

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 significantly higher compared to the previous year - 2020. The performance was generally poor especially amongst most rural schools. This could have been a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political unrest.

The level of difficulty of the paper was almost the same as of last year, however, some questions were popular and mostly favoured by candidates. The most challenging questions were on poetry. The candidates' main weakness was in interpreting the texts and understanding the poet's point of view. The examiners observed that most candidates were paraphrasing or rewriting the poems without necessarily appreciating them. Albeit the wording of the questions was clear enough for candidates, there was a struggle to address the demands of the questions. The weaknesses in the response is the prevalent "**How**" part of the questions.

This year saw an unprecedented spike in rubric infringement. Centres, are encouraged to explain the requirements of types of questions to be answered by the candidates in order to adhere to the expected instructions. For instance, a candidate should at least cover a question on Drama, Poetry and Prose. Moreover, candidates should attempt at least one passage-based question. It was common for some candidates to answer on three passage-based questions. This resulted to the deduction of marks and negatively impacted the overall mark.

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

***Question 1:** The task required candidates to show how the passage has portrayed Mrs. Birling as a mother figure and as a member of the charity committee. This question brought a bit of ambiguity for the candidates which led to misconceptions. Candidates were expected to discuss if in their view Mrs. Birling, from what she and those with her say, does exhibit traits typical of a mother and a member of a charity committee. Most candidates who failed to adequately respond to this question focused on how Mrs. Birling is a mother figure to Sheila and also looked at her reactions during her encounter with Eva Smith in a positive light. This adversely affected their essays. However, good candidates were able to identify what made Mrs. Birling a vile and mean mother and charity committee member. These were able to write convincing and well sustained responses.

Question 2: This question required that candidates should explain why Sheila is a likeable character despite her apparent involvement in Eva Smith's untimely demise. Though not quite so popular, the few candidates who attempted this question did well by recalling Sheila's personality i.e. she is remorseful, intelligent and has a good sense of humour etc. However, weaker candidates relied on the extract to answer the question. This hindered them as they could not come up with enough evidence to substantiate their views.

Question 3: This question required that the candidates write their thoughts as the inspector on his way to the Birling house. It was expected that he would already have a plan in his mind on how he would conduct the investigation. He would have in his mind the contents of the details in Eva's diary. A few candidates managed to remember that. Most of the weak ones made use of the extract for question one to craft their thoughts thus making them sound like the inspector has already been to the Birlings instead of being on his way.

William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night

Question *4: Too few responses to make a general comment. The question required candidates to describe the picture that the passage paints of Orsino's state of mind and his feelings for Olivia. For instance, candidates should have commented on how the imagery used in the text depicts Orsino's mental state.

Question 5: No responses made to warrant a general comment.

Question 6: No responses made to warrant a general comment.

Wole Soyinka: The trials of Brother Jero

Question *7: This question required that the candidates should discuss how the passage paints Chume's and the Congregants' lives. A majority of the candidates managed to bring that out and used relevant aspects of the extract to support their assertions. For instance, candidates correctly observed that Chume's life is dependent on Brother Jero and then went on to cite the relevant support from the text. However, weaker candidates dwelled on how dodgy Jero is as a character and how foolish Jero and the congregants are for allowing the prophet to manipulate them.

Question 8: This was by far the most popular question among candidates. It was relatively doable such that even weaker candidates managed to score average marks. Candidates were expected to state what makes Amope a memorable character in the play. Most candidates were able to draw out from the play the various scenarios that make her unforgettable and further sustain their viewpoints by echoing the texts. However, some candidates tended to use her appearance in one particular scene to answer

the question. Such responses malnourished the candidates' responses by disregarding all her other appearances. Those unfamiliar with the text were noted for using the extract for question seven to answer this question.

Question 9: Another popular question among candidates but was, however, poorly done. Most learners failed to recognize both the moment and most importantly the character. They wrongly assumed that the member of the Federal House was a devout member of Jero's church and had finally realized that Jero was a wolf in a sheep skin. Nevertheless, there were some good candidates who successfully captured the moment and rightly identified the character. These noted that the member who was at first skeptical of brother Jero, is at the end in awe of him and regards him as "The" messiah who has been sent by God to elevate him to the ministerial position he so much wants.

