

*EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI*

**EGCSE**

**EXAMINATION REPORT**

**FOR**

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (6875)**

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**EGCSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH****Paper 6875/01****Set Texts: Closed Books****General Comments:**

The number of candidates that sat for this paper was higher compared to the previous year - 2019. The general performance showed improvement as candidates displayed better skills in answering questions.

The level of difficulty seemed slightly better than the previous years as most questions were popular. The most challenging questions were the passage-based, whereby candidates tended to paraphrase the texts without engaging with the questions. The candidates' main weakness was lack of knowledge of the texts in detail, and failure to think critically when addressing questions. The examiners noted an improvement in poetry questions as compared to previous years, whereby candidates were able to recall poems and critically analyze them in relation to the tasked question. The wording of the questions were clear enough for the candidates, even though there were weaknesses in the "How far" questions as candidates would sympathize for Eric in Question 2, and fail to give the opposing view.

This year also marked a hike in rubric infringement, for instance, some candidates would answer on the two genres, either drama or poetry and omit prose or the other way round. Others would fail to adhere to the instructions on type of questions, thus finding themselves disadvantaged if they attempted passage-based questions only or traditional essays only. Centres are urged to explain these requirements very clearly to candidates.

**Comments on Specific Questions****Section A: Drama****J.B PRIESTLY: *An Inspector Calls***

1. The task required candidates to describe the personality of Gerald Croft and his relationship with Sheila. Even though it was not a popular text, those who attempted it performed below average. This was due to candidates failing to link the question that alludes to Sheila and the relationship thereof, instead they only focused on Gerald's

character. However, good responses were able to describe Gerald's personality as well as his relationship with Sheila.

- 2 Question was unpopular. It required candidates to sympathize with Eric and also show an opposing view. Candidates who attempted this question performed generally well as they were able to show their sympathy for Eric with good supporting detail and also oppose their view due to Eric's irresponsible behaviour. For instance, they presented Eric's ill-behaviour as a result of his home environment, being raised by parents who failed to model a good life and at the same time blamed Eric for uncontrolled drinking. Weaker responses were those sympathizing with Eric without necessarily showing their reasons for sympathy.
- 3 This question was generally well done. Best responses echoed Sheila's voice of regret and exasperation, as she feels guilty of being spiteful of Eva. Weaker responses failed to capture the appropriate voice and moment as demanded by the question, failing to understand how terribly bad Sheila feels at this moment.

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet***

- 4 This was not a popular text. It required the candidates to show the type of people the Capulet and Montaigne families were. Good responses showed the hatred, intolerance and deep silted rage that exists between the two families. It was fairly done but most candidates could not see the positive role played by the women: Lady Montaigne and Lady Capulet. Weaker responses only narrated the events from the passage without engaging with the question.
- 5 A well performed question and a popular choice. Candidates clearly had a lot to say about the nurse as an admirable character irrespective of the mistakes she makes. For instance, they admired her sincere love for Juliet, being a surrogate mother, a confidant but still acknowledge her mistake of not involving Juliet's parents completely.
- 6 This question was not so popular. Good responses captured the appropriate voice of excruciating pain and grief by Romeo leading him to his immediate decision of buying the strongest poison from the Apothecary to end his life and join Juliet in her tomb. However, some candidates' limitations were due to failing to capture the correct

moment that he is not planning to kill himself but has already succumbed to death. Others weakened their responses by concentrating on how Romeo will deal with the Apothecary, missing the point that he was determined and sure of getting help and nothing would stop him from lying dead next to the love of his life, echoing his undying love for Juliet. Better candidates will even blame Friar Lawrence for failing in his communication.

**WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero***

- 7** A very popular text, which was not done well. Most candidates tended to fuse amusing and serious and did not detach these, thus weakening their responses. Some cited the events without necessarily stating if they were amusing or serious. Others preferred to do a character sketch of Amope and Chume and did not engage with the question at all. There was evident confusion into picking serious moments against the amusing ones. However, good responses were able to show how most parts were amusing and how they were serious separately. For instance, candidates were amused by Amope's sarcasm when talking to Chume but also showed the disrespect as something serious as it was affecting their marriage.
- 8** A very popular question that was performed very well. Candidates were able to use or show Jero's negative aspects in his behaviour to prove his intelligence, and how he outsmarted almost everyone to achieve the best of everything for himself. They were able to focus on his tactful acts which made him victorious throughout the play. For instance, how he attained the land from the old Prophet, how he kept his congregants dissatisfied to keep them coming for more in his church, and how he manipulated most of the members, especially Chume. However, there were weaker responses which only narrated events without getting a grasp of the question requirements.
- 9** This question was done below average as most candidates tended to rely on the passage on Question 7. It was a tricky question as it only mentioned Jero's home being marked down for slum clearance. Thus they concentrated mostly on Amope's excitement about Jero's home being part of the slum clearance ignoring how she feels about the sanitary inspector. For those candidates who assumed the sanitary inspector was in cahoots with Brother Jero, it was then difficult for them to show their

anger yet we expect Amope to somehow feel insulted by these “ungrounded accusations” by him. Good responses captured the correct voice and appropriate moment.

## Section B: Poetry

### JACK HYDES (ed): *Touched with Fire* ©

- 10 Most candidates chose this question and it was fairly well done. Strong responses were able to bring out the sympathy created as well as the hope triggered by the poem. For instance, the intense heat that the young girl was working under was in line with the intense labouring that not only affected her but also her innocent baby that she’s working with at her back. The last part of the poem however, shows a promising better life and liberation from the oppressors. Better candidates engaged with the writing of the poem to bring out the sympathy and hope.
- 11 Both poems deal with the theme of beauty in different ways. Candidates were required to choose either *Snakecharmer* or *Fern Hill* to explain how admiration of creation has been portrayed. A very unpopular question with few candidates who attempted it, by only giving a narration of what the poem is about. They failed to appreciate the beauty that comes with creation.
- 12 This was an open question, whereby candidates were given the leeway to choose any poem of their choice that has made them think deeply about something they were not necessarily aware of before. Candidates chosen ground was expected to be any poems studied under this section, as opposed to writing about any poem they have heard about. Therefore, candidates who used poems out of the ones *Touched With Fire* were disadvantaged as their work could not meet the criteria for any mark. Some would use poems from *Groundwork*, and this affected their overall performance. However, those that chose appropriate poems were rewarded accordingly as they were able to give good responses. For instance, in *Poison Tree*, candidates acknowledge the lesson of failing to forgive as being poisons, and made them think deeply on how unhealthy that affects the person who can’t forgive.

**BRIAN WALTER AND FELICITY WOOD (ed): *Groundwork an Introduction to the Study of Poetry***

- 13 This was by far the most popular choice by candidates with a very good performance as well. It required candidates to show how the writing portrays the speaker's feelings of great disappointment. Candidates were able to engage with the language of the poem to bring out how disappointed the speaker is about his loved one, with only good memories that haunt him as nothing is left now, it is all over. They were able to figure out the sadness that comes with the lover being the very object of destruction for their love. Weaker responses only narrated what the poem is about without addressing the question.
- 14 Both poems deal with how change has been described. This was not a popular choice, but those who attempted *The Dry Season*, and were able to use the language of the poem in describing how a change of season comes by. Again, weaker candidates only narrated what the poem is about. There were no candidates who attempted *Wind a Change*.
- 15 This was the most popular question among candidates, and both poems fairly done as candidates were able to show how each of these poems convey sadness. For instance, in *Letter from a Contract Worker*, candidates demonstrated the sadness of the speaker with a close knowledge and clear understanding of the speaker's situation, that they even involved themselves with good personal responses that were quite pleasurable to read, citing sadness that is brought about by missing a loved one, so desperately that there was no way to communicate his feelings for none of them either can read or write. Similarly, they also displayed the sadness conveyed in *Boy on a Swing* of the transformation of the boy from a state of lack of awareness to that of political consciousness prevailing in an innocent wounded soul. Weaker responses only narrated what poems are about without engaging with the question.

**ELISE VARGA (ed): *Unbroken Chains***

- 16 This was the most popular question in this section. Most candidates limited their responses by only explaining what the poem is about instead of conveying the speaker's feelings about death and separation. A few would respond only generally

about death and sadness of separation without using the poem. Weaker responses were those who did not even understand what the poem is about, thus failing to align the speaker's feelings in the poem.

