

May 2013 subject reports

Swedish A: Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 19	20 - 32	33 - 44	45 - 59	60 - 72	73 - 82	83 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 17	18 - 28	29 - 44	45 - 57	58 - 69	70 - 81	82 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

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

General comments

Schools generally uploaded samples and extracts successfully on IBIS and filled in the 1/LIA form appropriately. Comments are very helpful for the moderator in the marking process and all teachers should therefore try to write comments explaining their marking. Schools are recommended to check the material uploaded.

One problem for many schools this examination session has been to meet the recommended time limit for the individual oral commentary and discussion. The candidates should be able to present a commentary for eight minutes on their own, followed by subsequent questions from the teacher for about two minutes. After that follows the discussion part, initiated by the teacher, lasting 10 minutes. Teachers are recommended to re-examine instructions in the Swedish A: Literature guide and to do more commentary exercises in class before the oral recording.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of poetry selected this session. The two most popular poets were Edit Södergran and Karin Boye followed by Johan Ludvig Runeberg, Tomas Tranströmmer and Kristina Lugn.

The works used in the discussion consisted of a mix of drama, short stories, novels as well as non-fiction works in the form of an autobiography and a collection of essays. 'Miss Julie' by August Strindberg is still a popular drama and short stories from 'Historietter' by Hjalmar Söderberg and 'Det osynliga barnet' by Tove Jansson too. Novels were represented by 'Ondskan' by Jan Guillou and in the non-fiction genre were 'Mig äger ingen' by Åsa Lindeborg and 'Konsten att läsa och skriva' by Olof Lagercrantz.

In general, the extracts were suitable in nature and length (did not exceed the permitted 20–30 lines) and included one or two pertinent guiding questions. Most of the extracts were good copies from a book and had numbered lines/stanzas.

Subsequent questions asked by teachers were generally pertinent and engaged candidates in further exploration of the extract. Some commentaries this session were too short in length, but most of the candidates succeeded in keeping their commentary within the permitted maximum time limit of eight minutes.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Candidates generally showed a good knowledge and understanding of the works studied, together with the necessary skills to deliver a good commentary. However, candidates often forget to situate the extract and their ability to place the passage in its precise context succinctly remains a challenge.

Criterion B: There was a considerable range of achievement in this section and many candidates showed serious engagement with the extract. The candidates' interpretation and analysis was generally valid concerning the story or content of the poem, but many found it difficult to appreciate how the writer's choices of language, structure, technique and style created meaning in the poem. Many are able to identify a few literary features, but they do not know how to integrate the interpretation into a wider and convincing argument. Weaker candidates relied on paraphrasing the text, often using the line-by-line method, throwing in a literary term occasionally and staying distant to the extract.

Criterion C: Most candidates were able to structure their commentaries and develop their responses in a meaningful manner. Almost every candidate has some kind of introduction at the beginning of the commentary, but too many forgot to end their commentary in an appropriate fashion. However, some candidates did deliver a short summary at the end of the commentary.

Many candidates have tried to structure their commentaries in a generally focused way, by integrating supporting references and analysing them thoroughly in a very effective manner. The most successful candidates had planned their responses well with a clear sense of

purpose and supported by detailed and coherent analysis. The best commentaries also integrated the guiding questions into the analysis.

The weakest commentaries included paraphrases or partial summaries of the passage. Many of these 'performances' only lasted 4–6 minutes, forcing the teacher to step in and rescue the candidates. The less successful line-by-line or stanza-for-stanza interpretation is still used. That structure of presentation could work, but the candidate needs to show some knowledge and understanding of the whole extract and its context.

Criterion D: Most of the candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the content and most of the implications of the work used in the discussion. However, many candidates tend to forget to comment on the writer's technique in this part of the examination.

Criterion E: The purpose with this part of the examination is to engage the candidate in a literary discussion, which most of the candidates managed to do. Their responses to the discussion questions were generally good and many demonstrated their independent understanding of the work.

Criterion F: Use of language is generally of a good standard and many candidates tried to use an appropriate register and style for the occasion. Literary terms were mostly used correctly. However, the use of informal language is still too prevalent to ignore and some candidates do not pay enough attention to the special register required when discussing literary topics. Language and style also differ between the commentary part and the discussion and some candidates tend to use a more appropriate language in the commentary than in the discussion.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Check that all candidates understand the demands of the individual oral commentary, for example the time limit, and to read the assessment criteria thoroughly.
- Work more intensely with oral commentary exercises and literary analysis in class.
- Recommend the candidates to situate their extracts/poems in the introduction of the commentary.
- Teach the candidates about the importance of contextualisation when they analyse an extract from a literary work. They should keep in mind: the setting, literary genre, period of time, specific ideas during this period of time, and so on.
- Read and discuss more literary criticism (articles, books, essays).
- Discuss the appreciation of the writers' choices when studying various literary works.
- Work more in class with structure and presentation. Candidates should be able to structure their presentation during the 20 minutes of preparation time.
- Candidates are recommended to work more intensely with the rules of spoken language and use a suitable vocabulary for commentary.
- Extracts for the oral commentary should be copies from a book or transcripts of the text but in the same way as in the original work. Every extract should also have numbered lines/stanzas. This makes it easier for the candidate to give references during the commentary.

