

GCE 2004  
*January Series*



Report on the Examination

**English Literature**  
*Specification A*

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- Advanced Subsidiary
- Advanced Level

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# English Literature

## *Specification A*

### **LTA1: The Modern Novel**

#### **General**

This was an enabling and fair paper; the questions worked well for those candidates who read them carefully, identified the focus and wrote relevantly. Few essays were seen where there was no recognition of texts and characters as constructs.

Some candidates were clearly very well prepared; they knew the novels well and were able to explore texts, offering individual and insightful comments. Not only did they demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their texts, but they also addressed the questions well, maintaining focus and fluency. Several examiners commented that the extract questions were handled more effectively, with candidates using the extract and then moving out to consider the whole novel. However, a large number of candidates seemed not to be fully prepared for the examination, demonstrating a rather shaky understanding of the narrative and often trying to insert prepared answers into the questions.

The better candidates wrote cogently and fluently, presenting coherent essays; the weaker candidates had difficulty in constructing a clear and coherent essay, and their writing was often vague, generalised and inaccurate.

The majority of candidates had studied *The Handmaid's Tale*, with *Enduring Love* the second favourite. There were a few answers on *Knowledge of Angels*, this being its last appearance, as indeed there were few on the new text, *Wise Children*. Choice of text is clearly still an issue for some centres where numbers of candidates appear to struggle with a particular text or feel morally or culturally distant from it.

To discuss the texts and questions individually:

## The Bell

### Question 1

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **ways, uses, settings**

Successful candidates:

- showed that they were engaged with text
- were well prepared, with an in-depth understanding of the text
- explored the significance of the settings rather than simply describing them
- paid attention to the whole novel and several settings
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the writer’s techniques.

Less successful candidates:

- seemed not to understand the word “settings”
- described various settings and narrated events that happened within them, but failed to analyse the ways the writer used them
- showed no understanding of the “ways” or of the writer’s craft.

### Question 2

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **consider, ways, presents, importance**

Successful candidates:

- assessed “importance” well
- explored the symbolism effectively
- linked the episode well to the whole novel
- explored the significance of Toby’s actions
- analysed the writer’s technique.

Less successful candidates:

- told the story
- described Toby’s character
- neglected “importance”
- paid little or no attention to the “ways the writer presents”.

## The Handmaid's Tale

### Question 3

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **key message, how convey**

Successful candidates:

- presented well written, eloquent and insightful responses
- analysed in detail “how the writer conveys”
- demonstrated the ability to identify and articulate a key message or messages and to focus on it/them throughout the essay
- focused on Atwood’s technique
- saw the novel as a construct
- used clear and cogent expression.

Less successful candidates:

- replaced message(s) with theme(s), showing little awareness of messages or of the writer shaping the novel
- used the question as a springboard for a prepared answer on rebellion/freedom/power
- failed to identify a message or mentioned several without developing a discussion on any one of them
- wrote everything they knew about the novel in the hope that the examiner would identify a key message
- had difficulty with how/convey
- resorted to a narrative/descriptive approach and, at worst, simple story telling
- offered vague generalisations
- failed to write a coherent structured response
- spent too long discussing Afghanistan and Nazi Germany
- wrote assertively about Atwood’s feminism
- neglected language and the writer’s style
- wrote in an inaccurate fashion.

### Question 4

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **part played, passion, love, romance**

Successful candidates:

- were able to explore the “part played”
- ensured that all three - love, passion and romance – were covered
- demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding
- offered a view and supported it well from the text
- often looked at the language - for example the description of the garden reflecting Offred’s desires through its sensual language.

Less successful candidates:

- found and listed examples of love, romance and passion but failed to consider the “part played”
- focused on the lack of love, romance and passion or neglected one or two of the three
- made many assertions about the Commander’s relationship with Serena Joy with no textual support
- focused entirely on the extract given
- did not know the text.

## Wise Children

### Question 5

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **consider, importance, Melchior, ways, presents**

Successful candidates:

- explored the importance of the character in detail
- considered the character as a construct and analysed Carter's techniques.

Less successful candidates:

- described the character and told his story
- neglected "importance"
- failed to deal with "ways presents".

### Question 6

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **starting point, ways, uses, Grandma, Kitty**

Successful candidates:

- used the extract effectively, mining it for aspects of style as well as for its subject matter
- considered the whole text
- dealt with ways and uses
- saw Kitty and Grandma as constructs
- explored the mystery and ambiguity of the characters.

Less successful candidates:

- neglected "ways" and "uses"
- described the two characters and told their story.

## Snow Falling on Cedars

### Question 7

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **ways, presents, theme, desire**

Successful candidates:

- offered impressive detail in their answers
- moved on from the obvious examples to the desire for land or identity, developing autonomy in their answers
- often included a wide range of desires
- focused on “presents”
- explored the novel and looked at the way the writer used devices to explore the theme
- made sustained reference to Guterson’s technique
- wrote wise, thoughtful and exploratory answers.

Less successful candidates:

- were sometimes perhaps too coy to mention Ishmael’s sexual desire for Hatsue
- sometimes stretched the definition of desire to breaking point, talking of the storm or the trial without making useful links to the question
- wrote answers which were limited in scope
- described events and characters rather than considering “ways presents”
- wrote answers characterised by weak expression.

### Question 8

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **starting point, explore, ways, presents, relationship**

Successful candidates:

- linked the relationship to the themes of the whole novel
- focused on the relationship
- ranged widely through the text and explored the various stages of the relationship
- addressed “presents”
- explored the parallels between Kabuo and Carl, the parental influences, prejudices, and Guterson’s use of symbolism (the blood in the handshake, for example).

Less successful candidates:

- struggled with the focus on the relationship
- found it really difficult to probe below the surface of Carl’s attitude in the extract or to explain clearly how the war had affected him
- skimmed over the scene on the boat or left it out altogether
- wrote about prejudice and other characters at the expense of the relationship
- described rather than analysed the prejudice and the court case
- described the relationship but struggled with the “ways”.

## Enduring Love

### Question 9

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **how, McEwan, uses, Keats, science**

Successful candidates:

- engaged in a serious, sustained exploration of “the debate” between science and Keats, demonstrating clear understanding
- wrote excellent responses, discussing paradigms, the link of Wordsworth/Keats to Joe/Jed
- explored in detail the ways in which McEwan juxtaposes the ideas represented
- had a clear focus on “uses”
- married Keats/science to the various relationships in the book
- saw the novel as a construct.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote unbalanced answers (usually in favour of science)
- tended to recycle their “Joe the rational man” essays
- struggled with or ignored Keats
- failed to see the novel as a construct
- used only part of the novel
- did not comment on the language
- were heavily reliant on narrative.

### Question 10

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **consider, appropriateness, subject matter, style**

Successful candidates:

- linked Appendix II to the other letters and to the whole novel
- had a clear grasp of how this episode fitted into the development of the plot
- explored the language of the letter
- explored the writer’s technique and the style of the letter, establishing links and drawing conclusions
- sustained a firm focus on “appropriateness”, addressing this in terms of theme, language, style and message.

Less successful candidates:

- neglected “appropriateness”
- tended to concentrate on “subject matter”, neglecting “style”
- struggled to link the Appendix to the whole novel
- were descriptive rather than analytical
- told the story of Jed’s illness
- speculated about Joe receiving the letters, betraying a lack of close reading.

**Knowledge of Angels****Question 11**

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **ways, presents, tolerance, intolerance**

Successful candidates:

- sustained a focus on tolerance/intolerance
- ranged widely with attention to the whole novel
- wrote balanced and consistent answers.

Less successful candidates:

- resorted to story telling
- made assertive comments about the Catholic church
- showed no understanding of the book's central themes
- restricted themselves to one or two characters
- focused on either tolerance or intolerance.

