

# LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 8695/11  
Writing

## Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Candidates need to allocate a set amount of time to: identify factors for writing; plan to write; write; check; correct.
- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to write the text for a *news story*, focusing on *the atmosphere of the event* and *the impact* on students.
- Candidates should consider the following as part of the planning stage: the purpose of the piece, the prescribed form and audience as well as the most appropriate voice or persona to adopt, the mood and tone that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable structure to employ.
- To perform well in this exam, candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English with accurate sentence demarcation. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences, and would do better to aim for clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety. One error that occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops. Another common error was writing in sentence fragments.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types, to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

## General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and some candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger candidates focused clearly on the question, writing engaging news stories aimed at other students in the school. Weaker candidates wrote simple accounts of the talk, many needing to pay more consideration to the specified form and audience.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and

appropriately. Weaker candidates focused on the content of the **1(a)** piece of writing and analysis was therefore minimal, usually addressed indirectly by outlining the structure of the piece. Stronger responses in **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (description, essay or review), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses in **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were narrative in form. Some **Question 3** responses lost focus on the formality required of an essay and became repetitive, with the same point(s) made several times rather than offering a selection of reasons. Some **Question 4** reviews were simple recounts of the trip to the stadium and the specific music that was played, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion about the concert.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary**

##### **Question 1**

**A famous person came to your school recently to give a talk about their career and life. Your teacher has asked you to write a news story describing the event, which will be published in your school magazine.**

- (a) **Write the text for the news story, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the atmosphere of the event and the impact that the talk has had on the students.**

Many responses focused more on the career of the famous person and their rise to celebrity status than on the actual event. This often resulted in form becoming biography, missing the focus on atmosphere. Many candidates included quotations from the students in the audience which covered their impression of the famous person and what the visit had meant to them. In many cases, this was reasonably well done.

Stronger candidates wrote a clear introductory paragraph and used subheadings or structured their piece into short paragraphs typical of news reports. They were able to combine description of the event with comments on the atmosphere and impact that the talk had on students. Stronger responses were about a famous person whose life and career enabled the writer to give specific advice relevant to all students and not just those who had similar interests to the speaker. They gave a brief biography of the famous person, which they were able to weave into the news story without making it the focus of the entire piece. Choices of speaker ranged from musicians and sportspeople to politicians, whose credible details were incorporated into the response, along with a range of literary devices which then served as useful evidence in **Question 1(b)**.

One strong example had a speaker who was a renowned conservationist and who gave advice on some of the less well-known changes everyone can make in their daily lives to help to slow down climate change. Another was a former White House aide and medical expert who had been driven to resign because of conspiracy theories.

Weaker candidates often talked about 'a famous person' without naming them; they often would have been improved with the inclusion of an introduction to the event and by writing consistently in the past tense. Most attention was paid to the famous person's life story, often a rags to riches story or one about coming from challenging home circumstances. These candidates tended to make generic comments to address impact; for example, 'all the students began to cry.'

In weaker responses, more attention needed to be paid to structuring the news story, with many written entirely without paragraphs. Many weaker pieces were short, often under 200 words. This resulted in a lack of development in all aspects – atmosphere, detail and the impact the event had on the student audience.

Grammatical errors, for example using commas instead of full stops between sentences, were common features of weaker responses. Ideas were mostly relevant but at times needed development. For example, in this response about the visit of a school police officer, the range of language was limited, and errors were frequent: 'Billy stated "I wear a green and black suit" to show

how he is different from the students at school he talked about how he carries objects in case he needs to use one, one day here at the campus he's on.'

**(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set by your headteacher.**

One approach that worked well for candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. Many responses were limited in detail; candidates should remember to provide evidence from their **Question 1(a)** response in their commentaries.

Stronger candidates showed an understanding of language and the need to provide some evaluation and analysis of how language functioned in the news story. They wrote in detail about the specific effects of structural and language features. Such features included parallel structures, figurative language, humour, hyperbole, direct quotations, puns, and discourse markers. They clearly identified their linguistic choices, gave quotations, explained the reasons for the choices and what effects they hoped to have on the reader. For example: 'In terms of structure I used discourse markers (such as 'Firstly ...') and chronological order to organise the text into sections which would make it easy for readers to understand and grasp the order of events. These features are conventional in news stories as they help provide an organised, time-based account of a specific event or occurrence.'

In weaker responses, candidates sometimes identified some basic language and structural features and struggled more with analysis. Some candidates attempted analysis using general phrases such as, 'This makes it easy for the students to understand'. There was a need in weaker responses for candidates to go beyond basic general commentary on the content of their piece and to make relevant language and structural points. Some wrote about basic things such as having written in paragraphs 'to make the text easier to read' or having used commas 'to make the sense clearer'. They often relied on simple identification of features without referencing specific words or phrases, and needed to analyse their effect and the ways in which they relate to audience and shape meaning. At times, language features were incorrectly identified.

**Section B: Extended writing**

**Question 2 – Descriptive piece**

**Write a descriptive piece called *The Heat Is On*, about a park on a hot day in summer. In your writing, focus on colour, sound and movement to help your reader to imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Many candidates successfully used the technique of a framed narrative, such as walking through the park to meet a friend. In several responses, narrative details became the most significant feature of the response, so that the ideas related to the descriptive purpose of the task were developed in a limited manner.

Stronger responses maintained a descriptive stance throughout the piece created an image of the park as a vibrant place full of people and animals. Colour, sound and movement were described with subtlety and precision. Some candidates described the park at different times, for example in the morning, in the afternoon and before sunset, observing the changes that had taken place. Stronger pieces invariably established the descriptive form in the very first paragraph or sentence, for example: 'The sun was sizzling and scorching the grass as I entered the park.'

A variety of linguistic techniques were used in stronger pieces, for example metaphorical language: 'The once vibrant green leaves were now lifeless skeletons.' Personification was at times used well, for example: 'Mother Earth slurped up all the water from the lake.' Some candidates created descriptive effects by zooming in on details to create a vivid snapshot: 'The rays of sunlight dance on the leaves of the trees, slowly switching into different shades of green like a kaleidoscope: forest green, pale green, olive green.'

Other stronger responses used imagery to develop thematic ideas: 'The cracked concrete slabs that made up the sidewalk had hints of brown bursting through as the roots of several neighboring trees tried their best to show their supremacy to man.' Some used elaborate descriptions that made the reader see mundane objects through an engaging new perspective while also integrating sound, movement and colour: 'The house-like structure also included a dummy steering wheel that did nothing but spin and squeak when the red plastic of the wheel rubbed against the loose steel washer holding it in place.'

Weaker responses were sometimes planned poorly, resulting in most of the piece detailing what preceded getting to the park, with little descriptive detail, for example: 'I combed my long dark hair as I thought about the day ahead; my mother cooked me a breakfast consisting of pancakes and fruit.' Some described various games being played in the park, but focused mainly on dialogue between the participants. Others began with some descriptive detail but became narrative, such as stories of a failed barbecue or a lost dog.

There was a tendency in weaker responses to slip into cliché when trying to convey the heat of the day. The reaction to heat was often described in physical terms, such as, 'More sweat is trickling down my back. As I feel the sun blazing on us.' Some of the weakest responses were in need of sentence control, revealed in sentence fragments such as, 'The crunching of the grass and dirt as I walk. The different birds chirping or communicating among each other. The distant barking of all dogs.'

### Question 3 – Essay

**In class, you have been discussing whether doing sport at school is a waste of time. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay on the topic. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Most candidates argued that doing sport at school is beneficial to students because it can help them build their resilience, develop their relationships, gain scholarships, keep them healthy physically and mentally, and help towards their future careers. Other candidates pointed out that doing sport at school may interfere with students' education as it takes a lot of their time; in addition, it can cause injuries and stress. Overall, most candidates agreed that doing sport at school has more advantages than disadvantages.