Section B Poetry;

Jack Hydes (ed) (Touched with Fire)

***Question 10:** This question was not popular with many candidates. It required candidates to capture the speaker's character and attitude in the poem. Some good candidates were able to identify for instance, the speaker's self-centeredness and excessive pride. They used the text well to validate their views. However, weak candidates paraphrased the poem or restated the lines without explaining how these reveal the speaker's personality.

Question 11: There were no responses made to warrant a general comment.

Question 12: The responses were too few to warrant a general comment.

Brian Walter and Felicity Wood (eds.)

Groundwork

***Question 13:** This was by far the most popular choice by candidates, but it presented the most dismal responses in the entire paper. The question required candidates to state how the poem portrays the speaker's admiration of the African pot. The candidates started talking about admiration from the first stanza which only talks about the speaker's confusion and not admiration. They further failed to connect and justify how the language of the poem brings out the speaker's admiration. Some candidates resorted to paraphrasing of the poem while others simply cited the lines of the poem and said they show admiration without saying exactly how. This question even limited good candidates in their overall mark.

Question 14: Candidates who fared badly in this question tried to recall what these poems are all about without exploring how the poet has portrayed the subject of love in marriage. Most candidates who attempted the River-Merchant's wife were successful in painting a sympathetic picture of a very lonely wife who has been abandoned by her husband for five months. On the other hand, those who attempted the poem At Tea, demonstrated a serious limitation in the interpretation of the poem in relation to the question. The deceit of the guest and the host's husband and the ignorance of the host shown in the poem was not clearly connected with the subject of love in marriage. As a result, candidates' responses were not rooted in the texts but were a general comment on the subject of love in marriage.

Question 15: There were no responses to warrant a general comment.

ELISE VARGA (ed.): Unbroken Chains: An Anthology of Poetry

Question 16: This was not a popular question among candidates. The few that opted for this question displayed high levels of unpreparedness. It appeared as if candidates who found no familiar poem in the paper opted for this poem with the assumption that it is shorter and accessible. These candidates interpreted the poem as a celebration of nature, yet the weather conditions in the poem act as parallels for the speaker's feelings for his lover. Few candidates realized that the speaker feels hurt by his lover who has betrayed him.

Question 17: General comment cannot be made as question was not chosen.

Question 18: General comment cannot be made as question was not chosen.

Section C: Prose

HARPER LEE: To Kill a Mockingbird

Question *19: This question required that the candidates discuss how the passage creates feelings of fear and suspense in the reader. Good candidates were able to explain how the fear and suspense was brought out in the passage. For instance, the incident occurs after the Halloween concert. Scout and Jem are walking alone in the dark night. This is obviously scary but what exacerbates the fear is that somebody is following them. Suspense is created by the question, who could this be? However, weaker candidates seemed to have no clue of the action building up to this moment or the general background knowledge of the text. These kept on questioning what exactly was happening in the passage and also seemed unaware of who was Scout and Jem.

Question 20: This question required learners to state how far they think Mayella Ewell deserves to be blamed for Tom Robinson's death. Most candidates performed well in this question as they were able to recall how for instance, Mayella hoodwinked Tom into being alone with her in the Ewell's house and

how she forced herself on the unsuspecting Tom. Mayella's poorly choreographed performance in the courtroom did not escape the attention of these candidates. The very best did not neglect to consider that Mayella deserves sympathy as she is a victim herself and lied under oath because she was petrified of her abusive father.

Question 21: This question was not popular amongst candidates. The few that opted for it relied heavily on the extract to craft what was supposedly Dill's thoughts. This was a clear sign of lack of knowledge of the text and therefore the thoughts were shallow and the voice hardly resembled that of Dill. However, a few candidates demonstrated good knowledge of Dill. They were able to note that at this moment Dill had not given up his fascination with Boo Radley and thus nursed the hope to one day see him.

William Golding: Lord of the Flies

Question *22: This question required that the candidates should state what the passage reveals about the personality of Jack and the way he relates to the other boys. Good candidates were able to note that Jack seems like a stern character and that he commands obedience regardless of the circumstances. Weaker candidates, however, simply cited the instances where Jack appears and when the other children address him without explaining what that reveals about his character and relationship with the other boys.