**Question 12**

demanded that the candidates address the key words: **ways, presents, sin, churchmen**

Successful candidates:

- showed conceptual understanding
- analysed in detail, making effective references to the text
- understood and analysed sin
- focused on churchmen.

Less successful candidates:

- found the concept of sin too difficult
- wrote about Palinor at the expense of churchmen.

## LA2C: Shakespeare

### General

There were not many entries for the coursework unit this year and so it is difficult to write a report that will especially help with preparation for the next series of examinations. Work submitted in general seemed to be in response to set tasks rather than to negotiated ones. As has been said before, moderators note a much more fresh engagement by students who are writing about a topic that engages them than one that has been imposed or chosen from a set list.

### AO1

It was good to see that very few folders were presented that were difficult to read because of small font size, decorations and colourful inks. Candidates' expression, too, showed some improvement on previous years although there still remain instances where AO1 does not seem to have been given appropriate weight as the second dominant objective in this unit.

'Positive' and 'negative' are not very helpful adjectives and could be replaced by more direct ones that address the real qualities of the nouns modified. They are especially unhelpful in titles. 'Almost' is coming to be a popular word, often with amusing effect. Clichés should be avoided. It is rather crass to suggest that it is time for Hamlet to 'move on' and 'get on with his life'.

### AO2

Candidates understood their texts and were able to communicate their understanding. There were very few candidates who did so merely by story-telling. This is very encouraging as it shows close attention is being paid to the dominant assessment objective (AO2i). More candidates are becoming aware of ambiguity and are prepared to show alternative views and understandings. Occasionally there were some curious interpretations such as the one that assumed 'the funeral baked meats' in *Hamlet* were the meat pies served at the wedding! In general, moderators continue to have reservations about the suitability of *King Lear* and *Hamlet* for study by students who have only recently finished Year 11.

### AO3

AO3 is the real discriminator in the Unit and is likely to remain so as, despite teachers' best efforts, some candidates refuse to support their ideas, explore language, unpack metaphors or see a play as drama. When candidates do try to address AO3 they very often tip the balance from Band 2 to Band 3. While there is truth in the general observation that verse is used for court characters and prose for the lower social orders, candidates do often trot the idea out as if it were a universal truth. Benedick, for example, would not like to be thought of as low life and Iago is certainly not noble. Candidates need to fit their observations to the text they are studying and not assume that all plays by Shakespeare are similar.

### AO4

There was much impressive work here where candidates engaged texts and were enjoying offering supported personal opinions. Moderators noted many instances where an informed 'voice' was able to raise a mark awarded for the main assessment objectives (1, 2 and 3). Centres are reminded, however, that Unit 2 only requires a candidate's own opinion. This is because it is felt that, at this stage in the course, candidates must focus on engaging personally with texts and learn how to arrive at understandings of them. The critical opinions of others are not required until Unit 3 and for A2.

**Administration**

Unfortunately there were many instances of delays in submitting coursework to moderators. Centres are reminded that lateness in submission of coursework to moderators is unacceptable. Otherwise, folders were properly presented and administrative requirements met.

Assessors are again advised that examiners are trained to underline points of merit. This makes for greater accuracy than ticking and allows an overview of a script and its argument easily to be formed. In one or two instances folders did not have a single mark on them though there is a requirement for each page to be marked to show that it has been read. In other cases every line of typing had been ticked. This does not help a moderator see how a mark has been arrived at.

## LA2W: Shakespeare

### General

*Antony and Cleopatra* still seems to remain the most popular text with the new text *The Tempest* getting a good welcome of about 10 per cent of the entry. It was a delight to see some 'twenty out of twenty' work on Prospero. Congratulations to the centre and candidates who produced such work after a term!

Again, all questions were felt by examiners to be accessible, fair and differential, allowing candidates of all abilities the opportunities to respond. The January entry seems to have stabilised over the past three January series to approximately 20 per cent of the total entry for the year, with June obviously taking the majority. It is heartening that the quality of the January entry improves each year. Far less Band 1 work was noted this time.

This year saw many more confident and knowledgeable responses to a range of ideas and text extracts than the previous January. Teachers and candidates are again to be congratulated on the continuing assimilation of the Assessment Objectives into the teaching and learning of text and development of ideas to produce some successful examination results and some very sound AS Level work.

Candidates are very often clearly "interested" and able to "respond", "consider", "explore" at all bands of achievement as a result of encouraging practice in very many centres, where knowledge and understanding of each candidate is a focus rather than pushing a 'party line' on a text.

This January series very pleasingly saw far fewer instances of inappropriate address of AO4 response to "other readers" which is not rewarded at all on this Unit. Where this did occur, overwhelmingly so in a couple of centres, the unhelpful and irrelevant diversions on Bradley et al in an answer where question key words clearly asked the candidates for a personal response - "How do you respond to..."; "How far do you think..."; "What do you find interesting..."; or the terms "explore" or "consider" - cost them the opportunity to move up the mark scheme when their own views were not offered.

As publicised, the focus of the response must always be the candidates' own informed judgements, not a debate, at best, or substitution, at worst, of someone else's - whatever their critical stature.

Successful answers:

**Question 1** - by far the more popular of the two on *The Tempest*.

- offered interesting and "interested" ideas about Prospero and his parallels with Shakespeare and even God (AO4, first part);
- were honest about what was found interesting (AO4);
- felt free to choose their own two episodes (AO4);
- indicated the ambiguous nature of Prospero's presentation (AO3 and AO4);
- showed good preparation of the whole play making the above points possible (AO2i).

**Question 2**

- produced good work on Miranda representing the audience as Shakespeare made his exposition through Prospero (AO2i);
- dealt with dramatic significance and made effective links to the wider play (AO3);
- used the extract as a starting point to explore the themes, characters and structure of the text (AO2i and AO3).

**Question 3** – by far the more popular of the two questions on *Antony and Cleopatra*.

- engaged the closing speeches of the scene (AO2i and AO3);

- had something to say about dramatic function (AO3);
- could link and connect the episode with the play (AO2i and AO3).

**Question 4** – produced the better work of the two questions on this play.

- saw Caesar as the antithesis to Antony (AO2i and AO4);
- contrasted Caesar with Antony and opened up the Rome v Egypt debate and the dilemma of Antony (AO2i and AO3);
- grasped the dramatic structure by considering the positioning of their chosen Caesar scenes (AO3 and AO2i);
- understood the ambiguity inherent in his presentation particularly regarding Caesar’s actions to his sister and at the end of the play (AO2i, AO3, AO4);
- justified their admiring views of Caesar as a tactician (AO4).

**Question 5** – by far the less popular question of the two on the play.

- engaged with the episode as a clear strand of the play’s construction (AO3);
- looked at the episode as Shakespeare beginning to tie up loose ends and prepare for Vii, thus addressing “dramatic importance” (AO3);
- explored the changed relationship between Petruchio and Katherina (AO2i);
- explored the scene in context of what had happened but, more interestingly, what was to come (AO2i, AO3, AO4).

**Question 6**

- did some interesting work on how Bianca empowers herself by her very conformity (AO2i);
- debated Katherina’s routes to and from power (AO2i and AO4);
- offered wide-ranging arguments on the nature of money, status, clothes and sex clearly enjoying making the links (AO2i, AO3, AO4);
- concentrated on exploring the relationship between Katherina and Petruchio (AO2i and AO4);
- selected material very carefully and sorted out an approach before writing (AO2i and AO4).

**Question 7** - as with Question 8, offered for the last time.

- contrasted the ways in which the three main characters Olivia, Orsino and Viola are introduced by Shakespeare (AO2i, AO3 and AO4);
- focused on “Introduction” and “both scenes” (AO2i and AO3).

