

CAMBRIDGE
INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

November 2003

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.

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Marking Notes specific to the passage set for November 2003

This is a working document; it is not exhaustive; it does not provide “correct” answers. The comments on the individual grades are intended to add flesh to the descriptors in the generic mark-scheme.

General Notes on the task

The challenge for us as examiners will be to be sensitive to candidates’ responses to the passage. The primary question asks them to state how they feel – we can interpret this as feeling for the atmosphere of the passage; feeling for the man in the passage, whether empathetic or not, feeling inspired by the horse or general feeling *about* the events described. The factor we should be looking for is the sense of sensitive engagement with aspects of the passage, rather than mere comprehension.

This might be explicitly described: “I feel a deep sense of unease as I read this passage...” but we must be alert for when it is merely *implied* in a narrative. Clearly, this will not be as direct an answer, but it should not go unrewarded. We should be clearly distinguishing between flat, mechanical paraphrases and lively, responsive narratives, which in their own way will show what the candidate is feeling.

The question does not explicitly ask candidates to show from the way the passage is written to explain why they feel the way they do. Many candidates will assume that this should be part of a well-rounded answer. However, the only reference to style as such is in the second bullet point (the way the horse is presented). We might, therefore expect for a 12-15 answer that there might be rather less analysis of language than we have expected in recent years. However, for the higher bands, close reading should still be evident.

Mark 0-1 : Insufficient to be placed in a higher band.

Marks 2-3

Candidates will show a very little awareness of what the passage is about, though there will be none or very little response to the writing, character or situation.

Marks 4-5

Candidates will make a few straightforward points. There will be a very basic understanding of the main events of the passage and perhaps some direct or implied statement of feelings, but any comments will be sketchy or disjointed. There might be answers in this range which offer straightforward, brief narratives of what happens in the extract.

Marks 6-8

The candidate will show a little implied response to the passage, perhaps by paraphrasing it with a very little feeling, or by selecting some details which imply that s/he has made a response to it, though there probably will be little direct comment. We might find in this range answers which show an extended understanding of the narrative and the central character but *no* sense of engagement with the passage at any level. In this category, understanding might be seriously flawed, or the candidate’s conclusions difficult to support.

Marks 9-11

There will be signs that the candidate has begun to develop a response to the passage, on whatever ground the candidate chooses, whether towards the central character, the general

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atmosphere or the whole experience. Mostly, in this range the response might not be directly stated, but might be apparent in the candidate's use of words.

Where a simple direct response is articulated, there will be little or no support for the conclusions reached.

There may be flaws in understanding of detail in this range and there might be an inclination to paraphrase or rely on selection of detail without commentary to reveal a response.

Marks 12-14

There will be a rudimentary response directly articulated in this category to at least two of the areas outlined in the bullet points. There should be *some* effort to support this with reference to the text. However, we may not expect much analysis of Hughes' writing. There might be some references to the way the horse is described, which shows a little awareness of the way language works, but we need not insist on this in this range.

Marks 15-17

There should be a clearly articulated statement of how the candidate feels at different stages of the story. The areas outlined by at least two of the bullet points should be referred to. There should be a sense of engagement with the passage and for marks 16-17, some response to the words and phrases which Hughes uses.

We must be open to any response that the candidate feels moved to give us, but there should be signs that s/he appreciates some of the detail in the writing, such as the descriptions of the rain, the vagaries of the man's state of mind, the description of the horse as "tall as a statue, and a ghostly silver in the undercloud light" etc. We need not in this range look for more than the awareness that they might add up to something significant, though there will be some feeling for the passage as a whole.

Marks 18-20

There should be evidence of real engagement with the passage, but we must expect, in answers to this open question, a range of responses and approaches.

Differentiation might arise from evidence of the candidate's sensitivity to the atmosphere of the piece, which should be supported with reference to the language Hughes uses. It might also arise from the candidate's ability to empathise with the man's state of mind. There might be considered speculation about what kind of experience this was. Was the horse real or supernatural or a product of the man's fevered imagination? There will probably be some reference to the descriptions of the rain and how important these are in the passage as a whole.

There will be probably in the 19-20 range a closer, more analytical examination of the language of the piece and an exploration of how tension is built up through the writing.

Probably there will be reference to all 3 bullet points, but we should be happy if a candidate chooses to explore two aspects in greater depth.

Nevertheless, there should be a sense that the candidate has appreciated the extract as a whole.