Standard level internal assessment

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

General comments

Most of the schools successfully uploaded their samples, extracts and candidate notes on IBIS and filled in the 1/LIA form appropriately. Schools are recommended to check the material uploaded as some of the recordings could not be opened by the examiners, thus causing many problems. Comments are very helpful for the moderator in the marking process and all teachers should therefore try to write comments explaining their marking.

The other problem this examination session has been the meeting of the recommended time limit for the individual oral commentary. The candidates should be able to present a commentary for eight minutes on their own, followed by subsequent questions from the teacher for about two minutes. Teachers are recommended to re-examine instructions in the Swedish A: Literature guide and do more commentary exercises in class before the day of the oral examination.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The works submitted are mostly of good range and suitability. The regulations for the new course this session might have caused some stress for some of the candidates. A long and rather complex poem is no longer the best choice for a commentary lasting (only) eight minutes. The overall impression of the examination is rather good, but some teachers are intervening too early on in the commentary.

The chosen extracts tend to be suitable in choice, but not always in length. Teachers are recommended to note the new time format for SL candidates as well as the stipulation for the number of lines which is between 20–30 lines.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Many candidates are still having problems with contextualization, especially when it comes to placing a short poem in a larger context. Examiners have noticed that too many candidates fail to mention anything about the author and the period from which the extract is taken. This has to be improved.

Criterion B: In general the candidates interpreted this criterion rather well. However, many of them just mentioned certain literary features without developing the importance of these features in the larger context. This examination session some candidates also tended to analyse certain poems mainly from a biographical point of view, which is not recommended.

The meaning of the extract should be the focus and relevant biographical knowledge is of course permitted, but in a balanced way.

Criterion C: Most of the candidates have delivered a commentary with an introduction and some kind of ending or conclusion. Sadly, many tend to write this down during the preparation time and then read it aloud at the beginning or end of the presentation. Some candidates still use the line-by-line method for delivering their commentary. This method might not be the most successful, but correctly treated and with contextualization it could earn a high score.

Criterion D: Use of language is generally good and many candidates were able to use an appropriate register and style for the occasion. Literary terms were also mostly used correctly. However, the use of informal language is still too prevalent to ignore and some candidates do not pay enough attention to the special register required when discussing literary topics. Examiners have also noticed that language and style tend to differ between the commentary part and the discussion, where some candidates tend to use a more appropriate language in the commentary than in the discussion.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Make sure that all candidates understand the demands of the individual oral commentary, for example the time limit, and to read the IA (internal assessment) standard level criteria thoroughly.
- Work more intensely with oral commentary exercises and literary analysis in class.
- Recommend the candidates to situate their extracts/poems in the introduction of the commentary.
- Teach the candidates about the importance of contextualisation when they analyse an extract from a literary work. They should keep in mind: the setting, literary genre, period of time, specific ideas during this period of time, and so on.
- Read and discuss more literary criticism (articles, books, essays).
- Discuss the appreciation of the writers' choices when studying various literary works.
- Work more in class with structure and presentation. Candidates should be able to structure their presentation during the 20 minutes of preparation time.
- Candidates are recommended to work more intensely with the rules of spoken language and to use a suitable vocabulary for commentary.
- Extracts for the oral commentary should be copies from a book or transcripts of the text but in the same way as in the original work. Every extract should also have numbered lines/stanzas. This makes it easier for the candidate to give references during the commentary.

Higher level written assignment

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

Candidates submitted a fairly good variety of works. Graphic novels were used in some schools. Performance by candidates employing these was equal to that of candidates employing more conventional fiction. On the other hand, when the works are too familiar, there is a risk of interpretations following in a too straightforward and expected manner.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Teachers should stress the necessity for candidates to show development in the reflective statement; sometimes this is too implicit in candidates' statements. The reflective statement does not have to include an interpretation if this does not add to the development, and certainly not a summary of what was being said during the interactive oral.

It was not easy for candidates to show appreciation of writer's choices. Quotes are not handled well in many essays. There is a certain clumsiness involved in many candidates' language.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to practise quotation skills. They should read literary criticism: this could include reviews from daily newspapers or essays from magazines. Many candidates need to be more familiar with an appropriate style for the assignment.

