

GCE 2002  
*June Series*



Report on the Examination

**English Literature**  
*Specification A*

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- Advanced Subsidiary
- Advanced Level

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*Kathleen Tattersall, Director General*

# CONTENTS

## AS Units

		<i>Page No.</i>
Unit 1	The Modern Novel	
Unit 2	Shakespeare	
Unit 3	Texts in Context	

## A2 Units

		<i>Page No.</i>
Unit 4	Texts in Time	
Unit 5	Literary Connections	
Unit 6	Reading for Meaning	

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades .....



# English Literature

## *Specification A*

### Introduction

This is the first time that all the units of the specification have been examined simultaneously and candidates and teachers are to be congratulated on their achievements. Examiners are unanimous in their praise for so much good work. The evidence is that the specification is working very well, discriminating between candidates at all levels, and enabling the best to succeed. The most successful centres have studied the specification carefully, chosen texts which suit their candidates – allowing candidates to make informed choices for themselves where appropriate – and made sure that their candidates are prepared for the specific questions (testing specific assessment objectives) for each unit. They also distinguish between preparation for open and closed book questions. Alongside specific preparation for each unit, there is welcome evidence of extensive reading for the synoptic unit.

### LTA1: The Modern Novel

#### General

The paper proved enabling across the range of candidates and texts. All questions tested the same assessment objectives – 1, 2, 3 and the first part only of 4 – offering appropriate choices and enabling candidates to explore and range widely through the texts.

The most popular texts are *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Enduring Love*, followed by *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Knowledge of Angels*, with *The Bell* as a minority choice.

Examiners are clear that the standard of response continues to improve and that they have read a substantial amount of top class work. More and more candidates recognise the text as a construct and are learning to deal successfully with the writer's technique. There also seems less work which falls into the bottom of Band 1 of the mark scheme.

This is a closed book paper, and the evidence is that candidates are coping very well with this kind of examination. Whether open or closed text, it is clearly essential for candidates to know their texts very well and to have read them several times so that they have a full understanding of how the text is structured, the kind of language used (whether it remains the same, or varies, and why that might be), the key themes, important episodes, characterisation. Candidates who know their texts well can summon significant detail and quotation to support their arguments. The great majority of candidates use quotation and use it often. It is quite possible to score highly through close reference, but, in practice, most candidates use the short, neat, integrated quotation (sometimes a single word) that comes from a close working knowledge of the text.

To turn to the texts:

### **The Bell**

This text is a minority choice, but those centres who study it clearly have enthusiasm for it and this shows in the candidates' work.

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

Successful candidates:

- analysed the ways
- wrote wide-ranging and confident answers
- focused on the symbolic, but not at the expense of the literal
- wrote detailed and thoughtful responses
- had a secure and detailed knowledge of the text
- used clear and cogent expression

Less successful candidates:

- told the story
- described characters' interaction with the bell
- paid little or no attention to the ways the writer uses the bell
- wrote in a convoluted way with little grasp of syntax

#### ***Question 2***

Successful candidates:

- explored the relationship
- traced its links to the relationship with Toby
- focused on presentation and reader reaction to it
- noted the complexity of their reactions to Michael's own complexities
- demonstrated a detailed understanding of text
- used clear and cogent expression

Less successful candidates:

- told the story
- neglected the presentation of the relationship
- could not deal with the complexities of Michael's feelings
- used convoluted expression with little grasp of syntax

### **The Handmaid's Tale**

#### ***Question 3***

Successful candidates:

- showed themselves to be deeply engaged with the text
- provided subtle and sophisticated interpretations of rebellion

- explored the ideas associated with rebellion of different kinds
- distinguished between Offred's own rebellions and those into which she was forced by others
- analysed Moira's rebellions and compared them with Offred's
- were focussed on technique
- saw the model as a construct
- understood the meaning of presents and ways
- had a secure knowledge and understanding of the text, using quotation and/or close reference effectively in a neat and integrated way
- used clear and cogent expression

Less successful candidates:

- sorted, classified and listed different kinds of rebellion
- described several examples of the rebellion of various characters
- struggled with presents
- tended to re-hash previous questions, losing focus and describing memories or the foundation of Gilead
- resorted to a narrative/descriptive approach and, at worst, simple story telling
- wrote in a convoluted way with a poor grasp of syntax

#### **Question 4**

Successful candidates:

- demonstrated their close reading and overview of text
- showed detailed understanding of Atwood's style
- were able to link the extract to the whole novel, including the Historical Notes
- understood appropriate
- had a secure knowledge and understanding of the text, used quotation and/or close reference in a neat and integrated way
- used clear, cogent expression

Less successful candidates:

- provided weak and repetitive accounts of Offred's state of mind at the end
- offered superficial readings of the text
- described the ending in a repetitive way
- read far too much into the Offred/Cora relationship
- focused mainly or entirely on the given extract
- did not refer to the Historical Notes
- wrote in a convoluted way with poor grasp of syntax

#### **Knowledge of Angels**

#### **Question 5**

Successful candidates:

- presented a variety of key messages – religion as a cover for immorality; state religion compromises freedom and morality; you can have religion without morality and morality without religion; religion generates hypocrisy, and so on

- explored their choice of message widely, referring to a range of characters and events and making links with the introduction to the text and its relevance to the present day
- demonstrated detailed understanding of the novel's complexities
- used close reference and/or quotation to support the argument
- wrote cogently and clearly

Less successful candidates:

- told the story
- described the characters, especially Palinor
- failed to present a coherent message
- wrote in a convoluted way with poor grasp of syntax

### **Question 6**

Successful candidates:

- voiced their opinions about the ending
- examined the role of religion in the book
- sensed and explored a line of beginning and ending to the events
- showed understanding of style and structure
- took the opportunity to provide a sustained, close textual reading
- referred to Palinor, recalling that in the previous paragraph but one, Amara had, again without curiosity, noted a thread of smoke
- noted that the novel had now come full circle, observing that Amara was now above the snowline, was still climbing, and was mortal rather than angel

Less successful candidates:

- managed to voice an opinion about the ending
- offered weak, descriptive work with a focus on Amara and freedom
- told the story
- wrote in a convoluted way with little grasp of syntax

### **Snow Falling on Cedars**

#### **Question 7**

Successful candidates:

- focused on how Guterson presents Hatsue
- were sensitive to the complexity of Hatsue as a character and to how Guterson develops this
- acknowledged and analysed the contradictions and developments that affected the character
- made sustained reference to Guterson's technique
- included a wide range of other characters and relationships in their essays
- had a secure knowledge and understanding of the text
- used quotation and/or close reference effectively in a neat and integrated way
- used clear, cogent English

Less successful candidates:

- adopted a limited focus and avoided presents
- offered only character studies
- did not consider Hatsue as she is presented in the whole novel
- concentrated on her adolescent relationship with Ishmael, often too much from his side of the story
- were often unduly critical of her, without producing textual evidence to support the criticisms
- described Hatsue and her relationships rather than analysed the way they were presented
- wrote in a convoluted way with poor grasp of syntax

### **Question 8**

Successful candidates:

- considered Guterson's use of pathetic fallacy in some detail
- demonstrated a wide view of his use of settings and showed a good grasp of his uses of metaphor
- wrote with a mature, conceptualised overview
- amassed an incredible amount of close textual evidence to address the ways the two phenomena affected events in the novel and its telling
- grappled with the symbolism of the weather and the environment
- ranged widely across the text to inform their discussion
- addressed the ways
- wrote succinctly
- had secure knowledge and understanding of the text
- used quotation and/or close reference effectively in a neat and integrated way

Less successful candidates:

- wrote only about the extract
- seemed to be answering the January question about the title
- listed every different type of weather occurring in the events of the novel
- had difficulty linking the weather to events in the novel
- described the weather, and to a lesser extent, the environment
- described the murder of Carl Heine and the court case
- wrote a good deal of unfocused and sometimes irrelevant material
- wrote in a convoluted way with poor grasp of syntax

## **Enduring Love**

### **Question 9**

Successful candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the Appendices
- kept a clear focus on importance
- analysed the contrasting language of the Appendices
- showed detailed understanding of McEwan's post modern tricks with the reader, writing fully and knowledgeably
- argued for the Appendices as significant parts of the novel as a whole
- noted the tying up of loose ends and the reflection of the theme of love

- looked at plurality of voice and considered McEwan's reasons for ending the book in this way

Less successful candidates:

- relied on simple association and assertion
- described the content of the Appendices
- did not seem to realise that Appendix is the singular form of Appendices, and lumped the two together
- seemed not to know about/recognise the pastiche in Appendix 1
- had difficulty linking the Appendices to the whole novel

### **Question 10**

Successful candidates:

- wrote about the part the episode plays in Joe's deterioration into irrationality
- considered the writer's techniques of structure and shaping
- recognised tone, the respite provided by the episode, the writer's intentions and its effects on the balance of the text
- recognised the episode's pivotal role in the action, some obviously knowing that it was the writer's starting point
- focused on contribution
- had a clear grasp of how this episode developed Joe's character
- saw the (black) humour in the episode
- contextualised the episode in the events immediately before and after the visit to buy the gun
- were confident enough to criticise the episode for interrupting the sense of realism in the book, and thought it an example of McEwan trying to be too clever

Less successful candidates:

- re-told the story, or described the episode
- had difficulty engaging with contribution
- wrote at length about Steve's shaved head and his waxed moustache dyed with henna
- were repetitive
- did not seem to have considered the episode much beforehand
- found it difficult to show the links to the novel as a whole, and to contextualise it
- wrote in a convoluted way with no clear grasp of syntax

## LA2C: Shakespeare

### General

Notwithstanding the guidance offered below, centres are heartily congratulated on the overall very high quality of tasks undertaken. An interesting range of texts was offered; there was evidence of candidates having the freedom to select texts for study and most enjoyed being able to follow their own interests.

This summer saw some splendidly presented folders containing excellent essays. The Assessment Objectives have been assimilated by teachers and candidates were directed to achieve them. Overall, work was of such a high standard that the occasional centre that did not respond well to the Specification stood out and the success of its candidates was noticeably lower than that of the general candidature.

### *Assessment Objectives*

The weighting of assessment units for this module is:

AO1	8%	
AO2i	10%	
AO3	7%	
AO4	5%	(The Unit only examines the first part of AO4: Articulate independent opinions and judgements)

In practice, the above weightings mean that candidates are tested upon, in order of importance, their:

- knowledge and understanding
- ability to communicate
- understanding of language, form and structure to shape meaning
- independent judgements

### *Task Negotiation*

The term “task negotiation”, rather than “task setting” is used deliberately. All moderators have noted that where candidates have been free to choose their own avenues of enquiry and have negotiated them with their teachers they have achieved much better than those candidates who have written on imposed tasks or who have chosen tasks from prescribed lists. Not every candidate studying a play is interested in the same characters or themes and they should be free in coursework to pursue their own independent lines of enquiry.

When negotiating tasks, teachers and candidates should note that AO2i dominates this unit. First and foremost candidates must demonstrate their understanding of the chosen play. This is achieved when they write “an exploration of...” or study “the way Shakespeare presents...”. If they are focused on the way Shakespeare presents (a theme or character), they will not make the mistake of assuming the characters in a Shakespeare play are “real” and respond to the play rather like they may respond to the tiresome “on-going problems” in a Soap Opera. “Soap Opera” responses are unlikely to rise above Band 2.

The difficulty with set topics, moderators noted, was that candidates tended to address similar points in a similar order using similar evidence. In the worst cases, it was possible to recreate that class discussion and list the white board bullet points. Clearly such an approach precludes the originality of opinion looked for in the first part of AO4.

Candidates sometimes experienced difficulties when dealing with plays based upon real characters such as the histories and Roman plays. There is no need to write at great length on Shakespeare's use of history or on the fact that Enobarbus, for example, is a fictional character. A reader is inclined to ask "So what?" It is what Shakespeare is presenting that is important and candidates should not worry about the real history. A purist may find this a difficult pill to swallow. The AOs help here. The second part of AO4, other opinions, is not examined in this Unit and so it need not be focused on. AO5, context, is not examined either. This is deliberate in order to allow candidates to gradually acquire the skills needed for the full A Level and so some ideas are arguably better saved until Unit 5 coursework (to set against a prose text, of course) or Unit 4 Shakespeare texts.

