

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

BGCSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH 2023



Paper 1: Written Paper

Section 1: General Comments

This paper is made up of three sections; Section A comprises of drama and novel; Section B is based on short stories and section C is based on poetry. Section A, candidates choose three questions and amongst their choice they should be a context-based question from either drama or novel. In Section B they only choose one question. Section C, candidates choose one question. In total candidates should answer 5 questions, each is out of 20 adding to a total of 100.

Candidates who attempted question 13 did quite well as compared to those who picked 1 and 10. Candidates must be encouraged to quote appropriately in instances where they quote. Twelfth Night, Animal farm and Encounters from Africa are the most popular texts across Centres except for a handful that is doing The River Between and Crime Never Pays.

Candidates are advised to leave adequate spacing between components of questions, start new questions on fresh pages and number attempted questions appropriately. There were many instances of rubric infringement because many candidates answered three questions from the same genre for example; 13, 14 and 15. While some candidates waffled in the aforementioned; which attests to shallow knowledge of texts.

Section 2: Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) This question was well done by most candidates. Most of the candidates were able to recall the setting of the scene as Olivia's residence.
- (b) Candidates fared very well on this question as they were able to name all the conspirators who plotted against Malvolio namely Sir Toby, Maria and Fabian. The extract was of great assistance in guiding the candidates to recall.
- (c) A sizeable number of candidates struggle with appropriate response to language-based questions as they do not match the mark allocation requirement and give incorrect interpretation of the lines given. Many candidates look at the language merely at surface level and do not comprehend or decipher the writer's meaning. The question requires the candidates to decipher what is being communicated and give that as the reason. The candidates should show that the "wise woman" was to be provided with Malvolio's urine as a specimen so that she could diagnose his condition as the conspirators were suggesting that he is mad.
- (d) This question was satisfactorily answered. The candidates were able to describe the relation between the two characters in the extract and use appropriate evidence to support their reasoning.
- (e) The question was poorly attempted because the candidates were unable to unpack the writer's language into the requirement of the mark scheme. They were supposed to display an understanding of the statement that Sir Toby meant that "it is not right for a sensible man (1) to be playing children's game (1) with the devil (1)".
- (f) Candidates' responses to the question were very poor as they did not comprehend the writer's meaning therefore could not logical reason that "Fabian knows Malvolio is not possessed by the



devil (1) as he and his friends orchestrated Malvolio's downfall (1) and, therefore, there is no devil to defy (1)".

- (g) Superb attempts to this question because candidates pointed out Maria's character traits and used evidence from the extract to support their answers.
- (h) Exceptional responses from candidates, substantiated with evidence from the extract.

- 2
- (a) This question was fairly done because candidates could recall other incidences such as Feste addressing him as Master Cesario, the attack by Sir Andrew and Sir Toby without any provocation, Olivia coming to his rescue and addressing him as Cesario.
 - (b) Some of the candidates had difficulties identifying emotions they tended to rather use state of mind such as confusion and loneliness instead of appropriate emotions. The candidates had to show the different emotions which are "perplexed" and "excited". The emotions have to be supported in order for the candidates to score four marks.
 - (c) Candidates were expected to give Sebastian's perceptions instead of their own. However, the question was interpreted wrongly as many candidates gave their own perceptions. Sebastian's views of Olivia are authoritative, stable, poised, sensitive and discreet. Any two of these with appropriate supporting evidence from the extract will score the four marks.
 - (d) Challenges of plot sequencing were picked in almost all Centres. There is confusion of how events in the drama are arranged sequentially leading to a mix up and misplacement of events. The question was badly attempted because the candidates showed a very bad recollection of the sequence of the plot of the play.
- 3
- Instead of analysing the two characters' response to falling in love, candidates merely narrated activities carried out by the characters in their quest for love. The expectation was for the characters to be analysed thematically, through qualities supported by the events attached to their actions. Furthermore, many candidates overlooked the second part of the question hence lost a lot of marks from this oversight.

Question 4, 5 and 6: These questions were not attempted at all probably because Centres avoid the set books.

Question 7,8 and 9: These questions were not attempted by Centres.

- 10
- (a) Exceptionally attempted because the candidates stated the setting as Waiyaki's place.
 - (b) Fairly done but some candidates confused Mugo and Chege' prophecies.
 - (c) The question was poorly attempted because the candidates were unable to show that it was ironic for Kabonyi, who is a member of the governing committee, to oppose the developments proposed for the school.