Conversely, it is not advisable to only learn the vocabulary and force these words into the essay, regardless of whether they are appropriate or not.

Candidates should take advantage of revision, and make more use of the first draft stage.

The use of chosen citation style must be consistently followed.

Standard level written assignment

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

Many works proved to be helpful in delivering useful topics for candidates. Some schools worked with graphic novels, and these were treated analytically by candidates.

When works are classics or very familiar, there is a risk of interpretations following a narrow

direction: i.e. candidates tend to analyze them in a rather predictable way. More imaginative interpretations were the result of having studied less familiar works.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The reflective statement can be handled more precisely by candidates. It needs to show more than just a summary of what was said during the interactive oral. It is not easy for candidates to reveal 'appreciation of writer's choices'.

Using quotations seems to be a major problem for many candidates. Not only do many candidates use a less readable method, but also quite a few do not quote verbatim, but change the wording or spelling.

Language is rarely very good. Perhaps there are not that many candidates with a really poor use of language – on the other hand, it is very rare to find a candidate who uses language with ease.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to practise quotation skills. The use of chosen citation style must be consistently followed. It is worth considering which style might be best suited to the task.

Teachers need to ensure that candidates do not only study and learn a fixed vocabulary, but can provide their own thoughts.

Candidates need to take more advantage of revision, and use the first draft as a tool to sharpen their essay. As it stands now, too many essays look like they could do with further revision.

Teachers need to read the subject guide very carefully: a few essays were too long this examination session, and it is not a joyful experience to penalize a good essay for this. (Assessment is based on the first 1,500 words.)

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 20

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

The tendency noted in previous examination sessions for the commentaries on prose extracts to be slightly weaker continues. Candidates do not seem so familiar with the analysis of

prose. They clearly lack a repertoire of literary terms for commenting on, for example, the language and structure in a short prose extract. Perhaps it is because of the poorer handwriting that more candidates than before seemed to have run out of time to finalise their commentaries with an effective ending.

It is rather surprising that so many centres still produce commentaries, where almost all candidates are unable to incorporate quotations from the texts into their own writing in a proper way.

When talking about the candidates' own writing it must be underlined that remarkably few candidates this session reached the top mark levels of 5.

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

The commentaries on the poem, as well as many on the prose extract, show clear evidence of both good planning (mind maps and so on) and hence rather good and effective structure with good opening paragraphs for example. In dealing with the interpretations of the two texts this year it was nice to notice the ability of many candidates to produce alternative readings/interpretations and also building these on convincing references to the texts.

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

This year's prose text was perhaps both easier and more difficult to comment upon than last year's. The extract is however a very good example of the importance many writers give to the structure of their texts. Here the author had actually added extra space between the two major paragraphs, one dealing with the extreme cold and the concluding one with the equally strong, but contrasting, warmth. Not only did the content differ in the two paragraphs, and many of the best candidates noticed the difference also in syntax, sentence constructions (such as shorter phrases) as well as ellipses in the first paragraph partly to underline the haste and eagerness to escape the cold. The poem was in many ways a very traditional one, at least when talking about the content and almost all candidates understood the two major parts about nature and love. Only the best candidates however included some commentaries about the quality of how memories can function. If the content was rather easy to grasp in general not even the majority of the candidates managed to identify and convincingly analyse all of the abundant literary features present throughout this beautiful poem.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

This part of the examination must be practised, not only during mock examinations. Candidates can try to produce good openings and endings. This can be practised in many ways during classes and of course at home as homework.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

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

The standard level candidates seem to struggle with the same problems as their higher level fellows: poor handwriting as well as a lack of technique as to how to properly and effectively incorporate supporting quotations from the texts to build their argument. Also the standard level candidates seemed to produce weaker texts when analysing prose, at least when it came to the literary features. A word like 'syntax' or even the Swedish equally good equivalent 'meningsbyggnad' occur in only a handful of texts.

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

This examination session saw the introduction of a new type of assessment: standard level paper 1 'guided literary analysis'. (The higher level candidates are still writing the so-called 'literary commentaries'.) The four (five in the previous course) criteria look a bit different and the maximum mark is reduced to 20.

It is of interest to see what the guide says about this new guided literary analysis: 'Two guiding questions are provided—one on understanding and interpretation, and the other on style. Students are required to address both questions in their answer. However, it is anticipated that students may also explore other relevant aspects beyond the guiding questions in order to achieve the higher marks. Attention should be paid to accuracy of expression and coherence of ideas'.