### ***Marking and Assessment***

All folders must bear signs of having been read. There were a few instances of teachers not annotating final drafts. It can be tiresome marking the same essay two or three times, but; do remember, the final draft represents a dialogue between the teacher, the assessment grid and the moderator. This means that comments and advice to candidates are not required and so the way in which the essay is read and commented on will differ. Perhaps the different intellectual approach may encourage closer marking of final drafts. In the best cases, the work offered showed signs of the internal moderating team engaging with each other and with the scripts. The final mark arrived at in these cases was invariably the correct one.

When annotating essays, teachers may find it helpful to adopt the practice of examiners. Examiners rarely use ticks. Merits in essays are underlined. This draws attention to the flow of an essay and to the frequency and quality of merits. When looking at the marked script, examiners find the underlining helps form an overview which can be related easily to the marking grid.

### ***Presentation***

Candidates who choose to handwrite their coursework do not suffer a penalty in these days when the vast majority is word-processed. Similarly, candidates who word-process do not gain marks for their IT skills.

When word-processing, candidates should use point 12 and use a formal font such as Times New Roman. Quotations not included in the text itself, should be set out using tabulation and not centre-justify. The latter distorts the text, shows scant regard for the forms of poetry and prose and seriously interferes with ease of reading. If a script cannot be read fluently, then it is not communicating well and so not gaining AO1 reward. Decorative borders and the use of any colour other than the formal black published text should be discouraged.

### **To candidates:**

The following notes are intended to help you achieve well in Unit 2. The notes are based upon what your fellow candidates achieved in the Summer Examination of 2002.

***Assessment Objective 1 : Communication***

You should:

- write in a formal register.
- clearly identify what interests you in the topic you have chosen and introduce your work with a paragraph suggesting you have a sound overall command of the material you are going to present.
- ensure that you guide your reader through your work by providing good links between paragraphs.
- use as wide a vocabulary as you can and always ensure you choose the right word.

You should not:

- abbreviate words.
- use the casual slang you may use in informal conversation.
- use confusing pronouns and fail to identify clearly the subjects of your sentences.
- keep writing “this”.

***Assessment Objective 2i : Understanding***

You should:

- write about what genuinely interests you and discuss the phrasing of your topic with your teacher.
- avoid setting yourself closed questions, but write “an exploration of the way Shakespeare presents...”.
- show you understand the text by engaging with it closely to support your arguments.
- show that you have reflected upon ideas discussed in class, or read in other works by presenting them in your own words and choosing your own illustrations.
- show that you are aware that Shakespeare has presented all you have studied to you and that “real” people are not being discussed.
- accept that in a play by Shakespeare you may come across ideas and situations that would not “work” in the “real world” and ask yourself what it is that Shakespeare is communicating to you through his sometimes unreal constructions.

You should not:

- simply describe the story or characters.
- digress from your chosen topic.
- feel obliged to base your work on Study Guides or Internet research that you can barely understand.
- use long quotations hoping that somewhere in them will be sufficient evidence to illustrate the points you are hoping to make.

***Assessment Objective 3 : Language, Form and Structure***

If you hope to gain marks in Band 3 of the marking grid, you must address this Objective.

You should:

- always ask yourself why Shakespeare prefers one word to another and look at the pattern of words he uses.
- explore Shakespeare’s imagery: you should “unpack” his metaphors and relate their meanings to other parts of the play and to your own experience. That is, you must explore connotations of words, phrases and images.
- show that you are aware that an idea can sometimes be interpreted in more ways than one.

- explore the arrangements of scenes in a play to discover what Shakespeare may achieve by setting presentations side-by-side.
- always quote poetry as poetry.
- always endorse your claims by giving appropriate and explored textual evidence.
- show that you are alert to Shakespeare's wit and word-play where relevant.
- remember that a play is just that, a play, and a look at the dramatic. Shakespeare wrote plays for a living and not for AS students 400 years in the future!

You should not:

- unquestioningly accept language, form and structure.
- merely translate or paraphrase texts or quotations.
- assume that your opinion is always the right one and just assert it in the absence of evidence.
- assume that study guides are always correct.
- refer to a play as a novel or a speech as a paragraph
- assume a director of a live performance or film is the definitive authority.
- write about "Shakespeare's language" without referring to any of it.
- take metaphor literally.
- set out poetry as prose in your quotations. This tells a reader that you are unaware of poetic form and therefore oblivious to its meaning.
- blithely assume that all "low life" characters speak in prose.

#### ***Assessment Objective 4 : Your opinion***

Moderators have commented on how sad it is to keep reading "York Study Guide and Internet" in bibliographies and how they read ideas which are clearly not those of the writer but the originators of the ideas are not acknowledged. You do not need to read "the critics" or the Study Guides in order to gain a Grade A in this Unit.

You should:

- give your own informed opinions clearly and argue them in the light of well-selected evidence from the text itself.
- think hard about ideas discussed in class, or read in other sources, until you feel you "own" them and can illustrate them with your own examples.
- show that you can form a conceptualised overview of a play by Shakespeare.
- always acknowledge the sources of your ideas if you do refer to material other than the play itself.

You should not:

- set yourself a task based upon somebody's else's opinion. You will have to discuss other people's opinions in other Units, but you do not have to in this one.
- write sweeping assertions about texts hoping your reader may agree with you.
- simply use ideas from class discussions or other reading that you do not understand.

#### ***Length***

Folders were largely of an appropriate length: 1500-2000 words. Candidates responded splendidly to the challenge of selecting ideas and presenting evidence in concise and coherent essays.

#### ***Administration***

Because of difficulties outside the control of centres there were some administrative difficulties. Where centres had the appropriate paperwork on time, mark sheets were properly and accurately completed. Centres and moderators coped well with identifying sample folders and in providing temporary mark lists and registers. In the absence of some Centre Declaration Sheets there are photocopiable cover sheets and declaration sheets at the back of the Specification. It is always

frustrating when candidates are persistently absent when they should be available to sign their cover sheets. Nevertheless, sign them they must even if it has to be done by post.

## LA2W Shakespeare

### General

Examiners thought the paper “very fair”, “with a good choice of questions” and that “it is obvious teachers and candidates are becoming used to the kind of questions set on this paper”.

These comments are borne out by the improvements in performance shown even since January 2002. It is also worth noting still, that examiners marking in both the winter and summer series reported far fewer band 1 scripts in June than January, as happened last year. Overall, significant achievements were made and some delightful work and sterling teaching and guidance dominated the entry.

### Responses to Individual Questions

#### Twelfth Night

##### *Question 1*

Successful answers:

- addressed dramatic presentation
- chose 2 scenes wisely eg. Act 1 scene 5, Act 2 Scene 4, and Act 5 Scene 1
- were flexible and differentiated between definitions of ‘love’

Less successful answers:

- wrote superficially about several scenes
- focused too much on Act 1 Scene 1
- produced too much love and too little drama
- struggled with AS Level expression and requirements of AO1 resorting to slang regularly; eg. “Orsino constantly goes over the top”, “this put the metaphorical blinkers on him”, characters “got all fired up” or “come out on top” or more disastrously “blew their chances”...

##### *Question 2*

This was the less popular question.

Successful answers:

- dealt refreshingly with dramatic significance
- saw the scene in the context of the play

Less successful answers:

- went for summary and anecdote
- wrote essays on Feste
- told the story

## **Antony and Cleopatra**

This was the most popular of the three plays.

### ***Question 3***

This was the more popular question.

Successful answers:

- addressed language, form and structure
- addressed the key demands of the question to range widely or focus on two episodes

Less successful answers:

- told the story
- made much of Fulvia's death
- wrote tirelessly about asps which signified all manner of curious things

### ***Question 4***

Successful answers:

- saw dramatic function
- explored the context of the episode within the play

Less successful answers:

- resorted to soap opera description: eg. "Cleopatra is now the broken shell of a person", "Antony can no longer face the uphill struggle".
- told the story

## **The Taming of the Shrew**

### ***Question 5***

Successful answers:

- engaged lively debate on attitudes to marriage
- demonstrated some refreshing individual opinions
- made good contrasts between the marriages
- demonstrated good understanding of the transaction of marriage

Less successful answers:

- were closed to the idea of marriage without romantic love
- got lost in pseudo sixteenth century viewpoints

### ***Question 6***

Successful answers:

- saw all the delicious drama of the witty repartee between the two characters
- were not afraid of the sexual imagery
- explored presentation of character
- engaged dramatic function

Less successful answers:

- were afraid of the sexual subtext so lost out on marks for AO3
- got lost in stichomythia and did not have any fun with the drama

## LTA3: Texts in Context

### General

This June's LTA3 paper was well received by candidates, centres and examiners. The paper's success reflects the care with which centres have prepared their candidates and have utilised the advice disseminated via consortia, subject presentations and previous editions of this report. Although this module is now well established (this was the third live LTA3 paper to attract a large entry; the fourth in all), these support systems will continue to offer on-going assistance and centres are strongly advised to make full use of them.

The LTA3 examiners were pleased to note that most centres now have a firm grasp of the new Assessment Objectives and the way they are examined in this module: candidates approached the questions in a direct, well-informed manner - constructing balanced, relevant arguments in response to the opinions contained in the AO4 questions and showing their contextual knowledge via close analysis of the text in the AO5 questions.

Unfortunately there are still a few instances of the problems which dogged some centres in last summer's examination, such as rubric infringements (due to prohibited textual combinations) or confusions arising from candidates who thought that writing a social history essay was the most appropriate way to respond to an AO5 question.

Additionally, there were some abuses of the opportunities offered in an open text paper, such as general, almost identical, apparently pre-written answers appearing in the scripts of several candidates. This may *seem* like a helpful crutch to less confident candidates but, in reality, it is no help at all: the general nature of such answers means that the highest mark they can be awarded is in mid-Band Two, while the difficulties of differentiation pose real problems for examiners who are doing their best to be fair to every candidate.

Similarly, there is a tendency for some candidates to copy long critical quotations into their texts and then copy them out again as part of their answers, whether the critic's view is relevant or not: candidates gain no credit for this. While we welcome and reward the inclusion of the views of other readers (such as critics), they need to be integrated as relevant evidence in the debate shaped by the candidate in response to the question: undigested or unassimilated critical material is not helpful to the candidate.

Now that centres have built up something of a past paper archive for this module, there is also a growing tendency for less confident candidates to attempt to recycle their mock exam or practice answers by twisting the actual question to fit the one they think they know the answer to: so a number of *Glass Menagerie* responses, for instance, became distracted by how much sympathy they felt for the characters (last summer's question) rather than considering how funny the play is or how much sexual tension there is in the final scene (this year's questions). This is a practice which centres should discourage: the most successful candidates are those who attempt the questions in a fresh and relevant manner answering the question that is actually on the paper.

Despite these caveats, examiners were most impressed with the work of the majority of candidates: the examiner who reported "I found this a really enjoyable paper to mark" reflected the experience of most who were involved with this module. It was felt that the questions were open and enabling, offering plenty of scope for individual choice but also challenging and stimulating the candidates – the less able were not intimidated by the paper, while the more sophisticated were given the

opportunity to display their insight and originality. Most candidates appear to have enjoyed their study of these texts; they approached the questions in a serious and engaged manner, displaying pleasing levels of knowledge and understanding. Once again, the mark scheme worked effectively and the acquisition of a copy is recommended to centres wishing to keep in touch with *how* the Assessment Objectives are tested in this module.

To conclude these introductory comments, I feel it is worth reminding centres that questions on four of the LTA3 texts (*The Rivals*, *Arcadia*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Mean Time*) will feature for the last time in next summer's paper. Centres should bear this in mind when planning the course for those who begin AS English Literature in the autumn of 2002: candidates would not have the opportunity to answer on these four texts if they were to resit this module during their A2 year. Those centres planning further ahead may be interested to know that the replacement texts (for first examination in January 2004) will be:

John Ford *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* (New Mermaids)

Brian Friel *Making History* (Faber)

Geoffrey Chaucer *The Miller's Prologue & Tale* (Cambridge)

Carol Ann Duffy *The World's Wife* (Picador).

