

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2006**

LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The candidate entry for the Literatures in English examination continues to increase. The 2006 examination had a combined candidate entry (Units 1 and 2) of 2 692, compared to the previous year's entry of 2 239. The performance on this year's examination of the new revised syllabus shows an improvement, one that is even more noticeable in Unit 2. In Paper 02, candidates are earning higher marks on "application of knowledge" especially on the specific questions. However, candidates need to be mindful that they should use every opportunity to score marks on the area of "knowledge and understanding" and they are not always exploiting these opportunities presented in the specific questions of Unit 1 Module 1 and Unit 2 Module 2. Also, it is important that candidates respond to the questions in their entirety and not ignore some aspects. The ability to select relevant knowledge to make an argument in response to all aspects of a question must be demonstrated in candidates' responses in order to maximize their performance in the area of "application of knowledge." Candidates must be reminded that of the 40 marks allotted for a question on Paper 02, "application of knowledge" carries the largest portion of those marks—16 marks. Answering only part of the question will not guarantee maximum scores.

In both Units 1 and 2, candidate performance on Paper 01 continues to be strong, with responses to Drama being the most pleasing. Of the three genres, the least satisfactory performance has traditionally been on Poetry. Teachers have been encouraged to continue devoting extra attention to this genre and this year there has been an improvement in performance in the Poetry module. Generally, there continues to be room for improvement, especially with respect to candidates' appreciation of the literary devices being deployed and their understanding of the significance of the writer's manipulation of the resources of the genre for artistic effect. In general, students need more practice in developing their analytical skills, and in applying those skills to answering questions on this paper.

There has been significant improvement on Paper 02 of the examination, but there is still a great deal of room for improvement on some aspects of this paper. While candidates are gaining more marks for showing evidence of knowledge of genre, the performance on some modules is weaker than on others. We are pleased to see the improvement on the Prose module; however, candidates need to improve their question analysis skills to maximize their "application of knowledge" scores. While many candidates are familiar with the conventions of each genre, many candidates need to understand not just the terms associated with the generic features, but the ways in which writers manipulate the different features of each genre to achieve artistic effect. The ability to explain the ways in which different artistic choices reinforce an author's view on a particular issue is an important skill for candidates to learn; giving a list of features of the genre is not sufficient. Candidates will also have to continue to improve their essay writing, question analysis and argumentative skills in order to improve their performance. The ability to analyse and synthesize evidence in support of an argument is crucial to doing well. In the Prose module, in particular, that requires candidates to use two books in their response to the question, candidates need more practice in comparative essay writing.

Although all modules on Unit 2, Paper 02 were satisfactorily done, the general performance on Paper 01 of both Units could still be improved. Candidates have to be careful that they pay equal attention to both Papers in order to maximize their overall performance. Far too many candidates spend time re-writing the questions and far too many fail to attempt entire questions or parts of questions. Since the marks on this Paper are awarded for specific responses, failure to attempt a question results in an inability to score marks for that section or question. Candidates should also pay attention to how many marks are awarded for particular questions because they might lose too many marks when they fail to attempt questions with a higher weighting of marks. It is clear that students need to be given practice in time management under examination conditions. Some candidates spent far too long on the first module and seemed to have had difficulty completing the other modules.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

Paper 01

Module 1 - Drama

The questions in this module tested candidates' ability to explain the ways in which meaning is conveyed through the playwright's choice of language, use of literary devices, use of structural elements such as characterization and use of features of drama such as stage directions. Candidates found this extract interesting and responded well to the questions. However, the ability to explain the significance of irony and the way it contributes to dramatic effect was not always evident in candidates' responses. The best performance of candidates on Paper 01 was on this module.

Question 1

Most candidates scored full marks on this question.

Question 2

The question was generally well handled. The function of dramatic devices continues to pose difficulty for weaker candidates. Although most candidates were able to identify what constituted inclement weather, many were unaware of the dramatic function served by the rain, lightning and thunder, in advancing plot, creating suspense, and visually representing character's isolation. Stronger candidates were able to interpret the weather as functioning both dramatically and symbolically.

Question 3

Candidates found this question straightforward and responded satisfactorily. Responses suggested that candidates had generally understood the ways in which stage directions reveal character.

Question 4

This question on the dramatic significance of movement on style was satisfactorily handled.

Question 5

This question was satisfactorily handled. However, many candidates failed to understand the concept of irony and to apply it appropriately to the extract.

