



General Certificate of Education

English Literature 6741

Specification A

LTA6 Reading for Meaning

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

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LTA6 Reading for Meaning

There was not a large entry for this January paper, but it was larger than the previous January since some centres are clearly entering candidates for the first time. Centres should note that the synoptic paper was designed to be taken at the end of the course when skills and knowledge have been fine-tuned and polished. Even the candidates who do well on this paper could clearly benefit from time to widen their contextual reading or to hone their close reading skills.

This paper gave every candidate an opportunity to show knowledge, understanding and ability. It demanded involvement and its challenge brought out the best. The paper worked well and the vast majority of candidates across the ability range were able to access both questions, enabling them to achieve. The skills-based mark scheme rewards different and valid interpretations and, as ever, we saw a variety of informed responses.

A few centres offer a very reduced diet which seems to be based on the limited material of extracts on previous papers, or prepare reading and approaches that the candidates insist on using no matter what, instead of answering the specific question set.

A few quibbles about “appropriate critical vocabulary”:

- ‘feel’ is not a critical expression
- ‘mirrored’ seems to have become a very popular term, along with ‘disillusioned’ which was almost inevitably used incorrectly
- there were the usual inflated and absurd claims for the power of alliteration

Question 1a

The evidence of this limited entry showed that there is still room for centres to improve their approach to this question. Exploring and debating the view(s) is crucial to success, as is detailed comparison. The two poems provided ample opportunities to compare and contrast.

Successful candidates:

- undertook systematic and sustained comparative analysis of the form, structure and language of the two extracts
- offered sophisticated readings
- had clearly had an enriching experience of poetry and prose study and brought flair and originality to their readings
- moved between the extracts with confidence, making effective use of text and integrating short and appropriate quotation
- compared the treatment of patriotism, religion, the enemy
- referred to the debate throughout the answer, the best ones challenging the view expressed in the question
- probed the complexity of Extract B
- wrote cogent, coherent answers

Less successful candidates:

- neglected the debate or simply addressed it at the end
- relied on paraphrase
- could only “audit” literary features and could only respond to detail rather than build a coherent reading of the whole text
- sometimes offered irrelevant contextual discussion, taking an “escape route” rather than engaging with text

- concentrated on the counting of lines, the incidence of rhymes and trope spotting
- did not understand the difference between form and structure
- used image/imagery loosely when they actually meant “idea” or even “statement”
- made amazingly different claims for the effects that one lot of sibilance could achieve
- lacked skill in written expression – inaccurate spelling and punctuation, limited vocabulary, inability to build a coherent answer

Question 1b

The extracts were well received with engaged and insightful responses to all three texts. Comparisons between the three in terms of attitude to death and battle and the conflict between home and battle front were explored. Some candidates still waste time quibbling about “typical” when the question asks how typical.

Successful candidates:

- set an agenda through offering a thematic comparison of texts
- addressed the four bullet points using them as a focus to develop comparisons of the exam texts
- used a range of wider reading to assess typicality and build an informed reading of the exam texts
- provided extensive and varied wide reading successfully linked to the extracts
- took the opportunities to write effectively about gender and time, acknowledging the complexity of the gender issue in WW1
- wrote cogent, coherent answers

Less successful candidates:

- found it difficult to maintain focus on the extracts by concentrating on wide reading
- used wider reading as a cross reference and frequently lost sight of the exam texts, embarking on learned commentaries on the wider reading
- used wider reading as a reference rather than a link which could have led them to “detailed and illuminating connections”
- neglected “typicality”
- discussed gender in a generalised and assertive way, separate from the extracts
- neglected Extract E and failed to finish
- failed to respond to the tone of Extract E
- found it difficult to deal effectively with genre
- neglected gender
- off-loaded histories of the war unconnected to the extracts
- had problems with expressing themselves accurately and clearly

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.