Stronger responses were written from an authoritative stance and maintained the appropriate form. They presented a balanced argument and came up with their own opinion at the end. The best pieces were organised into paragraphs, each one dealing with a different point. Some candidates used rhetorical questions, statistics or examples of different disciplines of sports. The strongest responses were formal in tone, presenting arguments in a well-structured and convincing manner. They took a clear line of argument and took readers through the argument point by point to construct a convincing overall case.

Stronger essays often began with an opening statement to engage the reader, setting out a point of view, as in this response: 'Sport throughout the year has presented a clear path for a healthy life and healthy living; thus, it would be hugely beneficial in schools.' They used discourse markers to structure the response and to demonstrate clear development. Some candidates opted to use the sequential 'Firstly, secondly and finally approach' which gives clarity and an overall impression of ideas developed clearly in terms of structure. More effective and sophisticated responses incorporated phrases such as 'Another/further argument', 'A different viewpoint' or 'On the contrary.'

Stronger essays included counter-arguments or had some sort of evaluation of each argument, for example that sports are an extramural activity that universities like to see on a student's application, but observed that there are other activities that can serve that purpose just as well.

Weaker essays were written in a conversational style rather than with formality and sophistication. This resulted in the loss of the authority that the essay required. They often presented a one-sided argument, usually in favour of sports in school. The argument often became repetitive with the same points made several times rather than offering a selection of reasons. They also showed weakness in sentence structure, for example, 'It can teach a student sportsmanship. Which is all about being ethical and respectful of the rules and others whether the team wins or loses.' Many weaker essays were not structured clearly, often without any use of paragraphs. In some cases, the candidates did not demonstrate sufficient vocabulary to express some of the more complex ideas, for example, 'Sports can end your life before it even starts'.

Some candidates took their point of view as the only point without expanding on their argument, for example, 'Sports can make you rich and famous and pay for your college education so they are a positive thing.' Other candidates talked mostly about personal experience with sports and needed to extrapolate a more general understanding of the issue. Responses were sometimes short or unfinished while in many other cases ideas needed more adequate development.

### Question 4 – Review

**You recently went to a concert in your town. Write a review of the concert, which will be posted on a website called *World of Music*. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Reviews covered concerts ranging from classical concerts to rock music and Korean pop. Most were enthusiastic reviews and positive recommendations were given to the reader. Most candidates discussed the venue for the event, the fans and people at the show in general, items for sale, including merchandise, the performer's outfit(s) and interactions with the crowd. They then gave a recommendation as to whether the event was worth seeing and sometimes qualified it by saying who might or might not enjoy the concert.

Some candidates showed that they were highly adept at this particular genre of writing, employing a range of stylistic conventions in order to create a sophisticated response. They maintained an authoritative persona throughout of a bored/enthusiastic/sophisticated/disappointed audience member, which lent the review authenticity. Some candidates described the whole experience rather than just the music and did so in a balanced, thoughtful way, so ensuring the weight of description focused on the bands and the music. A few made creditable attempts to describe the powerful, oceanic emotions they felt, singing and dancing and getting close to their icons. As one writer put it: 'We jumped! We swayed! We laughed! We cried! Emotions were so openly expressed and encouraged. This was a safe space for anyone who needed it.'

Some of the reviews criticised the music's quality. For instance, one candidate wrote, 'If you're looking to turn off your brain and enjoy a show, but not music, then West's concert is for you. Incredible performance, subpar music.' Another candidate criticised the food they bought, saying that 'it was lacklustre. Featuring a few famous restaurants, it tasted like low grade dog food. Seriously, forty dollars for a taco that wasn't even good was an instant regret trip to the bathroom.' Stronger pieces kept the form of review throughout the piece and offered well-informed opinions based on the evidence they presented. Some candidates made their descriptions of artists quite vivid: 'He certainly fit the description of a rapper, flaunting his dreadlocks and covered in jewelry from head to toe.' Stronger responses had evidence of convincing comments on the music as reflected in this example: 'As the audience started to cry at the sight of Michael leaving the stage, the drummer gave a cymbal crash.'

Weaker responses tended to be written in the form of an extended account of attending a concert, retelling what happened to them from the moment they arrived at the venue. Some went even further back, describing how they bought the tickets and providing details of the journey to the venue and finding a parking space; sometimes these responses were more akin to a personal diary entry than a review. Some weaker reviews contained little or no detail about the music. These reviews often focused on the parking, food outlets or the condition of the toilets, losing appropriacy to writing for a music website; comments on the music were treated as an aside at the end of the response. In weaker responses, the name or names of the performer or performers were not given, instead using the phrase 'the band' or 'the singer', which became repetitive. Some gave lengthy historical backgrounds of the band and its members; such responses were in need of the evaluation necessary for a review.

# LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 8695/12  
Writing

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- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write an article' and to focus on the 'challenges created by the speed of life' and to discuss 'how people cope with these challenges'.
- Candidates should consider the following as part of the planning stage: the purpose of the piece, the prescribed form and audience as well as the most appropriate voice or persona to adopt, the mood and tone that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable structure to employ.
- To perform well in this exam, candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences, and would do better to aim for clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety. One error that occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops. Another common error was writing in sentence fragments.
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The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and

appropriately. Weaker responses focused entirely on the content of the **1(a)** piece of writing and analysis was therefore minimal, usually addressed indirectly by outlining the structure of the piece. Stronger responses in **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (review, article or story), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses in **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some **Question 2** news programme reviews were simple recounts of the programme, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion about the concert. Some responses to **Question 3** only focused on one part of the question and were limited in development, while some **Question 4** responses were in need of a sense of drama.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary***

##### **Question 1**

**You have seen an announcement in a local newspaper asking people to send in letters describing their favourite building in the town. The letters will be published in a special edition of the newspaper next month.**

- (a) Write the text for the letter, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, describe the building and explain why you like it.**

A wide variety of buildings was discussed. Whilst many responses adhered to the specified form for the task, some responses read more like an article as they had been written without some of the conventions of a letter such as opening and concluding salutations.

Stronger responses were structured in a recognisable letter format. They gave detailed and clear descriptions of the building in question, together with some thoughtful reasons and explanations for having chosen it. They were appropriately organised, often focusing on the building's exterior, its entrance area and other internal spaces in sequence. They named the building and often described its surroundings before focusing on visual aspects of the building, such as colours, materials and architectural details.

Stronger candidates took care to examine their emotional response to the building by highlighting why the building they chose is special to them, rather than simply why it is liked, often linked to a childhood memory or a significant life event that occurred at the building. Sometimes significant emotional ties were conveyed by effective use of simile: 'The layout of the building is like walking through a real-life story book, each chapter a different section of the museum.'

More confident candidates employed descriptive lexis with purposeful concision, as in these two examples: 'This palace was not all sharp angles and glass. Interior parts of the building are soft and curved'; 'The owners had adorned the structure with dazzling fairy lights and blinking neon signs. The space was warm and buzzing with chatter. A receptionist stood behind a varnished mahogany counter and directed excited guests to their rooms.' A concluding paragraph prior to signing off the letter often provided a concise summary of the main ideas and a recommendation that the reader visit the building.

Weaker responses tended to slip into narrative and related first-hand experiences rather than describing the building to the intended audience, therefore losing focus on the task. They made generalised comments about an unidentified building or vaguely described a famous building. Some focused less on the building and its meaning and more on the activities and amenities associated with it, often reverting to listing as a straightforward technique; for example, 'checking the new action figures or a new style of clothing.'