**Question 8**

- saw Feste’s perceptiveness and intelligence and his links with reality/deception/disguise (AO2i and AO3);
- usefully documented Feste’s access to both houses and to different social levels (AO2i);
- analysed the role of Feste as the fool (AO2i and AO3).

Less successful answers:

- described and narrated (AO2i);
- asserted (AO2i).

**Question 1**

- used “interesting” so many times they were clearly hanging on to the rubric as a life raft (AO4);
- half understood colonisation (AO2i);
- got bogged down in Prospero as “evil” (AO2i and AO4).

**Question 2**

- tended to ignore Ferdinand and the magical elements (AO2i);

- misunderstood the presentation of Prospero's motivation, even ignoring the fact that he had engineered the meeting itself (AO2i and AO3);

### **Question 3**

- were awash with colloquialisms - "Cleopatra wears the trousers" and you can imagine the rest...(AO1);
- insisted that Cleopatra was the victor in the scene (AO2i and AO3 and AO4);
- ignored the outcome of the scene vis-a-vis Antony (AO2i and AO3);
- ignored "dramatic function" (AO3);
- were unclear about who was, and had been, where up to that point in the play (AO2i).

### **Question 4**

- ignored "presentation" and "response" (AO3 and AO4);
- mistook Octavius Caesar for Julius Caesar (AO2i);
- despite the age of spin doctors, PR and the Media, demonstrated en masse naiveté about Caesar's treatment of those beloved (AO2i and AO3 and AO4);
- described Antony (AO2i).

### **Question 5**

- bypassed the humour (AO3 and AO4);
- said only "it's funny when..." (AO2i and AO3).

### **Question 6**

- snatched at random examples of sexual, patriarchal, social or financial power but offered no conclusions (AO2i and AO4);
- garbled references to Elizabethan social and sexual power (AO2i);
- long opening paragraphs on Elizabethan female and male stereotypes! (AO2i and AO4).

### **Question 7**

- could not engage "introduction" or "appropriate" (AO2i, AO3 and AO4);
- tackled the question as a long comprehension exercise (again, all the AOs);
- wrote generalised answers on 1i only (AO2i and AO4).

### **Question 8**

- asserted that the music in the play was for light relief (AO2i and AO3);
- described Feste as a narrator (AO2i and AO3);
- were rigid and unfounded about the comic aspects of the character as a clown (AO2i and AO3);
- listed Feste's appearances and no more (AO2i and AO3 and AO4).

## LTA3: Texts in Context

### General

This January's paper ushered in a transitional phase for the LTA3 module: questions on four texts (*The Rivals*, *Arcadia*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Mean Time*) appeared for the last time, while questions on the four replacements for these texts (*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Making History*, *The Miller's Prologue and Tale* and *The World's Wife*) made their first appearance. As the former questions were only intended for re-sit candidates and the latter were attempted by a minute proportion of the entry, this report will deal briefly with these eight texts in summary form. However, those texts which are already well established and which remain on the Specification will be dealt with in the usual detailed manner.

The entry for this examination consisted mostly of re-sit candidates, as did last January's: these tend to be students who were on the borderlines of Bands 1 and 2 or 3 and 4 in the previous June's examination – candidates who are now trying to ensure that they gain a pass grade or an overall A-grade. For the first time, examiners also noted a significant number of very good candidates (a considerable proportion of whom were awarded full marks for the paper) in the January examination: it would appear that these students are making full use of the flexibility offered by the modular system to maximise their overall mark. Presumably, this is a trend which is likely to continue as a result of the recent relaxation of the re-sit regulations.

Examiners felt that this was a successful paper, enabling weaker candidates to display their textual knowledge, while providing a stimulating opportunity for more able candidates to explore their set texts in a sophisticated or conceptual manner. Initial feedback from centres suggests that this paper was welcomed as interesting and fair: it forced candidates to think for themselves but did not try to catch them out or trip them up. Happily, there were none of the rubric infringements which have occasionally caused concern in recent papers and examiners were able to report that the majority of candidates showed at least some awareness of how they should be meeting the Assessment Objectives in their responses.

However, examiners did see the work of a few unfortunate candidates who appeared to have been entered for this examination without any understanding of how the questions should be approached. These candidates often displayed an ignorance of the Assessment Objectives; their poetry answers were restricted to content, while showing no awareness of genre or effect; their answers to the questions featuring a named poem did not go on to consider any other poems from the collection. Such candidates often fall back on unsuccessful attempts to re-cycle practice answers to previous questions or all-purpose general essays which pay no heed to the actual wording of the question. Obviously, centres should train their candidates to avoid these approaches to the paper.

To summarise the responses to the texts making their final or first appearances:

### Texts appearing on LTA3 for the last time

*Mean Time*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *The Rivals* retained their popularity to the very end; *Arcadia* was still a minority choice among the texts which will not be appearing on future LTA3 papers. Although this January's questions will be of little direct use to candidates wishing to prepare for LTA3 by practising on past papers, it is worth bearing in mind that two of the writers concerned will remain on the Specification, while a third will return in 2006. The patterns and styles of question which have been established for Duffy, Chaucer and Sheridan will be applied to the new texts as they come on to the paper – and those for Ford and Friel will follow the established question styles for pre-1900 and post-1900 drama. Centres should consider the January 2004 questions as models for likely

future approaches to the replacement texts and may wish to adapt these questions for practice use with candidates who will be studying the new texts.

Centres are advised to take particular note of Questions 14 and 29. These successful, enabling questions were firmly focused on the linguistic contexts in which Sheridan and Chaucer operated. Candidates who were able to engage with the language of Mrs Malaprop and the Wife of Bath effectively used these questions to reach Band Three (and upwards) of the mark scheme: it is worth bearing in mind that an ability to analyse the writer's language in a relevant manner is still an important key to success in an A-Level English Literature examination, whatever the principal assessment objective might be.

### **Texts appearing on LTA3 for the first time**

This January's paper featured the first "live" questions on four new LTA3 texts: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Making History*, *The Miller's Prologue and Tale* and *The World's Wife*. Inevitably, these questions attracted very few responses and this is how it should be. While there will always be a small number of exceptionally gifted students who are able to tackle a major modular examination after only three months in the sixth form, the majority of candidates need time to adapt to the demands and requirements of an A-Level course: most are simply not ready for LTA3 entry in January of Year 12. Centres are now well aware of this and examiners saw no evidence of the "Let's get this one out of the way!" entry policy which made sporadic appearances in the very first January AS examination (in 2001). Almost all centres are now prudent enough to realise that there is little to be gained from premature entry to the LTA3 examination: they know that candidates will have been properly prepared (and, it is to be hoped, will have become sufficiently mature) when they take this module for the first time in June of Year 12. In the meantime, these questions will provide centres with a first taste of how these new texts will be examined: it is to be hoped that there are not too many surprises in these eight questions! Centres are, of course, welcome to use these questions for practice purposes as they prepare those candidates who are studying these texts for the June examination.

To look at the achievement of candidates question by question:

### **Doctor Faustus**

Marlowe is still the most popular of the pre-1900 dramatists: most candidates have developed a secure understanding of this play and their engagement with Marlowe's ideas is a pleasing feature of their answers.

#### ***Question 1***

This was a very successful question which often brought the best out of those candidates who were willing to think for themselves and consider *Doctor Faustus* in a conceptual manner. Most candidates were able to explore the suggestion that Faustus is some sort of Everyman figure and many were able to comment on the ways that Marlowe appears to be subverting the conventions of the religious drama of the Middle Ages. While some candidates saw Faustus as a reflection of Marlowe's own atheistic frustration with the limitations of the human condition, others argued for the play's universality – noting that there are still far too many people whose lives are dominated by an obsession with "profit and delight" and the desire "to heap up gold". Examiners were pleased to note such strong idealism among the nation's seventeen-year olds and were also entertained by those candidates who saw Faustus as not only symbolic of Man, but also of men: some candidates saw him as a typical male, driven by his appetites for food, drink and sex (a claim for which they were able to provide textual support in abundance!).

