

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH-9153/03

NOVEMBER 2012

GENERAL COMMENTS

The November 2012 paper was generally fair. It had a number of questions that were within the candidates' grasp. The majority of the questions were appropriately worded, unambiguous and accessible. Though most of the answers were mediocre, there were a few that were very good suggesting an improvement in the quality of work produced. Most of the questions provided candidates with a chance to explore texts studied on a wide scale.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Measure for Measure*

This was a popular text that had a lot of candidates responding to questions on it.

Question 1(a)

This was a very popular question that required candidates to show an appreciation of Shakespeare's techniques on character delineation. Good candidates focused on character, function, and role. Weaker candidates had problems of not having relevant textual details. Most responses were sketchy on relevant information about Elbow.

Question 1(b)

The question proved difficult for most candidates. Most of them merely discussed the concerns in general without linking form and content. Answers pointed to lack of knowledge on the meaning of concerns.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Question 2(a)

A straight forward question that required candidates to define and discuss the concept of honour from the many perspectives that Shakespeare suggests. Weak candidates failed to distinguish between honour and respect. Some good responses were those that were focused and had relevant supportive textual details.

Question 2(a)

This was a straight forward question. Many candidates appear to have had problems with the word typical. Candidates were expected to evaluate the passage showing how it was illustrative of Shakespeare's themes in the play. Good answers discussed among other issues, Antony's transformation, love, honour and duty versus pleasure.

HAROLD PINTER: *The Caretaker*

The text is not very popular with most centres

Question 3(a)

The question was a mouthful as it proved challenging for most of the candidates. The majority of candidates failed to link the quotation with the question. Evidently candidates were confused with differences between the words "importance" and "impotence". Often "impotence" was mistaken to mean "importance". Related to this, is that "redeeming features" was taken to mean saviour, resulting in inadequate responses. Good answers were expected to demonstrate working knowledge of key phrases which re "Tragic importance" and "redeeming features."

Question 3(b)

A fairly easy question in which candidates were expected to comment on the passage focusing on the audiences reactions as the scene unfolds. Weak candidates tended to focus on characterization instead of thought and feelings.

OSCAR WILDE: *The Importance of Being Ernest*

Question 4(a)

This was a discursive question. Candidates' were expected to show an understanding of satire and how it works. Candidates had problems with the phrase "self awareness" which was often not handled adequately. Candidates who opted to oppose the statement did not do well owing to lack of material to sustain logical discussion.

Question 4(b)

This was a straight forward question which required candidates to show the suitability of the passage as an opening. Most of the candidates misinterpreted the word exposition, while others over dwelled on the wider text but largely ignored the passage. On the other hand, others merely commented on the extract without linking it the wider text.

RORY KILALEA (ed): *In the Continuum and other plays*

Question 5(a)

One of the questions that provided candidates an opportunity to apply issues discussed in the plays to the wider human community. Weak responses over dwelled on the characterization of Kuku instead of exploring contemporary issues that are problematic to humanity. Informed personal insights would have seen candidates scoring high marks.

Question 5(b)

This was also a straight forward question which required candidates to analyse the passage bringing out aspects of the characters Kuku, Jobo and Mama Kuku. Most candidates focused largely on Kuku, while other characters got cursory treatment. Good answers made relevant reference to the wide text.

HENRIK IBSEN: *A Doll's House*

Of all texts, this was the most popular one.

Question 6(a)

This was a very popular, easy and straight forward question. The responses were often too long and evidently meant to demonstrate full knowledge of the play. In most cases, evidence of inability to discriminate relevant details was very apparent. It has to be emphasized to candidates that literature demands them to purposefully select supporting evidence which further their argument and not to offload all that they remember from class discussions. There is no room for general talk when one is responding to literature questions.

Question 6(b)

This was also a popular question which however, got some of the worst responses. Candidates often paraphrased parts of the passage ignoring the central issue of its dramatic significance. Some candidates' responses made general assertions which do not show how they are responding to the task at hand. A point should be supported by textual evidence and illustrative explanations.