Weaker responses showed a need for greater attention to structuring the response, very often having been written without paragraph breaks, for example. Other responses read more like advertisements for the building, with quite a few candidates describing the luxury and splendour of the interior of the building, almost as if it were a five-star hotel. Many weaker letters were short,

often less than 200 words. Such responses lacked development in both required aspects: detail in description and the explanation of why the writer liked the building.

Grammatical errors were a common feature of weaker responses, for example using commas instead of full stops between sentences. For instance, in this response, the range of language was limited, and errors were frequent: 'The Burj Khalifa, also known as the tallest building in the world. Which is located in the United Arab Emirates, in the city of Dubai which is very popular and full of tourists.'

**(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.**

One approach that worked well for candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. Many responses were limited in detail; candidates should remember to provide evidence from their **Question 1(a)** response in their commentaries.

Stronger candidates showed an understanding of language and the need to provide some evaluation and analysis of how language functioned in the letter. They wrote in detail about the specific effects of structural and language features. Such features included figurative language, humour, hyperbole and discourse markers. They clearly identified their linguistic choices, gave quotations, explained the reasons for the choices and what effects they hoped to have on the reader. For example: 'The importance of the lighthouse to the local people is further emphasised when I mention that it is made up of the "blood, sweat and tears" of the people. This powerful phrase creates a sense of belonging and instils pride in the reader.'

In weaker responses, candidates sometimes identified some basic language and structural features and struggled more with analysis. Some candidates attempted analysis using general phrases such as, 'This makes it easy for the students to follow'. There was a need in weaker responses for candidates to go beyond basic general commentary on the content of their piece and to make relevant language and structural points. Some wrote about basic things such as having written in paragraphs 'to make the text easier to read' or having used commas 'to make the sense clearer'. They often relied on simple identification of features without referencing specific words or phrases, and needed to analyse their effect and the ways in which they relate to audience and shape meaning. At times, language features were incorrectly identified.

**Section B: Extended writing**

**Question 2 – Review**

**You recently watched a new television news programme. Write a review of the news programme, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Most candidates tackled the review with appropriate attention to the readership of peers, with some light-hearted comments. However, there was evidence that some candidates had not read the question carefully enough as they did not engage with the fact that the television programme was meant to be 'new'.

Stronger candidates were highly adept at this particular genre of writing, employing a range of stylistic conventions in order to create a sophisticated response. They were able to confidently use techniques such as cynicism, irony or humour to criticise the programme or to use appropriately formal language and register to comment and review effectively. They usually adopted a chronological structure to focus on the different aspects of the news programme to clearly relate to their readers its constituent parts together with associated evaluative commentary. They made reference to: the scheduling of the programme to suit a target audience; the title sequence and the effectiveness of the associated theme tune; the professionalism and effectiveness of the news anchor; the dramatic qualities of 'on the scene' reportage; the informative nature of weather and sports segments and occasionally a local interest story. They often compared the new news programme with an established one on a competitor's channel, such as CNN, to achieve a balanced assessment, as in this example: 'I suspect many of you are as exasperated as I am with the obnoxious opening music announcing the start of most news programmes; this one provides much needed relief with a jaunty though not irritating tune.'

Weaker candidates tended to describe or retell an episode of the news programme and were therefore only able to achieve the task in part, as the content was only partially. The instructions were often misinterpreted



as candidates responded to a new programme other than news. This led to a variety of inappropriate content, such as focus on various hobbies and pastimes such as arts and crafts or video-gaming.

### Question 3 – Article

**In class, you have been discussing the fast pace of modern life. Your teacher has asked you to write an article called *Slow Down!* In your writing, focus on the challenges created by the speed of life these days, and discuss how people cope with these challenges. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Candidates generally engaged well with this question and most responses were sustained, with a good number of suggestions as to how we could all slow down and reorganise our lives for the better.

Stronger responses detailed a range of coping strategies such as taking up hobbies, ensuring sleep and eating patterns were improved, or making sure there were adequate opportunities to visit outdoor spaces. Many started with a bold question or a scenario to draw the reader in, for example: 'It's crazy to comprehend that the sound of an electric buzzer coming from a device made up of wires and metal is what controls the start of your day'. Another effective response opened like this: 'Human civilisation is in the fast lane but the unfortunate fact is that no one knows where we are going. We simply do not have enough opportunities to contemplate why we are in such a rush to get to a destination we cannot perceive'.

A variety of sentence structures were used in stronger pieces, including short sentences to make main points clearly and complex sentences for developed explanations. Arguments centred on the proposition that the increased pace of life is associated with higher levels of workload, stress and psychological and physical maladies. Articles tended to end with a direct and meaningful message for the reader.

More targeted responses explored the symptoms of a fast-paced life such as the loss of family time which was then linked effectively to the burdens of advanced technology; for, example mobile phones at the dining table or misuse of time such as 'spending most of our time online.' Stronger responses included effective solutions, for example to 'disconnect' or 'play a board game' and concluded effectively by expounding on the crux of the issue, as in this example: 'The hard-hitting truth is that we have been conditioned to work hard every day only to work even harder in the future. The notion of relaxing and taking time for ourselves has become such a taboo that people are extremely hesitant to openly admit it is essential to wellbeing'.

Weaker responses tended to focus on one aspect of the fast pace of modern life, usually technology such as smartphones and the associated demands of constant engagement with social media. They tended to overlook the second element of the question and did not give sufficient weight to the ways people cope with the challenges of living in a fast-paced society. Such responses often gave some consideration to familiar issues like technology, peer pressure and industrialisation (including pollution and global warming), but needed to make identification and examination of the challenges they represent.

Weaker responses were sometimes accusatory in tone, bemoaning quantities of homework and exam preparation stress. Alternatively, they attempted to contrast the conditions of modern life with those of the past, usually in a simplistic way, such as in this example: 'People before us also lived their life without the internet they did not had the instagram and scapchat and frankly speaking they never looked for fake appraiseal the wishes the fake social circle we intend to have and then find peace in it'.

### Question 4 – Story

**Write a story called *How Did That Happen?* about a holiday which did not go according to plan. In your writing, create a sense of anticipation and drama. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Anticipation and drama were generally well-crafted into the stories, as very often was humour. The strongest responses established and sustained a clear focus on anticipation and drama, whilst the weakest responses tended to offer a list-like series of unfortunate events and needed to give more in terms of engagement and narrative structure.

Stronger candidates created anticipation from the first paragraph, for example in this engaging opening: "'Come on girls! Hurry up, we don't have all day,'" shouted Sara's mom when she discovered copious amounts of clothing were still being packed, at a snail's pace.' This sense of anticipation or drama was developed in a clear or sophisticated manner all the way through the narrative. Another successful opening was: 'Alarms blazing, police sirens outside, a group of girls crying, the place was on fire and I was holding a flamingo. How did that happen?'

Many stronger candidates deliberately, and successfully, delayed any complications corresponding to a drama until the middle of the story. One such dramatic moment occurred during a charter flight's attempted landing in a storm: 'The pilot announced, "There is almost zero visibility and the wind speed is dangerously high. I urge you all to remain seated. In case of an emergency oxygen masks will drop down in front of you." Passengers immediately began to clamber for the emergency exits.'

The sense of anticipation and drama was a struggle in weaker responses, often involving descriptions of a family trip. Often, the anticipation came in relation to commencing the holiday and the drama comprised local difficulties encountered as the holiday progressed. Narratives often needed more focus on organisation, as they drifted from one event to the next. There was a tendency to incorporate unrealistic occurrences and expression was often hampered by frequent errors, such as in this example: 'Our trip was planned for two days, so we decided to buy a lot of fruits because by eating fruits we will get a lot of vitamins which will give us power to explore mountains'.

Some candidates employed plots that were very elaborate, with many characters involved, leading to a loss of narrative control. Often, candidates used a 'telling' and not a 'showing' technique, which did not allow for a sense of drama to be created.