To look at the achievement of candidates in this summer's paper question by question:

### **Doctor Faustus**

This remains by far the most popular choice of the pre-1900 drama texts and candidates' enjoyment of Marlowe's work is clear: many see the play as Harry Potter for grown-ups (Faustus is frequently described as a practitioner of "The Dark Arts": not Marlowe's phrase, but Rowling's!) and many made reference to their experience of the recent Young Vic production.

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

This question was the more popular of the two and it was often answered well. Many successful candidates explored Marlowe's presentation of sin through his use of Faustus himself, The Seven Deadly Sins, fallen Lucifer, comic ostlers and a greedy pope, while temptation was found embodied in Valdes & Cornelius, The Evil Angel, Mephistophilis and Helen of Troy. On the other hand, some candidates spent too long on the sixteenth century theological context, sometimes getting very muddled in the process and frequently allowing the context to distract them from the text itself – which remains the principal focus of the question, whatever Assessment Objective is being addressed.

Successful candidates:

- engaged with the question's keywords: "ways Marlowe presents"
- focused primarily on the text and skilfully integrated their contextual knowledge
- explored relevant aspects of the presentation of sin and temptation with confidence.

Less successful candidates:

- struggled with the keywords or ignored them
- produced simple accounts of the text
- wrote long theological essays on the sixteenth century context but paid very little attention to the text.

### Question 2

This was the less popular question and produced a wide range of answers. Weaker candidates produced simple accounts of the speeches of The Chorus and saw its function as purely narrative, even assertively dismissing it as a peripheral or unnecessary part of the play. More sophisticated readers explored its theatrical effects (a Brechtian device, as many pointed out), its poetry and its connections with the rest of the text.

Successful candidates:

- established The Chorus's importance by making connections to the rest of the play
- explored the practical and commentary functions of The Chorus
- analysed the ways that the language used by The Chorus affects the audience.

Less successful candidates:

- gave only a simple account of the speeches of The Chorus
- ignored or dismissed the idea of The Chorus's importance within the whole play
- made few comments about the language used by The Chorus.

### The Country Wife

Although this was the least popular of the pre-1900 drama texts once again, the responses from candidates of all abilities displayed a strong personal engagement with the play. As a number of examiners pointed out, *The Country Wife* often brings the best out of candidates (many do better on Wycherley than on their twentieth century poetry text) – especially because their enjoyment of the wordplay ensures they look at language: a key discriminator in Band Three of the mark scheme.

### Question 3

This was the more popular question on this text and Pinchwife was the nation's favourite cuckold: Sir Jasper hardly got a look in! The question was generally well handled and, even though weaker candidates tended to write simple character sketches, most had at least a basic grasp of the idea of cuckoldry and many candidates could explore Wycherley's presentation of the idea with some confidence.

Successful candidates:

- engaged with the dramatic function of their chosen cuckold
- displayed a secure understanding of the ways Wycherley presents the cuckold across the whole text
- focused primarily on the text and integrated contextual information as part of a shaped, coherent response.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple character sketches of Pinchwife or Sir Jasper
- used the question's keywords in a basic way
- were sometimes restricted by the weakness of their expression, although they did manage to show some understanding.

**Question 4**

Many candidates who attempted this less popular question had a good idea of how the play’s opening contains a number of Wycherley’s key themes and ideas. Even the less able candidates were able to establish some relevant links between the opening and the rest of the text.

Successful candidates:

- explored Wycherley’s presentation of London society with confidence
- had a secure grasp of the play’s opening and showed their understanding of the whole text
- made telling use of quotations and details from the rest of the play in establishing relevant links and connections.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple accounts of the events of the opening scene
- addressed the keywords only implicitly or indirectly
- could not link the opening to the rest of the text.

**The Rivals**

This play is a popular choice and it produced a considerably better quality of response than it did last summer. The majority of candidates had obviously enjoyed the play and their secure understanding was displayed in answers which paid close attention to the text itself, rather than over-emphasising the historical background. Nevertheless, there is still a tendency – particularly among weaker candidates – towards answers which spend far too long explaining eighteenth century social structures and paraphrasing the notes on Beau Nash.

**Question 5**

This was the more popular question, clearly differentiating between candidates who produced simple accounts of the opening scene and those who took the keywords “prepare the audience” as a cue to explore the connections between this scene and the events and themes of the rest of the play. Many of the candidates who attempted this question had an impressive understanding of the whole play and were able to illustrate their responses by carefully chosen quotations and close reference to the text.

Successful candidates:

- displayed a secure understanding of the ways the opening scene connects with the rest of the play
- explored Sheridan’s presentation of life in Bath and his attitude towards it
- deployed a range of relevant textual detail in support of their ideas.

Less successful candidates:

- simply produced an account of the opening scene
- wrote general accounts of eighteenth century society
- made limited reference (or none at all) to the rest of the play.

**Question 6**

This was the less popular question on the text but the candidates who attempted it often made use of some highly pertinent examples, notably the outspoken opinions of Sir Anthony on the subject of

female literacy and numeracy, as well as the ways that novels have shaped Lydia's romantic expectations. Some weaker candidates tended to confuse education with intelligence, but the more astute noted that the uneducated Lucy is probably the smartest woman in the play.

Successful candidates:

- engaged with the presentation of eighteenth century attitudes to the education of women
- explored the ways that the *range* of characters' attitudes might be evidence of general eighteenth century attitudes
- used a variety of relevant quotations relating to the subject.

Less successful candidates:

- tended to avoid the question of attitudes to education
- produced simple character sketches of the women in the play
- remained at the surface of the text, rather than analysing and exploring it.

### **The Glass Menagerie**

Yet again, this was by far the most popular of the modern plays and it produced some excellent responses: candidates of all abilities continue to engage sensitively and thoughtfully with Williams' drama.

#### **Question 7**

The two questions on this text enjoyed roughly equal popularity and produced a comparable range of responses. In this question, candidates often produced relevant commentaries on Scene Seven, identifying examples of sexual energy and making impressive use of both the stage directions and the ambiguities in the language used by Laura and Jim. More able candidates explored and debated the key phrase "delicate yet blatant" (suggested by some as appropriate adjectives for Laura and Jim respectively); others argued that there was very little real sexuality in the scene, seeing Laura as the eternal virgin (hence the Madonna imagery) and Jim's attentions as purely fraternal (noting that he tells her "I wish that you were my sister" before the climactic kiss).

Successful candidates:

- wrote relevant explorations of Scene Seven, considering alternatives and voicing their own well-supported personal responses
- engaged with all the keywords contained in the director's statement
- explored the ways that Williams' dramatic techniques shape the audience's responses to the events of this scene.

Less successful candidates:

- produced simple accounts of the scene and simply accepted the director's view
- were distracted by the possible autobiographical elements in the play and drifted into irrelevance
- spent too long establishing Laura's character as it appears in the rest of the play, rather than focusing on the key scene.

### Question 8

This was an effective question which produced clearly differentiated responses. Some candidates dismissed the “terribly funny” idea abruptly, focusing instead on the bleakness of Williams’ artistic vision; others found many examples of different kinds of humour in the play, noting that Williams is reported to have laughed throughout the premiere and seizing on stage directions such as “there is much...in Amanda...to laugh at”. The most successful candidates produced balanced answers which acknowledged that the play contains both comic and tragic elements; some explored the ambiguity of the keyword “terribly”, perceiving that the events of the play may well be funny but that there’s something truly *terrible* about all this too.

Successful candidates:

- explored the play’s funnier moments with confidence
- engaged with the ways Williams mixes the tragic and the comic, often in the same scene
- gave a balanced response to the question of “To what extent?” by exploring the play’s unfunny elements too.

Less successful candidates:

- dismissed the actress’ view abruptly and wrote only about the bleakness of the Wingfields’ existence
- attempted to recycle last summer’s question and wrote about sympathy instead of humour
- made assertive claims about Williams’ intentions to write a play that should not be laughed at.

### Light Shining In Buckinghamshire

This play is still the least popular text on the paper and, if anything, there were fewer responses in evidence than there were last summer. Nevertheless, several centres used Churchill to impressive effect: their candidates engaged with the play’s dialectic in an informed and often impassioned manner.

### Question 9

Many of the candidates who had studied this text used this question as an opportunity to explore the issue of just what madness *is* and whether its definition depends on the prevailing political climate: many sophisticated and conceptual responses were seen.

Successful candidates:

- understood the ways that Churchill presents madness
- were able to support this understanding with appropriate textual detail and examples
- produced a balanced response to the question of “How far do you agree?”, often suggesting alternative possibilities for favourite themes

Less successful candidates:

- struggled with the keywords
- experienced difficulty in engaging with Churchill’s presentation of madness
- found it hard to deal with the question of “How far do you agree?”

**Question 10**

Confident candidates often chose to argue the term “horrific” (cynically shrugging this off) while accepting the sad inevitability of “full circle”. Once again, this was an enabling question for those candidates who had engaged with this play’s rich political subtext.

Successful candidates:

- engaged with the idea of the scene as bringing the play “full circle”
- used their knowledge of the whole text to establish links which supported the “full circle” idea
- explored the critical view expressed in the keywords.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote simple, often narrative, accounts of the scene
- struggled to apply the idea of “full circle”
- had difficulty in addressing the question of “How far do you agree?”

**Arcadia**

This text remains a fairly popular choice and, once again, those who had studied Stoppard were obviously excited by the wealth of ideas in this play.

**Question 11**

This was very much the less popular of the *Arcadia* questions and one which weaker candidates saw as an opportunity to turn out simple character sketches. Some more successful candidates argued that many characters are complex and far from limited, while others saw any limited development as a consequence of Stoppard’s habit of using his characters as vehicles for his clever ideas.

Successful candidates:

- were able to consider a selection of differently developed characters
- explored Stoppard’s characterisation with insight and confidence
- produced a shaped and coherent debate which was enriched by their own views and ideas.

Less successful candidates:

- could address the question only via character description
- avoided the question of “To what extent?”
- struggled to engage with the question and fell back on rehearsed responses to different questions, such as those from past papers.

**Question 12**

This was the more popular question on this text: it produced some impressive and highly original answers as it enabled candidates to pursue a range of possible interpretations.

Successful candidates:

- explored the play’s structure with confidence and insight
- used the keywords as a cue to explore the text’s wealth of connections and intricacies

- were able to produce balanced responses to the question of “Is this a fair assessment?”

Less successful candidates:

- wrote simple plot accounts
- addressed the keywords in an obvious or simple manner
- were confused by the play and wrote very muddled responses.

### **The Wife of Bath’s Prologue**

Chaucer remains the most popular pre-1900 poet and it is good to be able to report that a recent AQA statistical survey showed that the performance of candidates who have studied him is comparable with those who have studied the apparently more accessible work of nineteenth century writers. Nevertheless, while many candidates respond to the Wife of Bath with fervent engagement and obvious enjoyment, it is still a cause for some concern that a minority of candidates treat Middle English as a foreign language and feel obliged to translate every quotation.

#### ***Question 13***

The two Chaucer questions enjoyed roughly equal popularity and this one was often well handled. Most candidates had some ideas of what was so provocative about The Wife’s views and many were able to place these in a fourteenth century context while maintaining a focus on the poem itself – some candidates even offered relevant evidence from elsewhere in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Successful candidates:

- supported their ideas about why The Wife is so provocative by close reference to the text
- explored the ways that Chaucer’s language adds to the provocative nature of The Wife
- made sensible use of historical context and their wider reading, but maintained their primary focus on the *Prologue* itself.

Less successful candidates:

- could not engage with The Wife’s language – sometimes because they had only studied Chaucer in translation
- wrote simple, general accounts of the Wife’s *Prologue*
- made no use of the keyword “provocative”, resulting in accurate but general responses.

