

One had the impression that the performance in this paper was slightly better than was the case in previous years. Candidates seemed to have a much better grasp of literary concepts and their answering technique showed some improvement. Whereas in the past one often came across centres where a disconcertingly high number of candidates scored below ten for this paper, we experienced much less of that in 2006.

The overwhelming majority of centres opted for the POETRY and SHORT STORIES. However, in some cases the results revealed that POETRY was not a wise choice. Teachers are often under the wrong impression that these questions are easier and can be completed quickly. Higher marks were frequently scored by centres that opted for either HAMLET or OTHELLO. Although these two genres require a full understanding of the play and although the questions are challenging, these centres demonstrated that Shakespearean English can be mastered if taught well. Well done to those centres!

BUCKINGHAM PALACE – DISTRICT SIX was also a popular choice. Candidates answered these questions well and showed an understanding of the book. However, the centres that opted for DANCE WITH A POOR MAN'S DAUGHTER were, in many cases, not well prepared and often showed that they did not understand the plot.

AREAS REQUIRING ATTENTION

- ✓ The length of the answer must correspond with the mark allocation. A two-mark question requires two clear points or facts
- ✓ Figures of speech and other literary devices should be well taught.
- ✓ Candidates still struggle with concepts such as IRONY, and LITERAL and FIGURATIVE meaning. Many do not understand the phrase "consecutive words". They must be given enough opportunities to test their understanding of these concepts.
- ✓ Questions and instructions were often misinterpreted. Teachers must spend more time dealing with this. Working through old question papers should help.
- ✓ Some teachers are content to teach only the plot. Learners must be taught to get into the hearts and minds of the characters.
- ✓ Very often DVDs differ from the text and the candidates tend to remember only what they have seen on the DVD. Rather have regular discussions on various aspects of the genres.
- ✓ Some candidates still answer all the questions. Teachers should work through old question papers and teach candidates that they must answer only TWO questions.

CONCLUSION

The candidates who did well were those who read their questions and instructions well. Candidates must be instructed not to rush their exams or leave blank spaces. Attempting to answer a question is better than not attempting.