

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 lower compared to the previous year – 2021. The performance was slightly better than the previous year. This could have been caused by that not all learners in Form 4 progressed to Form 5.

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 drama and prose, especially the traditional essay of *Trials of Brother Jero* and *Lord of the Flies*. The candidates' main weakness was in understanding the key words in the questions. The examiners observed for instance, that most candidates were giving excellent character sketches of the character of Chume without showing how his character is transformed throughout the course of the play. In *Lord of the Flies* most candidates failed to note that the boys undergo distinct experiences and therefore their lessons cannot be the same.

This year again had a discomfiting number of rubric infringement cases. 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 PRIESTLEY: *An Inspector Calls*****Question *1**

The task required candidates to explore how in the passage the writer brings out strong feelings in them. This question was accessible to candidates. Candidates were expected to describe their feelings as they read through the passage. Candidates who failed to adequately respond to this question failed to decipher the appropriate emotions from the passage. For instance, candidates would sympathise with Mrs. Birling when she is distressed by Eric's response to the inspector's questions. The expectation here was for candidates to note that Mrs. Birling as a mother to Eric has somehow failed in her responsibilities. Thus, candidates were supposed to have feelings like shock, disgust etc. This misconception had a negative bearing on the candidates' scores. However, good candidates were able to describe the precise feelings evoked by the passage. These were able to write convincing and well sustained responses.

Question 2

This question required that candidates explain how their attitude towards Sheila changes as the play progresses. Though not quite so popular, the few candidates who attempted this question did well by recalling how Sheila's personality was in the beginning i.e. she was naive, self-centred and childish but as the play progresses Sheila changes to become remorseful, more assertive and grows more insightful – seeing things the others do not see. However, weaker candidates simply gave out character sketches of Sheila while others 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 Eric after realizing Eva Smith was pregnant with his baby. This proved to be quite a tricky question for candidates because the actual moment is revealed by Eric in retrospect when responding to the Inspector. As a result, a number of candidates missed the moment. The thoughts they came up with were largely inappropriate. Instead of capturing Eric's thoughts of regret and anguish candidates would be angry at Mrs. Birling for having turned Eva Smith away when she needed help from the charity organization. Most of the weak ones made use of the extract for question one to craft their thoughts thus had very little to write about.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night***Question *4**

This was not a popular question amongst candidates. The question required candidates to show how the passage creates both amusement and surprise. The few that chose this one struggled to explain how the passage creates amusement and surprise. They would fuse amusement and surprise yet in the passage the two emotions occur separately. Others treated this passage as an unseen text and were therefore surprised by all that Malvolio was doing yet as readers of this set text, candidates had the privileged of knowing that Malvolio had fallen hook and sink for Maria's trickery.

Question 5

This was another question which was not popular amongst candidates. However, the few that opted for it performed fairly well. The question required candidates to show how Shakespeare presents the pain of love in the play. Candidates were able to see that the love triangle that permeates the play is characterized by pain. There is Orsino who loves Olivia and is melancholic because Olivia herself loved her dead brother so much that she chose to mourn him for seven years. Furthermore, candidates noted that there are other characters that experience the pain of unrequited love, such as Cesario, Malvolio and Antonio.

Question 6

This was not a popular question amongst candidates. Some of those who chose this one struggled to pin down the moment. The question demanded that candidates write Viola's thoughts just after the shipwreck. However, candidates would write thoughts that were prompted by Viola's conversation with the Captain. For instance, it is too early in the given moment for Viola to think of disguising as a boy and going to work for Count Orsino because she is still wondering where she is and therefore does not know much about the place and its people.

WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero***Question *7**

This was a popular question which required that candidates show their feelings as they read through the text. Most candidates were able to bring out their feelings with relevant aspects of the extract to support their sentiments. However, other candidates could not come up with the strong feelings which made their discussions flawed as the key word of the question which is 'feelings' was left out. Weaker candidates tended to focus on one element throughout their essay, for example, how Jero is not praying earnestly because he is not a real prophet.

Question 8

This question required the candidates to discuss the presentation of Chume's transformation throughout the play. Candidates were expected to present the change seen in Chume's character in the play. However, most candidates struggled to do this as they tended to write a character sketch of Chume without distinctly showing how he transforms. Those who did show transformation did so at a later stage of their essay as a by the way commentary. This limited their performance in this question.

Question 9

This was a popular question among candidates. It required candidates to write Jero's thoughts the moment he discovers Amope outside his house. A good response required that candidates show Jero's surprise and shock. Most of them managed to bring out the feelings and thoughts perfectly, proving their knowledge of the text. This, they achieved in spite of the limited material to use in response. However, weaker responses included a lot of content from what happens way after this moment which then became irrelevant.

SECTION B: POETRY**JACK HYDES (ed.): *Touched with Fire: Section B 'The light of setting suns'*****Question *10**

This question was not popular with many candidates. It required candidates to state what feelings are evoked in them as they read the poem. There was a great misunderstanding of the poem. Candidates could not deduce that the mountain lion is dead while others thought the dead lion was a deer. However, weak candidates paraphrased the poem or restated the lines without explaining what feelings they evoke in them.