#### ***Question 14***

This was the less successful Chaucer question, mainly due to the tendency of weaker candidates to adopt a narrative approach which took little account of the connections between this final section and the rest of the *Prologue*. More perceptive candidates addressed the keyword “importance” by detailed exploration of the links between this section and the rest of the text, many including relevant historical context for good measure.

Successful candidates:

- made connections between this section and the rest of the *Prologue*
- considered the significance of the Wife’s ultimate triumph over her fifth husband
- read the text closely and, in employing neat supporting details, showed their mastery of Middle English.

Less successful candidates:

- produced paraphrases or translations of the passage
- wrote long, general accounts of fourteenth century attitudes, but made no reference to the passage
- showed no awareness of Chaucer's techniques or intentions.

### Three Victorian Poets

This was a fairly popular text and, once again, the responses it produced were often thoughtful and well-informed.

#### *Question 15*

This was the more popular question and it produced a significant number of good answers. Inevitably, Robert Browning's "Madhouse" poems were the most popular choices for this question, but candidates found plenty of possibilities in Tennyson too – especially the section of 'Maud' where the narrator believes he has been buried alive. Some responses noted that the nineteenth century saw the dawn of psycho-analysis and considered the ways that these poets present the workings of *their own* minds: as one candidate remarked, "With the discoveries of Freud, it became cool to be a tortured poet."

Successful candidates:

- selected appropriate poems for the question and made their relevance explicit in their answers
- adopted an analytical approach to their chosen poems
- integrated relevant contextual information while keeping the text at the forefront of their answers.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote paraphrases of the poems
- sometimes made inappropriate selections
- made minimal references (or none at all) to the nineteenth century context.

#### *Question 16*

'In Memoriam' was the most popular choice of poem for this question (although Tennyson's equally useful 'Crossing The Bar' was oddly neglected), while Elizabeth Barrett Browning's campaigning poems on slavery and child labour were also used to good effect. Robert Browning's 'The Bishop Orders his Tomb...' was sometimes seen as a concerned Christian poet's attack on the established church's materialism and corruption, but less successful candidates simply threw it in as a poem which has something to do with religion; those who attempted to make 'Fra Lippo Lippi' fit the question seemed even more desperate.

Successful candidates:

- selected appropriate poems which allowed them to explore the ways that Christian faith is reflected
- 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 contextual answers which made little reference to the poetry
- paid little attention to language and style.

### A Choice of Christina Rossetti's Verse

Although this text is still a minority choice among the pre-1900 poetry options, Rossetti has a dedicated band of followers and candidates often respond to her lyrical simplicity with honest sensitivity. It should be noted that the absence of page references for the Rossetti questions was a conscious decision: the latest edition of Jennings' selection has been *reset*, so it was decided it would be more helpful to trust candidates to use the Contents page rather than to confuse them with potentially misleading page numbers. The evidence of the scripts suggests that this was the right decision and that candidates were not disadvantaged by the absence of page references.

#### Question 17

This was the less popular question on this text: those who attempted it tended to work their way methodically through the keywords “feminine, sweet, pure and good”, finding plenty of supporting evidence throughout the selection. More daring candidates sometimes argued with the friendly epithets applied to Rossetti, noting, for instance, the sexual undertones of “Goblin Market” (in response to which, one candidate memorably remarked “Rossetti isn't a religious robot: she *feels* these human urges”) and the evidences of temptation in “The Three Enemies”.

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 18

A very popular question which enabled candidates to engage with the *presentation* of rejected lovers, thereby giving them a fighting chance of making it into Band Three of the mark scheme. While many candidates chose to stick with the possibilities suggested in the question, others made their own choices from across the text (clearly, this is one of Rossetti's more persistent themes!) and used a wide variety of poems to impressive effect.

Successful candidates:

- chose relevant poems and explored them with confidence
- were able to place their chosen poems in the broader context of the Victorian world or Rossetti's life
- analysed Rossetti's use of language and style.

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, Larkin and Duffy were joint favourite choices among the twentieth century poets. Examiners reported that many candidates responded to Larkin's poetry with engagement and fascination, but weaker candidates resorted to a mostly inaccurate Larkin-by-numbers stereotype: he hates the working classes, he hates women, he never had a girlfriend. This assertive pseudo-biography tends to produce sweeping, superficial responses to the poetry, ignoring Larkin's wit and subtlety.

#### Question 19

For those who really want to know, the biographer who provided the starting point for this question is Jake Balokowsky (see page 27 of *High Windows*). Although some candidates were distracted by "natural" (focusing on Larkin's attitude to nature) and others limited themselves to his old-type attitudes in general (rather than the way he presents *himself*), this question produced some highly original and perceptive responses. 'Wild Oats', 'As Bad As A Mile' and 'The Large Cool Store' were regular features of these answers: candidates pointed out that you *have* to be fouled-up if you carry around snaps of the girl you *didn't* go out with, get suicidal when the apple core misses the bin and become *so* excited in the lingerie department of Hull's Marks & Sparks! Some astute candidates, equating "old-type" with "traditional", debated the appropriateness of this particular epithet - as it is Larkin's rejection of the post-war values of marriage and family which mark him out as unconventional and align him with other poets in The Movement.

Successful candidates:

- produced relevant and balanced answers which addressed all the question's keywords, including "Is this a fair assessment?"
- had the mastery of detail to select convincing and relevant examples
- analysed Larkin's poetic techniques.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote about Larkin's attitudes in general, rather than the way he presents himself
- chose appropriate examples but did not directly address the question of "Is this a fair assessment?"
- showed little awareness of Larkin's language and style.

#### Question 20

This was the more popular Larkin question and it was generally well handled. Most candidates at least managed to produce a relevant commentary on the poem; many used it as a starting point for an exploration of the whole collection's themes and ideas, analysing Larkin's poetry with insight and confidence. The poem's final image of "an arrow shower...becoming rain" was often an important discriminator in these responses: some candidates felt it was a shame that the weather had spoiled the day for these happy couples; some saw it as a symbol of life's unpredictability (like the "frail

travelling coincidence”); some sophisticated candidates took their cue from the imagery of a train entering a damp, mossy tunnel and ventured far more Freudian interpretations.

Successful candidates:

- had a secure knowledge of ‘The Whitsun Weddings’
- explored the connections between this poem and the rest of the collection
- produced a balanced argument in response to the question “To what extent do you agree?”

Less successful candidates:

- merely paraphrased ‘The Whitsun Weddings’
- asserted that the poem is a wholly snobbish condemnation of the working class
- made simplistic comments about the poem’s ending or avoided it altogether.

### **Safe As Houses**

Fanthorpe remains the minority choice among twentieth century poets despite her following seeming to be growing in January. As one examiner remarked: “It’s a pity Fanthorpe hasn’t a bigger take-up: there was real enjoyment in the responses of those few fortunate enough to have studied her poems.”

#### ***Question 21***

This was the less popular of the Fanthorpe questions, but most of those who attempted it had a secure understanding of this important poem and often wrote about it in a thoughtful manner.

Successful candidates:

- used ‘Sirensong’ as the starting point for an informed debate of this question
- engaged with the keywords “key to the whole collection” and “To what extent?” in order to produce a balanced argument
- analysed Fanthorpe’s language and style in this poem.

Less successful candidates:

- struggled to engage with the idea of “the key to the whole collection”
- wrote simple accounts of the focal poem with no reference to the rest of the text
- paid little attention to Fanthorpe’s language or the need to produce a balanced debate.

#### ***Question 22***

This was the more popular Fanthorpe question: most of the candidates who attempted it had a sound grasp of Fanthorpe’s attitude to modern life (A few daring souls even cited the early Blur album: *Modern Life Is Rubbish!*) and they were able to draw on a wide range of relevant examples.

Successful candidates:

- selected relevant poems for the question
- produced a balanced debate which considered the keywords “How far do you agree”
- explored Fanthorpe’s language and style.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote simple accounts of their chosen poems
- failed to engage with Fanthorpe's language and the ways she presents modern life
- ignored the key question of "How far do you agree?"

### Mean Time

Duffy remains a very popular choice. Candidates obviously enjoy studying her poetry and continue to respond with freshness and enthusiasm.

#### Question 23

This was the more popular Duffy question and it was usually answered well: the best candidates rose to the challenge, while even the less successful managed to produce relevant accounts of appropriate poems. Although a few candidates insisted that the collection is unremittingly bleak and miserable, most were able to achieve some sort of balance in their discussions. The popular poems for this question were 'Litany', 'The Cliché Kid', 'Drunk' and 'Valentine'; the balancing examples providing a counter-argument were drawn from almost everywhere else in the collection.

Successful candidates:

- were able to explore Duffy's mixture of the comic and the serious in specific poems
- understood that Duffy does not employ this technique in every poem she writes
- answered the question of "Is this a fair assessment?" by developing a balanced debate which applied the keywords to a variety of relevant poems.

Less successful candidates:

- wrote some simple accounts of poems but ignored the question of "Is this a fair assessment?"
- simply agreed with the given view and did not offer any alternatives or counter-arguments
- asserted that there are no comic moments in *Mean Time* at all.

#### Question 24

This question was less popular, perhaps because many candidates find 'Nostalgia' an intimidating poem: while the title shouts its obvious importance, the poem's lack of explicitly autobiographical or confessional content means that many candidates approach it with trepidation. Nevertheless, those who attempted this question often were able to use the poem as a springboard for relevant exploration of the whole text, while offering close readings and interesting interpretations of the focal poem's metaphorical approach to some of Duffy's favourite themes.

Successful candidates:

- had a secure understanding of the poem
- were able to connect the poem to others in *Mean Time* and used it as the starting point for an exploration of the collection's key themes and stylistic features
- focused on the keywords "To what extent do you agree?" as part of a balanced debate.

Less successful candidates:

- were confused by Duffy's use of metaphor in this poem and resorted to narrative or paraphrase
- struggled to make any sort of connection between this poem and the rest of the collection
- wrote about other poems, with which they felt more comfortable, instead.

## LTA4 Texts in Time

### General

There is every reason to rejoice, and hurry to congratulate all those teachers who through intelligence and hard work have been able to produce so much excellent work – most at the first attempt at this innovative specification and question paper.

That some of the questions were unexpected in the light of the specimen paper and the first ‘real’ paper in January is not surprising when one considers, for example, the range of critical opinion on the plays set in Section A. My report on the January examination did sound a warning about predicting questions on the basis of just two seen papers: “it is important for teachers not merely to read my report on the play they studied... They should realise that the questions range beyond those concerned with the way playwrights present character or relationships. Question 4 demanded an exploration of imagery. Question 6 expected candidates to consider the best way of presenting character in performance. Some critics may be found who have differing ideas about the structure of a play or about the form it takes in certain scenes...”. It is encouraging that candidates rise to the challenge of the unexpected question, and experienced teachers and examiners know how often they succeed on such questions more than they do on the rehearsed ‘spotted’ question. There is no doubt that they performed on these questions better than perhaps their teachers anticipated.

What gave added pleasure in this new examination were better spelling, grammar and punctuation than had been achieved in the legacy examinations. There was a general care about presentation in terms of spacing and handwriting.

The same conscientiousness was apparent in the majority of candidates who even in a closed book examination remembered so many short, apposite quotations to illustrate their arguments. Proper deployment of those quotations usually distinguished the talented from the less talented. The former were able to integrate quotations into the sentences they were writing. The latter often showed by an indiscriminate use of longer quotations that they did not really understand the quotation they were trying to use.

### Section A

In this section Assessment Objective 4 is dominant and in it candidates are expected to consider different ways of looking at some aspect of the text studied. This objective, however, cannot be successfully attained unless candidates can express complex ideas and build up logical argument, understand the critical opinions and write relevantly about them as well as the text they have studied. To move into the top two bands, candidates need to write appropriately about the ways language, imagery, structure and form may be used to affect an audience. That many candidates achieved most of these skills is the reason for the optimism informing this report.

It has to be said, however, that Centres are ill-advised to concentrate on reading critical opinion at the expense of the text and particularly to encourage their candidates to learn by heart choice quotations from the critics. The best preparation is probably to set up group discussions on key areas of dispute on character, relationship, author intention, language, structure and form and to accustom candidates to support or refute opinions by referring to the detail of the play.