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## General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and some candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger candidates focused clearly on the question, writing engaging news stories aimed at other students in the school. Weaker candidates wrote simple accounts of the talk, many needing to pay more consideration to the specified form and audience.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and

appropriately. Weaker candidates focused on the content of the **1(a)** piece of writing and analysis was therefore minimal, usually addressed indirectly by outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task; (story, speech or review), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some stories in **Question 2** were in need of a sense of drama or tension. Some responses to **Question 3** were limited in audience engagement or development of ideas, while some **Question 4** responses were simple recounts of a visit to the museum, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary**

##### **Question 1**

**You recently went to see a famous band playing live in a large stadium. You decide to write a diary entry about the experience.**

- (a) **Write the text for the diary entry, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the atmosphere and the sense of excitement.**

Many responses were in need of the basic conventions of diary writing. More successful candidates understood the required features and wrote convincing, entertaining responses. A minority of responses were too long, which impacted on the candidates' ability to write a **Section B** response of the required length. Conversely, some responses were very short and did not fully utilise the 400 words at their disposal.

More confident candidates moved smoothly through their diary entries, focusing on the atmosphere of the event and sense of excitement, both in the language used and in the sequencing of events in their narratives. They created a believable setting and experience that was well supported by specific details such as staging, costumes, sounds and selected moments from the concert. They created a sense of personal involvement, utilising the added freedom and possible intimacy of a diary entry. 'I screamed along with the rest,' one wrote, 'waving my arms around in a craze, it was an adrenaline rush'. For some it was the happiest day in their life: 'I was singing my heart out and felt like I was flying and could achieve anything.' This fan went on to describe how she climbed onstage and sang with the stars.

It was clear that quite a number of candidates had been to a concert and were able to recall and depict the experience in credible detail. One diarist got all but trampled underfoot. The sheer physicality of the occasion came over well in some accounts, the hot sun, the deafening sounds of the music and the audience chanting, the jostling bodies with their unsavoury odours. One example of effective writing included this description of the journey home after the concert: 'My whole body hurt and all I wanted to do was sleep, but I still had "17 Spoons" stuck in my head. I was humming the song the whole way home. The taxi driver probably thought I was some sort of lunatic for singing, "You won't hurt me but I'll hurt you with 17 spoons" under my breath. Good night diary!'

Weaker responses tended to take the form of an extended account of attending a concert, simply retelling what happened from the moment of arrival at the venue. Such responses would have been improved with some personal comment on thoughts and feelings, some detail about the music. Some writers went further back, describing how they bought the tickets and providing details of the journey to the venue and finding a parking space. A key technical problem in weaker responses was in maintaining tense forms. In responses in which the name of the performer or was not given, the resulting use of the phrase 'the band' or 'the singer' became repetitive. Some weaker responses included lengthy historical backgrounds of the band and its members, resulting in a piece more akin to an article than to a diary entry. Paragraphing was often absent from the response.

Grammatical errors were a common feature of weaker responses, for example the use of commas instead of full stops between sentences. Ideas were mostly relevant but at times needed some

development. For example, in this response, while content was generally relevant, the range of language was limited and errors were frequent: 'I was excited plus the feeling of fear. When I got inside the stadium there was a bunch of people sitting in their assigned set and everyone getting to know each other or communicate.'

**(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.**

One approach that worked well for candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. Many responses were limited in detail; candidates should remember to provide evidence from their **Question 1(a)** response in their commentaries.

Stronger candidates showed an understanding of language and the need to provide some evaluation and analysis of how language functioned in the diary entry. They wrote in detail about the specific effects of structural and language features. Such features included hyperbole, figurative language and humour. They clearly identified their linguistic choices, gave quotations, explained the reasons for the choices and what effects they hoped to have on the reader. For example: 'I used an informal register to create a more intimate and carefree feeling that comes with a diary entry. I used slang words like "cheesy" to indicate the youth of the narrator. Additionally, by using vocabulary such as "fandom" I am further cementing the idea of a young narrator.'

In weaker responses, candidates sometimes identified some basic language and structural features and struggled more with analysis. Some candidates attempted analysis using general phrases such as, 'This makes it easy for the students to understand'. There was a need in weaker responses for candidates to go beyond basic general commentary on the content of their piece and to make relevant language and structural points. Some wrote about basic things such as having written in paragraphs 'to make the text easier to read' or having used commas 'to make the sense clearer'. They often relied on simple identification of features without referencing specific words or phrases, and needed to analyse their effect and the ways in which they relate to audience and shape meaning. At times, language features were incorrectly identified.

**Section B: Extended writing**

**Question 2 – Story**

**Write a story which begins with the following sentence: *It was in the middle of the night when I finally made up my mind.* In your writing, create a sense of drama and tension. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Most candidates wrote complete stories, though some responses did not have a clear ending.

Drama and tension were generally well-crafted into the stories. Candidates wrote about big decisions in their lives; leaving home, going to university, pregnancy, romantic difficulties and running away from home were particularly popular. Others foresaw conflict over a choice of career; one wanted to join the military, a second wanted to attend a distant university rather than stay at home and attend the local one, while a third wanted to go to art school against the wishes of her parents. All three accounts avoided stereotypical outcomes. The strongest responses established and sustained a clear focus on drama and tension, whilst the weakest responses tended to offer a list-like series of events that resulted in a lack of engagement or narrative structure.

Stronger pieces provided a seamless transition from the narrative opening supplied to subsequent paragraphs. They introduced a sense of suspense and drama, both in the language used and in the sequencing of events in their narratives. Also, some stronger responses included a plot twist to subvert expectations. Some stronger stories established tension from the first paragraph, for example in this engaging opening: 'My feet were sore from my pacing a path worn into the carpet that would never leave. Unlike him. I scowl at the lines I've trampled, a testament to the feelings I claim I don't have.'

In weaker responses, candidates had struggled to create a sense of drama and tension, often writing rather tedious descriptions of escaping from somewhere. There was some need for greater organisation in narratives that drifted from one event to the next. Some stories consisted of the protagonist relaying internal thoughts in a manner hampered by frequent errors, such as in this example: 'I'm set on what I want to do.'

Now as I walk in the living room my parent are having a conversation perhaps its gossips from work I didn't care though.'

Other weaker responses employed elaborate plots with many characters involved, which lead to a lack of narrative control. Where candidates had used a 'telling' and not a 'showing' technique, this did not allow for a sense of drama to be created.

### Question 3 – Speech

**You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether teenagers should get jobs or relax during long school holidays. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a speech on the topic. Write the text for the speech, discussing both points of view and giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Most candidates discussed both points of view and gave their own opinion.

In stronger responses, candidates assumed an authoritative stance and maintained the appropriate form. They presented a balanced argument, showing both sides of the debate and came up with their own opinion at the end. They used a range of rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions, statistics, a variety of sentence structures and powerful vocabulary. The best responses were organised into paragraphs, each one dealing with a different point. The strongest responses were formal in tone, presenting arguments in a well-structured and convincing manner. They took a clear line of argument and took readers through the argument point by point to construct a convincing overall case.

Weaker speeches were written in the form of essays, which resulted in the loss of immediacy that speeches require. They often discussed only one side of the argument and were frequently repetitive, needing to develop ideas more. Many weaker responses were written without paragraphs, which affected the organisation of ideas and arguments. In some cases, insufficient vocabulary was used to elaborate clearly on ideas. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Some can manage school and work but, it just makes it easier and they can work more and longer if they want to.'

### Question 4 – Review

**A museum in your town has recently reopened after a major redevelopment, and you have visited it. Write a review of the museum, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

This question was generally answered quite effectively, although few responses demonstrated a full grasp of the particular language and structure needed for a review, whether positive or critical. Many answers lacked development and felt list-like. Most reviews focused on good points; a few offered slightly more balance by including negative comments too.