**Successful candidates:**

- engaged with the question's keywords: "symbolic of Man's condition on Earth"
- focused primarily on the text and skilfully integrated their knowledge of sixteenth century ideas
- explored relevant aspects of the presentation of Faustus with confidence.

**Less successful candidates:**

- struggled with the idea suggested by the keywords
- produced simple character sketches of Faustus
- wrote long accounts of sixteenth century attitudes but paid very little attention to the text.

***Question 2***

This was a popular question and was usually well answered. The majority of candidates displayed a secure knowledge of the focal scene and most could at least manage to write an accurate commentary on it. More perceptive candidates established connections and comparisons between this pivotal scene and the rest of the play, many noting the trend of physical harm inflicted by Faustus which begins with the Pope and culminates in the torture of the Old Man. Some candidates felt that the scene was Marlowe's way of expressing his own atheistic views: his mockery of religion is licensed here by the crowd-pleasing nature of his attack on the Catholic church. Others pointed out that, although he seems to be a Renaissance Man, Faustus once again misses an opportunity to develop his classical knowledge in this scene: ironically, he sees nothing of the glory that was Rome during his visit. Most candidates made sensible use of the question's bullet points as a framework for their response: this usually ensured a shaped, relevant answer.

**Successful candidates:**

- established the scene's importance by making connections to the rest of the play
- made effective use of the bullet points
- carefully integrated their contextual knowledge of the ways a sixteenth century audience might have responded to this scene.

**Less successful candidates:**

- gave only a simple account of the scene
- ignored the idea of the scene's importance within the whole play
- made general comments about the sixteenth century context but paid little attention to the scene itself.

## The Country Wife

As in previous LTA3 examinations, *The Country Wife* remains the minority choice among the pre-1900 drama texts but, once again, the responses from candidates of all abilities displayed a strong personal engagement with the play. The responses were divided fairly evenly between the two questions available to candidates who had studied this text.

### Question 5

This question was generally well handled: most candidates were able to explore Wycherley's presentation of a society devoid of love and friendship, commenting perceptively on the ways that selfishness seems to pervade most of the personal relationships in this play. Nevertheless, many candidates balanced their answers by arguing that there are some rare examples of genuine affection in the play (notably between Harcourt and Alithea) and that Wycherley's view of humanity is not entirely a pessimistic one.

Successful candidates:

- engaged with the reviewer's comment on the play
- displayed a secure understanding of the ways Wycherley presents seventeenth century society
- focused primarily on the text and integrated contextual information as part of a shaped, coherent response.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple accounts of the play's plot
- used the question's keywords in a very basic way or ignored them entirely
- wrote long, general accounts of the Restoration context.

### Question 6

Most candidates who attempted this question had a good grasp of the ways that Wycherley presents the relationship between Pinchwife and Margery; many noted the way the relationship has shifted by this stage of the play and compared Margery's matrimonial attitudes in these scenes to her initial wide-eyed innocence. Many candidates were clearly shocked by the violent threats made by Pinchwife here, feeling that this went beyond an amusing caricature of cuckoldry and became something entirely more sinister.

Successful candidates:

- explored the two focal scenes with confidence
- made perceptive connections between these scenes and the rest of the text
- displayed a secure understanding of Wycherley's purposes in his presentation of Pinchwife and Margery.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple accounts of the two scenes
- established few connections to the rest of the play
- showed little awareness of Wycherley as a dramatist.

## The Glass Menagerie

This text remains by far the most popular of the modern plays and, once again, it produced some excellent responses: candidates of all abilities continue to engage sensitively and thoughtfully with the problems faced by St Louis' most dysfunctional family.

### Question 7

This was the less popular of the questions, but many of the candidates who attempted it produced thoughtful and perceptive responses. Most candidates were able to apply the keywords “helpless and lost” to all three members of the Wingfield family (Amanda is lost in her memories, Laura is lost in herself and her menagerie, Amanda calls Tom “a total loss”), while the more adventurous applied these terms to Williams' presentation of Jim, too. The question of how “Williams often takes the side of” these characters became an important discriminator for examiners: some candidates ignored the phrase altogether, while others debated the idea in an engaged manner. Many candidates argued that the play's staging (including devices such as the way Laura is lit) might indicate Williams' sympathy, while some felt that the conclusion shows Williams is not on the side of Amanda and Laura: as one candidate wrote, “he abandons them in the ending he has written for them”. Some less successful answers tended to overplay the biographical angle in approaching the question: it should be remembered that knowledge of context is not assessed through this text. Too often, long accounts of Rose Williams' lobotomy were passed off as a substitute for textual knowledge: candidates are strongly advised to avoid this approach.

Successful candidates:

- produced balanced discussions of the idea that Williams sides with the helpless and the lost
- considered the keywords in relation to a variety of characters
- explored the ways that Williams' dramatic techniques shape the audience's responses to the helpless and the lost.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple character sketches and accepted the given view unquestioningly
- were distracted by the possible autobiographical elements in the play and drifted into irrelevance
- ignored the keywords or only addressed them implicitly.

### Question 8

This was the more popular question on *The Glass Menagerie*, producing many lively and thoughtful responses. Most candidates were at least able to produce a sensible and relevant commentary on the play's opening scene, while many engaged in an interesting debate concerning the scene's effectiveness as an introduction. Many argued that Scene One provides the audience with its first taste of Williams' major themes and his experimental theatrical techniques; others felt that the audience is more likely to be confused by the play's opening and that a number of the play's key elements do not emerge until later scenes. This question offered plenty of scope for candidates' informed, personal response and, where this was backed up by textual evidence, the results were invariably pleasing for examiners to read. Less successful candidates tended to avoid debate, merely agreeing with the given view unquestioningly or avoiding the question's keywords altogether.

Successful candidates:

- explored the idea of “an effective introduction” with some confidence
- engaged with the ways Williams presents whole-text themes and ideas in the opening scene

- gave a balanced response to the question of “To what extent do you agree?”

Less successful candidates:

- simply agreed with the given view, resulting in a one-sided, unbalanced response
- established very few connections between the opening scene and the rest of the play
- wrote simple accounts of the scene, but made no attempt to debate the view contained in the question.

### **Light Shining In Buckinghamshire**

This play is still the least popular text on the paper: examiners saw very few responses to Churchill this January.

#### ***Question 9***

This was the less popular choice among the few candidates who had studied this text.

Successful candidates:

- showed a secure understanding of the ways Churchill presents Briggs
- engaged with the keywords “admires most” and “real hero”
- produced a balanced response to the question of “How far do you agree with this assessment?”

Less successful candidates:

- struggled with the keywords
- wrote simple character descriptions of Briggs
- merely agreed that Briggs is the play’s real hero.

#### ***Question 10***

The few candidates who attempted this question were usually successful in connecting the play’s fragmentary opening scenes with later events.

Successful candidates:

- debated the idea of “an appropriate introduction”
- established links between the play’s opening and later scenes
- explored the form and language of the opening scenes.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote simple, often narrative, accounts of the opening scenes
- struggled to connect these scenes to the rest of the play
- ignored the question of “To what extent do you agree?”

### Three Victorian Poets

This remains a popular choice of text. This January's questions offered candidates the opportunity to select their own poems, yielding some illuminating and original combinations. However, a few candidates struggled here because their inappropriate selections did not match the focus of the questions.