Module 2 – Poetry

Candidates' performance in this module continues to improve. The questions in this section tested candidates' ability to recognize imagery and symbolism, to correctly identify literary devices and to evaluate the effectiveness of their use. The knowledge of poetic elements continues to be an area of weakness and candidates' ability to make evaluative judgements on the use of these techniques is equally weak.

Question 6

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question.

Question 7

This question was generally poorly answered. Weaker candidates were not able to identify the effectiveness of the poet's use of a one-line stanza. Stronger candidates were able to recognize that both the physical layout of these one-line stanzas and the choice of words help reinforce isolation and desolation.

Question 8

Candidates were not able to identify the appropriate poetic techniques. Candidates would benefit from doing more exercises that help them to recognize the purpose and the effectiveness of literary devices. Far too often, they resort to labelling all poetic techniques as examples of simile. Figures of speech such as personification and allusion, while they could be identified, were not appropriately explained in terms of effectiveness.

Question 9

Candidates responded well to this question. They were able to identify the effectiveness of the poet's word choice.

Question 10

Candidates' responses were weak on this question. They were not always able to explain the ways in which the title of the poem is appropriate. However, some responses were both creative and insightful.

Module 3 - Prose Fiction

Candidates responded positively to this extract, but many tended to be tangential in their responses, focusing too closely on indications of Jonathan's ill-temper, rather than on the circumstances which produce that mood. While candidates understood the extract and could speak clearly to the plot, they were unable to explain the ways in which meaning is conveyed through narrative technique. Weaker candidates continue to have difficulty commenting on the effectiveness of literary devices. In general, students should be given more practice in developing their analytical skills and in applying them to the answering of questions on this paper.

Question 11

This question was well done. Candidates found the question straightforward and responded satisfactorily. Most candidates scored full marks.

Question 12

This question posed some difficulty for weaker candidates. While many candidates were able to identify the literary devices, they were unable to explain their effectiveness.

Question 13

This question was well handled. Weaker candidates tended to make comments on character that were unrelated to the stimulus given.

Question 14

Generally candidates were able to explain the effective use of exclamation marks in the passage. Stronger candidates were able to relate the use of exclamation marks to the animation that characterises the entire scene.

Question 15

This question was not well done. Candidates, while they were able to identify significance of the last sentence, were unable to establish a relationship between this sentence and the extract as a whole. In rare instances were candidates able to recognize the structural antithesis of the sentence the way in which the change in mood is marked both through word choice and structure.

Paper 02

While the performance on the essays remains satisfactory in the area of knowledge, application of knowledge and in organization, many candidates still fail to formulate a proper introduction and conclusion to their argument. Outlining the argument in the beginning of an essay establishes, from early, a candidate's main thesis and provides a guide for the candidate to maintain focus throughout the essay. Also, it is often important to define the terms on which the argument rests. Many candidates often seem to write without planning or outlining. While some referred to knowledge of genre or the writer's biographical, historical and social contexts in their answers, many of the candidates were still not synthesizing this information into a strong argument in response to the questions. In the profile of organization, many candidates are not maximizing their marks by paying particular attention to the effective use of thesis sentence, introduction, transition, conclusion and paragraphing. Also, too often the language of candidates at this level remains pedestrian.

While there has been improvement on the Prose module with fewer candidates merely telling the story, more work has to be done on reinforcing the features of the genre. Carefully selected incidents from the plot should be used primarily as evidence to support an argument. Furthermore, elements of prose fiction beyond plot and theme should be given attention. Narrative point of view, characterization, setting, the use of various motifs, literary devices, styles of narration like interior monologue, stream of consciousness and satire might become significant aspects of the writer's technique in exploring various issues. On the Poetry module, students should be guided not to treat poetry as merely sociology. Whenever some themes are highlighted in a question, candidates tend to ignore the fact that the writer has chosen a particular genre to articulate those concerns. A question about "social or personal issues" cannot ignore the poetic expression of these issues. Attention to the elements of poetry, literary devices and poetic forms, for example, should be given equal attention. In Drama, more focus needs to be given to objectives 2 and 3 of the Drama objectives. Candidates' ability to "assess how meaning is expressed through, the playwright's choice of language, use of literary devices and stage conventions and manipulation of the structural elements of drama" is what is being tested. Much more emphasis has to be given to exercises that help the students develop critical judgements about literature.