Stronger reviews were structured clearly, with some effectively deploying sub-titles. They gave clear recommendations or criticisms, and provided plenty of detail to get across a real feel for the museum. The few critical reviews were the more dramatic and usually the more insightful.

Weaker responses tended to list and describe the museum's content. Other weaker work more resembled advertising copy than reviews. They often omitted to express a view, as is a defining feature of review writing.

# LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 8695/21  
Poetry, Prose and Drama

## Key messages

- Option **(a)** discursive essays should analyse specific details of the text within the argument presented.
- Option **(b)** passage questions may usefully place the passage in the wider text as a relevant context.

## General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with the large majority of candidates showing at least a sound knowledge of the set texts. There were some rubric errors in this session with candidates not understanding the optionality on the paper. Very few responses showed evidence of mismanagement of time in this session. The quality of expression was sound in nearly every case, although there are still some candidates with expressive weaknesses which can impede communication at this level.

There were responses to nearly all the texts on the paper and answers reflecting a wide range of performance were seen on each of the texts attempted by the candidates.

There are two specific issues to be addressed in this session:

Assessment Objective 2 from the Literature in English syllabus states that candidates should 'analyse ways in which writers' choices of language, form and structure shape meanings and effects'. Candidates attempting option **(b)** passage questions often showed evidence of meeting this Assessment Objective in their responses to the given passage. However, candidates attempting option **(a)** questions, the discursive essay, also need to provide evidence that they are able to do this, by quoting or referring closely to specific moments in the text. They should then discuss these references in detail, focusing on the writer's choices and exploring what for the candidate are the effects of those choices.

Candidates responding to option **(b)** passage questions, who briefly place the passage within the wider work it is selected from, often write more focused and relevant answers. Some candidates could benefit from considering this approach, as it will give a context to their interpretation of the passage itself, as well as providing evidence of knowledge of the text. This equally applies to passages from poetry selections as well as the drama texts on paper 1.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section A*

#### **Question 1**     **ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons***

- (a)**     Nearly every candidate was able to select relevant material with which to address the task, often focusing on Joe, with weaker answers tending to retell Joe's story, often in great detail. Better answers at this level saw Chris as having contrasting attitudes to his father, with 'Joe thoroughly corrupted by the value he places on his family's wealth' and 'Chris suffering from survivor's guilt, from the war and the court case'. The ability to select relevant narrative and shape it to the specific question was an important factor in the overall success of weaker responses. Better answers at this level considered the other characters and their interactions, sometimes suggesting an appreciation of Miller's dramatic choices. More competent responses were able to range more widely in the text to support their ideas, often bringing in the Baylisses as having contrasting

attitudes, similar to Joe and Chris, 'where materialism clashes with idealism', as one suggested. Others saw Miller's concerns as critical: 'Miller presents wealth as a motivator for the likes of Joe and Sue but also a cause of conflict and family tensions', as one suggested. Better answers at this level often supported their ideas with direct reference to or quotation from the text. Good answers paid attention to the wording of the question and focused on 'Miller's presentation', with clear and detailed analysis of how he uses dramatic techniques, such as contrast, irony and staging to present his concerns, 'about wealth and thereby the American Dream and its poisonous effect on family values', as one put it. Very good answers were also able to embed contextual references to the social concerns in post-war America, often illuminating their arguments perceptively, seeing the play as 'Miller's critique of the American Dream, tying together dramatically wealth and family, in a series of conflicts and deceptions'.

- (b) In response to this question many candidates were able to place the passage into the context of the wider text, with nearly all answers showing at least some knowledge and understanding of the significance of the passage. There were however some very weak responses which struggled with some of basic knowledge: the relationship between Ann and Kate, the situation with Larry and his relationship to both women and the role and situation of Chris were common causes of confusion and suggested a lack of knowledge of the text. Answers in the lower levels tended either to paraphrase the dialogue or to give a more general summary of the play's action and its characters to this point, with some able to chart the changing tone and tension within the passage: 'the conversation moving from light and playful (gossip) to the conflicted and tense (trembling)', as one suggested. Others saw the nuances of the relationship, how 'Kate makes a sly point about Ann's mother waiting for Steve, to encourage Ann to do the same for Larry out of guilt'. Better answers at this level kept the question firmly in mind and were able to focus on the presentation of the women. Analysis at this level often consisted of comparing and contrasting the words and actions of the women, with better answers, for example, exploring some of the effects of Miller's stage directions. More successful answers focused on Miller's dramatic methods throughout – the effects of the very specific stage directions ('going upstage' and 'delicately' for example). Good answers were illuminated by precise contextualisation, often identifying who knows what at this stage – 'Kate's hiding of the truth about Joe and Ann similarly protective of Larry's reputation', as one put it. Very good answers developed such interpretations further, for example, 'there is a kind of reverse dramatic irony at work here, where Ann knows the truth about Larry, because of the letter, when the audience and all the other characters do not', was one such development. Others had detailed analysis of the language, 'how the dashes show they are growing further apart', for example. There was also consideration of the symbolic significance of Chris on stage, 'his presence serving to heighten the divide between the two women', as one put it. Those who could blend their contextual points with a grasp of the dramatic methods in their interpretations of the relationship often did very well.

**Question 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Much Ado About Nothing***

- (a) Most responses were able to select relevant material with which to address the task. Weaker answers often retold Hero's story, sometimes in great detail, with better answers at this level seeing contrasts with Beatrice's reputation and how that changes through the play, 'though they both end up married to the right man', as one noted. More competent answers considered Shakespeare's presentation, often seen as dramatic contrasts between pairs of characters: Hero and Margaret or Benedick and Beatrice or more subtly Don John and Don Pedro. Better answers developed such contrasts by reference to the text and especially exploring the language through which, for example, Don Pedro's reputation of being honourable is set against Don John's malice. Good answers linked reputation to the idea of 'noting' and the various puns on that word throughout the play. Some saw the entire structure of the play as a series of reputations lost, from Hero's purity to Beatrice's shrewishness through more thematic losses such as 'love as a genuine human emotion becoming a mere comic manipulation', as one put it. Very good answers considered the dramatic language with which such ideas were presented, the use of 'characters talking about each other both sincerely – Beatrice on the fallen Hero – and insincerely – Hero on Benedick's love for Beatrice, so that there is no moral or reputational stability at all in the end', as one suggested. Such interpretations, supported by pertinent reference to the text, did very well.



- (b) Most responses were able to find relevant points to make about the relationship. Very weak answers struggled with the basic situation and the relationships between the various groups of characters, often assuming the exchanges between Don Pedro and his friends to be 'sincere'. Weaker answers tended to retell the story of the relationship, sometimes in great detail, largely ignoring the shifting focus. Success at this level was often determined by how closely the candidate explored the given passage and what that revealed about the couple. More competent responses were able to track how the dramatic focus moved from Benedick listening, to his soliloquy to his exchange with the unwitting Beatrice. Many responses analysed the final exchanges in detail, often with awareness of the effects, such as the comedy and irony of his 'determination to see signs of love and her reluctance to move beyond their existing 'war'', as one suggested. Good answers were alive to Shakespeare's use of different comic techniques here, from the audience's awareness of Don Pedro's 'trick', to the 'comic irony of Benedick's self-delusion and at the same time his self-awareness', as one put it. Other answers developed such ideas analysing the effects of the audience knowing that Benedick has been tricked as he engages with the unsuspecting Beatrice. Very good answers explored the language in detail, with some contrasting, for example, Benedick's 'fair lady' here with his 'harpie' of a few scenes before. Others explored the language of love and its effects – 'doting', 'get her picture', 'wear her heart out' and 'marks of love' suggesting, for some candidates, a superficiality in its treatment. Very good answers sometimes considered the staging, sometimes using their knowledge of the Globe as a useful context, with others showing very good understanding of the play's themes of deception, false reporting and naivety, 'so that Benedick and later Beatrice both end up just as much victims of the meddling court as Hero', as one suggested.