Question 23: There were too few responses to warrant a general comment.

Question 24: This was not a popular question among candidates and was generally poorly done. The question required candidates to write Ralph's thoughts after Piggy had made the observation that the littlun with the mulberry mark on his face had disappeared. Weak candidates failed to capture the exact moment – that this happened soon after the fire made by the boys went out of control and burnt the part of the Island where the littlun was last seen. Ralph's thoughts must mirror his bewilderment and fear upon hearing this information.

Barrie Wade (ed.): Into the Wind Contemporary Stories in English

***Question 25:** This was another question which was popular among candidates and was fairly done. This question required candidates to state how the writer makes the reader feel sympathy for Jane and Collier. Good candidates were able to separate between the characters and explained why they sympathise with each one of them using relevant evidence from the extract. However, weak candidates would lump the two characters together thus making a clear discussion of the question improbable.

Question 26: This question required that candidates state ways in which Alex La Guma makes them to sympathise with the Coloured man in the story. Good candidates were able to recall the events and incidents that compelled them to sympathise with the Coloured man in the story. For instance, sympathy is evoked when looking at the way the Coloured man is flimsily dressed on a cold night. However, weak candidates confused the Coloured man for the white men and went to great lengths explaining how cruel the Coloured man was towards the black people in the story. This displayed a gross misunderstanding of not only the story but of the question as well.

Question 27: This question required that the candidates write Alice's grandfather's thoughts at the end after he had released the pigeon and the other birds. Good candidates were able to realize that this was a moment of triumph for the old man. He has finally come to terms with the coming of age of Alice and has finally realized that he must not only release her but must also let go of the birds. His voice must mirror his relief and happiness for finally being able to overcome his fears of letting go of Alice and the birds. However, weak candidates ignored the symbolism of freeing the birds in relation to Alice. They came up with regretful and guilt-ridden thoughts of having allowed the birds to fly away. These thoughts were largely inappropriate and demonstrated a glaring lack of understanding of the gist of the story.

EGCSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 6875/02

Unseen Text

General Comments

This paper consists of two questions. Candidates have to make a choice between these two questions. One question is a literary Prose passage (short extract from a novel /short story) and the other is a Poem or an extract of one.

Both questions required candidates to make critical commentary on them, and also appreciate previously unseen writing.

The highest mark obtained was 19 which is low when compared to the maximum mark that was obtained in 2020. Even though the maximum mark was not obtained, but it was noticed that it didn't affect the candidates from obtaining better marks. To be noted is that the highest scored mark being 19, it did not mean that the paper was difficult compared to 2020. It still maintained the standard as other previous papers.

Both questions were equally popular as they were both friendly and familiar subjects for candidates. Question 1 required candidates to bring out the emotions that were evoked as they read the passage. Question 2 required candidates to bring out the relationship between the speaker's parents and how it affected the speaker. Even though both questions were popular, each brought out its set of challenges.

Question 1:

- *not answering the question
- *using of previously learnt information
- *not bringing out the emotions required

Question 2:

- *not engaging with the poem till the end
- *misconceptions on the poem
- *not understanding the poets use of language.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1:

The question required candidates to bring out the gripping emotions evoked as they read the passage. What was expected was for the candidates to mention and bring out how these emotions intensify as the passage develops. They had to mention specific emotions evoked as they encounter each emotional moment in the passage. These gripping emotions are evoked from the moment Grimes is seen riding on a horse with loaded guns. It certainly is an uneasy and dangerous moment that evokes fear and anxiety for the slaves walking on foot. From then on candidates were presented with a lot of emotions to play around with. Such moments are when sympathy is evoked as the slaves are tied, and even in their sleep they are still tied. Their mournful songs makes us pity them as they convey how they feel. The sickness of the boy intensifies the emotions as it is horrifying how he is described; that he is bony and had an unhealed scar from continuous physical abuse and torture and how Grimes doesn't care. Infact, it lays bare the brutality displayed by Grimes. To add on to that, he beats him inspite of the fact that the boy can't help himself but to moan and cry in pain because he is sick and parched. The condition of the slaves, from their dress code to the path they are made to walk on surely intensifies the emotions from terrifying to horrifying. The description of Grimes actually completes the whole picture of the pitiful situation the slaves find themselves in his hands. All that they should feel for Grimes is hate and disgust.

