

# Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE

## GCE English Language and Literature (8179/9179)

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## 6381 The Spoken Word

### Section A: Unprepared Commentary

Candidates found the texts accessible, with most able to provide meaningful comment on each. Candidates were more confident dealing with the transcript, and with identifying features of authentic speech; however, most candidates managed to make some interesting point about the extract from *The Birthday Party*. The challenge of the question (which most discriminates between higher and lower band responses) remains the task of using relevant linguistic and literary frameworks not just to identify features, but to explore their effects in the given texts.

Higher band responses demonstrated how attitudes and values are conveyed through features of language, rather than read for surface meaning, responding to 'content' alone.

Many strong responses on Text A demonstrated awareness of the context on register, compared the speakers, and noted the development or change in attitude or tone between the speakers. The dynamics of the conversation were often explored thoughtfully. On Text B, higher band responses clearly conveyed some awareness of dramatic form and purpose, for example commenting on characterisation, comedy or tension. Lower band responses typically provided little comment on Text B beyond the identification of one or two features of authentic speech.

### Section B: Pre-1900 Drama

Extract-based questions remain more popular, although (b) type questions are often answered extremely well. Candidates should be made aware that there is an expectation with (a) type questions that they make some attempt to address the language of the extract(s) provided. Of course, with (b) type questions there is more scope for comment on language of their own selection. It was reported that a surprising number of candidates wrote answers which comprised a mixture of the a) and b) question on a set text. Candidates answering a b) question may, of course, refer to the extract provided for the a) option, but should be advised against switching questions half way through an answer.

**Question 2 (a)** was slightly different to many extract-based questions in that it did not invite candidates to use the extract as a 'starting point' but asked candidates to comment on it in the light of the whole play. This question was answered quite well, with a healthy number of candidates focusing upon the language of the extract and demonstrating awareness of relevant material throughout the play.

**Question 2 (b)** also attracted some good responses. Although the prompt quotation from the play referred to 'mighty men' (i.e. plural) candidates were not penalised in any way for only writing about Henry.

**Question 3(a)** was extremely popular and there were some excellent responses. However, examiners reported that a significant number of candidates did not really address the specific question and, rather than addressing the issue of how language creates character and perspectives, provided general character profiles and relied upon plot summary. **Question 3 (b)** was popular. The successful answers explored more than just plot.

Questions 4(a) and 4(b) were answered very well by a minority of candidates, but a lot of candidates struggled to demonstrate much understanding of the play at all. A number of responses to this text comprise stock 'answers' which barely address the specific questions.

Question 5(a) was popular, with a lot of detailed, ranging and thoughtful responses made. Candidates found a lot to say about the extracts and there were many confident analyses of the relationship between Nora and Torvald, where candidates were able to use the language and dramatic features of the play to probe the psychology of their marriage. Some were not absolutely sure what constituted a 'dramatic feature' and went for plot summary, since the plot must by its nature be dramatic, but stronger candidates realised it referred to the interaction of different elements in the play. Weaker responses saw the question as an opportunity to say how awful Torvald is to Nora and omitted to say much about 'tensions'. Those who did comment on these were able to show how Nora could be manipulative, and even complicit, in the power struggle which is going on. Of those who wrote on (b) there was a clear divide between the candidates who simply agreed with the question and those who contested it in some way. The majority opted for the former and tended to write plot driven analyses of Nora and Torvald's relationship. The others were more aware of the need to refer to verbal and dramatic techniques for the presentation of character.

There were too few responses on *The Rover* and *Trelawny of the Wells* to provide meaningful feedback.

# Statistics

## Unit 1: The Spoken Word (6381)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	71	62	54	46	38
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	65	36

### Notes

**Maximum Mark (Raw):** the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.



# Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (8179/ 9179)

## Set texts

### Range of reading

'English Literature' includes American and Commonwealth writing, and significant works in translation may also be included. The set texts are drawn from a range of historical periods between 1370 and the present day, and candidates are required to study a range of texts, which must include:

**AS** • a range of literary and non-literary texts, including a minimum of two texts covering two literary genres (prose, poetry and drama) one of which must have been published before 1900. The non-literary texts must include both spoken and written language.