The only critical opinions which candidates need are those printed on the examination paper. These must be read in detail and understood. Indeed, it is as important to understand these opinions as it is

to understand the areas of text they will be using in their answer. If, as usual, there are two views which need to be studied, it is unwise to concentrate on one at the expense of the other.

## **Othello**

### ***Question 1***

This was popular with those few centres which had based their studies of Iago on his soliloquies and of Othello on the changes in his language patterns as the play progresses. Most candidates dismissed the critical view that soliloquies were ‘embarrassing’ and ‘outdated’ and their debate of this issue probably reflected lively classroom argument, the best preparation for this examination. High marks were gained by those candidates who saw the importance of the soliloquies in Othello as a dramatic form, and showed how an actor might exploit it. On the evidence of the responses to this question there seem no grounds for assuming that they would have been better if candidates had had texts available for consultation. It is likely that more candidates would have attempted the question, but that is not an argument about quality. Finally, how can there be a study of a central character like Iago without a close study of his soliloquies?

### ***Question 2***

Nine out of ten candidates chose this question on the most popular play in Section A and this, therefore, made it the most popular question in Section A. Understandably, few of them argued that the play would be better if it began in Act 2. Able candidates could understand the reason for the opinion, and went on to examine it skilfully. Those who ignored it lost marks. However well they wrote about Act 1 they could not achieve Band 4. Encouraging was the lack of awe any candidate felt towards either critic. This is encouraging because critics are just as able to make doubtful assertions as candidates themselves. Mere narration of Act 1 could not gain a pass mark. A general outline of the characters and their relationships in the Act suggested Band 2. A competent review of Shakespeare’s presentation of the Act was enough to place a candidate in Band 3. Band 4 candidates gave space to consider the first critic and then went on to a study of the less obvious features of language and imagery in Act 1 and of its links with the structure of the play.

## **Henry the Fourth Part 2**

### ***Question 3***

This was marginally more popular than question 4. Most candidates grasped at least the import of the two opposing arguments which raise both political and moral concerns and challenge candidates to move in and out of text and conceptualisation. Band 2 candidates based argument on plot and character sketch showing a general acquaintance with the play. Those in Band 3 set up well-organised argument, showing awareness of audience and, less assuredly than those in Band 4, dealt with the concepts of order/disorder, rule of law, ingratitude, treachery and selfishness.

### ***Question 4***

This question contained two views on one of the central scenes in the play. Candidates had no problem in understanding the differences in the critics, though candidates in Bands 1 and 2 did not pay sufficient attention to words like ‘climax’, ‘unconvincing’ and ‘mutual love’. Those in Band 3 addressed these words and were able to give evidence for the scene being ‘most moving’, showing a competent knowledge of the scene. Band 4 candidates probed the differences in the two attitudes to

the scene and could explore in detail the language used by both King and Prince. This was not because they had learned banks of quotations. Significant words and phrases had stuck in their minds as they had studied the play. It has to be said that this choice of play was that of enthusiastic teachers who excited most of their candidates in a too neglected text.

### **The Merchant of Venice**

#### ***Question 5***

Only one in five candidates chose this question which clearly invited discussion of the structure of the play. Some of these had difficulty in understanding the term ‘parallel presentations’ and produced an essay tracing the relationship of these two characters in the play. If they considered ‘outsiders’, that saw them into Band 2. For Band 3 there had to be a sense of the parallels reasonably argued, as well as at least another way of looking at the structure of the play. Band 4 candidates clearly understood the purpose of the question and argued confidently from their grasp of the play. It is fair to say that the question attracted those seeking a challenge who, if successful, gained a just reward.

#### ***Question 6***

Candidates engaged enthusiastically with this question, the second critic particularly challenging their opinion of Portia. At Band 3 candidates paid attention not only to ‘great lady’ but also to ‘dignity’, ‘authority’ and ‘good breeding’ and then in responding to the second criticism to ‘word’ as well as ‘deed’. They possessed the precise vocabulary to argue logically and knew enough of Portia’s language to satisfy the demands of AO3. Those at Band 4 had remembered the detail which ensured their greater success.

### **The Wakefield Master**

#### ***Question 7***

The focus was on one play, Noah and his Sons. Able candidates were able to argue for the accessibility to the Bible story provided by the play. Most thought, however, that Noah’s Wife gave the play its appeal and adduced appropriate textual references to support their contention. How much effective quotation had been remembered was a revelation in their answers. Less able candidates relied too much on narration, often forgetting the critical opinions as well as the invitation for them to write about what they had found interesting in the play.

#### ***Question 8***

This question had obviously not been anticipated, and it discriminated between those who were able to think in the examination room and visualise the staging of The Second Shepherds’ Play and those who used the given staging as a prop for telling the story. The edition used gives possible stagings for all three plays, and these need to be studied carefully. After all, these plays are intended for acting and their structure and form make the plays unique in English theatre.

### **The Duchess of Malfi**

This play and *The Merchant of Venice* came a distant equal second behind *Othello* in the Section A popularity stakes. There is no doubt that the *Duchess* compels engagement and enthusiasm was a feature of responses to both questions, and much of the work was of high quality.

**Question 9**

Band 1 and 2 candidates believed this to be an invitation to write about the character of Bosola, though the latter did try to assess how convincing he is. More wary candidates grasped the point of the question: character or authorial tool? That grasp took them into either Band 3 or 4. The difference between the two bands turned on the quality of the arguments submitted and of the reference, those in Band 4 able to call on detailed knowledge of the play to support their arguments.

**Question 10**

This was another question which challenged candidates to engage in a moral debate about characters in a play. Though it did not attract as many as the previous question, there were many fascinating responses which bespoke healthy classroom debate, the pedagogical key to this section of the paper. There was little difficulty in understanding the differences between puppet and human being. What discriminated among candidates was an ability to illustrate, Band 2 being restricted to general observations; Band 3 able to focus on more precise and relevant areas of the play, and Band 4 able to focus on detail, quoting key words and short phrases at telling parts of their argument.

**Volpone**

Both questions centred on two of the key scenes in the play and both challenged and brought out the best in the candidates who attempted them. This is a minority choice play which attracts the enthusiastic teacher. No set text on the paper produced work of higher quality.

**Question 11**

Only a few candidates tackled this question, but those who did were able to consider the value of the scene as timeless satire set against the criticism that somehow it interrupted the progress of the play. There were interesting analyses of Volpone's sales technique, and most candidates rejected the second view, arguing that in fact the scene actually helped the Volpone-Celia intrigue. Few argued the 'timeless' nature of the satire, but most had an adequate grasp of the scene to enable them to make acceptably close reference to the scene.

**Question 12**

This was the more attractive alternative. Most candidates took issue with the first critic over his use of the word 'rape', again demonstrating that candidates are not prepared to genuflect before critics who make sweeping assertions. It was difficult not to sympathise with those who saw no humour in the scene. This is a play rarely performed, and most candidates would have just missed the most recent production by the RSC. What was discussed was the contrast between the virtue of Celia and the evil of Volpone, and this, when well done, achieved high marks. At the top was a surprising number of candidates who revelled in the humour created by Volpone's extravagant language, the thrill of the chase and the melodramatic interruption of Bonario.

**Section B**

The purpose of this section is to test the skill of candidates to evaluate contexts appropriate to the poetry they choose to study and to explore the way those contexts have affected the content and style of that poetry and the way their poetry was received in their time. There are clearly related considerations that an examiner will take into account in assessing answers to the questions: clear

expression and cogent argument; knowledge and understanding of both text and context; exploration of language, form and structure as appropriate.

There were signs in this examination that candidates were learning almost by rote notes on context which they were determined to include in their answers whatever the thrust of the question. Even candidates who ultimately scored well were tempted to write as many as two pages on irrelevant context before they settled to answering the question set. These pages counted for nothing, and candidates would be advised not to waste valuable time regurgitating irrelevant notes however well they have been learned. One other piece of advice: when candidates quote poetry, they must quote it in lines of verse.

Most encouraging was the decision of many candidates to write first about the poetry. This demonstrated increasing confidence and was a welcome rejoinder to those who bemoan the lack of enthusiasm of candidates of today for poetry. Overall there was no significant difference between achievement in poetry and that in drama.

### **Women Romantic Poets**

There were many signs that the study of this Selection had given pleasure to candidates who had studied it. A minority choice, it had probably been taught in an exploratory way in the classroom and response was all the fresher by the current absence of commercial notes on the text. There was a keen sense of historical, political and above all social context. With so many poems in the Selection, teachers had very wisely concentrated their attention on poems likely to interest their candidates.

#### ***Question 13***

What struck examiners were the confident selection of poems appropriate to the question asked and the wide range candidates were able to refer to. Many candidates had remembered relevant lines of verse and these were used to good effect in well-structured essays. The question enabled the best candidates to show skills of analysis and synthesis.

#### ***Question 14***

Again, there was a shrewd choice of poems to fit the terms of the question. Quotations from poems were well-used, and in the two top bands there was ample evidence of appreciation of language, form and structure.

### **The Prelude, Books 1 and 2**

This was the third most popular choice of text, well behind Blake, but not so far behind Keats. Both questions concentrated on the way Wordsworth's poetry was received during his life, a different kind of context from that tested in *Women Romantic Poets* but appropriate to Wordsworth's *Prelude*. There were signs that teachers had concentrated their attention on two or three episodes and on two or three passages of philosophy in each *Book*, thereby ensuring detailed knowledge of those areas of the text but at the same time they had ensured that their candidates had a nodding acquaintance with the rest of the two *Books*.

#### ***Question 15***

Only one in five of Wordsworth candidates attempted this question. A few found Hazlitt's criticism difficult to understand, but most wrote convincingly with illustrations from the poem about his

obsession with features of Nature and with his relationship with Nature. Interestingly, most justified his obsession and argued convincingly that as a Romantic poet he had every right to concentrate on self. The best candidates were able to illustrate with ample, short and apt quotations.

### **Question 16**

Candidates who demonstrated Wordsworth's skill in creating excitement gained high marks on this question. Unfortunately, some candidates merely narrated episodes, and so failed to score many marks. Again, the best essays were distinguished by detailed analysis of language and form and by clever synthesis of stylistic features.

## **Songs of Innocence and of Experience**

### **Question 17**

This question attracted one in eight of candidates, but the majority of these had really mastered their Blake. They produced a variety of answers which delighted examiners. The least able could find in the introductory poem something they recognised as typically Blake, for example the change from innocence to experience or his exposing of hypocrisy. Better candidates enjoyed linking to the *Songs* the idea of 'caging', while the very best examined 'snarl' and 'howl' and the Eagle and the Owl.

### **Question 18**

Band 3 and 4 candidates understood that the words 'seek to influence' were an invitation to examine Blake's form, structure, language and imagery. Nor did they neglect 'the brotherhood of man', the best referring to Rousseau and the slogan of the French Revolution. As usual, what distinguished Band 3 from Band 4 was the difference between a competent and a detailed knowledge of the poems. Band 4 candidates were able to use detail in order to analyse Blake's ways of influencing his readers. At the very top there were considerable skills of synthesis shown. This was the most popular question in Section B and very few candidates were stuck for something relevant to write.

## **Selected Poems - Keats**

Centres seemed to have heeded the advice given in the January examination report that concentration on seven or eight of the major poems and a nodding acquaintance with as many of the remainder as there was time for was preferable to a jog-trot through all the poems in the *Selection*. Illustrative examples were in the main derived from the sonnets, *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *Lamia*, *The Eve of St Agnes* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. The result was an appreciable improvement in detailed knowledge compared with the January examination

### **Question 19**

This question was more popular than question 20 and it was well-done. Band 2 candidates were able to make general reference to relevant poems to reach the 'unseen order', even though from time to time they interpreted it as 'escape'. Band 3 candidates were able to argue the statement with illustrations from the poetry, while those in Band 4 had a confident grasp of the relevant detail.