**Question 3 WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero and Jero's Metamorphosis***

- (a) Most of the responses had enough knowledge of the plays to answer the question relevantly. Weak answers retold parts of the narrative connecting Amope and Jero with Chume, often in accurate detail, with only implicit reference to Chume's role and characterisation. Better answers at this level were aware that he helped to show what sort of characters they were and that he developed during the two plays. More competent responses were able to consider some of the ways Soyinka develops his character: his music making, his arguments with his wife and his simple faith were often useful starting points for discussion. Others were able to compare and contrast the way he is used by Jero during the plays, how 'his importance to Jero grows as Jero's own power and influence grows', as one suggested. Very good answers were able to explore his dramatic role in detail, in terms of the plot and as a method 'that Soyinka uses to explore the moral and gender concerns he is presenting in the play', as one suggested. Other responses at this level also analysed Soyinka's methods of characterisation: Chume's language, the contrasts between Chume and the other minor characters, such as the band leader and his attitudes to religion. Where such interpretations were supported by specific reference to and quotations from the text they often did very well.
- (b) Most responses were broadly aware of the context, though few were able to place this exchange precisely. Weak answers tended to either summarise the relationship so far, often with little direct reference to the passage, or to paraphrase the passage in detail. Better answers at this level showed understanding of the importance of Rebecca to Jero and how 'she seems to be changing him and the way he behaves', as one suggested. Sounder answers considered Soyinka's presentation, with discussions of the setting, the props and the stage directions enabling candidates to show some understanding of his dramatic methods. Other answers at this level considered the relationship from different perspectives, Jero and Rebecca's as well as the audience's, resulting in some interesting interpretations developing. Good answers also analysed some of the details, the dramatic effects of the setting and props for example. Others looked closely at the language, noticing for example Rebecca's 'almost hero worship of her mentor, whilst he shows barely disguised lust for her at odds with his spiritual role', as one suggested; such points led to a consideration of Soyinka's use of characterisation to develop his plot and the way he creates 'both laughter and intrigue in his audience'.

**Question 4 THOMAS MIDDLETON AND WILLIAM ROWLEY: *The Changeling***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Section B**

**Question 5 ROBERT BROWNING: Selected Poems**

- (a) Nearly all responses to this question were able to select relevant poems to discuss, the most popular choices were *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*, *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St Praxed's Church*, *Confessions* and *The Confessional*. Weak response often summarised the poems chosen for discussion, often concentrating on the characters in the poems. At this level, successful essays tended to compare the 'stories', with some sense of the religious backdrop to the characters' actions. Direct references to some details of the poems, indicating knowledge and understanding, also helped to lift some responses. More competent answers focused on the topic of 'religion', often recognising that Browning's characters were an important part of his poetic choices in presenting his concerns. Other responses at this level developed the comparing and contrasting of characters, as well as discussing such diverse elements as settings, verse form and language. Good answers explored such poetic methods in detail, often using apt quotation and showed at least an awareness of appropriate contexts to inform and expand their interpretations. Very good answers analysed the effects of such poetic methods in detail, with some responses showing perceptive exploration of imagery and language. Other very good responses were able to explore the tone, with some seeing a 'dark, even disturbing humour in some of Browning's ironic phrases', where others showed some sophistication in comparing the effects of his choices of verse forms and rhythms. Answers which supported such points with specific reference to the detail did very well.
- (b) Nearly all answers were able to explore the poem with some knowledge and understanding. Very weak answers, however, were often puzzled by the overarching metaphor and appeared to be responding as to an unseen poem, with consequent weaknesses in understanding and the discussion. Answers in the lower levels often attempted a paraphrase of the poem, with some able to recognise the poem's 'triple layered structure', as one called it. Answers which were able to shape the paraphrase partly to the topic of the question, 'emotions', did better at this level. More competent answers showed knowledge and understanding of Browning's concerns and to some extent possible interpretations of the poem. At this level these tended to be asserted with occasional supporting quotations, and candidates who were able to show some awareness of Browning's poetic choices tended to do better. Good answers developed this further, often starting from a consideration of Browning's poetic methods, for example, the structure and verse form of the poem, using this to lead naturally into considering the question in more detail. Many good responses offered multiple interpretations of the poem's meaning and where such arguments were supported by detailed analysis of the language and imagery, the answers were very good. More sophisticated analyses considered the effects of the language and imagery in forensic detail, with some seeing the 'typical longing for something both desirable and unobtainable we see in so many of Browning's poems', as one suggested. Other sophisticated answers saw a sexual, almost predatory tone in some of his choices, with the main metaphor of the rose, 'suggesting beauty in the flower, danger in the thorns and the poet's desire to pick the bloom, in other words to Deflower the subject', as one answer put it. Such arguments were at times supported by appropriate biographical context and did very well.

**Question 6 OWEN SHEERS: *Skirrid Hill***

- (a) Nearly all responses to this question were able to select relevant poems to discuss, the most popular choices being *The Farrier*, *The Fishmonger*, *Winter Swans*, *Late Spring*, *Song* and *Swallows*. Weak responses often summarised the poems chosen for discussion, often concentrating on the characters in the poems, with each poem treated separately. At this level some focus on the task lifted responses, as did some attempt to compare the treatment in the poems. More competent answers showed understanding of Sheers' concerns as well as detailed knowledge of the poems, often offering interpretations in which the comparison was, at least implicitly, embedded. Answers tended to be assertive rather than demonstrative at this level. Those essays which included some appreciation of Sheers' methods, often language and imagery, did better. Good answers developed the analysis, often exploring the effects of the poetic choices by comparison. 'Sheers uses the animals – the calm solidity of the horse and the cold deadness of the fish to reveal the characters he is really interested in, *The Farrier* and *The Fishmonger*', as one candidate wrote. Very good answers were able to develop their interpretations across a wider palette of methods, Sheers' use of verse form and repetition, for example, but focusing on the effects of such choices and how these effects might suggest a variety of interpretations.

- (b) Nearly every answer showed knowledge of the basic meaning of the poem, though there were some very weak responses which struggled with some of the details – for example, the ‘long-dead sheep’ – resulting in some uneven commentaries. Weak answers retold the story, often quite accurately, yet with limited awareness of the construction or its poetic nature, often becoming distracted by speculations about the nature of the relationship at the heart of the poem. More competent responses showed clear knowledge of the poem and often sympathetic understanding of Sheers’ concerns and even the nuances of the relationship. This was a sound basis for exploring the poetic methods used by Sheers and good essays rose to the challenge of exploring the language, the symbols and the imagery, often developing convincing interpretations on the strength of the analysis. Very good answers focused on the effects of the poetic methods identified, with many candidates showing great perception in discussing ‘the changing emotions of the couple, the sense of timelessness but also of immediate loss’, as one suggested. Other very good answers wrestled with some of the details, the ‘clumsy shoes’ and the ‘sarcophagus’ for example, exploring different interpretations and how these details enable Sheers to ‘give his reader, bit by bit, a complete picture of the relationship and the couple’s changing emotions’, as one suggested. Where such points were drawn from specific references to the poem and had some contextual support, the answers often did very well.

