



General Certificate of Education

English Literature 6746

Specification B

LTB6 Exploring Texts

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

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LTB6 Exploring Texts

Candidates found this paper, entitled 'The Individual and Society', accessible and interesting. A relatively small number of centres are entering their candidates for the January module and, while some do exceedingly well, there are some who would appear not to be ready for the synoptic paper at this stage.

Candidates need to be reminded that quality is more important than quantity and that they should not feel it necessary to write at great length. The 12-page answer book they are given should be quite adequate. At times handwriting was a real problem, in some cases it would appear exacerbated by an insistence in writing more than was necessary.

Although AO1 is not targeted in question one, it is still important for candidates to write as clearly and accurately as they can in order to get their points across as effectively as possible.

Question 1

This question always asks candidates to compare and contrast the ways in which different writers, of either extracts or complete texts, present their material. Each paper has a focus, which is indicated in the pre-release material. The focus this time was theme based rather than genre based, which enabled candidates to compare and contrast the subject matter of the two literary pieces with some relevance. However, the focus of the question is, as always, on the comparison of 'the ways' in which the writer achieves his or her purposes and a concentration on content at the expense of form, structure and language will not be highly rewarded.

An understanding of form is the first essential for this question and those candidates who began their answers with a clear reference to the two very different genres chosen by Auden and Bradbury and the differences that must inevitably result from presenting their subject matter in different forms, were approaching the given material in the most appropriate way. It is worrying that there are still quite a number of candidates who have clearly spent time researching the wider contexts of the pre-release material rather than, as is intended, studying it in detail so that they are prepared to answer questions that require close-reading and detailed analysis.

Those candidates who realised the importance of AO3 were able to access the full mark range and there were some impressive comparisons of the two writers' approaches. Weaker candidates struggled with the form of *The Unknown Citizen*, often trying to designate it as comprising a number of separate stanzas and being very confused by the rhyme scheme. The irony of the poem was lost on many and even some very capable candidates struggled to explore Auden's tone. There was a pleasing recognition by many candidates of the fact that both texts were complete and of the significance of that. Most candidates had clearly worked hard on an analysis of the Bradbury short story in advance of the examination, although there were still some who had clearly relied on imported sources for their critical judgements.

Question 2

Bullet one: Most candidates seemed to have enjoyed 'The Murderer', which helped them to show a genuine engagement in assessing the applicability of the given critical viewpoints to the literary text. The mistake a lot of candidates made, including good ones, was of attempting to respond to too many of the viewpoints and thus being unable to respond to any of them in sufficient detail. It was sensible to refer briefly to them all, as many candidates did, to show that some initial evaluation had taken place but candidates would be wise in this part of the examination to concentrate on detailed consideration of one, two or three points rather than a superficial gloss on many. They were directed to give reasons for their choice and the quality of

the reasoning was the major determinant of the mark awarded. In particular candidates should be reminded that the main point of the task is to explore the literary text in order to back up the reasoning as to how far a particular viewpoint is applicable. Answers that concentrated on the viewpoints rather than the literary text therefore penalised themselves.

Bullet two: Candidates generally seemed to respond well to the request to find connections between Items Three and Four and the two literary texts. The particular way in which Paul Lashmar wrote his article for *The Guardian* confused weaker candidates, who tended to forget that it was a piece of journalism and write about it as though it were a short story. More able candidates recognised the techniques Lashmar was using to interest and hold the reader and were able to distinguish his purposes in the different parts of the text. Most candidates were able to draw at least simple parallels between Bradbury's didactic message about the dangers of too much dependence on technology and Lashmar's imagined glimpse of the results of such dependence in the twenty first century. Abler candidates connected Lashmar's focus on surveillance with Auden's similar preoccupation, while weaker candidates sometimes did not comment on Auden at all or were only able to focus on the more obvious references to technology, as in 'A phonograph, a radio...' The most able candidates wrote very perceptively about the links between all three pieces here and also in connection with the definitions of citizenship in 4a and 4b. Some very subtle links were traced with both the poem and the short story, with in many cases, admirably precise reference to the literary text to back them up.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.