Module 1 - Drama

Question 1

The Drama module contains the text-specific questions in this Unit and these allow candidates to focus on particular aspects of the dramatic texts. These questions were designed to test a candidate's ability to recognize the ways in which artistic choice influences the impact of the drama on the audience. Any recognition of the ways in which the playwright's choice of language, literary devices, structural elements and features of drama might influence audience response would have been credited. While the responses were generally satisfactory, some candidates tended to focus too narrowly and missed opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of genre. Question 1, for example, directs the candidate's attention to the dramatic significance of Don Pedro's character. In this question, the relationship between characterization and dramatic effect is emphasized. While many candidates could identify features and actions of the character very well, they were less able to discuss the dramatic significance of Shakespeare's characterization to develop plot, to act as a foil for other characters or to create humour or intrigue in the play.

Question 2

This question was slightly more popular than Question 1. Many candidates who attempted this question did not do very well. While candidates could identify contrasting couples in *Much Ado About Nothing*, they were not very good at recognizing the ways in which that contrast between couples contributed to the humour of this Shakespearean comedy. Although the question created the possibility of arguing that the contrast between couples was not the primary source of humour, they tended to ignore the "to what extent" part of the question. This section of the question allows for students to exercise their judgement on the writer's artistic choices. It was surprising that candidates, in their preparation, did not pay attention to such an important part of a comedy—humour—and the ways in which the playwright produces humour in this comedy. Part of the knowledge of the sub-genre of comedy would necessitate understanding the ways in which humour is produced.

Question 3

Candidates who chose this question performed satisfactorily. Candidates were very good at identifying and discussing the theme of honour and the characterization linked with that theme. However, they failed to discuss thoroughly the "dramatic representation" of that theme, outside of characterization. The important marriage between form and content or theme and dramatic technique should be given emphasis in preparing candidates. More attention needs to be given to objectives 2 and 3 of the drama objectives. Candidates' ability to "assess how meaning is expressed through, the playwright's choice of language, use of literary devices and stage conventions and manipulation of the structural elements of drama" is what is being tested. Much more emphasis has to be given to exercises that help the students develop critical judgements about literature.

Question 4

Candidates did not handle this second question on *Henry IV, Part 1* as well as they did Question 3. Many candidates made use of historical information, connected characterization to the theme of war and satisfactorily discussed thematic development. However, many candidates failed to demonstrate the dramatic significance of war in this play. In what ways did the issue of war provide the dramatist with ready material for a dramatic representation? How might the war issue lead to dramatic plot development, to elements of suspense and high tension, to theatrical stage pictures and the use of costume, lighting, sound effects and stage props? This central relationship between theme and generic resources to represent theme needed to be explored by the candidates in order to maximize their performance.

Module 2 – Poetry

Question 5

This question directed candidates' focus on the significance of word choice and the power of poetry. While many candidates could discuss themes adequately, many failed to evaluate the significance of word choice or any other literary device in producing powerful poetry. The essential question of making judgements about what makes poetry "powerful" or effective was often ignored. Objective 3 of the syllabus needs to be fore-grounded in candidate-preparation: "explain how meaning is expressed through the poet's choice of language, literary devices, and structural elements commonly found in poetry, such as image, symbol, alliteration, assonance, metre, lineation, and rhyme".

Question 6

For many candidates, this question was a popular choice and many found Margaret Atwood and Robert Frost very useful for exploring themes related to the personal and the social. Many candidates demonstrated knowledge of the poet's life, knowledge of criticism on the poetry and knowledge of appropriate themes. However, the question of the ways in which the genre of poetry is used to "effectively" reinforce theme was often ignored. So while students might score marks for knowledge, the area of application of knowledge was often less than satisfactory because half of the question was ignored. Many candidates are not making use of the opportunity provided for presenting discriminating arguments that reflect their own informed opinion of and personal response to the poetry taught. Questions that ask them to discuss "*the extent to which,*" for example, "poetry is used as an effective vehicle," are specially designed to elicit candidates' informed personal response. Many could have highlighted the elements of poetry that help to reinforce various themes.

Question 7

Many candidates chose this question and gave enthusiastic and appropriate responses using *Brother Man* and *A Grain of Wheat*. Many understood what the term "moral character" meant and the authors' representation of "moral character." While this question was satisfactorily done, weaker candidates encountered difficulty in establishing a relationship between moral character and narrative solution. The link to narrative ending or narrative resolution or the denouement in narrative was not always in evidence, although some very good candidates saw that certain moral characters helped to determine narrative endings or even that some moral characters did not receive the kinds of solutions they deserved. Also, many candidates failed to evaluate whether this connection between moral character and narrative solution was the distinguishing characteristic of the novels under study. In this regard, many candidates again missed opportunities to provide more nuanced discussions of the question. Some responses provided more in-depth analysis of one book than the other. Candidates should strive to give equal attention to each book in this two-book response. More practice in comparative essay writing is needed.