### Question 7 *Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2*

- (a) Most responses were able to choose relevant poems to discuss. Some very weak responses, however, discussed poems not in the selection, for which no credit could be given, or poems from the selection which did not apparently present war – Dickinson’s *I Years had been from Home* or Browning’s *If thou must love me*, for example. The success of the essays based on these choices was very limited. Weak answers chose at least one relevant poem and were often able to show some knowledge of the basic meaning of the poems. At this level there was often very little or no attempt to offer a comparison of the writing. Some implicit sense of the poetic methods or that the poems were constructed improved the responses, though in many weak essays there was very little evidence of any appreciation of the genre or that the works were poems. More competent responses made wiser choices of material to discuss with Owen’s *Futility*, Sassoon’s *The Death Bed*, Hardy’s *A Wife in London* and Gurney’s *First March* the most popular choices. There were surprisingly few references to Gallagher’s *Distant Fields/Anzac Parade*. Answers at this level showed understanding of the concerns and were able to offer a comparison of the chosen poems, often treating each poem separately with a summative, comparative conclusion. Better answers at this level explored some of the poetic methods, often the language and the imagery, with often some relevant context added in support of the interpretation. Good answers focused on the writing of their chosen poems, exploring how the different choices of form, rhythm and rhyme, as well as language and imagery, enable the poets to create different tones and emotions in the readers. Very good responses developed such points into sophisticated interpretations of the poets’ concerns, often embedding the comparison throughout the essay, with apt quotations and a use of appropriate contexts.
- (b) In response to this question, some contextual knowledge was very helpful, particularly in weaker responses. Without the context, very weak answers attempting to unpick the relationship and the ‘story behind it’, as one suggested, often struggled to make relevant points. Lower level answers tended to paraphrase the poem line by line or offer a general summary with some generally relevant comments on the situation. Better answers at this level were able to explore the meaning of Yeats’s poem, often showing understanding of ‘the speaker’s feelings of loss, disappointment and anger’, as one suggested. Competent answers linked such ideas to the poetic methods, often focusing on language and imagery, for example noting how Yeats creates ‘a picture of the old lady, once beautiful, sitting sadly by the dying fire’, as one put it. Others explored the structure of the poem, showing understanding of Yeats’s use of time, ‘merging past in the present’, as one suggested. Very good answers, often informed by detailed contextual knowledge, analysed the effects of the poetic choices perceptively, offering sophisticated and at times sensitive, interpretations of Yeats’s intentions in the poem, ‘from the very graphic image of her sad old age to his love-lorn mythical wanderings in the Irish mountains’, as one wrote, with many noting his own sad future in his attempt to fill his ex-lover with regret. Where such discussions were structured, so that context, analysis and interpretation were fully integrated, the answers often did very well.

**Question 8 GILLIAN CLARKE: Selected Poems**

- (a) Nearly all responses to this question were able to select relevant poems to discuss, the most popular choices being *The Baby Sitter*, *Catrin*, *White Roses*, *Sunday* and *Cold Knap Lake*. Weak responses often summarised the poems chosen for discussion, often concentrating on the characters in the poems, with each poem treated separately. At this level some focus on the task, 'relationships between adults and children', lifted the response, as did some attempt to link the treatment in the chosen poems. More competent answers showed understanding of Clarke's concerns as well as detailed knowledge of the poems, such as the conflict between the generations or the lack of communication. Answers at this level tended to be assertive, and those essays which included some appreciation of Clarke's methods, often language and sentence structures, did better. Good answers developed the analysis, often exploring the effects of the poetic choices by comparison. 'Clarke often uses the indifference of nature to contrast the human emotions, such as the lake and the drowning girl or the cat and the dying boy', as one candidate wrote. Very good answers were able to develop their interpretations across a wide range of methods, Clarke's use of verse form and natural imagery, for example, but always focusing on the effects of such choices and possible interpretations, informed in some cases by appropriate reference to contexts.
- (b) Nearly every answer showed knowledge of the basic meaning of the poem, though there were some very weak responses which struggled with some of the details – for example, 'lamb-grief' or a 'ruff of ice' – resulting in some confused discussions. Weak answers tended to paraphrase the poem, explaining how the details gave a 'wintry image of what February looks like in Wales', as one suggested. More competent responses showed understanding as well as clear knowledge, noting for example 'how the humans seem almost like aliens in the landscape described by Clarke', as one put it. Others explored the imagery and language in depth, showing some awareness of the visual and auditory effects created by Clarke. Good answers often supported ideas with relevant biographical contextual detail, such as the Welsh countryside, noting how the precise and specific details, such as the frozen tap, lend an air of authenticity to her presentation. Very good answers focused on the effects of Clarke's choices, the interplay between verse form and enjambement and her poetic imagination, 'connecting the frozen pond to the harp-string as the human 'plays' is both graphic and creative', as one put it. Others explored the anthropomorphism of some of her imagery, 'indicating the loneliness of her existence in the countryside, so that only the streams, the pond and dead lambs seem to communicate', as one stated. Such interpretations supported by specific and detailed reference to the poem did very well.

**Section C**

**Question 9 E M Forster: *Howards End***

- (a) Nearly every response was able to select relevant material with which to address the task. Weaker answers often retold Helen's narrative in their own words, often in quite accurate detail, though with little reference to the wording of the task. At this level, some direct reference to or quotation from the text improved the response, especially where it at least implicitly suggested awareness of Forster's portrayal. More competent responses considered the given quotation and were invariably in agreement with it, citing her various relationships with the Wilcoxes, her sister and Leonard, often showing understanding of Forster's concerns and how her 'moral ambiguity blurred the lines between the various social groups', as one suggested. Good answers considered Forster's portrayal in detail, his use of language and the third person narrator, for example, so that 'Helen becomes a mysterious figure to the reader because her sister no longer understands her', as one stated. Others noted how the attitudes of Leonard, Paul and Henry towards her also shape the reader's response, both positively and negatively. Very good answers explored the quotation – 'Helen wants to be the centre of attention and of course always responds to those who respond to her, whether by loving them or giving them of herself and wealth', as one shrewdly noted. Such responses, when supported by apt quotation and some contextualisation, often did very well.
- (b) Most responses were able to give a broad context to the passage. Weaker answers tended to retell the story of Margaret and Henry's relationship and wedding up to this point or offer a summary of the events of the given passage. More competent answers focused on the different attitudes on display and what they revealed about the characters – Henry's casual indifference and Margaret's need for permanence. Others linked this into a critique of the relationship, with such differences 'inevitably suggesting, even on honeymoon, that the marriage was to be a terrible mistake for both of them', as one suggested. Good answers looked closely at the details: Forster's use of the narrative voice to shape the reader's response to characters, the contrasting language of Henry's

practicality and Margaret's more philosophical musings, 'her honesty is at odds with his natural deceptiveness as underlined by the language and narrator', one suggested. Other good answers explored Forster's use of dialogue and punctuation to create the tone and atmosphere throughout. Some contextualisation helped lift other responses, who saw an 'all too familiar male attitude to a woman's concerns in Henry's dismissive attitudes', as one summarised it. Where such ideas were supported by specific reference to the details of the passage, the answers did very well.

**Question 10 ANDREA LEVY: *Small Island***

- (a) Nearly every response was able to select some relevant material with which to address the task. Weaker answers often explained the background to Queenie and retold her story, often in quite accurate detail, though with only sporadic reference to house and the given task. At this level, awareness of the importance of the house to different groups of characters improved the response, with some able to see contrasting emotions and responses. More competent answers explored the idea of a 'setting', contrasting the house with other settings in the novel, for example. Others explored how Levy uses the house to develop characterisation, how as 'an unchanging place in a rapidly changing world it comes to represent something permanent in the lives of many of characters', as one put it. Good answers were able to develop such ideas into analysing Levy's methods more closely, the language and imagery with which the house is described and how the attitudes to the house change as the characters develop. Very good responses were able to explore the effects on the reader created by Levy's description of and use of the house, noting how it 'reflected the changing social attitudes as well as the more personal and emotional changes in the characters', as one suggested. Where such ideas integrated appropriate historical contextual references with specific reference to textual details, the answers often did very well.
- (b) Most responses were able to give at least a broad context to the passage. Weaker answers tended to retell the events that had led to this moment in the text and showed some knowledge of character and plot. Better answers at this level did focus on some of the detail and were able to explain the relationships here and why the American soldiers were important to the novel. More competent answers looked at the presentation in detail, showing understanding of Levy's concerns around race and class, as well as societal changes. These were often informed by some awareness of appropriate contexts – often the war and racial stereotyping. Such ideas were developed further in good and very good essays, where the details of Levy's style – language and descriptive detail for example were often well discussed. Other good answers looked at her use of telling details, such as the 'trembling hand' and 'little cup and the little saucer', and how these are used to underpin her concerns here and in the wider novel. Where such analysis was developed to consider the effects of these choices and how they might differ from reader to reader, the answers often did very well.

