

# **Scholarship**

## **2012 Assessment Report**

### **English**

## **COMMENTARY**

This paper provided real challenges for students, as well as providing tasks and questions that were accessible to a range of candidates – a wide choice of statements provided opportunities for candidates to structure independent and mature arguments through discussion, which reflected a high level of critical response. Candidates were able to identify key elements, demonstrate their knowledge of a range of texts and how they were crafted and show personal reflection.

Candidates were able to argue for and against statements. This resulted in excellent academic writing where candidates displayed perception and discrimination.

### **Section A**

The focus on creativity was one which candidates felt relatively strongly about and it encouraged a range of independent thought and some very real engagement. There were accessible differences between the two texts and this allowed candidates to make critical and thoughtful comments about the contrasts, some of which were startlingly original and highly insightful.

Several candidates made reference to the wider allusions of, 'standing upright here', in the prose and considered the ramifications of these in the discussion of creativity and others showed a real range of textual knowledge in their understandings of the various allusions in the poem. As with last year's section, candidates who were prepared to contrast and compare, produced insightful and focused discussion.

The best responses covered only a few of the aspects suggested in the opening instructions and were more cohesive. Those who followed to the letter the suggested headings, lacked depth because they were intent on a paragraph on vocabulary, then one on phrasing, and so on and ended up lacking a degree of cohesion and not making well-chosen connections. Again a similar comment was made in the 2011 report.

### **Section B**

A wide range of genres was made available in Section B and while there was an obvious focus on Shakespeare and the Novel this year, it was still encouraging to see candidates branching out into other genres, such as those provided by new technologies, where students discussed a range, including inter-active texts, for example.

There are still a number of candidates who respond in a way that is applicable to Level Three, but not for Scholarship. These responses tend to be learned and formulaic, following lines that are not established by engagement with the statement before them, but rather with a practised pre-conceived notion of what the text is about and what the examiner wants to know about it. Often these responses give huge plot summaries, concentrate on filmic techniques, for example and allude only to the statement to be discussed, with tenuous end sentences often precluded by 'this shows...'. There were several examples of scripts from particular schools, following exactly the same train of thought and argument, even down to using exactly the same wording and examples, from the same texts, which exemplifies the issue.

Those candidates, who engaged with the question, established what it meant to them, took a clear stance, had a clear understanding of the nature of the genre they chose and chose texts which would suit their argument, generally did very well. Often this was accomplished in the introduction leaving a clear path for the marker to follow.

## **Section C**

A wide range of challenging and accessible statements were provided which allowed candidates to articulate their individual perceptions of the nature of literature, their interpretation of it and the relationship between literature, themselves and others. The statements encouraged independence of thought and encouraged reference to a range of independent readings.

Once again, those candidates who made the statement their own at the start of the response, established a clear stance and chose texts which supported their views did well. To enable this connected and supported discussion it is advisable to avoid the reference to an over large numbers of texts which often precludes synthesising.

Candidates did not help themselves by providing long-winded rambling introductions with little reference to statement and/or chosen text. Candidates are reminded the introduction needs to introduce key ideas relating to the statement/topic, the stance taken and the texts which will be used.

## **SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE**

**Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:**

- chose a statement they could respond to and clearly understood
- engaged with the statement keeping to a sophisticated central discussion
- showed ‘freshness’ of response in working with their own readings and their reinterpretation of the chosen statement
- were driven by the statement and not by the text
- mounted vigorous and confident response with zest, wit, acumen and panache
- brought relevant and focused knowledge of texts to support their response
- synthesised information and response
- showed personal insight and independent, critical thought about text and genre
- formed strong, well-supported conclusions about texts in relation to the statement
- structured fluent discussion which moved from reference/quote to applied readings/analysis
- wrote with flair, sophistication, and eloquence
- sustained the ability to write well across the whole paper:

## **Section A**

- dealt with both content and crafting of the two texts in a focused and balanced discussion
- explored unfamiliar passages with perceptive analysis, receptive to nuance and author’s intention
- applied their knowledge of crafting methods in a relevant and productive way to draw out the purpose or ideas of writers
- produced a response which was independent, insightful and creative.

## **Section B**

- focused their response on the statement
- responded with a clear understanding of the genre

- developed and supported a cogent and effective thesis
- demonstrated the ability to reconsider, rework and even refresh learned materials and familiar texts so that materials were brought cogently and judiciously to support chosen topic.

### **Section C**

- focused their response on the statement
- were able to demonstrate an independence of thought
- combined breadth and depth in their discussion
- used specific and appropriate details of the chosen text(s)
- sustained their discussion in a perceptive and engaging way.

## **SCHOLARSHIP**

### **Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:**

- selected appropriate statements
- wrote a response which included critical analysis
- wrote solid essays which were fluent and well-constructed
- engaged with the statement in their response
- structured discussions with supporting and relevant reference
- showed personal insight and independent thought
- formed strong, well-supported conclusions about texts.

### **Section A**

- were able to make reference to purpose, techniques and meaning in the given extracts
- showed understanding of techniques and their use
- compared elements of the texts and were able to discuss similarities and differences.

### **Section B**

- responded to the statements
- took time to wrestle with the statement and understand it in their terms rather than assuming that the meanings were given
- used their understandings and experience of texts and genres to shape developed and linked discussion.

### **Section C**

- responded to the statements
- recognised with a degree of discrimination the thrust of the statement, producing relevant and fluent discussion
- included textual evidence fluently, selecting details rather than summarising.

## **OTHER CANDIDATES**

### **Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship typically:**

#### **Generally**

- were unable to respond to the statement and redirected materials to pre-worked /essays.
- did not fully engage with the statement
- lacked a sense of personal voice or ownership of argument
- worked at a superficial level of understanding of the statement
- responses were literal rather than analytical
- lacked a clear command of their chosen texts and readings
- wrote literary essays that were not fluent or lucid
- produced work which was unbalanced and lacked the scope to provide Scholarship level responses.

#### **Section A**

- misunderstood the unfamiliar texts, or did not compare the texts in any way
- were too focused on spotting effects or their absence
- resorted to paraphrased commentaries rather than analysis
- relied on explanation and repetition
- did not develop and structure a coherent discussion
- made general assumptions about genre and shaped their discussion by this, rather than what they actually found in the texts
- were inaccurate in knowledge and identification of language features.

#### **Section B**

- pieced together passages of pre-worked materials rather than adapting/responding to the given statement
- often included extraneous reference, detail or quotation which did not pertain to the chosen statement
- could not move beyond particular studied/prepared “past-essay” areas of a text or texts, producing generic genre related discussions.

#### **Section C**

- misunderstood the thrust of the statements, without using knowledge of texts or their own reading experience
- retained ‘pocketed’ discussion of individual texts or authors without blending their readings/responses in a relevant discussion
- were unable to show or develop a personal response.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

The examination continues to provide evidence that there are some very able thinkers and writers who can construct sophisticated responses in examination conditions with sustained eloquence and insightful comment.