

## Principal Assessor Report 2002

**Assessment Panel:**

**English and Communication**

**Qualification area**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
included in this report**

**English SCE Higher Grade**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2001</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	
<b>Post appeal</b>	12,827

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	469
<b>Post appeal</b>	

### General comments re entry numbers

This examination was available only to candidates either re-sitting or completing a two-year course. The expected number of presentations declined as the examination approached.

### General comments

There were few large presentation groups. Most centres presented only a few candidates. There were relatively few really good scripts and few that were distressingly poor.

**Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report**

A	65%
B	57%
C	50%

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

The candidates did not form a homogeneous group, but their achievements were almost all around the halfway level in all papers.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Paper 1 – Part 1 was well done by most and within their understanding although questions on the authors' use of language were poorly done. Reviews of Personal Reading were competently done – some candidates were obviously following a formula suggested by the teacher/lecturer and others were clearly left to their own devices. Folio writing was more discursive than creative.

The Report was understood by most, though they probably did not relate as closely to the task and topic as candidates did last year (Gap Years). Technical accuracy suffered at the end of this paper, presumably due to pressure of time. Appropriate register was maintained in most cases.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

In Reviews of Personal Reading, candidates all too often chose texts of little substance which often caused them to resort to re-narration.

In both Interpretation and Specified Texts (Scots Practical Criticism was done by one candidate – the other option by no more than 20 candidates) questions inviting comment and explanation of the effectiveness of the writer's language use were not well done. Technical terms were often in evidence but understanding was not. Not all questions are rhetorical. Not all tones are sarcastic.

In order of popularity "Bold Girls", "Romeo and Juliet" and "Afternoons" were clear favourites. "Bold Girls" was not well done whereas "Romeo and Juliet" was, with the surprising exception of Question (a) (i). The final Question (f) was very well done, but in Question (f) on "Afternoons" candidates seemed to find it difficult to select a suitable poem.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

- Candidates' language tended to stand up reasonably well to the twin demands of writing at speed and length.
- Many candidates would benefit from more study about how language functions and how to analyse it. While there are many good writers, there are fewer who can evaluate an author's effectiveness as a communicator.
- Reviews of Personal Reading indicated frequently that there was a choice of text which penalised the candidate. The choice was frequently a text of little substance and all the candidates choosing such texts could do was to quote and narrate extensively. These often had very generalised tasks/remits indicated, eg looking at the change in the characters over the course of the book (most were as usual prose fiction) and this did not help.
- Although the examination is discontinued and there will be no Folios in 2003, it should be noted that the skill required is still a component of Personal Study (written response) and advice offered here should help in that context. Candidates who did well had chosen texts of substance and restricted their commentary and argument to tightly specified tasks and areas, which prevented generalised answers and increased their marks vis-à-vis others.