#### *Question 19*

'In Memoriam' was the inevitable favourite here and candidates were able to find plenty more to consider in the poetry of Tennyson (although, oddly, very few candidates wrote about the equally useful 'Crossing the Bar'). The attitudes to death in the protest poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning also featured frequently in answers to this question, while candidates did not lack relevant examples from the poetry of her husband, either. Indeed as many candidates pointed out, an obsession with death seems to pervade Victorian attitudes and culture: it is certainly easy enough to reach such a conclusion from the evidence contained in this anthology.

Successful candidates:

- selected appropriate poems which allowed them to explore the ways that Victorian attitudes to death are presented
- had a secure understanding of the effects of language and form in their chosen poems
- made valid connections between the poetry and the Victorian context.

Less successful candidates:

- made inappropriate selections which resulted in unconvincing or assertive responses
- wrote simple accounts of their chosen poems or, alternatively, wholly contextual answers which made little reference to the poetry
- paid little attention to language and style.

#### *Question 20*

This was a popular question and it was generally well handled by those who attempted it. Inevitably, Robert Browning's monologues were the most popular choices here, but 'Ulysses' and 'The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point' also featured regularly in successful answers. 'Maud', though an appropriate choice in terms of form, worked less well for those candidates who attempted to use it – perhaps because the short extracts in Jane Ogborn's edition do not provide the full 'Little Hamlet' effect that Tennyson was aiming for in this poem? Examiners were concerned at the inappropriate selections made by some candidates in answering this question: 'Mariana' and 'The Lady of Shalott' are not dramatic monologues, yet a significant number of candidates attempted to use them here. It is important that centres prepare candidates for this examination by familiarising them with commonly used technical terms: a student of Victorian poetry ought to be able to recognise a dramatic monologue.

Successful candidates:

- adopted an analytical approach to their chosen dramatic monologue
- integrated contextual information while keeping the text at the forefront of their answer
- used the question's bullet points as a way of structuring a relevant answer.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote a paraphrase of their chosen poem
- showed little awareness of poetic technique, even choosing poems which are not dramatic monologues

- produced general answers about the nineteenth century context which paid minimal attention to the poetry.

### A Choice of Christina Rossetti's Verse

Rossetti remains the least popular choice among the pre-1900 poetry texts, but examiners still saw a significant number of responses to her writing this January. As with *Three Victorian Poets*, candidates made the most of the questions' opportunities for personal, individual selections of poems.

#### Question 21

Although this was the less popular Rossetti question, it was usually well answered. Candidates drew on a wide variety of poems which deal with the theme of memory and many were able to integrate the biographical detail of Rossetti's withdrawal from the outside world, while maintaining a focus on the spirituality of her later writing. Some candidates used this question to place Rossetti in the context of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, noting the importance of memory and dream in the work of these artists.

Successful candidates:

- explored the poetry with confidence and insight
- made effective choices of poems that were relevant to this question
- paid close attention to the language and style of the poetry.

Less successful candidates:

- chose inappropriate poems or attempted to twist those they had prepared in advance to fit the question
- wrote simple, narrative accounts of their chosen poems
- struggled to engage Rossetti's language and style.

#### Question 22

This was the more popular Rossetti question and, while some rather disaffected candidates were inclined to agree that her poetry is all 'doom and gloom', many argued that there is a wide variety of emotion on display in this anthology and were able to support their views with an impressive range of textual evidence. Many candidates conceded that Rossetti's critics might have a point but still wanted to stick up for her, blaming any apparent narrowness on the restricted lives Victorian women were often forced to lead: as one candidate so eloquently put it, "Of course her emotional range is narrow; you cannot give what you do not have."

Successful candidates:

- considered a variety of poems as they engaged with this critical view of Rossetti
- analysed Rossetti's use of language and style
- integrated biographical and contextual material in a relevant manner.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote general contextual answers which did little with the actual poetry
- produced simple accounts of their chosen poems
- paid no attention to Rossetti's use of language and style.

## The Whitsun Weddings

Once again, the poetry of Larkin was a very popular choice. Most candidates continue to write about his work in an enthusiastic and well-informed manner.

### Question 23

This was by far the more popular Larkin question and one of the most successful questions on the entire paper. Examiners were well aware that there was a significant amount to tackle in this question (Larkin's alleged misogyny *and* his attitudes to class) and candidates were not penalised unduly if their answers sometimes lacked balance in subject matter – although balance in debate was still expected. 'A Study of Reading Habits', 'Self's the Man' and 'Wild Oats' were frequently cited as evidence for Larkin's hostile attitude to women (several candidates suggested that the latter's "bosomy English rose" implies class issues too), while 'Broadcast' and 'Love Songs in Age' were often used as evidence of a more sympathetic view of women. 'Faith Healing', 'Sunny Prestatyn' and 'The Large Cool Store' also featured in many answers, as candidates explored the more ambiguous attitudes which Larkin presents in these poems. The usual suspects were often rounded up to show that Larkin sneers at the working class ("The fathers with broad belts under their suits", the "mothers loud and fat", the "cut-price crowd, urban yet simple") but many perceptive candidates balanced this by pointing out that those of a higher class are not treated with much respect either: the "white-clothed ones from tennis-clubs" and the selfish academic of 'Naturally the Foundation will Bear Your Expenses'. Many examiners were concerned that, in answering this question, even able candidates could not distinguish the word 'woman' from its plural form 'women'.

Successful candidates:

- selected relevant poems which deal with Larkin's attitudes to class and women
- explored these poems with confidence and insight
- produced a balanced argument in response to the question "How far do you agree?"

Less successful candidates:

- selected inappropriate poems for this question
- discarded the keywords "hater" and "hatred" in favour of the vague, all-purpose "negative"
- wrote about the way Larkin presents relationships in general, rather than his attitudes to women and class in particular.

### Question 24

This Larkin question was a minority choice: even those candidates who attempted the question successfully seemed less at ease with 'Reference Back' than they were with the poems to which they chose to link it. Nevertheless, plenty of candidates could see the connections with other poems dealing with the passage of time (especially 'Love Songs in Age' and 'Dockery and Son'), while many noted the poem's studied evocation of jazz music and compared it to 'For Sidney Bechet'. Candidates often saw the quadruple "unsatisfactory" as the key word in the poem – and in the whole collection; others saw the poem's structure (closely detailed incident followed by broader, profound reflection) as typical of Larkin's technique.

Successful candidates:

- produced relevant and balanced answers which addressed all the question's keywords and displayed a secure understanding of 'Reference Back'
- showed mastery of detail and made convincing, relevant connections between the focal poem and the rest of the collection
- analysed Larkin's poetic techniques.

Less successful candidates:

- had only a basic grasp of ‘Reference Back’
- wrote accurately about ‘Reference Back’ but did not directly address the question of “To what extent do you feel that this is the key poem?”
- showed little awareness of Larkin’s language and style.

### Safe as Houses

Fanthorpe is still the minority choice among twentieth century poets: examiners saw very few responses to *Safe as Houses* this January.

### Question 25

This was the more popular Fanthorpe question and most of those who attempted it were able to identify poems which deal with the idea of unsafe houses: ‘Sirensong’ and ‘Last House’ were popular choices, along with ‘The Doll’s Children’ and ‘What, in our house?’ More assured candidates debated the keywords, arguing that some safe places can be found in Fanthorpe’s collection of houses, not least in ‘The Room Where Everyone Goes’!

Successful candidates:

- began by focusing on appropriate poems about unsafe houses
- used other poems to produce a balanced debate
- analysed Fanthorpe’s language and style in the poems they had chosen.

Less successful candidates:

- struggled to engage with the idea that some of the poems present unsafe houses
- wrote simple accounts of the poems they were determined to write about, regardless of the question
- paid little attention to Fanthorpe’s language or the need to produce a balanced debate.

### Question 26

This was by far the less popular Fanthorpe question. Those few candidates who attempted it were able to connect the focal poem to others that deal with the idea of forgotten places (such as ‘Greensted Church’) and lost civilizations (the prophetic ‘Under the Motorway’, for instance).

