

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH(A LEVEL)

NOVEMBER 2012

PAPER 5

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This report is for the December 2012 Literature in English Paper 5 examination. The report seeks to comment on the quality of the examination paper as well as the performance of the candidates who sat for the paper. All in all, 556 candidates sat for this paper, a notable increase in the number of candidates opting for the paper. A variety of papers were presented. It is worth noting that there were 4 texts that were being examined for the first time in this component – a fact that had an effect on the quality of some of the answers. This, it should be noted, is unusual that a number of texts are introduced at the same time. Only one text from the books in last year's examination remained. Of the five texts, two are collections of short stories. Candidates weak in short stories in general had very limited choices. Generally the rubric of the question paper was observed though there were two or three cases where candidates infringed the rubrics: answering two questions from one text. There is still need to educate candidates on the futility of that practice. Candidates need to be prepared adequately on studied texts and they should observe the instructions on the first page of the question paper.

LOVELACE EARL: *The Dragon Can't Dance*

The text is not very popular.

Question 1(a)

This question was not very popular with candidates. However, the casting of the question was appropriate. The question was accessible for the level. Fair knowledge about the presentation of women was shown. Weak candidates tended to focus on individual characters rather than universals. As such mediocre answers were evidence. Owing to that weakness, the "elsewhere" aspect became problematic.

Question 1(b)

Of the 2 questions from this text, this was more popular than 1(a). However, regarding performance some candidates largely focused on a commenting on the passage forgetting its effectiveness of the as an introduction. For candidates to comment on effectiveness, they were required to show the elsewhere aspect and demonstrate how it

is linked to the themes, style and character portrayal. Performance in comparison to question 1(a) was better.

KANENGONI ALEXANDER: *Echoing Silences*

This was a very popular text out of all texts in this paper.

Question 2(a)

The casting of the question was suitable for the level. However, there were cases of misinterpretation of the term 'betrayal'. Most candidates also tended to concentrate on the themes at the expense of the style. The word 'pervades' was also misunderstood by some candidates. Performance was not pleasing.

Question 2(b)

The casting of the question was straight forward. The question was quite accessible for the level. The tendency was to concentrate on the themes ignoring style which was equally a vital component of the question. As already indicated, performance was mediocre for this question.

MTIZIRA NYARADZO: *The Chimurenga Protocol*

The text was popular however candidates' performance was generally poor.

Question 3(a)

This was a very popular question. The casting of the question was quite appropriate. Answers tended to concentrate on bringing out the backgrounds of the two characters. Candidates failed to bring out character traits and were content on telling the themes of the text.

Question 3(b)

This was a popular question. The casting was appropriate although style was problematic. The tendency was to paraphrase or specifically treat the passage without linking to the wider text.

ROSEMARY MOYANA, MUCHADEI A, NYOTA, BARBARA MANYARARA:
Hunting in Foreign Lands and other plays

Again, this was a popular text. The casting of the question was problematic – verbose, vague and inaccessible.

Question 4(a)

As noted above, the casting was very problematic. Knowledge of stories for some was in doubt. As a result, selection of relevant stories was often poor. In most cases irrelevant stories were referred to. There were cases of confusion on names. There was also paraphrasing and inability to select or discriminate relevant material to support claims. Performance was poor owing to many responses dwelling on retelling the stories.

Question 4(b)

The casting of the question appeared confusing. The issues in the passage did not readily offer connection with the more universalized women suffrage. Also, the use of 'elsewhere in the collection' was too wide. There was need to limit the elsewhere part. Performance was very poor.

ACHEBE AND INNES: *The Heinmann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories*

The text is popular with candidates. However, it seems there has not been adequate, or in depth study of the text. Learners need to be quite familiar with the various stories.

Question 5(a)

The casting of the question was appropriate for it was quite accessible. Knowledge of stories for some candidates was in doubt. There was tendency to paraphrase and narrate. Very few candidates were able to comment on the subject in a more meaningful manner. In some cases names of characters were mixed up. Performance was therefore poor.

Question 5(b)

The casting of the question was quite appropriate for the question was accessible though candidates failed to attend to 'imagery' and 'symbolism'. As a result, candidates were tempted to paraphrase rather than analyze and evaluating the text.

Conclusion

There is still need for teachers to adequately prepare candidates adequately for the examination.

There is need to stagger texts when they go out of the syllabus to avoid having too many new books coming in at the same time.

Teachers should address issues of style very closely in all the texts they are studying with their groups.