- (d) The question was well attempted. The candidates were able to comment on the relationship as tense/bitter/hostile and used relevant evidence from the passage to show the rivalry between Waiyaki and Kabonyi.
- (e) Poorly done as candidates were not able to infer and reason that it was meant to intimidate, incapacitate, demean and disrespect Waiyaki.
- (f) A well-done question because the candidates were able to identify the appropriate material from the passage.
- (g) An excellent attempt from the candidates as they appropriately described their feelings and supported them with evidence from the passage.
- (h) Satisfactorily attempted because character traits were laid out with appropriate support from the passage.
- 11 (a) This question was poorly attempted. Candidates had a challenge with the understanding of foreshadowing and symbolism. Candidates should have shown that the writer uses Waiyaki as a foreshadowing instrument to give the reader a glimpse into the realisation of Chege's prophecy. The fact that Waiyaki can command Kamau and Kinuthia, though younger than them, foreshadows the natural capacity he will have as an adult. His attempt to stop them from fighting foreshadows his future objective to unify the rivalry that exists between the two religions. The dropping of the water barrel which is viewed as a bad omen foreshadows the death of Muthoni which was due to the fact that her wound never healed after circumcision.
- Symbolism as displayed in the novel by the geographical description of the villages. The Honia river running through the two villages signifies the menacing rivalry and the division between the two villages. The river also unifies them as a source of life. It has a spiritual significance for two villages as they both use it as a sacred site for their different religious practices. It therefore, stands as an indication that the rivalry of religions are more similar than they are different. Circumcision as a symbol represents one's commitment and adherence to Gikuyu traditions as it is a traditional rite of passage that graduates one into adulthood. Baptism is a rite of passage for Christians that signifies being born again.
- 12 Candidates' responses were satisfactory because they were able to discuss Waiyaki's character traits which contributed to his failure.
- 13 (a) An exceptional response because the candidates were able to identify the scene as the farmhouse.
- (b) A well-done attempt because candidates simply named the skull as Old Major's.
- (c) This question was very well attempted.
- (d) This question was well done. Candidates were able to attain the two marks.



- (e) This question was a challenge for the candidates because they were unable to decode the implication that there was no difference between man and pigs as they looked alike and behaved the same way.
- (f) A good attempt accompanied by relevant supporting evidence from the passage.
- (g) Candidates seem to have grasped an understanding of this type of question as they do very well and offer appropriate supporting evidence from the given passage.
- (h) Excellent responses as candidates give their feelings and support them appropriately.
- 14** (a) Candidates' responses were inadequate since they lacked relevant information that addressed the question appropriately. The candidates' selection of the relevant plot was problematic. The candidates were supposed to outline the tactics that Snowball exercised in the battle of the Cowshed such as preparing for the battle by reading Julius Caesar, being in charge of the defence operations (1), launching his first attack (1), leading Muriel, Benjamin and all the sheep as they prodded and butted the men from every side (1), strategically giving a signal of retreat (1) and charge as men relaxed, charging at Jones even when pellets scored bloody streaks along his back (1) and flinging himself against Jones hurling him into a pile of dung (1).
- (b) An excellent attempt was displayed by candidates and mostly scored the four marks allocated for the question.
- (c) A fair attempt because the candidates could not recall enough about Napoleon previously in order to get all the marks. It was worth mentioning that Napoleon on the onset was against the building of the windmill (1), he had urinated on the plans drawn by Snowball (1), he did not believe that the windmill would increase food or reduce labour (1), at the meeting he said the windmill was nonsense (1) and advised against voting for it (1).
- (d) The question was fairly attempted. Candidates mentioned manipulation, threats, propaganda, blackmail as well as the use of Snowball as a scapegoat.
- 15** The candidates who attempted this question while paying attention to detail did exceptionally well. But some of the candidates simply narrated without any analysis, therefore they did not do well. The mentioning of Snowball as inclusive, democratic, fair, team player, wise, smart, innovative, inventive, and loyal elaborated with relevant supporting evidence came very handy in attaining good marks. In contrast Napoleon has to be presented as authoritative, dictator, classist, inarticulate, violent, cruel, narcissist, greedy and insecure in order to draw a balance that contrasts the two characters.

Question 16,17 and 18: These questions fall under Wuthering Heights and the text has not been attempted for some time now.