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: An Introduction to Reading and Writing about Poetry***Question *13**

This was a popular question. It required candidates to discuss the feelings evoked as they read the poem, *Poem for My Mother*. The response required that candidates, in describing their feelings, must have an understanding of the fact that there is no malice intended by either the mother or the daughter and that the basis of it is love. It was fairly well done because most candidates were able to bring out relevant feelings for both the daughter and mother. However, there were those candidates who had the misconception that there was hatred between mother and daughter.

Question 14

This question was not that popular among candidates. Candidates were required to explore how the poet has portrayed the subject of injustice and suffering. However, most would simply summarise the poems without showing how they portray injustice and suffering. Those who made an attempt to respond to the question tended to struggle to remember the lines of the poems thus wrote generally about injustice and suffering. Most of these responses appeared to be rooted on the knowledge candidates have of apartheid South Africa and the exploitation of the working class.

Question 15

There were a few candidates that chose this question. The question required candidates to discuss how the poem *Death the Leveller* presents death in such a memorable way. Candidates wrote generally about death without anchoring their views on the poem.

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 had a misunderstanding of the poem. The question required candidates to state what feelings were evoked as they read the poem. Most candidates misinterpreted the opening line where the persona compares himself to an unprepared actor on stage. They sympathized with the persona for being unrehearsed. Consequently, candidates brought forth feelings which were irrelevant to the poem.

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 should consider what the passage reveals about the personalities of Jem and Scout. Most responses were marred because candidates bunched the two characters together and, in the process, created an impression that they were just one person. There were, however, quite a few responses that clearly brought out the personalities of the two children. They aptly noted Jem's responsible, caring, authoritative and intelligent nature. These also took note of Scout's naivety, obedient and respectful personality.

Question 20

This was not a popular question with many candidates. It required learners to state how far they agree with the statement 'Most children gain their knowledge through life lessons'. They had to base their argument on the Finch children. The few that attempted it just mentioned the experiences the children underwent without bringing out the knowledge the children gained through that life lesson. Candidates were expected to touch on issues like: the children learnt to empathise, the true meaning of courage and racial inequality among others.

Question 21

This question was not popular amongst candidates but the few that chose it seemed to have a good knowledge of Atticus. They captured the correct moment and thus were able to craft appropriate thoughts and feelings. These were accompanied by the correct voice of Atticus who at this moment is determined to defend Tom Robinson even though he realizes that the odds are heavily against him.

WILLIAM GOLDING: *Lord of the Flies***Question *22**

This question required that the candidates state how Golding's writing in the passage brings out the goodness in Ralph. Even though a few candidates opted for this question their responses were fairly good. Candidates correctly noted that Ralph is a caring person as he was concerned that Piggy had been left alone with the littluns. They also noted that Jack's dark personality in the passage serves to reinforce Ralph's goodness. Weak responses approached the passage as an unseen text and thus gave responses that were dismal.

Question 23

This was not a popular question among candidates. The question required candidates to state the extent to which they thought the boys learnt lessons from their experience on the Island. This question was generally not well done. Candidates were supposed to treat the boys separately as they undergo different experiences on the Island and end up living in two separate camps. However, most responses looked at the boys' experiences as if they were a homogeneous group. This limited their responses as they could not cover the 'to what extent part'.

Question 24

This was not a popular question among candidates and was generally not well done. The question required candidates to write Jack's thoughts having just been accused by Ralph for letting the fire die, thereby missing the chance of rescue. Candidates struggled to nail the correct moment on which their thoughts and feelings should have been based. The guiding phrase to the question is 'having just been accuse'. Candidates ignored the phrase and based the thoughts on incidents that did not come immediately after the accusation. This made their thoughts and feelings largely irrelevant.

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 write on the woman's personality. Some candidates were able to describe her character clearly in reference to the text and made careful selection to support that character trait. However, weak candidates made long brushing statements as a way of describing the woman's personality. They also tended to use one example from the passage to support everything they said. Some candidates had a total misconception of the woman as they thought her to be a prostitute who was there to seduce the men.

Question 26

This question basically required candidates to state how the writer persuades them to have strong feelings of admiration for Lellie. This was a popular question that was well done. Candidates had a clear knowledge of the character thus they had a lot of reasons to admire her.

Question 27

This was another popular question which required candidates to write their thoughts as Selina when she discovers that she is being sent to jail. Those who did well in the question were able to recall specific events in the story which at this point could be dominant in Selina's mind. However, weaker candidates tended to repeat one and the same thing showing their lack of knowledge of what the character does throughout the story.

