

May 2014 subject reports

Norwegian A: Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 18	19 - 33	34 - 45	46 - 58	59 - 71	72 - 83	84 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 17	18 - 31	32 - 44	45 - 57	58 - 69	70 - 81	82 - 100

Higher level and standard level internal assessment

HL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

SL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, all of the poems selected for the IOC were very suitable for the task. The majority of centres selected poems by Rolf Jacobsen, although poems by Inger Hagerup, Nordahl Grieg and Sigbjørn Obstfelder were also used. Jacobsen's most well known poems such as *Landskap med gravemaskiner*, *Myrstråvipper*, *Stillhetenefterpå*, *Byens metafysikk*, *Signaler*, etc. were most frequently used, all of which are very suitable choices. However, teachers may also be encouraged to select poets other than Jacobsen in order to avoid the IOC becoming too narrow in future sessions.

Many teachers also selected poetry for the IOC at standard level, but extracts from plays by Ibsen, short stories by Askildsen and Cora Sandel, and extracts from novels like *Markens Grøde*, *Beatles* and *Lillelord* were also very popular. The general impression of this examination session was that teachers chose extracts that were very suitable and in which important issues of the works as a whole were present.

Candidate performance against each criterion

At standard level, candidates generally performed well against criterion A (Knowledge and understanding of the extract), criterion C (Organization and presentation) and criterion D (Language). Strong candidates should have good knowledge and understanding of the extract, the presentation should be well structured and it should be easy to follow their thinking and development. Language should be good without lapses or linguistic fillers such as "eeh", "well", etc. For criterion B (Appreciation of the writer's choices), however, there were too many candidates who neglected to comment on literary devices.

Criterion B was also problematic in the IOC at higher level. Even though the guiding questions often invite the candidates to comment on literary techniques, many still do not mention these features. This issue is common across all the Norwegian A: Literature components, as candidates often seem to have good knowledge and understanding of the texts studied, but they are so focused on the content of the texts that they neglect the literary devices.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The fact that most teachers choose to study poems by Rolf Jacobsen, is unsurprising as he is perhaps the most obvious choice for this task. However, teachers should be encouraged also to use works by other poets. As mentioned above the main issue with this component is the neglect of literary devices. Teachers should strongly emphasize the importance of criterion B (Appreciation of the writer's choices), which for the IOC at SL can be awarded up to 10 marks, whereas criteria C and D are only rewarded a maximum of 5 marks each. Teachers should also try to perform mock exams by inviting students to volunteer to carry out an IOC in front of the class. This can be a good exercise for teachers as well.

It is important for centres to ensure that the technological equipment used in the oral examination is appropriate for the task. Some of the microphones used resulted in every little sound (e.g. handwriting) being overly amplified.

In the IOC the role of the teacher is to engage in a discussion with the candidates. This is the case both for HL (Individual commentary and discussion) and for SL (Individual commentary). Teachers should avoid using this activity to try and find holes in the candidates' knowledge, but should rather ask them questions that give them the opportunity to demonstrate the best of their knowledge and abilities. Another common mistake is simply to ask a lot of questions that only require short answers.

Higher level and standard level written assignment

HL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

SL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the quality of the higher level written assignments was good this session with very few weak essays and a large number of very good performances. At standard level there were some excellent performances, but also a fair number of weaker assignments. Most candidates demonstrated a decent understanding of the works studied, but there was a considerable difference between those who only focused on the content of the texts and those who also managed to integrate a description of literary aspects in addition to the theme of the work.

Although many interesting questions were pursued in the assignments, it would be desirable for fewer candidates to select the same or very similar questions. Some centres provided nearly identical assignments and there is definitely a need for more variety in terms of the selected topics and approaches.

Some centres were also very late in sending their assignments, so in some cases the examiners did not receive them until after the deadline.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

The reflective statement was one of the two most problematic areas in the Norwegian A: Literature written assignments this year (another being Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices – see further details below). Different centres approached the reflective statement in different ways. Some candidates merely referred to the plot and various themes in the works studied, while others referred, sometimes in detail, to the classroom discussion. Some mentioned a few literary techniques, but it was difficult to identify any self-reflection or development of understanding. Teachers should be aware that the key words here are “development of understanding”, and the reflective statement needs to refer to (a) the interactive oral and (b) how the candidate's understanding developed or changed (or was challenged). It should be focused, personal and include some critical and independent thinking.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

On the whole candidates scored well against this criterion, as most of them showed good knowledge, understanding and insight into the works studied. Their main issue here was often that the research question was too broad and unfocused which resulted in them retelling the main plot rather than producing a literary analysis. It is advisable for teachers to be pro-active in this phase of the writing process and it is at this stage they can help their students the most. After the candidates have chosen which work to write about and the theme to focus on, teachers should be actively involved in supporting them in the phrasing of the research question. As stated in the subject guide, it is important that teachers “ensure that the topic is suitable to the length and the focus of the task.”

