

24 June 2005

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Directors of Education

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of National Qualifications in English**

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications — English

On the advice of the Assessment Panel and Examiners, it has been agreed that there will be a re-formatting of the examination question papers for Critical Essay in English at Higher, Intermediate 2 and Intermediate 1 in and after the **2006** examinations. Details are as follows.

- ◆ The reminders formerly given in the third part of each question will now be included in the instructions at the start of the question paper and in general advice in each Section.
- ◆ Section D of the question paper will have the new title “Film and TV Drama”, to reflect more accurately the content covered in this Section.

It should be noted that there is no change to the Arrangements.

The aims of this re-formatting are to avoid repetition in the wording of questions, reduce the amount of time taken to read questions, and help candidates to focus on giving answers which are relevant to the questions set. The Panel and Examiners have advised that this re-formatting is in the best interests of candidates.

For the Critical Essay paper, candidates are expected to have studied a suitable range of texts. It should be made clear to candidates that at **Higher** level it is open to the Examiners in any year to set a question or questions requiring reference to more than one poem or more than one short story. As indicated in the new specimen question paper for **Higher**, questions on prose non-fiction may mention a particular kind of prose non-fiction such as travel writing or biography.

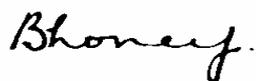
With regard to the specimen marking instructions accompanying the specimen question paper for Close Reading at **Higher**, the opportunity has been taken to expand, clarify and re-format this material in order to provide added assistance to centres. There are no changes to the passages or questions in the specimen question paper concerned.

It should be noted that the length of each of the two passages in the examination paper for Close Reading at **Higher** may vary from year to year. The first passage may be longer than the second, or the first passage may be shorter than the second, or both passages may be of similar length. The design of the 'two-passage' **NAB** material for Higher requires the first passage to be longer than the second, since the first passage in NAB material must have questions to the value of 30 marks (for possible use in end-of-Unit assessment), while the second passage has questions to the value of 20 marks. This requirement does not apply in the external assessment (examination).

The specimen question paper material is enclosed. This material is also available on SQA's website.

Centres are asked to direct the attention of candidates to the format which will apply in Critical Essay question papers in and after the 2006 examinations in English at Higher, Intermediate 2 and Intermediate 1, and to emphasise that there is no change to the Arrangements.

Yours faithfully



Miss B Loney
Qualifications Manager

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