However, some candidates did not follow the question but referenced to the slave trade and didn't stick to the question requirements. It was evident that they had prior knowledge about it, maybe from other subjects they had learned in class. Some kept referring to the phrase "gripping emotions" without actually bringing out the specific emotions needed to answer the question.

A lot of misconceptions were also noted as the candidates attempted to answer the question. Mostly were about candidates failing to understand and comprehending what the passage was about. Some candidates kept referring to the character of Grimes in the plural sense. They thought Grimes meant many guards called "the Grimes", hence the phrase the Grimes ran through out their responses. Also, instead of referring to Grimes, they would use the name whites or Americans and refer to the slaves as Africans. Other errors in comprehension noted were that the candidates thought the slaves had walked all the way from Africa to America hence the tiredness and the sickness of the boy; and that Grimes was a slave too. Some went as further as admiring Grimes for his love of the slaves. They commended him for the fact that he had guns to protect the slaves and even at night that he couldn't even sleep as he cared for them. They didn't see that the guns made the atmosphere uneasy and dangerous for the slaves as it put their lives in danger of being shot at by Grimes.

Such errors disadvantaged some of the candidates from scoring high marks. Otherwise, it was a popular question and most candidates did well on it.

Question 2:

The question required candidates to outline the relationship between the speaker's parents and how it affected the speaker. What was expected from the candidates was to point out what kind of relationship the parents had from the poet's use of language and how it affected their child; the speaker. Candidates were also required to show how they felt for the speaker. From the first stanza, the relationship is clear as the poet puts it sarcastically that they "never quarrelled". Candidates were supposed to see that this was an indication of a strained relationship where the parents couldn't even bring themselves to talk about their problems. Candidates were supposed to see that as the poem moves from one stanza to the other, the relationship is described clearly as one that was unhappy and monotonous. They are likened to a daily newspaper which shows that they were just going through the motions. It was just monotonous. There was no joy nor even intimacy in the marriage. The candidates then had to note how it also affected the speaker. They should note that the speaker suffered together with his mother as it was the father at fault. He was cold and did not express his feelings for his family. He "dammed up his Irish blood in alcohol" and became devoid of all feelings; "stiffened into stone and creaking wood." He failed to even be like other fathers to his son by not kissing him after an absence but reject him at the slightest gesture of tender emotions. Candidates were to be able to bring out how this results into the child feeling neglected together with the mother who sing songs to hide her suffering and misery in the relationship. As a grown up, the speaker regrets his upbringing. It has become like a "cyst". Even though he was not neglected materially but emotionally, but it all makes him sad and unhappy. Candidates were to note that he has learnt a lot from his experiences and he can't judge his parents as he awaits his own judgement since his experiences made him who he is, it is a part of him. He cannot now confront them as they are dead "the living cannot call the dead collect".

Some candidates encountered a lot of challenges with the poem. First of all, some candidates did not attend to the whole poem but left it halfway. Candidates are encouraged to engage with it all the way to the end. Another major drawback that has been noted over the years is the poet's use of language for the candidates. They have found themselves missing the very meaning of a poem because of language analysis. This year was no different as a lot of candidates missed the poet's sarcasm in the opening stanzas. Candidates thought the parents were loving as they "never quarrelled". As soon as they moved along with the poem they realised this couple wasn't actually loving, they would then switch and say it changed overtime; first they were loving then later on their love was an unhappy one. They couldn't even pick up the simile of the daily newspaper "the Sydney Morning Herald" that it meant the relationship was bland and routine.

Another challenge the candidates encountered was the word "absence" by the father to them meant they divorced or the father wasn't there when he grew up. To them it was like the child wishes his father was there to show him love but unfortunately, he was dead yet he was there all the time. Its only now in adulthood that he looks back on all those experiences. Candidates are encouraged to read the poem to the end and then answer the question. This can help them in comprehension, thus being able to score maximum marks.