Successful candidates:

- had a secure understanding of ‘The Silence’
- produced a balanced debate which considered the idea that “this poem is the key to the whole collection”
- explored Fanthorpe’s language and style with confidence.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote simple accounts of the focal poem
- failed to engage with the ways this poem might be considered as the key to the collection
- were unable to debate the given opinion in a balanced manner.

## LTA4: Texts in Time

### General

The January examination followed to some extent the entry pattern of previous January examinations: there was roughly an equal number of ‘high-flyers’ and of candidates who were not really ready to take this challenging examination. The former knew the texts in detail, had had practice in the art of writing well-expressed, cogent essays and had taken care to read the critical opinions in Section A and had understood the relevant context in Section B. The latter had still only a passing acquaintance with the text, had written few practice essays, went their own way in Section A or paid scant regard to the critical opinions which they were supposed to address, while in Section B, they still tended to unload irrelevant context, summarising poetry instead of examining the ways the poets created meaning in form, structure and language.

### Section A

As *Othello* was overwhelmingly the most popular play in this section, it seems sensible to devote most attention to the answers on this play. Surprisingly, most candidates answered Question 1, the more challenging of the alternatives. As expected, the weaker candidates relied on narrative, concentrating on what Othello and Iago do in the play. Band 2 candidates moved towards an understanding of the differences between the two views, an essential for a worthwhile answer. Band 3 candidates understood the differences and were able to focus on more specific areas of text to support their views, while those in Band 4 had the detail of the text at their finger-tips. It is important that students understand the main technical terms, in this question, ‘tragic hero’, and can discuss its significance. Question 2 answers followed a similar pattern, except that even quite able candidates knew little detail about the brawl and so could write only in a general way. Even though this is a closed text examination, it does test the whole play and not just the highlights.

The *Duchess of Malfi* was the next most popular text. Most candidates chose Question 9 which focused on Antonio, hero or just a man of considerable worth? Many candidates excelled, showing a grasp of the difference of view of the two critics, writing cogent essays with significant short quotations well-remembered and skilfully woven into the text of their answers. The real delight, however, was in the answers to Question 10 which challenged the best to argue about the effectiveness of the play in the theatre. The more imaginative can answer questions like this whether or not they have seen the play in performance. Visualising a play on stage will from time to time be the subject of differing critical opinions on this paper.

Surprisingly, there were few candidates who answered in January on *The Merchant of Venice*. The few seen handled well both questions. There seems to be a sound understanding of the structure of this play as shown in Question 5. There was usually strong textual support for arguments about Gratiano.

There were so few answers on *Henry IV Part 2* and on *Volpone* that useful statements in this report would be difficult. There were no answers seen on *The Wakefield Master*.

### Section B

Questions most popular were those on Blake with those on Wordsworth and Keats a distant, equal second. There were no answers seen on *Women Romantic Poets*.

One feature noticed was that candidates had been given a good deal of information about Wordsworth (Questions 15 and 16), but sometimes they had limited knowledge about the poetry in *The Prelude, Books 1 and 2*. Background notes are useful but they should not be regarded as a substitute for a working, first-hand knowledge of the context set in the question nor of the poetry. Question 15 had a demanding context relating to Wordsworth's claim about the gift a poet needs to produce 'the best poetry'. Question 16 context concerned the attack on Wordsworth by the educated upper classes of his day that he was making his poetry too easily understood by 'the common people'. Both questions challenged the candidate's ability to find suitable passages to fit the contexts. Band 1 candidates had either spent too little time understanding the contexts or had simply missed the significance of them. Band 2 candidates managed to write appropriately, though their recollection of the text was only at a paraphrase level. Band 3 candidates concentrated on the contexts and were able to cite specific, smaller areas of text, while Band 4 had the usual gift of fitting detailed knowledge of the poetry to the context.

The alternatives on Blake were equally taken up, though 'our agony and despair' was better understood than 'revolutionary vision'. There seem to be three steps which the candidate must take before embarking on an answer in Section B of this paper. Step one: Understand the words of the context – what, for example, is 'revolutionary vision'? Step two: What in Blake's poetry is 'revolutionary'? There are his attitudes about free love, about education, about religion, about child abuse, about the relationship between God and people. Step three: What poems can I best use to illustrate his revolutionary vision? These steps are taken by the Band 4 candidates.

Some of the best answers seen so far on Keats were in evidence in January, though both contexts challenged candidates: Paganism or Christianity in Question 19, the supremacy of the poet's imagination in Question 20. Fewer candidates jog-trotted their way through irrelevant poems. At the top, poems were cleverly chosen, known in detail, appreciated in terms of style and fitted in short quotations into fabric of a cogent essay.

## LA5C: Literary Connections

### General

Coursework entries showed a small increase this January compared to the previous year but at only just over a thousand candidates the number is still small in comparison to the summer's 16,000 entries. The range of marks was roughly comparable to the previous summer, though moderators saw few really weak folders; it is assumed that any students not likely to achieve even the minimum mark were advised to defer submission. It is still felt, however, that there were rather too many examples of work that would have benefited from additional care in preparation and presentation. Some candidates who had clearly engaged with their texts and found interesting things to say failed to develop their examination of the texts to address the assessment objectives clearly. There were also a number of folders that suffered from lack of attention to editing or even simple proofreading to remove errors. These students would have done themselves better justice by spending more time in the spring term on their work. It was also most pleasing to read a number of excellent and original folders in which students had chosen from a wide range of texts to compare in interesting ways, some of which gained full marks.

In this third year of the course it is clear that most centres are confident about the assessment objectives for this unit and are able to guide students towards helpful assignment choices. Guidance on these matters has again been provided in the standardisation booklet for 2004, which was accompanied by two documents for students on planning and presenting their coursework. This report will concentrate on those areas that moderators found still need attention from candidates and teachers.

### *Text choices*

Most centres have kept in regular touch with their moderator to ensure that text and assignment choices are suitable. The introduction of new texts to other units can occasionally cause problems, as this may mean that texts which have previously been used are no longer acceptable. It is worth stressing that even when a centre has no intention of studying a text in another unit, all the texts listed in the Specification, apart from those for the examination alternative, LA5W, must be avoided for LA5C.

### *Task setting: addressing the assessment objectives*

Where problems arise with the nature of the candidate's task, moderators often suspect that the student has decided, for whatever reasons, to simplify the wording agreed with the teacher and approved by the moderator. In a few cases the texts were not specified and the task was too vague or non-literary. It would be worth stressing to students from the outset that the title needs to specify the texts, should use 'compare' or an equivalent term and make clear the focus of comparison. The assessment objectives make clear the requirements of this unit and the wording of the task should show the requirement for consideration of AO3. Moderators found that failure to pay sufficient attention to language, style and structure was the reason that folders did not achieve the higher mark ranges. The emphasis on comparison in this unit should provide a natural opportunity to explore the ways in which the two texts make use of the chosen form, yet many candidates concentrated too much on content and ignored the structure and style. If, for example, one text is epistolary non-fiction and the other a novel, this needs to be the focus of the comparison. Even if the comparison is between two works of prose fiction, the candidate needs to explore similarities and differences in the authors' uses of narrative techniques, language and so on. Only then can the work be rewarded with a mark in Band 3 or Band 4; occasionally centres wished to place in Band 4 folders which paid scant attention to AO3 and which therefore had to be marked down by the moderator.

Almost all the work seen addressed comparison (AO2ii), though in a few cases the focus was so narrow as to convey little sense of the text as a whole. Candidates are rightly advised not to attempt to cover too much ground but they need at the same time to make clear how certain key characters or episodes relate to the whole of the text, whether it is a novel or a collection of verse.