Only very few candidates chose to use the two guiding questions as the backbone for their structure in that they produced almost two separate answers. The majority understood that to gain the higher marks under criterion C, organization, and to make an effective and convincing, but also, no matter the shorter time allowance compared to that of the higher level candidates, a somehow developed answer, they have to go with the traditional format: introduction, main body and ending. All candidates reaching marks even in the middle of the spectrum chose to 'explore other relevant aspects'.

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

Although this year's prose extract was significantly more difficult, at least when it comes to understanding and interpretation and also literary features, almost all candidates could identify the important element of envy. The majority of the candidates could sense the ironic touch to the extract but surprisingly few identified the rather humorous tone. The passage, with platonic love and the reference to Ling, was on the more difficult side to handle for the candidates.

This year's poem however must be said to have been a bit easier than last year's. Even so far too many, even among the more advanced candidates, forgot to comment on the concluding part of the poem where the author is mentioning the crucial importance of silence in her own destiny of becoming a poet. The short, and perhaps easy, poem is rich in elements to analyse and comment upon.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

This part of the examination must be practised, not only during mock examinations. Candidates can try to produce good openings and endings. This can be practised in many ways during classes and of course at home as homework.

Higher level and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher Level

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

Standard Level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

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

Many candidates do not analyze the key concepts of the topic, so they risk interpreting them in an inadequate way, missing much of the potential of the question. Many essays tend to present the literary works in a general way with too little linking to the chosen topic. More

marks are available for the essay that reflects care about the meaning of the topic rather than the one with limited relevance to the topic. (See below for specific examples.)

Too many essays do not give detailed references to justify the claims made. There is room for improvement in the structure of the essays. Few introductions are interesting. Even if most essays have a clear structure, only the best essays show development. Most conclusions are trivial summaries.

The language in the essays does not show improvement over the years. On the contrary – one can fear that language is getting worse. All kinds of basic and trivial mistakes are to be found in too many essays.

The handwriting is a great problem in a few essays. It is sad that candidates that may be good readers miss a lot of points because they cannot write legibly.

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

A vast majority of the candidates had studied novels, some poetry and only a few, drama or short stories. Generally the candidates showed good knowledge about the literary works. The weak essays presented basic information about the works: theme, characters, and plot. Almost all essays have a good basic structure with an introduction, a couple of distinct paragraphs and, finally, a summary in the conclusion. There is also a general awareness that the essay shall include something about literary conventions. The narrator's perspective is mentioned in most essays, often with a discussion of its effect.

One can find an improvement in the structure of the essays: most essays this year do focus on the topic and do link the chosen literary works to each other, instead of being two separate presentations of the works with little linking to the topic.

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

Few schools had chosen to work with poetry, and those who do, do it very well; most candidates showed deep knowledge and understanding of the poems, and they all managed to interpret the topics in an adequate and fruitful way. All poetry essays are about (at least) two poems only, one (at least) by each author, and the poems can be rather short, so these essays are more like internal assessment, quite different from essays about longer literary works.

Essays about the short story topics were often misunderstanding, discussing novels instead. This confusion probably depends on the Swedish word for short story being 'novell'. This year there was no general penalty for choosing a topic meant for another genre, but some topics do not fit other genres, so the essays scored low marks.

Question 13 about relations between characters in novels was the most popular, and most candidates managed well. The topic focuses on what any reader would notice in a novel, so

quite general presentations of novels were also relevant. The best essays made a point of 'relations between characters' and did not just present a number of characters without discussing the relations between them.

Question 14 was about 'social issues', and was misunderstood and not interpreted in a fruitful way by a majority of the candidates choosing this topic. Existential or moral issues are not synonymous with social issues, so some of the novels discussed here did not fit well. A candidate choosing some of the most popular novels like 'Doktor Glas', 'Dvärgen' or 'Ondskan' must be aware that a conventional presentation of these novels risks missing the point. Novels by Per Anders Fogelström and Moa Martinsson are perfect for this topic.

Question 15 about surprises in novels worked well for most candidates.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should show the candidates that the interpretation of a topic is a matter of great importance. There are marks to gain for the candidate who can link general knowledge of a literary work to an adequate and interesting interpretation of the topic. It is important that an essay actually focuses on the topic and is not a general presentation of (at least) two literary works, repeating what was said in class. The candidates should be taught to develop their understanding of the literary works by discussing them from more specific perspectives, like the topics found in paper 2 questions.

The real challenge is: to integrate deep and personal knowledge and understanding of a literary work (content and technique) with an interesting interpretation of a given topic. Candidates should learn not only to give true information about the literary works, but to give detailed references, justifying their claims.

Candidates should learn how to structure their essays, with interesting introductions and conclusions. All candidates must receive efficient teaching on how to write correctly and clearly. Handwriting can generally be learnt. Candidates with poor handwriting must be identified early on in their studies.