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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Literature (4ET1)  
Paper 01R: Poetry and Modern Prose

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Centres are thanked for choosing Pearson Edexcel as their International GCSE English Literature provider. We very much hope that both our candidates and centres are delighted with their results.

## **Introduction**

The January 2022, 4ET1 01R series was successful and performed well. The paper was very similar in performance to previous series. There were no errors in the papers, no erratum notices and there were no enquiries from centres following the examination.

Centres are once again congratulated on preparing their candidates so well, especially during another very challenging year.

For the January 2022 paper, it was decided to remove the Anthology Poetry section due to the unprecedented circumstances related to the pandemic. The removal of one section of the paper enabled candidates and centres to access the paper with more confidence, especially after lost teaching and learning hours.

For this series, there were just two sections. In Section A, candidates were presented with an unseen poem and answered a question based on it (20 marks). For Section B, Modern Prose, candidates responded to one of two questions based on the prose text that they had studied (40 marks). The total mark for this paper was 60.

As expected, the number of entries was much lower than in previous series, however, the responses seen were a pleasure to read. The most popular prose text was *Of Mice and Men*, but there was at least one response for all novels except *The Joy Luck Club*.

A full range of marks was awarded with most candidates gaining marks in Level 3 or above. There were some extremely good responses and a number of candidates gained full marks for their prose response. (On the whole, the cohort was able and most gained marks in Levels 4 and 5.) All responses were marked by the Principal Examiner.

## **Section A Unseen Poem**

### **Q1. *Brendon Gallacher* by Jackie Kay**

**Question: Explore how the writer presents Brendon Gallacher in this poem.**

A full range of responses was seen for this poem. There were the brief answers demonstrating 'some' understanding through to the assured and perceptive.

Most candidates attempted to explore the language, form and structure and were able to identify the use of alliteration and repetition. Several candidates commented on the speaker's ownership or possession of Brendon and identified the security that Brendon gave the child. Others compared how the lives of the children contrasted and how Brendon Gallacher 'consumed her every thought' like 'a guardian angel'. There were some very sensitive readings and those that were very maturely expressed. One candidate commented that 'you can almost hear the sigh

at the end of the poem' when exploring the repeated 'Oh Brendon, oh my Brendon Gallacher'.

There were a small number of responses where candidates did not realise that Brendon was an imaginary friend and others who considered Brendon as 'simply a toy'.

When comparing with previous series, the level of demand and the range of responses was **similar**.

Key areas to consider for future series remain the same.

When responding to the Unseen Poetry, Section A, candidates should try to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of the poem
- focus on the question
- refer to form and structure and try to suggest why this may have been used
- give examples of language and explain their effect on the reader
- comment on all areas of the poem, not just the first few lines
- use short quotations and avoid copying large areas of the poem.

**SECTION B, Anthology poems, was removed for this series due to the current unprecedented circumstances. The Prose section was relabelled as Section B.**

### **SECTION B Modern Prose**

#### **Q2 *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Courage**

Courage was explored through: Atticus' courage for taking on Tom Robinson's trial; Mrs Dubose; Scout walking away from a fight with Cecil Jacobs; the contrast of the Ewells' cowardly behaviour and how courage is not seen through a physical struggle. One response gained full marks.

#### **Q3 *To Kill a Mockingbird*: a memorable character.**

There were no responses to this question.

#### **Q4 *Of Mice and Men*: Life on the ranch**

The full range of marks was awarded for this question, but there were none in Level 1. Most candidates gained marks in Levels 4 and 5 with three gaining full marks. Candidates focussed on the ranch hierarchy, the nature of the work, how men suffered injuries (such as Crooks and Candy), how ranch life was hard and low paid, loneliness, itinerant farmers and the violence. Ideas were varied and often detailed. Several characters commented on similarities with *The Grapes of Wrath*.

#### **Q5 *Of Mice and Men*: Candy**

Again, most responses were very successful. There was one each placed in Level 2 and Level 3 and the rest were Levels 4 and 5. Candidates commented on: how Candy introduces other characters, his relationship with his dog, Candy offering his

savings to George and Lennie, loneliness, how he is 'disposable' and sexist towards Curley's wife, his prejudice and use of derogatory language, being representative of the older generation and more. Responses tended to be confident and sustained.

#### **Q6 *The Whale Rider*: Names of people and places**

There were no responses to this question.

#### **Q7 *The Whale Rider*: 'Koro is a dislikeable character...' How far do you agree?**

There were just four responses to this question, all gaining marks in Levels 4 and 5. Comments included: how Koro is stubborn and is 'stuck in the past'; his distaste for Kahu leading to the reader disliking him because of his treatment of her; his lack of love and affection for females; his unacceptance of new ideas and how, despite being dislikeable, he is respected. The responses were a pleasure to read.

#### **Q8 (Chinese parables) and Q9 (Lena St. Clair) in *The Joy Luck Club***

There were no responses for this novel.

#### **Q10 *Things Fall Apart*: How does Nwoye change?**

The one response to this question was sustained. The candidate explored Nwoye's relationships with Okonkwo, Ikemefuna and the missionaries, but smaller details were not included. For example, the points about Nwoye becoming a Christian could have been developed further. Key areas of Nwoye's change, such as how his name was changed to Isaac or how his life changed following his conversion were not included in the response.

#### **Q11 *Things Fall Apart*: Marriage**

There were no responses to this question.

In comparison with previous series and with limited evidence to comment on, the Prose (Novels) questions **performed in a similar way**. The full range of marks was awarded, particularly for the most popular texts. The questions followed a similar style and there were no new phrases or surprises in the wording or topics of the questions.

In summary, and as mentioned in previous series, when responding to Modern Prose, candidates should remember to:

- focus on the question
- avoid narrative retelling of the events in the novel
- provide a range of examples from their chosen text – remember that as this is a closed book examination, examples need not be quotations but examples of events or episodes within the novel
- prove to the examiner their knowledge of the text – do not assume the examiner knows everything
- comment on contextual points and try to relate these to the points being made

- avoid dealing with context separately. Do not write a page of historical background, but link all contextual points with an example from the novel and in relation to the question being answered
- when using film versions, which are most valuable teaching aids, remind candidates that not all scenes in a film appear in the novel that they are studying and that their responses must be based on the novel and not the film version.

### **Conclusion**

The responses are always a pleasure to mark and have, once again, been very enjoyable to read.

For further commentaries, please refer to the Principal Examiner's report for the January 2022 4ET1 01 paper.

Centres should be congratulated on preparing their candidates for the examination. As always, we very much hope that you will continue to deliver this specification and that you and your students are delighted with results.

Do look at our website for more details about the Summer 2022 examinations and for the latest COVID-19 updates.

For those candidates looking to continue their English Literature studies, the Pearson Edexcel International AS and A Level (Specification references: YET01 and XET01) are ideal options. These qualifications are becoming very popular and successful and have received positive feedback from centres. Full details are available on our website.

Again, thank you for choosing Pearson Edexcel as your International GCSE provider. We should like to wish you all every success for the future.

Thank you.  
Chief / Principal Examiner  
International GCSE English Literature  
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