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

As mentioned above, this criterion was one of the most problematic areas in this component this session. As one examiner commented: “many essays have limited mention of the ‘ways language, structure and style shape meaning’”. This is still the criterion which most candidates find difficult to incorporate into their assignments and very few candidates achieved the highest marks here. Even the highest quality assignments often lost 1-2 marks under this criterion. Teachers should remind candidates of the importance of analysing literary devices in their assignments.

Criterion D: Organization and development

In general the organization and presentation of the assignments were very good. It was noted in the examining team, however, that “there is substantial room for technical improvement and centres should pay closer attention the use of footnotes, references, quotations, bibliographies etc. The formal elements of many assignments were below the acceptable standard, and not many candidates had correct bibliographies”. There were also some issues with word counts. Teachers should remind candidates that they will be penalized for exceeding the specified word limits.

Criterion E: Language

The majority of candidates scored highly against this criterion and it was often their strongest area. Many demonstrated a good command of register and style that was appropriate in the context of literary study.

Recommendations for teaching of future candidates

There are two areas where teachers can help their students to improve their performances:

- help them formulate a precise and focused research question/topic;
- ensure that they are familiar with the assessment criteria and, in particular, remind them of the importance of Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The vast majority (approximately 80%) of the candidates chose to base their commentary on the poem rather than the prose passage. However, some candidates may have performed better if they had selected the prose passage and teachers are advised to encourage candidates to consider their text selection carefully.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most of the candidates seemed well prepared for the commentary in general.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual question

The majority of the candidates started their commentaries by repeating the title of the text, the name of the author, year of publication etc. This is unnecessary and their time would be better utilized elsewhere. Teachers should encourage candidates to be more creative and learn to develop more contextual and reflective opening paragraphs.

In both the prose passage and the poem, candidates would have benefited from planning their commentaries with more care and attention.

While many candidates had good knowledge of different literary features, they often lost marks by only identifying and describing them. Candidates must also be encouraged to discuss the effects of the literary features.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidate

It seems to be a trend that the candidates almost automatically choose the poem for their commentaries. Teachers should encourage candidates to read both texts carefully before making a choice, and encourage them then to choose the text that they best connect with.

It is important for candidates to learn to plan their commentaries more effectively. Crossing out paragraphs and lots of crossing out/blacking out of sentences and single words often results in a weak syntax and can really distract the reader. In addition the handwriting of many of the candidates is now so poor that the text sometimes becomes illegible.

Candidates could be encouraged to try to reflect more on the context of the texts. Both the texts this year gave the candidates clear frames for their understanding, but many of the candidates were not able to benefit from this information - in their comments on the prose text some candidates thought the story was about roaming gypsies, others said it was probably runaway slaves from the south...

For the prose text it is important that the candidates read the text as an excerpt rather than mistaking it, for example, for a short story - this session the prose text was the first chapter of a novel.

There was quite a gap regarding the candidates' knowledge of literary features. Many of the candidates were not able to distinguish "besjeling" from "personifikasjon", and very few mentioned enjambment, for instance. When analysing challenging texts like Brekke's poem, candidates who have a broad knowledge of different literary features are at an advantage, even if they are not able to be precise about the theme.

Candidates need to know that when they discuss the perspective in a poem, they should discuss it by reflecting on the use of pronouns within the poem. "Det lyriske jeg" is well known to the candidates, but far too many characterized this as "førsteperson", the term used in analysing prose texts. Discussing the use of "jeg", "vi" or other pronouns in the poem, makes it easier to discuss the effect of the chosen perspective.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

This year the distribution of the responses between the prose text and the poem was roughly 50/50, which may indicate that the candidates found the texts equally challenging/easy. A number of candidates found it very difficult to understand and interpret the texts, some of them had evidently been taught a relatively mechanical procedure of approaching unknown texts, but failed to appreciate what the text was really about.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates seemed well prepared for the commentary in general.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The majority of the candidates started their commentaries by repeating the title of the text, the name of the author, year of publication etc. This is unnecessary and their time would be better utilized elsewhere. Teachers should encourage candidates to be more creative and learn to develop more contextual and reflective opening paragraphs.

In both the prose passage and the poem, candidates would have benefited from planning their commentaries with more care and attention.