- 17** A very unpopular text. Candidates were required to explore how the poet deals with the idea of persuasion. Candidates did not attempt this question at all on Shakespeare's Sonnet 109 and Sonnet 101. Generally, there are very few Centres who do this section, to warrant a comment.
- 18** Too few responses to make a general comment. However, those who attempted this question made a rubric infringement as the question was open-ended. They decided to choose any poem they know without focusing on the listed poems of the section, resulting in them not earning marks, as their choice did not meet criteria for a mark. Candidates are urged to know all poems in the section they have studied in order to focus when answering questions. More rubric was evident when they pick poems from other sections i.e. Groundwork. A few who attempted the poem *Death do not be Proud* gave fairly good responses as they were able to show their surprise on the positiveness of the speaker about death, and even explaining their reactions.

## **Section C: PROSE**

### **HARPER LEE: To Kill a Mockingbird**

- 19** In this question candidates were able to identify points answering the task of how the passage is amusing yet so serious, but then fail to justify how those details are humorous or serious. Their limitation was illustrating points without sustaining them. Most candidates failed to align humour with the serious matters in the given passage. Thus their performance in this question was below average. Good responses were able to show the amusement as much as the seriousness of the situations. For instance, it is very amusing how Aunt Alexandra fit into the world of Maycomb like children, this becomes a serious issue as it affects her relationship with Jem and Scout.



- 20** Generally, well done and a very popular choice. Candidates were able to sustain their responses very well on how Calpurnia is such a lovable and valuable member of the Finch family. Candidates supported their views on how Calpurnia becomes a surrogate mother for Jem and Scout, her unconditional love for the children, how she provided protection, the lessons she imparted to them i.e. they learn from her the difference between whites and blacks, to name a few. Better candidates even mentioned how she outstretched herself for Jem and Scout, rarely having enough time for her own children, supporting fully their views of Calpurnia being a faithful member of the Finch Family. Weaker responses were those who totally failed to recall who Calpurnia is in the story thus giving sketchy responses.
- 21** Not so popular. The few candidates who attempted this empathy question for Bob Ewell were able to capture the correct arrogant voice and appropriate moment. At this moment, Atticus has cross-examined Bob Ewell and he is feeling very humiliated and boiling with anger that his planning or threatening revenge to whosoever embarrassed him in-order to recover his pride. Good responses will recall how Atticus has exposed his evil character and irresponsibility as a father. However, echo his pride in his voice.

**WILLIAM GOLDING: Lord of The Flies**

- 22** This question demanded the candidates to present a contrasting picture of Ralph and Piggy in the given passage. Candidates limited their responses by narrating the passage and not engaging with the question at all. Some tended to not understand the word “contrasting” thus limiting their overall performance, as their responses were straight forward points with little or no reference to the aspect of the text. A few candidates who understood the question were able to bring out differing qualities and personalities of Ralph and Piggy. For instance, to name the least, they could figure out that Ralph was a healthy, vibrant boy whereas Piggy is sickly and timid.
- 23** This was generally an easy and accessible question as candidates had a lot of material to use in supporting that Ralph deserves to be called the boss. They were able to mention what he did for the boys in the island, i.e. how he managed to maintain peace, provision for their safety, protection of lit-thus by providing shelter, maintaining order and giving good advice to name a few. Weaker responses

emanated from candidates who decided to use the passage on Question 22, which was a gross mistake that limited their performance.

- 24** Generally, not well done as candidates displayed lack of knowledge of Simon's character and totally did not understand the moment as guided by the question. Poor responses echoed a fearful Simon, who is wavering on his decision to go up the mountain in proving the existence of the mysterious beast. Yet in true, Simon was determined to reach the top to be sure of the beast's existence, he is fearless and not terrified at all even by the darkness. Candidates were thus expected to echo his voice of assurance and vigour.