### **Question 20**

Though comparatively few candidates were attracted to this question, those who did attempt it did so with engagement. They often demonstrated confidence and a wide and detailed knowledge of the text

to support, modify or reject the criticisms levelled by Keats' contemporary critics. Unexpected but valid arguments appeared and these showed candidates' ability to cope with the unexpected question. At the top, there was cogent argument and a detailed knowledge of the properly chosen examples.

## LA5C Literary Connections

### General

Moderators were most impressed with the standard of the work submitted for this unit. Centres had in almost all cases followed advice from consortium and subject support meetings and devised tasks that addressed the new assessment objectives, in particular the need to concentrate on comparison. There was much stimulating work and the best folders were a pleasure to read. There was an impressive range, from *Paradise Lost* (Satan was compared to Conrad's Kurtz) to *Atonement* and *Birdsong* (a comparison of narrative techniques). Many centres are taking the opportunity to select texts which explore the war theme in preparation for Unit 6. As the entry, at almost 16,000 candidates, was much larger than when this unit was available for the first time earlier this year, some of the points in the January report are repeated here for the benefit of those centres who many not have seen that document.

The emphasis on comparison resulted in most candidates making a systematic attempt to consider both texts throughout their essays. This ensured that candidates were on task and gave equal emphasis to each text. If the candidate chooses to treat each text separately, it is essential that the introduction makes the comparison explicit and at least the consideration of the second text concentrates on similarities and differences – it is not adequate merely to tack on a comparative paragraph as conclusion. In a few cases, moderators had to reduce marks, even for able candidates, where the comparison was scant or non-existent; more careful planning and guidance in the drafting stage could have avoided this.

Successful work does not adopt a discrete approach to each assessment objective. In particular, writing well and exploring language – Assessment Objectives 1 and 3 – are discriminators even when the dominant Assessment Objective here is knowledge, understanding and comparison (AO2ii). The best candidates approach comparison through a well-structured analysis which includes detailed exploration of form, structure and language. This means that they will also pay attention to issues of genre – which is an element of AO2ii – and their ability to compare, contrast and consider alternatives will demonstrate informed literary judgements (AO4). Many centres used the assessment grid both as a guide to candidates during work on the tasks and as a checklist when marking; the version in the standardisation booklet emphasises the relative weighting of each objective.

The selection of texts needs some care. There were a few problems over the choice of unsuitable texts which should have been resolved by close consultation with the moderator before candidates embarked on the work. Occasionally, candidates change tasks or texts after they have been approved; centres should always check with the moderator that the new choices are acceptable before permitting the candidates to proceed.

The focus of the comparison is also important; some tasks were superficial, or, despite the use of terms such as 'the ways the writers present', just a disguise for character studies or descriptions of content. The problem is most severe when the focus of the essay is on a theme such as personal development in *The Color Purple* and *Oranges are not the Only Fruit*, or the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman*. These topics make it difficult for centres to avoid a narrative or character study approach when they need to concentrate on an exploration of the writers' craft. For example, if the *Color Purple* and *Oranges* essay is about how the writers present and use religion in the novels it would shift the focus and also enable the candidates to write about personal development without tracing it so unremittingly. It should also be pointed out that although centres are free to study the texts set in the examination options (LA5W), questions from previous examination papers are not

normally appropriate since they are designed to be approached without preparation in examination conditions.

Close exploration of the text is as essential in this unit as in others in the Specification. Quotations need to be explored for the effects of language at work (AO3) and not merely paraphrased or used to support a narrative account. Close reading will also allow candidates to consider the features of particular genres. The structure of plays and novels could profitably be explored much more than it is. Being able to write cogently, to provide apt support, to explore language at work and to articulate informed opinions will also, of course, stand candidates in good stead in the examination papers.

Good tasks:

- offered candidates a choice of texts and tasks
- made the assessment objectives explicit, using terms such as ‘compare’ or ‘presentation’
- encouraged candidates to address form, structure and language
- allowed candidates freedom to explore the texts.

Less successful tasks:

- failed to direct the candidates explicitly to compare the texts
- were the same for all candidates when they might have performed better on another approach or even on different texts
- focused on themes (such as ‘personal development’), issues or characters which made it more difficult for candidates to see the texts as literary constructs
- led candidates to believe that they should mimic someone else’s approach, whether from lessons, worksheets or critics.

Successful candidates:

- compared throughout (AO2ii)
- concentrated closely on their chosen texts (AO2ii)
- made effective use of brief extracts, exploring and analysing the ways language was working (AO3)
- included comparison of form, structure and language (AO3)
- were aware of genre (AO3)
- made explicit the authors’ roles in shaping the texts (AO2ii and AO3)
- wrote succinctly, coherently and cogently (AO1 and AO4).

Less successful candidates:

- made only general comments rather than detailed comparisons
- took a narrative approach
- took a literal rather than a literary approach, treating characters as real people
- were verbose, often quoting at length rather than weaving short, telling extracts into the body of their argument (weakness in AO1)
- paid little or no attention to comparing the ways the texts were written and so could not score highly in AO3
- were discursive and failed to focus sharply on the task (a failure of communication – AO1)
- failed to maintain a balance between the texts and between alternative viewpoints (therefore failing both to structure a clear response and to compare effectively, AO1 and AO2ii)
- failed to check their work for errors before submission (AO1)

- relied heavily on notes, centre worksheets and other materials rather than attempting to develop their own voices – these candidates could not demonstrate ‘independent literary judgements’ (AO4).

In relation to this last point, it is worth stressing that references to critics are not required for this unit. The primary focus is comparison and whilst candidates are required to articulate informed opinions they are not expected to derive these from secondary sources. This is one reason why tasks which invite candidates to discuss a given critical opinion are rarely successful. Some candidates may wish to draw on their background reading – but this should never be a substitute for close reading of the text itself (a point which also applies to the other units in the Specification). It should be stressed to candidates that if they do use such material, including Internet sites or study guides, they must acknowledge them clearly, including attributing quotations. In a handful of cases this summer, folders had to be penalised for unacknowledged reliance on the work of others.

Moderators saw few folders where length had been a problem. However, despite the comments in this year’s standardisation booklet, some essays of 3,500 words or more were far too long. Candidates should be urged to re-draft work which is significantly over the suggested limit in order to ensure a tight focus on the task. In a few cases work was significantly short, which meant that the candidates dealt superficially with the texts. It will help if candidates provide an approximate word count on the cover sheet. This need not be exact but will give them, in the first instance, a warning if they are too far from the suggested 2,500 words.

### **Presentation**

Some candidates fail to do their work justice because they neglect the final presentation of the folder. Whether the essays are word processed or handwritten, candidates should be advised to consider the readers of their coursework, particularly in the following ways:

- avoid a cramped layout: leave generous space around the text and between lines
- write or print on one side of the paper only
- number pages – and ensure that they are in the right order
- check the final draft before submitting it for assessment – some students did not seem to be aware of the computer spell check
- provide a bibliography (in some cases it was not immediately apparent which texts were being compared, even from the title) – it is essential that all secondary sources are acknowledged, whether or not they have been directly quoted in the essay
- indicate an approximate word count
- fasten the work together securely using a staple or treasury tags – not simply placing the essay in a plastic pocket.

More detailed guidance on this topic, including advice for candidates, will be available at the autumn support meetings for this Specification.

### **Support through consortium meetings**

Consortium meetings continued to provide a valuable source of support and opportunities to share good practice on all aspects of this course. Centres which take an active role in the consortium system are likely to be better informed about the course objectives, are able to receive feedback on performance across all units and are consequently likely to experience fewer problems in devising and assessing candidate assignments. Moderators would like to pay tribute to the hard work of the many teachers who have continued to offer each other encouragement and to share resources and ideas through the termly meetings.

**Administration**

Moderators noticed that centres had generally paid careful attention to the guidance and examples in the standardisation booklet and were pleased to see extensive evidence of rigorous internal moderation. The few problems that did occur could often be traced to failure to attend meetings or consult moderators in good time about texts and tasks. Occasionally, comments on the cover sheets or in the body of the essays were sparse, limited to ticks or merely a listing of items from the assessment grid rather than an identification of the specific qualities of the candidates' writing. Teachers are asked to remember that a number of other readers may see the folders during the moderation and awarding process; clear signposting of achievement helps to justify the marks awarded.

Moderators were grateful to those centres which submitted work in advance of the final deadline. As almost all candidates will be taking written papers as well, they should not be completing coursework at the last minute. Some administrative details were occasionally overlooked, such as the signing of candidate record forms and centre declaration sheets.

## LA5W Literary Connections

### General

Senior examining personnel reported that this was a fair and enabling paper and that they had marked some excellent answers to all of the questions which had been attempted.

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 and started with a comparison of style before moving on to a comparison of themes
- kept the keywords of questions at the heart of their answers
- could use carefully selected and apposite, integrated quotation with skill
- were able to move from the literal surface of their texts into an analysis of the more subtle underpinning ideas
- defined terms before proceeding to construct an argument reliant upon those terms
- read with sensitivity and explored skilfully
- were able to make well-balanced, well-controlled, analytical observations about how language shapes meaning
- were fluent when considering the various contexts of their set texts
- used the experience of Unit 5 as a solid preparation for the comparative elements in Unit 6, the synoptic paper
- 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 contexts of the work from which they had been selected
- could signpost their way around texts leaving the examiner in no doubt that they were familiar with whole texts and were aware of the delicate twists and turns within those texts

Less successful candidates:

- wrote erratically, frequently employing a style which mixed misunderstood technical terms with a poor formal control of English, especially with regard to spelling and grammar. Future candidates are reminded of the importance of being able to write sensible, coherent English
- sadly did not know the difference between *woman* and *women*
- 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
- ignored the specifics of questions by opting not to concentrate on keywords and phrases
- in answers to the direct textual comparison questions (1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11) offered a résumé of one extract followed by a résumé of the other, thereby missing the comparative nature of the questions
- had no idea of how to signpost their way around a text leaving their understanding of such issues as narrative order, plot development or simple textual chronology completely obscured
- did not engage the style of the writers and frequently got bogged down in writing about what they imagined to be the important themes in a text
- wrote irrelevantly
- very occasionally “over-planned” by writing plans of such detail that they were longer than the essays which followed them

- thought that the meaning of all literature of any period could be boiled down to writers “trying to put messages across”
- did not present an argument when requested to do so
- brought received ideas about texts into the examination room and did not allow the specifics of the question to determine the specifics of the answer
- could not use quotation, integrated or otherwise
- generalised and made vague assertions
- wrote imbalanced answers, spending an inappropriately large proportion of time on one text at the expense of the other
- wrote answers that led many senior and assistant examiners to form the impression that texts had been taught extensively as separate entities with little time being spent on comparison
- ignored or were not aware of literary contexts
- wrote about characters as though they were real people and not literary constructs
- wrote vaguely and with little understanding or discrimination about terms such as “society”, “patriarchy”, “feminism”, “post-modernism”, “slave narratives”, “symbolism”, “magic realism”, “humanism”, “Thatcherism”, “Marxism”, “Manichaeism”, “blasphemy”, “dystopia” and “Christian fundamentalism”. It is not that such terms can not be highly useful to candidates at Advanced Level but that those terms need to be understood by the candidate before embarking upon an answer which will make extensive or central use of them.

### Option 1: History in Literature

This option produced some excellent answers and it seems that the rewards of studying *Hawksmoor* and *Sacred Hunger* make the effort well worthwhile for most candidates.