Recommendations

- Educators must emphasize the importance of adhering to the instructions on the cover of the booklet. It is vitally important for learners to write their centre number, candidate number and name.
- To address prevalent rubric infringement, teachers are encouraged to give full Literature in English papers (make use of mock paper) to learners and then ascertain if learners in their selection of questions do conform to the instructions.
- Learners when dealing with passage-based questions must be made aware that it is not an unseen text. Thus, knowledge of what has happened leading up to the selected passage is key to answering a passage based question.
- Teachers need to impress on the minds of the learners that the strength of an extract question lies in citing relevant evidence from the passage to substantiate argument raised. Paraphrasing and generalizing must be discouraged.
- When responding to traditional essay questions learners tend to use the extract question. This disadvantages candidates as they find themselves with very little or no material to craft their responses. Learners are allowed to use information from extract to answer traditional essay question if the passage relates to the question. However, in order for them to present a good response they must consider the entire text.
- In the traditional essay question citing accurately from the text is not demanded but learners must demonstrate their knowledge of the text by echoing the text in their response.
- At times traditional essay questions demand that learners must state 'how far?' or 'to what extent?', a good response puts the other side of the argument into consideration as well. The response though must clearly show which side of the argument is dominant.

- With empathy questions teachers must highlight the importance of the moment the thoughts are based on. A question for example may read, 'You are Viola just after the shipwreck.' Write your thoughts. Such a question requires candidates to come up with Viola's thoughts soon/immediately after the shipwreck.
- Teachers are encouraged to attend Literature in English workshops as they help shed light on some of the recommendations raised here.

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

This year saw a significant drop in the number of candidates who sat for Literature in English Paper 2 compared to last year.

Candidates' performance was fair as there was an even distribution of marks amongst them. As the paper offers candidates with two options to choose from, both questions were popular. It was noted that candidates are now willing to attempt both the passage and poem equally, yet in previous years it had been noted candidates would lean more towards the poem as it is shorter. Most candidates were able to understand the task at hand and tried to respond accordingly to both questions. Only a few candidates would deviate from the question and use their own words instead of those given. Misinterpretations were noted especially the writers' choice of words would be distorted. What is expected of candidates is to show appreciation of how the writer has used language to bring out the intended meaning. It must be taken into account also that language usage does not simply mean to just pick out words as they are, but it is to unpack them and bring out their effect.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

This was a popular question. The question required candidates to show how they felt tension and anxiety as they read the passage. The question was generally well done by candidates. Good answers from candidates were characterised by being able to see the tension and anxiety develop from the beginning of the passage up to the end. They were able to juxtapose Mary's strong feelings of love for her husband against the issue of divorce that he was considering. This created the anxiety on how she would handle these news, and that she didn't even know what her husband was planning to do. Candidates were also able to show how the tension was contributed by both characters and how it heightened to the point where the husband tells Mary to sit down, as he had something to tell her.

However, weaker responses were characterized by when the candidates would paraphrase the story without mentioning how the tension and anxiety builds up. Other candidates would just highlight Mary's love more instead of answering the question. They would also praise Mary for being a good, loving and responsible wife to her husband. They would ignore the question completely and not make any comments on how their selection of text shows any tension and anxiety. Common errors were prevalent

where candidates would refer to the husband as a drunkard, yet it was the situation he was faced with that made him drink to relieve the tension he felt as he had to tell her about the divorce. They would also emphasise on the love of the woman, failing to see that she was in denial of the whole scenario that was unfolding right before her eyes. In general, candidates showed an understanding of the passage itself, and it showed the exposure they had that it was wide.

Question 2

The question was also popular with the candidates. Good answers were characterised by candidates' responses that showed understanding of the poets' language and by giving relevant quotes as they wrote. They were to identify the figures of speech used and their effect, and how it brought out the fear and terror. The candidates were also able to see that it was during nightfall that people in Soweto would be scared as they would be attacked during this time. They noted the cruelty and merciless killing of innocent victims through the poet's use of language. However, weaker responses were characterised by a lot of misunderstanding of the poem. They misinterpreted it a lot. Candidates would personify nightfall. They thought it was an animal or a person going by the name of Nightfall that would terrorise the whole of Soweto. Other candidates would just change the name nightfall into rainfall and explain how floods wreaked havoc in Soweto. Others took the simile in the first stanza literally and would go on about a disease like HIV/AIDS that ravages the people and leave them helpless or even dead. Some candidates interpreted the poem like it was on gender-based violence and lamented how cruel men have become instead of protecting women. For them the quote 'man has become beast' was literal. Man to them meant gender not mankind. Some words would be taken out of context e.g. words like 'dagger' were thought to mean 'dagga' and 'beast' to mean a real animal. Candidates still have a long way to go in the aspect of being able to unpack the poet's language and get to understand the writer's use of words.

Recommendations

It is important that in preparing candidates for Literature in English Paper 2, teachers should try and:

- Expose candidates to various common terms that the examiner usually uses in question construction.
- Expose candidates to a lot of passages and poems so they do not have a problem when encountering any form of unseen text in the examination.
- Train candidates to read beyond the surface meaning and understand writer's intended meaning as most of the answers to the questions lie deeper than explicit meaning
- Train candidates on language use and its effects.