They should also be warned to avoid relying on narrative; the aim, at this level, is not to compare the stories but the ways in which the writers work. For this reason it is always a good sign when a candidate makes regular reference to the writers by name, indicating that they are aware they are dealing with literary constructs.

This unit should also enable students to demonstrate their own independent literary judgements (AO4). There are many ways in which they can respond to the different approaches authors have adopted to similar subject matter. This should be an opportunity for them to engage in an individual way – which is why it is often preferable that students choose different texts and find their own points of interest. Comments from their background reading may be useful and can obviously help set works in context, but it should be remembered that AO5 is not assessed in this unit. Comments by critics should be used sparingly and only when they can help shed fresh light on the text itself rather than merely provide a generalised assertion – as with the students' own points, such comments need to be tied to a specific textual reference. Students should also have the confidence to suggest alternative readings to show they recognise that a variety of responses is possible.

Folders marred by poor expression were rare, but moderators still sometimes felt that centres could have done more to emphasise the importance of clear communication to their students. Where work is short, poorly organised, narrative-based or contains numerous errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, the mark will not rise above the lower reaches of Band 2. Although AO1 is not the dominant objective, here, as in all the other units in Specification A it is an essential component in the assessment scheme. Coursework offers candidates the opportunity to redraft and check their work and moderators therefore expect a good standard of written expression at all levels. It should also be mentioned that it is very helpful to have a brief bibliography and word count at the end of the work; these assist in assessment and make explicit any background reading as well as the editions of the texts used by the candidate.

#### *Assessment and administration*

Moderators experienced few problems with centres' assessments in this series. It is particularly helpful to be able to read the evidence of internal assessment, where teachers have often been scrupulous in adjusting marks in accordance with the assessment grid and the examples in the standardisation material. Problems are more likely where there is little evidence of teacher assessment on the final draft or the candidate record form – although it is much more helpful to be able to read comments highlighting specific aspects in the body of the work itself. Teachers should not hesitate to underline sentences that clearly demonstrate where assessment objectives have been met, with a brief comment to indicate the level of achievement.

Where problems were found it would seem that either internal moderation had not been carried out thoroughly or there were misunderstandings about the application of the marking grid. In particular, work with weak AO1 was, as noted above, sometimes over-rewarded. Moderators will indicate on the feedback form where they feel marking has been generous, even though this may not actually result in an adjustment; centres should take this as an indication to realign their marking in the next series rather than as approval for continuing generosity.

Candidates' work is usually well-presented. However, despite previous requests, moderators still receive too many folders which are not securely fastened with staples or treasury tags. Nothing elaborate is required but loose sheets are not acceptable and all pages should bear the candidate's name and a page number.

A minority of administrative failings continue to consume an undue amount of moderators' time. Centres are urged to check before submission that the Centre Declaration Sheet is signed not only by the teachers concerned but also by the head of centre, that candidates have completed all the details on their own record forms and that the marks on the folders are clear and agree with those entered on the mark sheets.

## LA5W: Literary Connections

### General

Senior examining personnel reported that this was a fair and enabling paper and that they had seen some excellent answers to all of the questions that had been attempted. Due to the very small January entry for LA5W, however, only the following options were attempted by candidates in sufficient numbers for the Principal Examiner to find anything meaningful to say to be useful for the purposes of this report: Option 2: *A Woman's Struggle*; Option 3: *Visions of the Future*; and Option 5: *Reflections*. Centres wishing to find advice about the other options available on LA5W are referred to previous Examiner's Reports for June examinations.

Successful candidates:

- understood the comparative nature of Unit 5
- planned carefully and effectively
- made good use of their time
- were fully engaged with the language used by the writers of their texts
- kept the keywords of questions at the heart of their answers
- could use carefully selected, short, integrated quotation with skill
- were able to move from the literal surface of their texts into an analysis of the more subtle underpinning ideas
- read with sensitivity and explored skilfully
- were aware of sub-texts and literary and other contexts
- could spell, punctuate and use correct English grammar
- were able to place extracts within the overall context of the work from which they had been selected
- could signpost their way around the chronology and narrative sequences of texts leaving the examiner in no doubt that they were familiar with whole texts and were aware of delicate twists and turns within those texts.

Less successful candidates:

In January 2004 candidates tended to do what the great majority of less successful candidates have always done in LA5W. They:

- wrote erratically, frequently employing a style which mixed misunderstood technical terms with a poor formal control of English
- did not use the personal voice even when a question specifically asked them to do so
- could not punctuate titles correctly
- did not plan their answers or occasionally “over-planned” by writing plans of such detail that they were longer than the essays which followed them
- ignored the specifics of questions by not concentrating on keywords and phrases
- did not engage the style of the writer
- wrote irrelevantly
- did not present an argument when requested to do so
- could not use quotation, integrated or otherwise
- generalised and made vague assertions
- did not know the difference between *woman* and *women*
- wrote imbalanced answers, spending an inappropriately large proportion of time on one text at the expense of the other
- wrote about characters as though they were real people and not literary constructs.

The space given to the following question-specific comments reflects the number of answers received on each option in the examination as a whole.

## Option 2: A Woman's Struggle

### Question 3

Successful candidates:

- placed the extracts within the overarching structure of both novels
- understood that the extracts present key moments which explore the themes of challenge and change (or the absence of both in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*)
- engaged the language of both extracts
- understood that Winterson and Walker employ different styles of writing.

Less successful candidates:

- forgot to compare and contrast
- ignored the request to write about style
- struggled with signposting, especially in *The Color Purple*
- got bogged down in a discussion about lesbianism
- off-loaded centre-prepared notes
- thought all they had to do was regurgitate character sketches of Celie and Jeanette.

### Question 4

Successful candidates:

- were able to focus on the key word *presentation*
- often were able to write very interesting comparative analyses of all three characters, showing a complex understanding of both novels
- were able to differentiate between Pastors Finch and Spratt
- linked the presentation of Winterson's pastors and Walker's Samuel to the wider theme of the presentation of religion in both novels
- were not afraid to argue with flair e.g. to cite Nettie as an "unreliable narrator" and to show some sympathy with the plight of Corrine and to illustrate various intriguing incongruities in Nettie's presentation of Samuel
- understood Winterson's biting satirical attack on evangelism.

Less successful candidates:

- were unable to disentangle Pastors Finch and Spratt or made no attempt to do so
- offered narrative and ignored the key word *presentation*
- forgot to compare and contrast
- wrote vaguely and assertively
- were frequently irrelevant.

### Option 3: Visions of the Future

#### Question 5

Successful candidates:

- placed the extracts within the overarching structure of both novels
- understood that at this stage in *Brave New World* Huxley was introducing John and were confident about offering an analysis of this introduction and that by Chapter 8 of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell was foreshadowing later events such as Winston's relationship with Julia and were able to analyse i.e. the irony of Winston's initial reactions to Mr Charrington and his environment
- understood authorial intent
- were very confident about dealing with the themes of, for example, anomie, class and cultural clashes in both extracts
- never forgot the comparative nature of the task
- were able successfully to demonstrate that Huxley and Orwell were different writers interested in presenting different visions of the future
- saw Winston's and John's value systems (i.e. a shared respect and nostalgia for "the past", a kind of sentimental "morality") as yardsticks to measure the scale of the emptiness of life and were able to make use of Bernard, Lenina and Mr Charrington in this context
- were as comfortable comparing style as subject matter.

Less successful candidates:

- fell into generalisation and assertion about the genre
- wanted, as ever on this option, to write about how the writers' "predictions" had come true
- wrote vaguely about dystopias
- made no real attempt to disentangle Orwell and Huxley
- gave real or imagined historical contexts in which *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were written rather than analysing the extracts
- frequently felt compelled to off-load prepared notes which had little or no relevance to the question.