#### Question 1

Successful candidates:

- were able to demonstrate that both extracts prefigured the theme of loss (initiated by references to stolen money) which is so important in both novels
- offered interesting analyses about the roles of drunkenness and dignity in both extracts and were able to offer pertinent arguments about the importance of the scenes which introduce (especially in *Sacred Hunger*) characters who will play important roles in the entire novel: Billy Blair, Michael Sullivan, Bosun Haines.
- saw ambiguities in the introduction of Ned and of Billy’s old shipmate Sullivan. Better candidates were interested in the fiddler’s coded musical warnings (“I’ll Away No More” and “Sweet William”) and were able to write interestingly about friendship, decency and loyalty or their absence in both extracts
- charted how both writers created tension in the build up to violence and drunken confusion
- wrote with enthusiasm about writers’ style, for example Unsworth’s integration of research: “nankeen jacket”, “gill o’ best Jamaican”, “seventeen days from Caracas”, “brig Albion”, names of captains, details of old cargoes, old voyages, Billy Blair coming from Sunderland, a town with a fine and long naval tradition ... and for example Ackroyd’s use of long sentences punctuated by frequent commas (to show Ned’s racing, complex train of thought?). Most candidates were aware that typically for *Hawksmoor*, the extract deals with Time and how characters experience it
- made sense of the mention in both extracts of prison and of the falling and breaking of glasses, for example as symbols of the *broken world* motif common in both novels

Less successful candidates:

- told the story or relayed plot and perceived themes
- wrote the same sorts of weak answers mentioned in the general introduction

### **Question 2**

Successful candidates:

- were confident and assured in their choice of characters: Dyer featured most prominently from *Hawksmoor* but interestingly both Wren and Hawksmoor featured in some excellent answers; Erasmus Kemp, Thurso and Delblanc all featured from *Sacred Hunger* but most candidates concentrated on Paris to good effect
- saw characters as constructs
- realised that the writers modify the presentation of their characters and allow them to change and develop as the novels progress: there were some excellent answers on Dyer's developing mania and on how Paris's set ideas were re-shaped by the humane influence of Delblanc and the inhumane behaviour of Thurso, Haines and the Kemps
- explored the skills of the writers at work

Less successful candidates:

- wrote with reasonable understanding about one character (usually Dyer) but struggled with other characters
- wrote the same sort of weak answers mentioned in the general introduction

### **Option 2: A Woman's Struggle**

#### **Question 3**

Successful candidates:

- placed the extracts within the overarching structure of both novels
- engaged the language of both extracts
- wrote interestingly about the theme of lesbianism in both extracts and in the wider novels
- wrote with skill and understanding about the introduction of Jeanette's *orange demon* with its focus on the "difficult and different" and linked the idea of differences and difficulties to the extract from *The Color Purple*
- analysed the presentation of women as victims of violence and torture but were able to differentiate the role of the mayor and his wife in *The Color Purple* and Jeanette's mother and her co-religionists in *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*
- saw how the episodes further establish Celie and Jeanette as characters who are changing and developing
- made interesting observations about power in both novels
- could distinguish Jeanette Winterson the novelist and the literary construct Jeanette in the novel
- wrote interestingly about style i.e. Winterson's use of short sentences and the frequent repetition of the personal pronoun "I" and Walker's creation of an uneducated black voice for Celie
- made sensitive observations for example about the references to Miss Jewsbury "not being holy", significant in the light of later developments in the novel

- acknowledged the significance of Jeanette’s dream sequence in Melanie’s room, analysing the significance of, for example, the concentration camp imagery with the very best candidates writing convincingly about Winterson’s dramatic (excessive?) comparisons
- wrote with skill about not only Celie but Sofia

Less successful candidates:

- asserted horribly about such things as *patriarchies, feminism, sisterhoods* ...
- offloaded partially-understood notes
- were not clear on the distinction between the different kinds of torture in the extracts
- forgot to compare and contrast
- ignored the request to write about style
- struggled with signposting, especially in *The Color Purple*

#### **Question 4**

This was the most popular question on the examination.

Successful candidates:

- were able to present compelling and coherent evidence about the presentation of Jeanette’s mother and Albert
- explored the importance of the hiding or burning of letters in the lives of Albert and Jeanette’s mother
- clearly understood the nature of the comparative task
- saw Albert’s comparative weakness in his relationship with his own father and his sensitivity and love for Shug
- were confident about Louie and used evidence from her past life (old flames, Pierre) and presented the testimony of other characters (i.e. Miss Jewbury’s assertion that “she knows about feelings, especially women’s feelings”) to help frame an argument
- knew the differences between patriarchy and matriarchy
- were able to disentangle Louie’s and Albert’s cruelty and hypocrisy
- acknowledged Albert’s changes towards the end of *The Color Purple* and presented realistic comparisons and contrasts with Jeanette’s mother’s nature towards the end of the novel with regard to Louie’s new manifestation as *Kindly Light* and her new acknowledgement that “Oranges are not the only fruit”
- analysed and wrote with engagement about Winterson’s use of humour in her presentation of Louie

Less successful candidates:

- were unable to jettison prepared answers about Celie and Jeanette and wrote about them no matter what
- moralised about Albert’s behaviour rather than analysed his presentation
- sometimes thought that Jeanette’s mother was a feminist
- did not use textual evidence, preferring to rely on cod-sociology and assertion
- conflated or confused the characters of Albert and Alphonso

**Option 3: Visions of the Future****Question 5**

Successful candidates:

- placed the extracts within the overarching structure of both novels
- understood authorial intent
- made excellent use of the obvious links on offer: Lenina and Julia undressing, the use of make-up, songs, smells, sexual energy, the link between excitement and regret, consumerist drive
- understood the different narrative techniques of their set texts
- were able successfully to demonstrate that Huxley and Orwell were different writers interested in presenting different visions of the future
- made good use of Orwell's introduction of the rat, Julia's comment of the "bugs" behind the picture and the symbolism of the paperweight
- wrote with sympathy and intelligence about John's horror at the film and the synthetic pleasures on offer in the artificial Brave New World

Less successful candidates:

- treated the characters as real people, offering advice to Lenina about how to get her man and giving Julia some tips about the application of cosmetics when there isn't a mirror in the room
- fell into generalisation and assertion about the genre
- wanted to write about how the writers' "predictions" had come true
- wrote vaguely about dystopias, crystal balls, test-tube babies and cloning
- made no real attempt to disentangle Orwell and Huxley and wrote about them rather as though they were a couple of metropolitan solicitors
- gave real or imagined historical contexts in which *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were written rather than analysing the extracts
- could write about John's horror at the feelies without being able to explore it or place it within a narrative or thematic pattern

**Question 6**

Successful candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the writers at work
- kept their answer firmly focused on the key word *presentation* and understood that characters in novels are the self-consciously created artefacts of writers who are using them as vehicles of communication to the careful reader
- wrote convincingly about Julia's lack of intellectual engagement with rebellion and considered more sympathetic readings of Bernard
- saw the presentation of Julia and Bernard as yardsticks to measure the scale of the rebellions presented via other characters for example Winston and the Savage
- knew that Orwell and Huxley were critiquing their own societies and that the construction of Julia and Bernard were key factors in this critique

Less successful candidates:

- did not address the key word *presentation*

- wrote character studies of Julia and Bernard or discussed them separately
- off-loaded a lot of centre-inspired notes
- were more confident with Julia and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* than with Bernard and *Brave New World*
- did not convince the examiner that they understood that characters in fiction are constructs
- were unable to write convincingly about style
- wrote reams about everything they could remember about both texts in the hope that there would be sufficient about Julia and Bernard in the answer to convince the examiner that the question had been answered
- artificially exaggerated Huxley’s dislike of Bernard and Orwell’s support of Julia

#### Option 4: Experiences of India

Successful candidates:

- responded in an intelligent and astute manner to the extracts and to the wider novels
- were clearly aware of cultural contexts in the extracts
- started with the language of the extracts and worked their way out towards the novels’ wider themes
- spotted the many opposites in the extracts: i.e. hope/disillusionment; male/female; east/west; hostility/acceptance and wrote with engagement and skill
- showed an appropriate historical awareness
- wrote with clarity about the religiosity of the extracts
- made much of the similarity of the endings of the extracts

Less successful candidates:

- could not distinguish between Indians and visitors
- had no helpful or useful notion about historical context which would have been particularly helpful when considering the juxtaposition of past and present in *Heat and Dust*
- wrote the sort of answers mentioned in the general introduction

#### Question 8

Successful candidates:

- kept their answer firmly focused on the key word *presentation* and understood that characters in novels are constructs
- wrote convincingly about Fielding and Olivia without being afraid to move beyond received critical orthodoxies (about Fielding in particular)
- saw the presentation of both characters as part of the novels’ engagement with the theme of the “liberal” English characters wanting to integrate with and understand “the real India”
- showed a clear understanding of the writers at work
- often wrote very interesting responses about Olivia
- wrote interestingly about sexuality

Less successful candidates:

- often discussed Olivia in a vacuum rather than as a character who was developed as part of the network of other characters
- did not address the keyword *presentation*

- wrote character studies of Fielding and Olivia or discussed them separately
- off-loaded a lot of centre-inspired notes about India
- were not able to write about style
- sometimes forgot to write about wider novels

### Option 5: Reflections

#### Question 9

Successful candidates:

- analysed style with as much rigour as they analysed subject matter
- had prepared themselves for the examination by analysing Gibbons' style of literary pastiche
- were alive to the rich resonances of language in both texts
- made interesting links between religiosity and sex in both extracts (essential, vital, burning in *Precious Bane*; detached, judgmental in *Cold Comfort Farm*)
- saw that Pru's nascent awareness of her sexual power led to self-discovery and joy but that Mybug's attentions to Flora only made her uncomfortable
- made many interesting comparisons between Prue and Flora and also analysed many interesting contrasts between Mybug and Kester Woodseaves

Less successful candidates:

- thought Prue was performing a lapdance or was performing in a go-go club
- 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 lost in subject matter and failed to engage style
- could not contextualise the novels and so were baffled by both
- were not alive to the language of the texts
- were sometimes incoherent: it needs to be said that the weak answers on Option 5 were probably the worst in the whole examination. An understanding of contextuality and intertextuality are vital for candidates' success and a significant minority of candidates had no real useful underpinning knowledge.

#### Question 10

Successful candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the writers at work
- kept their answers firmly focused on the key word *presentation*
- were comfortable in constructing an argument: many candidates found hidden depths in Beguildy which moved him beyond the stereotypical melodramatic villain
- found many interesting things to say about Beguildy's dark paganism and Amos' dour Christianity and went on to discuss the importance of religion and philosophy in both novels
- were not afraid to argue to be amused by the comic Christianity of Amos or intrigued by the kersey mysticism of Beguildy
- were not afraid to argue: i.e. that *Precious Bane* was often unintentionally funny and that the humour of *Cold Comfort Farm* was deliberately satirical
- found useful and interesting things to say about narrative voice

Less successful candidates:

- did not address the keyword *presentation*
- wrote character studies of Beguildy and Amos Starkadder
- tended to treat both characters and both novels with po-faced seriousness befitting the Quivering Brethren themselves
- were over-reliant on centre-inspired notes especially about Mary Webb's life
- did not convince the examiner that they understood that characters in fiction are constructs
- re-worked narrative

### Option 6: Humorous Writing

#### Question 11

Successful candidates:

- wrote with enthusiasm and understanding about the many explicit links between the extracts: Father Arsenios' "apocalyptic rage"/ Yossarian's fury and both of their desires for the retribution; the graphic language of violence; the importance of guns; the mention of exploding or scrambling of brains; the treatment of death; the narrative-shifts from character to character...
- engaged de Bernière's quasi-Biblical style with understanding and analysed Heller's shifts of focus to good effect
- responded in a responsive and astute manner to the extracts and to the wider novels
- started with the language of the extracts and worked their way out towards the novels' wider themes
- were not afraid to engage the idea that the extracts may be "unusual" in novels famous for their humour but were equally unafraid when engaging the concept of satirical writing
- understood authorial intent

Less successful candidates:

- did not understand how genre operates
- were heavily reliant on centre-inspired notes
- wrote about one extract then the other without really engaging a comparative analysis
- got bogged down in unsuccessful attempts to describe subject matter and failed to engage style
- could not place the extracts within the novels as a whole so missed significant details like the survival of Corelli or the preparation of the reader for Snowden's death (which comes later on in the novel in chapter 41) by the fact that here, in chapter 30, Yossarian had treated "the wrong wound"
- asserted and found it difficult to use text

#### Question 12

Successful candidates:

- knew the differences between sexual love and romantic love and showed the examiner that they understood the difference by offering definitions of both terms
- were able to write with sensitivity about, for example, Carlo, Mandras, Nurse Duckett, Nately and Nately's whore as well as Yossarian, Corelli and Pelagia

- analysed the style of the writers at work
- considered complexities at an early stage in their answers
- understood that they had to focus on the word *presentation*
- made sense of the *love in a war-zone* motif shared by both novels but understood their texts sufficiently well to tease out plenty of compelling contrast
- could signpost their way around two weighty novels with skill and purpose

Less successful candidates:

- gave themselves too narrow a focus
- made assertions about Heller's "misogyny" or claimed all the women in *Catch 22* were whores
- suggested that women were unimportant in both novels
- were simplistic and moralistic in their approaches
- occasionally found Aarfy in *Catch 22* admirable because of his "moral stance" about whoring, thereby simultaneously proving that some candidates find murder preferable to prostitution and that those candidates had completely misunderstood Heller's technique and authorial purpose
- tried to present an oversimplified argument, usually that Heller's novel was "bad" because of the allegedly "negative" way women were presented and that in contrast de Bernière's novel was "good" because it dealt with "true love"
- found it difficult to steer their way around the novels and so could not present the most helpful evidence
- sometimes confused the novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* with a film carrying the same name. Candidates are warned to treat cinematic interpretations of these novels with extreme caution: the motion picture industry has very little of any importance to tell candidates of novels which are set for GCE English Literature examinations.