- 19** (a) This question was satisfactorily attempted by the candidates. Candidates were able to provide the two reasons, hence scored the two marks allocated for the question.



- (b) Fairly done. Candidates tend to fall short when it comes to recalling the plot that is related to the given passage. The question requires a precise recall of events later in the story that led to the blackmail. The events include the killing of Gooch (1), use of a wheelchair to move the corpse to the fountain (1), switching on the fountain (1), placing the body in a manner that it will appear Gooch fell and died. Masters witnessing the incident (1), remembering switching off the fountain (1), drying Mr Spiller's clothes on the night of the murder (1).
- (c) A good attempt because the candidates did well in giving the reasons.
- (d) Excellent attempt as the candidates stated their feelings with appropriate supporting evidence from the passage.
- (e) A very good analysis of Mr Gooch's character traits was given and supported with evidence from the passage.
- 20 Candidates' response to this question were sheer narration whereas the question required an analysis of 'the ways, as well as the feelings evoked in the candidates because of these ways. Candidates were expected to demonstrate how Ronald manipulatively proposes to marriage to middle aged women then swindles them into putting him in their wills then murders them to claim insurance. Ronald's predatory, opportunistic, and manipulative tendencies should evoke feelings of loathe, disappoint and disgust among candidates.
- 21 It was a poorly attempted question. The candidates failed to clearly demonstrate how Josia Amberly is presented by the writer. The question requires an analysis of Josia Amberly's actions which will translate into his qualities. Furthermore, the candidates had to explore their feelings regarding Josia's diabolical vengeful actions.
- 22 (a) A fair attempt. The candidates could not recall the events in a sequential manner. It was worth mentioning that the superintendent of police was supposed to keep away the police escort from the vehicles carrying workers' salaries(1),but he failed to do so and the police shot the boys(1),the boys retaliated and killed the policeman and the security guards(1), they got the money but the killing was not part of the deal(1)they had to pay(1). The police took the money and went after the boys (1), we took the blame as the boys acted on our orders (1). The police took us in and they made a lot of public noise (1).
- (b) Excellently attempted by the candidates.
- (c) The question was challenging to candidates. They struggled to show that the accusations laid by Bana towards the priest contradict with his belief. A priest is expected to be holy therefore it is ironic for him to be accused of hypocrisy, adultery, and fornication.
- (d) A marvellous attempt at the question. The traits of the society were clearly outlined and supported with appropriate evidence from the passage.



- 23** The question was poorly attempted. Candidates could not draw a clear line between the two themes, greed and materialism. This resulted in repetition of points hence they ended up not doing very well on this question. Further it was characterised by very little critical analysis as the candidates' responses simply narrated the story. Candidates should be assisted to critically analyse and select relevant information instead of sheer narration of events.
- 24** The attempts were very impressive. Traits for the two characters are abundant since they are main characters, so even in comparison of the other, many qualities could be identified by the candidates. The second half of the question, which required feelings based on the character traits, made the question more accessible.

Questions 25,26 and 27: There seems to be no Centres studying this anthology because these questions are never attempted.

- 28 (a)** A fair attempt of the question. Candidates were able to identify the symbols in the poem but fell short in elaborating their significance. For example, by picking "tacks and splinters", they should elaborate further how they are used to symbolise the pain suffered by the persona.
- (b)** Some candidates confused mood with tone. The poem starts off with a somber and melancholic mood as the persona tells the son about her difficult life and then changes to optimism as the word 'but' indicates a change in pessimism. At the end of the poem there is triumph as the mother tells the son that she is still going and climbing.
- (c)** A very good attempt. Candidates were able to give with supporting evidence the feelings they have for the persona in the poem.
- 29** Candidates lost a lot of marks through inaccurate quotations. Therefore, it is advisable to discourage candidates from using quotes in cases where the accuracy of the quote is not ascertained as quotes should be lifted verbatim.
- 30** The responses to the question were very poor. Centres must encourage candidates to pay attention to key words like imagery. Candidates' responses overlooked 'imagery' and just focused on the beauty. The fact that candidates overlooked the similes, metaphor and exaggeration used in 'Letter from a Contract Worker' compromised their answers as they did not adequately use them to show how the beauty of the lover is described. When it comes to 'who Will in the Fairest Book of Nature Know', candidates displayed lack of comprehension of the poem.