Question 8

This question required candidates to assess the relationship between narrative technique and theme, between form and content. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question. The phrase “narrative technique” could be defined in a number of ways. Candidates offered “narrative point of view,” “narrative structure,” and various narrative strategies such as motifs, interior monologue or symbolism as reasonable definitions of the term and set up their arguments accordingly. This is the kind of critical thinking that the examination promotes. Teachers need to continue to help the students develop the ability to set up an argument around a clearly defined set of criteria that is supported by textual and extra-textual evidence. Weaker candidates experienced problems in linking narrative technique with theme. Teachers should ensure that discussions of themes are not separated from discussions of narrative form and technique. Students should be encouraged to articulate their own informed personal responses to literature and should be made aware of opportunities that questions provide for such personal opinion. This section of the question, “discuss the extent to which you agree,” provides such an opportunity.

UNIT 2

Paper 01

Module 1 - Drama

The questions on this dramatic extract tested students’ ability to identify and evaluate strategies of character revelation. This module, usually one where candidates perform very well, was poorly handled. Generally candidates did not demonstrate knowledge of the literary function of dramatic irony and asides— literary techniques which are included in the syllabus. Weaker candidates continue to have difficulty explaining the ways in which playwrights manipulate language and literary techniques to create dramatic effect.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to correctly identify Joseph’s state of mind.

Question 2

The first part of the question was well handled. Candidates were generally able to indicate that Joseph needed privacy away from the prying eyes of his neighbour. However, the second part of the question required that candidates demonstrate knowledge of the ways in which a stage direction could produce dramatic significance. Many candidates proceeded to establish, erroneously, a clandestine relationship between Joseph and his neighbour. Stronger candidates were able to explain the ways in which a drawn screen contributes to secrecy and heightens audience’s anticipation of the action to follow.

Question 3

This question was poorly handled. Even while stronger candidates were able to correctly identify literary device, they were not able to explain the significance. In the instance of Part 3 (ii) candidates failed to recognize the irony of Joseph’s comment and, instead, interpreted ‘constancy’ as personification. Candidates had difficulty understanding the ways in which language functions in this extract.

Question 4

This question was not well done. The question required candidates to assess the ways in which the playwright deploys literary conventions for effect. Candidates were generally unable to identify the irony in Lady Teazle’s opening speech.

Question 5

This question was not well done. The question required candidates to assess the ways in which the playwright deploys literary conventions for effect. Candidates were generally unable to comment on the dramatic function served by the asides. Stronger candidates were able to show how the asides contribute to plot development and character revelation.

Module 2 - Poetry

The questions in this section tested candidates' ability to recognize poetic symmetry, to comment on the poet's use of symbolism and to correctly identify literary devices and to evaluate their effective use. Generally, candidates had difficulty explaining the effectiveness of literary devices and, accordingly, were unable to comment on the significance of these devices. However, there was an improvement in candidate performance in this module compared with that of last year.

Question 6

Candidates responded positively to this question and correctly identified the situation described in the poem.

Question 7

Candidates performed well on this question; they were able to explain the association between the uniform and happiness.

Question 8

Generally, candidates were able to identify the various poetic devices, but as in questions of this nature, the weaker candidates were unable to explain the effectiveness of those literary devices.

Question 9

This question was well done. Many candidates were able to explain the meaning of the line and to comment on its significance.

Question 10

This question was not well done. Candidates did not know the meaning of the word "shroud" and were, therefore, unable to comment on the effectiveness of its use.

Module 3 - Prose Fiction

Candidates generally performed poorly on this module. Stronger candidates related intelligently to the subject matter. Weaker candidates found this extract difficult and many did not pay sufficient attention to the writer's use of poetic prose. Consequently, many did not respond satisfactorily to the questions. As with the other modules, many candidates failed to understand the significance of the writer's deployment of literary devices and therefore could not comment on their effectiveness.

Question 11

This question was well done.