**A2** • a wider range of literary and non-literary texts, including two additional literary texts and at least one text published before 1770 ensuring coverage of prose, poetry and drama. The additional non-literary texts must include both spoken and written language.

The following texts are set for this specification:

### Unit 1: The Spoken Word (Closed Text)

#### Section A: Unprepared Analysis

This section will consist of an unseen extract which may involve a transcription of spoken language.

#### Section B: Pre-1900 Drama Unit

The following texts will be set in January 2006, June 2006, January 2007, June 2007, January 2008 and June 2008.

- Shakespeare: *Henry V*
- Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*
- Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- Ibsen: *A Doll's House*
- Aphra Behn: *The Rover*
- Pinero: *Trelawny of the Wells*

Candidates study **one** of the above texts.

### Unit 2: Desk Study

This unit sets pre-released textual material for writing tasks.

### Unit 3a: Shorter Fiction Study

There will be a free choice of text for this unit.

### Unit 3b: Shorter Fiction Study (Open Text)

The following texts will be set in June 2006, June 2007 and June 2008:

- Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber* (Vintage ISBN: 0099588110)
- W Somerset Maugham: *Collected Short Stories Vol. 1* (Mandarin ISBN: 074930345X) or *Collected Short Stories Vol. 1* (Vintage ISBN: 0099287390)
- James Joyce: *Dubliners* (Penguin ISBN: 0141182458)

- Alice Munro: *Selected Stories* (Vintage ISBN: 0099732416)
- F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Short Stories* (Penguin Popular Classics ISBN: 0140622381). All stories in this volume are prescribed.

Candidates study one of the above texts.

#### Unit 4a: Writing for Different Audiences and Purposes

There will be a free choice of at least two texts selected from a variety of literary and non-literary sources for this unit.

#### Unit 4b: Writing for Different Audiences and Purposes

Candidates will be given two texts as stimulus material. The texts will be drawn from literary and non-literary material.

#### Unit 5: Wider Reading (Open Text)

The following texts will be set in June 2006, June 2007 and June 2008:

##### Section A: Pre-1770 Poetry

- Chaucer: *The Merchant's Tale*, editor Hussey (CUP ISBN: 0521046319)
- Milton: *Selected Poems* (Dover ISBN: 048627554X)
- Dalglish (editor): *Eight Metaphysical Poets* (Heinemann ISBN: 0435150316)
- *Edexcel Poetry Anthology* (Section Two)
- Pope: *The Rape of the Lock* (OUP ISBN: 0198319584)

Candidates study one of the above texts.

##### Section B: Modern Literature

###### Drama

- Friel: *Translations* (Faber ISBN: 0571117422)
- David Mamet: *Oleanna* (Methuen ISBN: 0413626202)
- Tom Stoppard: *Jumpers* (Faber ISBN: 0571145698)

###### Poetry

- Sylvia Plath: *Selected Poems*, editor Hughes (Faber ISBN: 0571135862)
- Grace Nichols: *The Fat Black Woman's Poems* (all four sections) (Virago ISBN: 0860686353)
- *Edexcel Poetry Anthology* (Section One)

###### Prose

- Margaret Atwood: *Surfacing* (Virago ISBN: 0860680649)
- Julian Barnes: *Flaubert's Parrot* (Picador ISBN: 0330289764)
- Doris Lessing: *Memoirs of a Survivor* (Flamingo ISBN: 0006493254)

Candidates study one of the above texts.

#### Unit 6: Genre Studies (Closed Text)

This unit will focus on unprepared texts and extracts. Students will be required to read and understand the stylistic features and characteristics of both whole texts and extracts from the following areas: a) travel writing; b) letters, diaries and journals; c) biography and autobiography; d) speeches; e) reportage; f) scientific writing. Examples of suggested texts for this unit are given in the list of *Textbooks and Other Resources* on page 37 of the Specification.

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