

June 2004

INTERNATIONAL GCSE

MARK SCHEME

MAXIMUM MARK: 20

SYLLABUS/COMPONENT: 0486/03

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 3 (Alternative to Coursework)



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For general administrative matters, refer to the Handbook for Examiners.

The syllabus aims at encouraging candidates to make some personal response in their reading. Therefore, while examiners may have legitimate expectations as to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at all times be prepared to meet candidates on their chosen ground.

Examiners will encounter a wide range of performance in this examination, and must be prepared to use the full range of marks available.

Examiners must at all times when necessary tease out what a candidate might be trying to say to us. This is a literature not a language examination. We must recognise that it is possible for a candidate whose technical command of language is limited, but who still manages to communicate an understanding, to receive high marks. Nor should we reward fluency and display of literary terms if we find little or no evidence of such understanding. We are looking for and assessing *literary* response, not language skills.

Prescriptive notes are not provided because that is to suggest that we can have a fixed idea at this stage of how this passage will work – and this is an unseen exercise, and not a pre-tested one. The photostats of the range of candidate answers circulated for discussion at the co-ordination meeting will be central to deciding appropriate levels of expectation for response to the passage.

It is vital that examiners are constantly aware that this is unseen work – we should not be overcritical of an occasional false note or misunderstanding. The approach is embodied in the grade band descriptors. The passage offers ample opportunity for candidates to respond; candidates who, in addition to grasping the central content of the passage, can demonstrate an appreciation of other valid qualities will be rewarded highly. A perception of the literary qualities of a piece of writing seen for the first time, and a sensitive and well-expressed response to its force, constitute a very considerable achievement, and must be rewarded accordingly.

We shall meet a wide range of candidates in this examination. We must be prepared to use the range of marks available. This particularly applies to the A grade; it should be quite normal to award full marks to an essay. With only a few marks available, failure to do this will result in few candidates achieving the top grade without statistical manipulation. We are not looking for the perfect answer, whatever that might be!

In this Syllabus we aim to encourage the candidates to make some personal response to their reading. That means that, while we may have legitimate expectations to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at times be prepared to meet the candidates on their chosen ground.

We must try at all times to tease out what the candidate is trying to say to us. We must recognise that it is possible for a candidate whose technical command of English is limited, but whose language still manages to communicate understanding, to receive high marks. Nor should we reward fluency and display of literary terms if we feel that there is little evidence of such understanding. Of course, those who have linguistic capabilities of a high order are more likely to be able to convince us that they have insight, but please remember that we are looking for literary response, not language skills. Other areas of IGCSE assess the latter very well.

It is vital that we constantly remind ourselves that this is unseen work and we should not be overcritical of an occasional false note or misunderstanding. We are marking the quality of the process of engaging with literature, and not merely assessing the accuracy or otherwise of the conclusions reached. Above all, we should be alert to any response to the affective

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power of the words, however it might be expressed.

Band Descriptors for Unseen Answers

The descriptors are an attempt to guide examiners to an understanding of the qualities normally expected of, or 'typical' of work in a band. They must not be interpreted as hurdle statements. Together with the marking notes specific to the passage/poem set for that exam, they form a means of general guidance. However, as is emphasised later in the Marking Notes, the photostats taken from work produced in the examination will be the principal means by which we shall standardise the marking.

0-1	The answer does not meet the criteria for a mark in the next band
2-3	Candidates will – show just a very little awareness of.....
4-5	Candidates will – make a few straightforward points about....
6-8	Candidates will – make some straightforward points about... show a little understanding of... .
9-11	Candidates will – begin to develop a response.... show some understanding of
12-14	Candidates will – make a sensible response... show reasonable understanding of... show a little awareness of the way language works.
15-17	Candidates will – make a considered, sustained response... show clear understanding of.... show some awareness of the way language works
18-20	Candidates will – sustain a perceptive, convincing response..... show extensive understanding... respond sensitively to the way language works

Marking Notes specific to the passage

This is a working document; it is not exhaustive; it does not provide "correct" answers. The Marking Notes can only provide "best guesses" about how the question will work out, and it is subject to revision after we have looked at a wide range of scripts. The comments are intended to add flesh to the descriptors in the generic mark-scheme.

General notes on the task

There is no clear division between the material which will show the build-up of suspense and that of a sense of fear. The question should be treated as a whole.

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The whole passage centres on anticipation of the storm. The candidates should have no shortage of material to choose from. Differentiation will probably come from the awareness of different aspects of Susan Hill's writing, the sense of the writer at work and appreciation of the singularity of the expression of Duncan's fears and perceptions. Really strong candidates should appreciate, for example, that the selection of detail for the metaphors and similes in the latter part of the extract are very Duncan-orientated. As always, we should be alert for signs that the candidate has really engaged with the text and responded personally to the intensity of the writing.

Marks 2-3

Candidates will show a very little awareness of what the passage is about, though there will be almost nothing specifically about the ways Hill builds up suspense or a sense of fear.

Marks 4-5

Candidates will make a few straightforward points. There will be an elementary understanding of the passage and some awareness of the question, but comments will be very sketchy and disjointed.

Marks 6-8

Candidates will show a little understanding of the atmosphere of the passage perhaps by paraphrasing some relevant sections of it or by selecting relevant details, but without commenting on them directly. In this category, understanding might be seriously flawed in places or there may be no or few references to the actual words Hill uses. Sometimes, the candidate's conclusions will be difficult to support.

Marks 9-11

There will be clear signs that the candidate has begun to develop a response to the atmosphere of the piece and has a straightforward understanding of the main thrust of the description. There may be flaws in understanding of detail, however, and there may be an inclination to paraphrase or to select detail without useful accompanying commentary.

Marks 12-14

The basic understanding of the passage should be secure. There should be a reasonable understanding of the way the atmosphere builds up and the sense of fear. There should be a rudimentary response to the way Susan Hill writes, demonstrating, for example, the way she appeals to our different senses and the power of the vocabulary and imagery. Candidates might refer to her descriptions of the behaviour of the people and the animals in the passage but comments on these will generally be very straightforward in this mark range.

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Marks 15 – 17

The response should show a clear understanding of the way Hill builds up suspense and a sense of fear in the passage. There are many features to comment on and we must allow candidates to choose their own ground in this mark range. However, we should give credit for:

An awareness of the soft, tense beginnings as the wind picks up.

The brief allusions to the behaviour of the people in the passage, Davey Ward and Cragg – with his terse forecast.

The descriptions of the gulls and the natural premonitions of the animals.

The vivid imagery: "tearing the bricks up like roots of a tooth", "whole streets had dissolved like paper..." "fine as splinters", "edges eaten away like a biscuit."

The exploration of Duncan's rabid imagination as he alludes to the local folklore centred on past flooding.

Whatever their focus, we must look for more developed comment than in the 12-14 range and a sense that candidates have appreciated the passage as a whole.

Marks 18-20

There should be evidence of real engagement with the passage. One might find here an awareness of the gradual development in intensity as Duncan's fears intensify. There may be an understanding of the ways that Hill taps into elemental fears in her evocations of Duncan's feelings. There may be a searching exploration of the words of the passage or developed commentary on the imagery. There might be comments on less obvious use of words, like the "cold" steeples of churches, "wild" hares "racing" for shelter. There will probably be evidence of an appreciation of the *different* techniques used. We should not expect the use of literary terminology to explain these features but should welcome them if they aid the candidate's discourse. Above all, we should be alive to signs in the way that the candidate writes that he or she has entered into the world that Hill has created.