While many candidates revealed a good knowledge of different literary features, weaker candidates often lost marks by only identifying and describing them. Candidates must also be encouraged to discuss the effects of the literary features. Very few candidates were able to understand and comment on the author's use of humour and irony in the prose text.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

More practice of reading and analysing unknown texts is recommended, in particular prose texts. More emphasis should also be placed on planning the commentaries. Crossing out paragraphs and lots of crossing out/blacking out of sentences and single words often results in a weak syntax and can really distract the reader. In addition the handwriting of many of the candidates is now so poor that the text sometimes becomes illegible.

The incorrect use of prepositions and confused use of personal pronouns are sadly quite common, as is poor spelling. In particular, many candidates seemed quite confused about when to use or not use double consonants.

Standard level candidates suffered from many of the same weaknesses as the higher level candidates regarding the knowledge and understanding of literary features. Many of the candidates were not able to tell "besjeling" from "personifikasjon".

The candidates need to be taught that when they discuss the perspective in a poem, they should discuss it by reflecting upon the use of pronouns within the poem. “Det lyriske jeg” seems well known to the candidates, but far too many characterized this as “førsteperson”, the term used in analysing prose texts. Discussing the use of “jeg”, “vi” or other pronouns in a poem makes it easier to discuss the effect of the chosen perspective.

Higher and Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

There are two main areas that need to be commented upon here:

Literary features: as one of the examiners commented, candidates often had difficulty “putting their knowledge of literary conventions of the genre into practice. Examples of literary features relevant to the genre were often only superficially commented on.” Many candidates spent too much time retelling the plot rather than writing a focused literary analysis including the use of literary features.

Criterion B (Response to the question): Many candidates did not pay close enough attention to the question and consequently responses were sometimes rather superficial. They did not therefore address the question in a manner that demonstrated clear understanding of the implications of the question. There was too much paraphrasing and too many unfocused answers.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Although there were some exceptions, it is fair to say that the vast majority of the candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the works studied. They had good knowledge of the content of the works, the main characters, the themes/ideas and sometimes also of the literary features used. Some included good references to the texts; a small number could even cite short passages from the works. Many candidates were also able to compare the works in an excellent manner and even some of the candidates who performed less well overall included some degree of comparison.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Overall there seemed to be a good number of excellent scripts as well as a substantial number of weaker responses. However, the general impression seemed to be that there were fewer mid-range scripts compared to last year, and that many of them had fallen onto the lower category.

A small number of candidates focused on three rather than two works in their responses. Although this is not prohibited, it is not recommended as 90 minutes (at standard level) or 120 minutes (at higher level) is not generally enough time to address all three works effectively, and teachers are therefore advised to discourage their students from this practice.

There is the recurrent theme of Anglicisms and English influence in language and literary terms. This is a wide and complex affair, but it is essential to note that passive constructions are not appropriate in Norwegian: "Detvilblidiskutert" for example, is not a well written expression in Norwegian.

Recommendations for the teaching of further candidates

Writing practice

One of the more obvious problems among this year's candidates was the general deterioration of their handwriting. Never before has the examining team encountered such issues in reading, understanding and interpreting handwriting, which was extremely demanding as the text was at times almost unintelligible. There were also far more deletions and crossings out in the scripts than in previous sessions. It is therefore recommended that candidates have more writing practice in class, especially under timed conditions. It is also important for candidates to plan carefully before they start writing their responses. Often the first couple of pages of the responses were in disarray, but there was a significant improvement after they had warmed up.

There is also much room for improvement in the introductions of the essays. Many candidates might have gained more marks if they had been more creative in their introductions, and produced more contextual and reflective opening paragraphs. The same goes for conclusions, which were often too long and repetitive.

It is important that candidates develop their writing abilities and also that they be encouraged to be independent in their approaches to the works studied. It is clear that a considerable number of candidates are being taught to write mechanical responses, where they all refer to the same quotations and incidents and have almost identical introductions etc. Also problematic are references to literary history, which are often superficial or used without any real understanding of what the terms mean, e.g. by calling Lars Saabye Christensen a post-modernist writer, or using terms such as “realism”, “modernism”, “naturalism” without integrating the understanding into the analysis.

Literary features

A high percentage of candidates, even a number of very strong candidates, produce Paper 2 essays with only a brief mention of literary features/conventions. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that candidates are able analyse such features in their literary analysis, or else their responses will be incomplete and they risk being disadvantaged. All Norwegian A: Literature teachers should therefore ensure that they teach candidates about literary features in a systematic way, and they must make all their students understand that it has to be included in every literary analysis, written or oral, Paper 1 or Paper 2.