## LTA6 Reading for Meaning

### General

This, the first examination of the synoptic paper, represents a triumph for candidates and teachers. The notion of “synoptic”, an opportunity to examine all the key components of the course as well as all the assessment objectives, is an entirely new feature; its introduction has been thoroughly justified by the way candidates have performed.

This specification’s interpretation of “synoptic” is based on an examination which presents unprepared passages for analysis within a prepared context of reading literature from and about World War One. Its aim is to be “inclusive” in the sense that the extracts have been chosen to reflect literature from pre and twentieth century, works written by both male and female writers, as well as drama, poetry and prose. All the assessment objectives are tested equally on this paper.

### Questions

The actual question should have come as no surprise to candidates or centres. It will remain the same, with the exception of the specific focus of the views for debate in 1a which can only be determined by the nature of the two passages. The passages will of course be different for each series.

The focus of the questions is on analysis of the extracts – in 1a comparing two extracts in the light of a given interpretation; in 1b comparing and linking and assessing for typicality.

### Performance

There was clear evidence that candidates had followed advice and prepared thoroughly for the examination, over a lengthy period of time. The quality of work was very high and examiners awarded full marks to many candidates who had not only read widely but were also able to link that reading to the unprepared texts to illuminate ideas and to illustrate how typical the writing was. The high standard of work within AO3 was particularly noted. The majority of candidates made meaning of the texts through analysis of form, structure and language. Even weaker candidates were able to make basic links both between the passages as well as to their wider reading.

The scripts were a delight to mark because candidates had to “make meaning” on the spot; their voices were their own and each answer was distinctively different from any other.

It is impossible to prepare a formulaic response to such questions; nor is it an examination where an acceptable response is to compile lists of wide reading or to offer potted histories of World War One. Each question was awarded 20 marks. AO4 is tested only in 1a and AO5 tested only in 1b. Examiners were required to review their award of marks at the end of marking both questions so that they could ensure that all the assessment objectives had been assessed fairly.

### Success in Question 1a

This question required a detailed comparison (AO2ii) of the two poems – *Drummer Hodge* by Hardy and *A Dead Boche* by Graves - and a consideration of the views presented about them (AO4). AO4 is

dominant in the question so candidates needed to engage and understand the views and then explore them in relation to the two poems, using supportive detail as appropriate.

All the assessment objectives except AO5ii are tested in this question. Where the candidates did refer to AO5ii in this answer, examiners noted it and considered it for possible reward at the end of the whole paper. Most candidates agreed with the views stated in the question, but the better candidates noted the complexity of the Hardy poem, referring to the associations of “throw”, “uncoffined”, “strange” and “foreign” and considering why Hardy might have made such choices and what implications they might have for meaning.

Key points of comparison explored by candidates were:

- the titles
- the naming of one character, the anonymity of the other
- an emphasis on innocence as opposed to corruption
- the growth of a new tree and the destruction of the shattered trunk
- a sanitised version of death with a gruesome and revolting description
- a description of “Hell” rather than references to and associations with heaven – “eternity” as opposed to rotting
- the active nature of one poem contrasted to the static nature of the other
- the relatively impersonal “they” of the Hardy poem with Graves’ personal direct address to the reader
- differences in structure and rhyme schemes: they claimed that the rhythm of the Graves supported his argument with clinching rhyming couplets, and that Hardy set up the stately regular (drum like?) rhythm of a military tribute

An example of a candidate making this last comparison and making meaning from an analysis of form and language follows:

“The writer conveys emotions as evident in “lonely northern breast” and “His stars eternally”. The use of language is important here, the archaic diction of breast creating a sense of the passion of the soldier, and the use of “His” implying a great gain for the soldier since he now possesses the stars, even at the price of losing his life.

However, it is the form of the poem which adds greater warmth to the piece. The simple abab rhyming scheme gives a sense of bouncing optimism to the text, inducing feelings of reflective appreciation in the reader.

Hardy’s presentation of death is far from that encapsulated by Graves in Extract B. Here the poet adopts a similar form of rhythm but the feeling created within the reader is very different. Here the simple rhyming seems inappropriate for the poem’s depiction of the terror of war. Words such as “shattered”, “unclean”, “sodden”, “black blood” seem out of place within this type of poem. The poet uses this sense of unease to amplify his portrayal of the stark reality of war.”

### Success in Question 1b

This question required a detailed consideration of the four extracts with reference to how typical they were of writing from and about World War One. It tested all the assessment objectives except AO4, with AO5ii dominant.

AO5ii requires candidates to evaluate the significance of contextual factors in literature, but the literature itself should always be the starting point for such explorations. Starting from a study of the literature enables candidates to assess the kinds of contextual factors at play, the contexts the writer is referring to, relying on or implicitly presenting. This is the way to approach the paper, rather than

trying to impose learned context on to the answer. Those answers which were less successful, for example, had whole paragraphs describing the history of World War One with no reference to the text.

It is important to have read widely. The key aspect of the question which requires candidates to demonstrate their facility with AO5ii is that which asks for them to say how typical each extract is of World War One literature – candidates can only do this from a working knowledge of this literature. They need to be able to make judgements about the difference between literature written at home and that by men of action, between male and female writing, between literature written before 1914 (or even pre-Somme) and that written as the war went on as well as that written in the course of the whole of the twentieth century, and between poems, plays and prose. They can only do this from a base of wide reading.

In the examination room candidates are invited to use this wide reading in their answers, but the starting point and key activity which will determine success is close and analytical reading of the passages set. Armed with this analysis as well as their background reading, candidates are then well equipped to assess typicality.

As for AO2ii in this question, it is more than the straightforward comparison which was required in 1a. Additionally, examiners sought to credit the linking and connecting of texts or references. There are clearly as many different ways of making connections and links as there are candidates.

Candidates found links and connections between the four extracts: images of the brutality of war in B and D and E; references to heroic valour in C and D; making the reader/audience think critically in B and E, for example. Some examples of candidates making such connections:

“The word ‘you’ in the Graves poem could refer to those loud mouthed patriots at home, the jingoistic writers such as Jessie Pope who from the safety of their armchairs encourage men to sacrifice themselves against ‘those beastly Germans’, or ‘you’ could simply be anyone who chooses to gloss over the reality of war – Brooke for example, who makes death out to be some glorious finale in Extract C. Death here is anything but glorious; it is personified as some stinking, rotting being that smells and dribbles in the warmth of its own decay. The descriptions here are so vivid that we can almost smell the fumes of decay, so tangibly expressed in ‘scowled and stunk’ and ‘black blood’. This smell that is so associated with death is something that is often referred to in war literature. Indeed, Vera Brittain describes the odour as ‘the smell of graveyards and death’.”

And:

“It is interesting to note that where Brittain describes the clothes as being saturated with dead bodies we are reminded once again of Graves’ grim depiction of the ‘dead boche’ whose body is saturated with decay. Thus, although she is a woman, a sex that according to Brooke is full of ‘laughter’ and ‘gentleness’, that is unaware of ‘evil’ death, Brittain has recognised the grimness of war in her miserable and frank description of death, a death that like Graves’ boche seems to fester’.

Candidates also linked the four texts to their wider reading: extract B with Owen and Sassoon, for example; or C with Jessie Pope; or E with *Journey’s End*. Other frequently mentioned texts were: *The Regeneration Trilogy*, *Birdsong*, *Strange Meeting*.

Some examples of candidates making connections with their wider reading, from a simple reference to a more extended comparison:

“The use of the words ‘scowled’ and ‘stunk’ convey the brutal and harsh sounds of war with the use of the reader’s own mouth, those guttural plosives exploding out loud. This use of language to achieve this effect is similar to that achieved by Wilfred Owen in *Dulce et Decorum Est*.”

And

“Vera Brittain’s writing is both typical and slightly different from other female writers of her day. She is typical in the sense that she treats her fiance as if he were a god, or a hero, spelling ‘His’ and ‘Him’ with a capital letter. This was clearly typical as it was even an attitude reflected in the work of a male poet, Isaac Rosenberg, in his poem *Girl to Soldier on Leave*. He uses descriptions of Greek Gods to describe the sweetheart from the girl’s perspective. The battles are ‘titan wars’ – those of the gods.”

Most candidates were very widely read; only a few found difficulty here. They had clearly followed advice and been reading through the course.

Successful candidates:

- thoroughly analysed Extract B, noting that it was a typical poem written from the perspective of a soldier who had experienced war and that he had a message to communicate – War’s Hell. Like so many of the trench poets he communicated his message by using shock tactics.
- commented on the fact that Brooke might well have written a different kind of poetry had he survived to fight, but saw this as a typical idealistic pre-war poem, full of love for England, of the desire to be a hero and sacrifice oneself for her.
- responded with sensitivity to Brittain’s letter, noting that it was private and personal writing from a female at home at the mid point of the war, but that the war had entered her future in laws’ living room and that the stench and sight was of the trenches brought to England. The conflict of her wanting Roland to continue to be thought of as a hero with the sight that she witnesses was well analysed by many. This was often not seen as typical female writing.
- noted that Littlewood’s production could not have been written earlier for fear of offence, but analysed its black humour and bitter satire and found it as effective as B in communicating a strong message about the futility of war. They wrote that “the humour emphasised the moral lesson and the pity” or that “war is farcical”. Again it was not seen as typical, rather as standing alone.

An example of a candidate assessing the impact of this extract:

“The genre of the piece is particularly important in achieving a specific effect. The presence of slides, songs and dialogue give a range of different aspects to the play, the audience’s senses stimulated in many ways, giving multiple viewpoints. This choice of genre also has the significant absence of authorial voice, leaving the audience to form an objective opinion of what they witness and infer the attitude of the writer.”

Overall, this has been a challenging but very successful examination and we congratulate candidates and their teachers on the high standards achieved.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
LTA1	20	20	11.2	4.3
LA2W	20	20	10.1	4.4
LA2C	20	20	13.5	3.6
LTA3	40	40	21.6	7.3
LTA4	40	40	23.4	7.8
LA5W	20	20	11.8	3.9
LA5C	20	20	14.3	3.5
LTA6	40	40	23.7	7.5

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

### LTA1 (24856 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	15	12	10	8	6
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### LA2W (5248 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	20	15	12	10	8	6
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### LA2C (21517 candidates)

Grade	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 (26774 candidates)**

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	28	24	20	16	13
Uniform Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

**LTA4 (17869 candidates)**

Grade	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 (2884 candidates)**

Grade	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 (15742 candidates)**

Grade	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 (19246 candidates)**

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	31	26	21	17	13
Uniform Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

## Advanced Subsidiary award

Provisional statistics for the award ( 21121 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	16.2	37.2	62.9	84.0	95.3

## Advanced award

Provisional statistics for the award (18134 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	20.9	47.0	74.5	93.0	98.9

## Definitions

**Boundary Mark:** the minimum 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.