Level 1/2 Certificate

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

CONTENTS

Level 1/2 Certificate

OCR Level 1/2 Certificate Living Texts (J945)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

B931 Analysing Texts

General Comments

This June there were 11 centres that entered their candidates for the Analysing Texts unit. The entry was very encouraging as the quality of the responses adequately met the assessment criteria and the consistency of marking indicated that centres had been able to meet the requirements of this relatively new specification.

General Admin

This was excellent overall. Folders were submitted on time and were all well presented, with detailed annotated comments making the moderation process much easier. In many cases the annotated comments helpfully referred to the assessment criteria.

The electronic sampling system clearly facilitated the whole process.

Generally there was clear evidence that internal moderation had taken place and very few moderation adjustments were needed. Marking was generally consistent and centres had been conscientious in their application of the assessment criteria.

Response to texts

The diversity of texts that had been chosen was reflected in original and interesting responses from the candidates. Interestingly this year some centres had chosen media texts, ranging from the humour of Peter Kay to the wartime speeches of Winston Churchill. In addition there were responses to texts as widely spread as *The Fall of the House of Usher* to Andrew Payne's *Mugged*. Centres need to be reminded, however, that their choice of text sometimes prevents candidates from making the sustained and convincing response that is expected of a Band 1 or Band 2 candidate, especially when there is a requirement to make precise and perceptive references to detail from the text. This year, work from some centres was only just within the accepted OCR tolerance because of this lack of detail, and centres need to be aware of this in the future if they are to avoid having their marks being adjusted accordingly.

Summary

Generally this was an impressive entry; centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the specification and responded appropriately. Teachers are to be complimented for their hard work in delivering this component, and their conscientious approach and consistency of standards was reflected in the quality of work that was submitted for final moderation.

B932 Recreating Texts

General Comments

This June there were 11 centres that entered candidates for the Recreating Texts unit. The entry was very encouraging as the quality of the responses adequately met the assessment criteria and the consistency of marking indicated that centres had been able to meet the requirements of this relatively new specification.

General Administration

This was excellent overall. Folders were submitted on time and were all well presented with detailed annotated comments, making the moderation process much easier. In many cases the annotated comments helpfully referred to the assessment criteria.

The electronic sampling system clearly facilitated the whole process.

Generally there was clear evidence that internal moderation had taken place and very few moderation adjustments were needed. Marking was generally consistent and centres had been conscientious in their application of the assessment criteria.

Response to texts

The diversity of responses gave much to enjoy on this entry. The majority of candidates seemed to have really engaged with the characters whose voices they adopted, and much of the writing was original and engaging. Some centres submitted quite large entries of candidates who had all done the same task, and this did narrow the opportunity that this specification offers. Diary entries seem again to be a popular choice, with the result that the articulation of a character's own voice became the essential skill tested. Centres must remember that matters of plotting, setting, descriptive style and narrative voice are all areas that could be explored. However it was good to see interviews with Wilfred Owen and Jessie Pope and travel writing in the voice of Bill Bryson.

Summary

Generally this was an impressive entry, and centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the specification and responded appropriately. Teachers are to be complimented for their hard work in delivering this component, and their conscientious approach and consistency of standards was reflected in the quality of work that was submitted for final moderation.

B933 Comparing Texts

This unit involves candidates studying the relationships between texts of any genre and exploring how these connections shape readers' responses. One of the challenges of this unit is to find pairings of texts that reflect and develop candidates' own personal interests. There were many interesting combinations of texts presented in this session. Canonical texts featured strongly, with candidates exploring text and film/TV re-imaginings of *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Jane Eyre* and others. Many candidates explored poetry, too, with the First World War poets proving particularly popular. Modern poetry was also represented, with Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage being compared by several candidates. Less well known texts and some young adult fiction were also presented. It was very pleasing to see centres organising the unit so candidates could select their own texts. To have a range of texts being studied by a group is of course one of the great advantages a coursework unit over an examined unit. The originality, enthusiasm and freshness of response demonstrated by candidates working with this freedom was readily evident. Whole-centre responses to the same pair of texts do tend to inhibit such personal response.

Many, but not all, candidates looked at novel and film/TV comparisons, but there was also very interesting work in comparing two written texts, sometimes from different genre. A response exploring how far Macbeth and Jay Gatsby are responsible for their own downfalls was an interesting and challenging example of a cross genre task. On the whole the candidates who offered slightly less obvious pairings of texts and points of comparison were able to demonstrate the requirement of the higher assessment bands to show insight and perception much more readily than those candidates who compared, for example, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* novel and film. We encourage centres to extend the range of texts that students encounter and for that to be reflected in the texts offered for assessment in this unit. Some candidates were rather too narrow in their scope; a comparison of two poems - say by Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage - whilst technically fulfilling the specification requirements (that candidates study, and then explore in their writing and presentation, paired texts), does seem rather limiting in terms of the potential of the unit. A more developed approach would be to compare some poems by Duffy or Armitage with another text of a different genre, such as a novel or film. Examples of such tasks are available in the Living Texts section of the OCR English website.

The second element of this unit is the presentation. At moderation it would be very helpful for centres to provide more detail of what constituted the presentation, the context in which it took place and the performance achieved by the candidates. The presentation, whilst adding an assessed speaking and listening element to the qualification, also enables candidates to develop the focus of their study beyond that covered in the written work. As was pointed out in this report last summer, it seems a missed opportunity if the presentation is merely a spoken version of that which has been explored in the writing. Centres should see the presentation as a space where the themes and ideas that candidates have encountered can be explored more fully. For example, one candidate who in their writing explored *The Kite Runner* novel and film used the presentation to explore the cultural significance of kite fighting in Afghanistan's recent history. This presentation, complete with illustrations and YouTube clips would seem to advance the experience of studying these texts much more interestingly than repeating the particular focus, in this case the different treatments of the assault on Hassan, already discussed in their writing. It would likely have been more entertaining and informative for the audience too.

The single Assessment Objective (AO3) involves candidates exploring connections between texts, and considering how meaning is encoded in the language of the texts. In order to access Bands 1 and 2 and demonstrate 'insight' and 'perception', it is necessary for candidates to go beyond overview and explore specific moments from their chosen texts. Task setting is important here. If the candidate is working to a broad and generic title, such as, 'Compare the novel and the film of *The Kite Runner',* it is more likely that the candidate will present

generalisation rather than the specific points and illustration which might have been generated by a title such as 'Explore how Mark Foster's film of *The Kite Runner* translates a specific episode from the novel'. With such a title the candidate could look closely at the impact of a particular scene in the novel and then consider how and why it had been treated in the film. On the whole a narrower focus in these tasks has proved much more successful.

Centres are encouraged to annotate candidate work as fully as possible. Comments in the margin drawn from the mark scheme can be helpful but fuller comments on the particular strengths or weaknesses of a section are more so. Summative comments which explain and justify the mark awarded make the process of confirming such marks at moderation more straightforward. A final plea - please could centres staple the work submitted rather than using folders or plastic wallets ?

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning
Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance
programme your call may be recorded or monitored

PART OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT
GROUP

LLOYD'S REGISTER QUALITY ASSURANCE · ISO9001

UKAS
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS

001