#### Question 6

Successful candidates:

- were not afraid to argue and did so with passion and flair
- fully engaged the key words *meaningless* and *fruitless*
- disentangled the terms *human life* and *human love*
- saw characters as constructs and identified authorial intention
- explored the skills of the writers at work
- discriminated with style and knowledge
- never forgot the comparative nature of the task.

Less successful candidates:

- did not argue
- did not engage the key words *meaningless* and *fruitless*
- ignored or did not disentangle the terms *human life* and *human love*
- wrote vaguely or assertively
- off-loaded a lot of centre-inspired notes
- were often rambling or confused
- offered narrative in the hope that it would suffice
- made little or no attempt to compare and contrast.

**Option 5: Reflections****Question 9**

Successful candidates:

- analysed style with as much rigour as they analysed subject matter
- understood the different narrative techniques of their set texts so had, for example, prepared themselves for the examination by analysing Gibbons' style of literary pastiche
- were alive to the rich resonances of language in both texts
- placed the extracts within the structure of both novels
- were alive to the hilarity of Gibbons and the melodrama of Webb
- never forgot the comparative nature of the task.

Less successful candidates:

- were heavily reliant on narrative and on explaining the background to the novels
- wrote about one extract then the other without really engaging a comparative analysis
- got stuck in subject matter and failed to engage style
- could not contextualise the novels
- were not alive to the language of the texts
- unloaded a lot of biography, especially about Mary Webb.

**Question 10**

Successful candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the writers at work
- kept their answer firmly focused on the key word *presentation*
- wrote with intelligence and knowledge about both *rural life* and *rural values*
- offered an argument
- found useful and interesting things to say about narrative voice
- were ambitious in their range, for example, offering the argument that as far as many of the characters were concerned rural values and rural life were quite similar in both novels but that rural life and values were presented with different flourishes and emphases by the writers who were trying to achieve quite different outcomes with similar subject material. As with any question requiring candidates to construct an argument, any line or approach was acceptable to the examiner so long as the candidate presented sufficient evidence
- never forgot the comparative nature of the task.

Less successful candidates:

- did not address the keyword *presentation*
- listed various aspects of *rural life* without necessarily engaging *rural values*
- were over-reliant on centre-inspired notes
- did not convince the examiner that they understood that characters in fiction are constructs
- wrote narrative answers which often merely recapitulated swathes of the plot of both novels
- struggled with Gibbons' parody
- were vague or assertive.

## **LTA6: Reading for Meaning**

### **General**

#### *Entry*

This January there were nearly twice as many entries as there were for January 2003. The general pattern seems to be one of re-sits, but there were at least three centres where all candidates had been entered early. This is clearly not advisable. The specification has been designed to be incremental, both at AS and A2. LTA4 and LA5W/C - with their emphasis on the skills of comparison, evaluating the significance of contextual influences, and debating different interpretations - are vital preparatory units for the summative paper which tests all the assessment objectives.

#### *Timing*

Some candidates need to pay attention to the guidance given in the question paper on timing the answers. Reading the passages through several times and carefully is vital to success, as is careful planning, especially for the complex task which is Question 1b.

#### *Wider reading*

Alongside the requirement for the analysis of the extracts – that is, reading for meaning – is the necessity for candidates to demonstrate their wide reading in the literature of World War One. Such reference is necessary in order to justify the assessment of “typicality” for each extract. This cannot be achieved by vague assertion.

To turn to the questions:

### Question 1a

In this question, candidates were required to compare the two poems – *Vitai Lampada* and *In Flanders Fields* – in terms of their attitudes to war, and to discuss an interpretation of the poems. This means that, alongside the assessment of the candidate’s communication skills and abilities to analyse writers’ techniques, the question also tests the skills of comparison and discussion of the interpretation of text.

This question does **not** test **wider reading** or the notion of **typicality**.

Successful candidates:

- maintained the comparison throughout the essay
- kept the debate to the fore
- challenged the views presented
- explored the texts
- spotted the torch reference in both, but differentiated carefully between them
- noted the difference between *fling* and *joyful* on the one hand and *failing*, *break faith* on the other
- compared the relatively impersonal Extract A with the personal Extract B
- explored the structure of each poem and its relationship with the meaning
- analysed the ways the rhythm of each poem reflected the action/meaning
- examined the use of repetition/refrain in each poem
- in Extract A, established the serious tone and the public school training that underpins struggle and victory
- in Extract B, established the quiet, reflective tone but also noted that this was not an anti-war poem
- presented a coherent, structured argument.

Less successful candidates:

- neglected the comparison
- ignored the views presented and the debate
- tended to address the views in a bolt-on last paragraph, giving cursory agreement, with little reference to text
- failed to understand each poem
- gave a superficial interpretation of Extract A – war was like a game of cricket
- missed the significance of the references to public school education in Extract A
- saw Extract B as an anti-war poem
- presented biographical material as evidence rather than analysing the text
- wrote answers lacking in coherence and specific reference.

### Question 1b

In this question, candidates were required to: compare the three extracts (from *Strange Meeting* by Susan Hill, *Journey’s End* by R.C. Sherriff and *Great Men* by Siegfried Sassoon); assess their typicality as writings from the literature of World War One by setting them in the context of their wider reading; analyse their language, form and structure; explore their attitudes to war; assess the influence of the time of composition as well as the gender of the writer. This question tests all the assessment objectives except AO4 (which is tested in 1a).

Successful candidates:

- compared the three extracts, establishing links and differences between them
- compared and linked the extracts to their wider reading
- assessed typicality based on their wider reading

- traced the theme of authority, comparing Garrett, the Colonel and the great men
- explored the linking theme of futility
- in Extract C, explored the language; the use of settings; the psychological as well as the physical effects of war; the use of contrast; the significance of chaos and mess
- in Extract D, explored the contrast between Stanhope and the Colonel, noting how out of touch the latter was with his men
- in Extract E, examined the language closely; probed double meanings and their effect; focused on bland, guilt, mouthings; noted the irony, anger and bitterness.

Less successful candidates:

- failed to compare the extracts
- went through the three extracts separately, rarely making links
- offered little wide reading
- paid little attention to typical
- failed to identify and explore the linking themes
- did not read closely
- neglected language, structure and genre
- made wild and unsupported assertions about gender or genre
- showed little or no understanding of the Sassoon poem.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
LTA1	20	20	10.2	4.0
LA2W	20	20	11.0	3.6
LA2C	20	20	13.3	3.6
LTA3	40	40	20.5	6.5
LTA4	40	40	23.3	8.8
LA5W	20	20	9.4	3.6
LA5C	20	20	14.5	3.5
LTA6	40	40	20.1	8.3

For units which contain only one component, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

### LTA1 (11676 candidates)

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	15	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### LA2W (1542 candidates)

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	15	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### LA2C (1579 candidates)

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	16	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

**LTA3 (3978 candidates)**

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	29	25	21	17	13
Uniform Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

**LTA4 (2639 candidates)**

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	32	27	22	17	13
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

**LA5W (271 candidates)**

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	15	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

**LA5C (1058 candidates)**

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	16	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

**LTA6 (467 candidates)**

	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	32	27	22	18	14
Uniform Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

## Advanced Subsidiary award

Provisional statistics for the award (1234 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	12.9	31.8	60.2	84.1	97.1

## Advanced award

Provisional statistics for the award (155 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	11.6	40.6	70.3	92.3	99.4

## Definitions

**Boundary Mark:** the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

**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).

**Uniform Mark:** a score on a standard scale which indicates a candidate's performance. The lowest uniform mark for grade A is always 80% of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, similarly grade B is 70%, grade C is 60%, grade D is 50% and grade E is 40%. A candidate's total scaled mark for each unit is converted to a uniform mark and the uniform marks for the units which count towards the AS or A-level qualification are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.