**BARRIE WADE (ed): *Into The Wind***

- 25** Not a popular choice. Candidates were required to portray Lellie as an admirable character in a given passage. It was generally well handled as the language of the passage was often examined to good effect by candidates. Weaker responses often ignored certain portions of the passage, yet Lellie's admirable qualities are evident even in those parts of the extract where she does not appear. When the author describes at length Duncan's failure to save himself, that brings in mind how remarkably thorough Lellie was in her preparations, as a result one sees her as admirable, though this is hinted indirectly. Candidates who failed to see this, limited their responses.
- 26** Generally, well done by candidates who used adequate knowledge of the text to actually explain situations in both stories, presenting an unpleasant side of life. Some weak candidates took the words of the question as an invitation to retell the stories. Such responses did not score much as they failed to address the expectations of the question. Better candidates were those who attempted *The Lemon Orchard* as opposed to *The Sniper*, as they were able to explore on most of the sad events in the text.
- 27** Fairly done. However, some candidates exhibited signs of not having good knowledge of Jane's character. A strong desire for revenge should not be uppermost in the head of this intelligent girl, yet some candidates ran with that theory throughout, thus limiting their performance. Some weaker responses even assumed the character of Jane at

the end and were very hateful of Collier. This was inappropriate because at this moment, though Jane is hurt but she is not at all vengeful. It is only by coincidence that Collier loses the game after he is fairly judged by the umpire - Jane. Better candidates were able to capture the correct voice and appropriate moment.

**EGCSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH****Paper 6875/02****Unseen Text****General Comments**

Candidates' performance in this paper appeared to be slightly better than that of the previous year 2019. However, there was a sizeable number of candidates who displayed lack of exposure and practice in responding to unseen text questions. This paper aims at giving candidates the liberty to employ the skills learnt in paper 1 without the limits that are usually set. All candidates need to do is to read questions analytically before they respond.

The question is always written in bold. The accompanying notes that appear in bullet form are mere guides that candidates may consider in responding to the question. Candidates commit the error of treating these notes in isolation and forget about the question written in bold. The response should show the candidates' appreciation of the writer's choice of words to bring the overall meaning of the text. It is worth mentioning that language usage does not necessarily mean picking out words and explaining them dictionary style. Words are used to convey meaning and thus must be understood in that context.

**Comments on Specific Questions**

This was the most popular choice amongst candidates: Candidates who opted for this question performed slightly better than those who attempted question 2. This is not to say that there were no challenges for candidates in this question. A majority of those who performed poorly failed to realize that the question required that they should bring out their feelings as they read the passage. They persistently wrote that "the passage is very emotional for me..." without giving the precise emotion. For example, sympathy, anger, admiration, happy etc. The very weak candidates simply tried to respond to the bullet points and completely ignored the main question while others presented a summary of the events in the text or paraphrased it. Most glaring amongst these was an inability to identify the characters mentioned in the passage. For instance, some would confuse Shane for Wendy and Wendy for Shane. In addition to this

misconception, was the failure to appreciate the hostility and tension which runs through the passage. Thus such candidates could not explore the rising tension between the couple and as a result they could not come up with the appropriate emotions. However, some candidates performed admirably well: they were able to observe the growing hostility and tension between the husband and wife and therefore came up with relevant emotional reactions for both of them. No detail from the text escaped the eyes of these candidates as they traced the development of the passage from the opening line to the last.

This question presented candidates with a daunting task: Most candidates who attempted the question struggled to understand the poem and consequently could not “explain how the speaker makes you feel about love” by paying attention to diction and the poet’s attitude towards love. Instead many responses strayed from the poem and covered the candidate’s own knowledge and experiences of love. These were the very weak responses. Those who made an attempt to respond to the question could not bring out the appropriate feelings about love. For instance, the poet has painted love as something beautiful in the first stanza. However, some candidates held the view that love is terrible and provokes feelings of disgust in them. Such a flawed interpretation of the poem negatively impacted on the entire comprehension of the text by these learners. Other candidates would simply paraphrase the words of the poem without relaying the feeling/s they provoked in them about love. They would simply say that the poem is about unending love and would not offer more than that. This is merely echoing the text without teasing out the feelings hidden in them. A few candidates performed exceptionally well in this question as they successfully engaged with the language and brought out their feelings about love i.e. happy, ecstatic, glad, admiration etc.