Question 12

This question was poorly handled. Candidates were unable to comment on the effectiveness of the writer's choice of words such as "forked," "veined," and "vicious." They also could not recognize any significance in the writer's use of these words in such close proximity to each other, or the structural significance of a sentence made lengthy through the piling up of images.

Question 13

Candidates were able to identify figures of speech but encountered difficulty explaining their effectiveness and tended to paraphrase the stimulus given.

Question 14

This question was well handled by stronger candidates and responses were both creative and insightful. Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase the stimulus given.

Question 15

This question posed a challenge for weaker candidates. Many of them did not pay sufficient attention to the requirements of the question and failed to recognize that they were required to comment on the ways in which narrative technique conveys the power of the storm. Many merely described the power and consequence of the storm.

Paper 02

As in Unit 1, Paper 02, the performance on Unit 2, Paper 02 has improved from last year. It was gratifying to see improvement on this paper, especially in the area of knowledge. In the Drama module where candidates are required to answer the questions with reference to two books, they will not score very high marks if they only write on one book. In respect to the Poetry module, there is evidence of that candidates are not paying sufficient attention to craft. Even when theme is highlighted in a question, that does not mean that candidates should ignore aspects of poetic craft. The same comment is applicable to the Prose module. Candidates must pay attention to the directive of questions to the matter of artistic representation. Not enough reference is being made to the elements of prose fiction such as narrative point of view, characterization, setting, structure, motif and use of literary devices that provide a writer with tools for representation.

Candidates should be given exercises in improving their writing which is often pedestrian. At this level, clarity of expression and even elegance in writing is expected. When candidates take contrary positions to ones articulated in the question, they often find room for less clichéd responses and for offering their personal responses to and critical evaluations of literary practice. Many more candidates need to be encouraged to make use of the spaces created by the questions to offer their unique informed perspectives on literary production.

Module 1 - Drama

Question 1

This question required candidates to examine the relationship between the dramatic significance of the climax and plot and character development. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question. While most candidates could discuss with confidence climax, plot and characterization, many failed to adequately examine “dramatic significance.” Candidates should pay particular attention to the dramatic impact created by playwrights’ manipulation of genre. The ability of candidates to assess the dramatic impact of a playwright’s use of the structural elements of drama was crucial for doing well on this question. Moreover, candidates need not to have agreed with the proposition. They could have argued that other dramatic techniques such as costuming, lighting and sound effects determined the dramatic effect of climax or that plot and characterization are only part of the dramatic significance.

Question 2

Requiring candidates to examine the extent to which spectacle is significance to drama, this question appeared to be the less popular choice. Most candidates seemed unable to understand the key term of the question: “spectacle.” The word is neither technical nor archaic. It was surprising that candidates at this level should have been stumped by such a non-technical term. The term that simply means “a visually striking performance or display” is an everyday word. Moreover, candidates were given an opportunity to suggest other factors that contribute to the theatrical in dramatic works. The question essentially is a question about what contributes to the dramatic in theatre. Any attention to objectives 1, 2 or 3 should have provided ready answers to the question. More attention to question analysis and to the significant features and elements of drama will help candidates to respond more effectively to such questions.

Module 2 - Poetry

Question 3

This question represented the first of four specific questions on Paper 2. Most candidates performed creditably, but they did not take full advantage of gaining higher grades with this question. While most candidates identified thematic evidence of landscape in Senior’s poetry, many ignored the aspect of the question that pointed to landscape as a stylistic device. The ways in which “gardening” operates a central motif or other aspects of the landscape—trees, plants, land, fruits, natural disasters—function as metaphors or symbols were often ignored in the responses. Teachers must engage in exercises that force students to make connections between poetic technique and theme. They should also be warned about discussing thematic issues in isolation and treating poetry as merely history or sociology; they should not ignore the artistry of poetry. Objective 3 of the poetry objectives needs to be emphasized. The ability to “explain how meaning is expressed through the poet’s choice of language, literary devices, and the structural elements commonly found in poetry such as imagery, symbol, alliteration, assonance, metre, lineation and rhyme” needs to be demonstrated to maximize marks. Some more capable candidates identified the motif of gardening or selected the hurricane poems and discussed both style and technique in response to this question. These were very carefully organized and synthesized responses that were very pleasing.

