

## Narrative Texts/Intellectual and Cultural Sources Exam 2012

### Examiners' Report

Number of candidates: 73

Breakdown of questions answered:

#### Section A: ICS passages and essays

1 (passages for comment)	32
2 everyday life	4
3 future	14
4 health/happiness	0
5 place	10
6 evidence	3
7 topicality/relevance	10

#### Section B: NT passages

8(a) <i>Paradise Lost/Tristram Shandy</i>	16
8(b) <i>Mill on the Floss/ Disgrace</i>	57

#### Section C: NT essays

9 rules	18
10 ritual/pride	13
11 repentance	5
12 intellectual inquiry	10
13 allegory	1
14 reader identification	19
15 digression/interruption	5
16 parts/whole	2

Favourite ICS texts chosen for comment (Section A, question 1):

Ovid, then Plato, followed by Woolf, Barthes, Nietzsche, Marx, Bible. Nobody answered on the More passage.

Comments:

Most candidates showed good knowledge of a range of Narrative Texts and Intellectual and Cultural Sources.

The best answers to the passages in Sections A and B combined detailed analysis of the extracts with a good sense of their location within the work from which they were taken. Some candidates wrote rather generally on the works themselves rather than attending to the extracts. In general, the passage from *Metamorphoses* was well handled, as was the passage from Barthes. Marx and Virginia Woolf were tackled less well, on the whole, with *either* too little attention to tone and rhetoric *or* too little sense of the theme of the work as a whole as exemplified in the extract. The essay question on the relevance/topicality of two Intellectual and Cultural Sources texts brought forth some answers more on universality than topicality, and some answers to this question strayed rather far from the original texts into current affairs which they could not always link in useful ways to the ICS texts.

Of the pairs of Narrative Texts passages in Section B, the second pair, from *The Mill on the Floss* and *Disgrace*, attracted many more answers, 57 as against 16 for the earlier pair of *Paradise Lost* and *Tristram Shandy*. The answers to this section were generally good, with the majority of candidates showing thorough knowledge of the texts and giving due attention to the rhetorical strategies, narrative method, and point of view of the particular passages. It was good to see that our 'new' texts on the course – *Tristram Shandy*, *Mill on the Floss*, and *Disgrace* – have fitted well into the Narrative Texts setting and elicited engaged answers in Section B.

All the essay questions in Section C found takers, with the most popular being the question about the problematic nature of reader identification with central characters. This question elicited some interesting answers about *Paradise Lost* (though too many candidates forgot that it is inappropriate to think of either Satan or God as 'human') and *The Waste Land*. Also popular was the question about rules, which was answered about both the rules of genre – epic, the novel – and about the treatment of social and moral rules within the works. Some candidates wrote rather mechanically about the 'rules' of epic and mock epic in relation to *The Rape of the Lock*, and *Paradise Lost* found a number of candidates rather unquestioningly adopting Blake's dictum about Milton being of the devils' party... All the Narrative Texts were tackled by at least some candidates. A few tried to include some discussion of too many texts where it would have been better to concentrate on two or three. Some candidates chose to write in Section C about the same Narrative Text which they had tackled in Section B in ways, or on themes, which were similar and led to near-repetition of material. This was most obvious in the case of *Paradise Lost* and *Disgrace*. While it is allowable to write twice on the same text, there should be no overlap of material.

Those candidates who took time to think and to structure their answers did better than those who ran on breathlessly, producing quantity rather than quality. There were some sweeping generalisations about intellectual, scientific, and political history, especially in answer to Section A, Question 3, on the future, and Question 7 on relevance/topicality.

A few candidates misread the rubric, answering on either too many or too few passages in Section A, or answering an essay question on two of the passages in Question 1 instead of ranging over the chosen Intellectual and Cultural Sources texts as a whole.

Difficult handwriting was a factor in a small but significant number of cases. Spelling and punctuation were often careless, and hardly any candidate underlined the titles of works. Loose use of commas where full stops or semi colons were required was rather common, as was the curious habit of adding brief illustrative quotations without using any punctuation at all. Common spelling mistakes were: prohesises (for prophesies), repentence (for repentance), existance (for existence), seperate (for separate), lead (for led), illicit (for elicit), similie (for simile), alright (for all right).

Names of authors and characters – including some which were in the passages themselves and only needed to be copied - were: Woolfe (for Woolf), Nietsche/Nietzsche/Neitze (for Nietzsche), Socrate's (for Socrates), Moore (for More), Rosseau (for Rousseau), Bellinda (for Belinda in *Rape of the Lock*), and Phillip (for Philip Wakem in *Mill on the Floss*). *The Wasteland* appeared for *The Waste Land* in a few cases.