Question 4

As with Question 3, many candidates failed to engage the poetic in their responses to this question. Many candidates interpreted the question to be primarily thematic. All candidates must remember that this examination is heavily genre-based and all questions will require answers sensitive to this demand of the syllabus. Discussions of theme should not be separated from discussions of poetic technique. So many candidates agreed with the proposition but only offered discussions about Senior's representation of women's issues. Very little attention was given to the ways in which gender might also be reflected in her writing style beyond theme. Her use of female deities, mythological figures and historical figures did not often feature in such arguments. Also, the whole oral tradition that she evokes as part of her style that is often aligned with women's revolt or a feminine resource is often not acknowledged in these discussions. Even the traditional feminist appropriation of traditional poetic conventions for feminist ends is missed as well in these kinds of responses. All questions on this examination will require responses examining the relationship between theme and style.

Question 5

Many candidates who attempted this question were able to avoid the theme/poetic technique divide because the question emphasized this relationship. Many candidates were able to correctly discuss both the social and political context of Martin Carter's poetry as well as features of his poetic craft such as symbolism, imagery, metaphor and tone. This question was satisfactorily done. Many of the very good scripts rejected the proposition of the question as seen in this response:

Martin Carter was a Guyanese poet based entirely in the Caribbean. In addition to being a poet, Carter was also a political activist and was involved in Guyana's struggle for independence from the cruel institution of the plantation system. Though a strange combination at first, Carter's poetic abilities and his involvement in politics were quite synchronized and produced powerful weapons which were used to spur on the people of Guyana to struggle against oppression. Therefore, it is short-sighted to state that "it is his politics and not his poetic genius that makes Martin Carter a remarkable poet."

Question 6

This question was not as popular as the previous one. However, candidates could discuss tone and other features of Carter's poetic craft satisfactorily. One candidate, for example, does not restrict her/his argument to this reasonable conclusion: "As a Caribbean poet living in a time of political oppression, social discontent and among a people hungry for change, *Martin Carter's poetry is written in tones of rebellion ... , but, at the same time, a common thread of hope runs through much of his work.*" However, the candidate goes on to argue "tone, while significant, merely works hand in hand with other features of Carter's craft which have a great bearing on meaning." These kinds of nuanced arguments are likely to score high marks in the area of "application of knowledge."

Module 3 - Prose Fiction

Question 7

Responses to this question were generally satisfactory. Most candidates could discuss convincingly the relationship between the past and the present in any one of the three books on the syllabus. *The Sun Also Rises* and *Clear Light of Day* were popular choices. However, not all candidates paid attention to the phrase "the ways in which the relationship ... is represented" in the question. In this regard, many only answered half of the question and the section that allowed them to demonstrate knowledge of genre was ignored. The more sophisticated responses engaged with the narrative techniques of characterization, motifs, setting and symbolism as significant features of the writer's representation of that relationship between past and present.

Question 8

While this question was satisfactorily done, on the whole, many candidates concentrated more on the writers' "representation of the characters' encounters with boundaries" and very few on whether this aspect of the novels represented the distinguishing feature of modern works. Opportunities for more refined arguments are often avoided by most candidates and this suggests that they need more practice in developing their own informed responses to literature and in building confidence in making judgements on artistic expression.

Paper 03 - Internal Assessment for Units 1 and 2

The performance on the Internal Assessment remains at the same satisfactory level as last year. The samples show evidence that candidates are enjoying these activities that provide room for their critical judgement, informed personal response and creativity. Some schools/teachers are doing great, creative work for these assignments. For example, candidates are writing and acting and reviewing plays. Candidates seem to be enjoying these exercises and this is part of the goal of such activities. However, in some cases, teachers need to be careful that the assignments set are able to fulfil the objectives of the syllabus. Length, complexity and appropriateness in light of syllabus objectives must be considered. Reviews given for critical responses must be of high literary and academic merit. Teachers should ensure that essays easily downloaded from the Internet, for example are carefully screened and critically assessed for their analytical value. Teachers need to continue to be vigilant about plagiarism but should always provide the evidence and explanation when such an example is included in the sample.

Some schools/teachers are not paying enough attention to the requirements of the syllabus. Here are a few reminders:

1. The syllabus stipulates the use of "prescribed" texts for assignments.
2. It is the detailed commentary (of 1500-2000 words) that is marked out of 48 not the reinterpretation or other creative pieces.
3. Teachers should ensure that if students are given the highest marks in each category their assignments are excellent in nature.
4. Some teachers are not adhering to the stipulation of sending 5 samples. Some send two or three even when they have 8 or 15 candidates doing the examination. Some send in 2 of 3 even though the rules say all should be submitted if there are fewer than 5 candidates.