**Question 11 *Stories of Ourselves, Volume 2***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Most responses were able to give a broad context to the passage and show some knowledge of the story in general. Weaker answers tended to retell the story up to this point or offer a summary of the events of the given passage and what had preceded it. More competent answers focused on the doll's house and the different attitudes to it from the girls. Better answers at this level noted that the responses revealed something about the characters and their different worlds. More competent answers looked at Mansfield's concerns closely, 'the different classes with their different social attitudes brought together by the doll's house', as one put it. Others considered Mansfield's use of dialogue and description and the specific use of colours. Good responses looked closely at language and punctuation, noting how Mansfield creates anticipation and the children's excitement through her third person narration. Very good answers explored the effects of such choices, especially how Mansfield makes the doll's house 'a symbol for the children's expectations and desires, however unrealistic', as one put it. Others analysed the effects of the variety in the sentence structures and the way the detail is accumulative so that 'the reader sees the house through the eyes of the assembled children, so that the reader's experience is as varied as theirs', as one suggested. Where such interpretations were supported by specific detail from the passage the answers did very well.

**Question 12 NGŪGĪ WA THIONG'O: *Petals of Blood***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

# LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 8695/22  
Poetry, Prose and Drama

## Key messages

- Option **(a)** discursive essays should analyse specific details of the text within the argument presented.
- Option **(b)** passage questions may usefully place the passage in the wider text as a relevant context.

## General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with the large majority of candidates showing at least a sound knowledge of the set texts. There were some rubric errors in this session with candidates not understanding the optionality on the paper. Very few responses showed evidence of mismanagement of time in this session. The quality of expression was sound in nearly every case, although there are still some candidates with expressive weaknesses which can impede communication at this level.

There were responses to nearly all the texts on the paper and answers reflecting a wide range of performance were seen on each of the texts attempted by the candidates.

There are two specific issues to be addressed in this session:

Assessment Objective 2 from the Literature in English syllabus states that candidates should 'analyse ways in which writers' choices of language, form and structure shape meanings and effects'. Candidates attempting option **(b)** passage questions often showed evidence of meeting this Assessment Objective in their responses to the given passage. However, candidates attempting option **(a)** questions, the discursive essay, also need to provide evidence that they are able to do this, by quoting or referring closely to specific moments in the text. They should then discuss these references in detail, focusing on the writer's choices and exploring what for the candidate are the effects of those choices.

Candidates responding to option **(b)** passage questions, who briefly place the passage within the wider work it is selected from, often write more focused and relevant answers. Some candidates could benefit from considering this approach, as it will give a context to their interpretation of the passage itself, as well as providing evidence of knowledge of the text. This equally applies to passages from poetry selections as well as the drama texts on paper 1.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section A*

#### **Question 1**     **ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons***

- (a)**     Nearly every candidate was able to select some relevant material with which to address the task, with weaker answers tending to retell Joe's story, often in great detail. Some responses interpreted 'ignore' as 'ignorance' or 'denial', which limited the success of the response. The ability to select relevant narrative and shape it to the specific question was an important factor in the overall success of weaker responses. Better answers at this level considered the quotation broadly, sometimes suggesting an appreciation of Miller's dramatic presentation as 'Miller shows Joe's social success in the neighbourhood, based on his self-confidence, as just a façade', as one suggested. More competent responses were able to range more widely in the text to support their ideas, often looking at what other characters say about him, often focusing on Chris and George,

and showing understanding of the impact of Sue's negative opinions and 'Kate's ability to equally ignore the truth as much as her husband', as one essay put it. Better answers at this level often supported their ideas with direct reference to or quotation from the text. Other answers considered the moral implications, noticing, for example, how 'Joe's lies and deceit have destroyed the Deevers, but the truth destroys him and his family', as one suggested. Good answers paid attention to the wording of the question and focused on 'Miller's dramatic presentation', with clear and detailed analysis of how he uses dramatic techniques, such as moral opinions, the interplay of characters and irony to present how the 'true situation is gradually revealed to audience and cast, leading to Joe's inevitable suicide as he finally has to face up to the consequences of his deceit', as one put it. Very good answers were also able to embed contextual references such as the social pressures of post-war America, the returning soldiers and families coping with loss. Where these answers supported their interpretation with reference to the text they often did very well.

- (b) Nearly every response had some relevant ideas about the relationship, though very weak answers were insecure about the factual details, such as George's role or who the 'woman' is. Weak answers retold the story of the relationship between Chris and Ann, with success at this level depending on how much use the candidate made of the given passage. Many weak answers ignored the end of the passage and the entrance of Joe, which limited the interpretation offered. Better answers were alive to the tensions between the couple, often noting the tone shifts and how Miller 'hints at what each of them really believes without it ever being openly stated', as one noted. Competent answers were aware of the context, often referring to Larry's letter, as yet unrevealed by Anne. Some explored what her knowledge of Larry's death meant to the relationship here – noting that 'though she never said she suspected him, surely Larry's letter meant she did?' as one wondered. Good answers analysed how Miller prepares the audience for the high drama to come, the hesitations of both Chris and Ann, as well as the 'threat of Chris's reactions when the truth is revealed', were all well explored. Her doubts about Chris's ability to see what people are really like was also well discussed. Some saw how Miller's presentation of her reaction to Sue, for example, 'developed her honesty and moral clarity in a way that leads to her later revelations', as one wrote. Good answers noticed the change in tension and tone when Joe appears, 'the easiness of the relationships, at least on the surface, as a contrast to troubling exchanges between Ann and Chris', as one noted. Joe's certainty of 'the big night' was also noted as contrasting the preceding atmosphere. Very good answers explored the dramatic ironies at work in the passage – Chris stating he could not forgive his father for doing what Ann's father was found guilty of was often analysed in terms of their relationship, with some seeing 'modern masculinity dealing with a conflict between idealism and practicality', while other saw 'a modern feminist with independence of choice and decisiveness'. Others looked in detail at the various deceptions at play, both public and self, and how they serve to undermine the relationship here and more generally in the play 'until in the end the relationship is destroyed as effectively as all the other relationships in the play', as one suggested.

## Question 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Much Ado About Nothing*

- (a) Most responses were able to select relevant material with which to address the task. Weaker answers often retold Beatrice's story, sometimes in great detail, with better answers at this level aware of how she changes through the play, with some linking those changes to specific moments in the drama. More competent responses considered Leonato's comment in their interpretation, with some exploring how, in changing her tone, after she is tricked by Hero and Margaret, she does 'get a husband'. Others thought the significant event in her development was the shaming of Hero, one response noting how 'Shakespeare shapes the audience's attitude to Claudio and Don Pedro through Beatrice's impassioned desire for revenge'. Good answers analysed how such moments of development in Beatrice often led to changes in other characters, notably Benedick but also Leonato and Don Pedro. More developed responses explored her role more widely, often analysing how she is often the source of visual and verbal comedy (her exchanges with Benedick at the masked ball, for example) but also the driving force behind the potentially tragic conflicts between Benedick and Claudio. Very good answers often saw the irony in Leonato's references to 'a husband', noting the hints of a previous romance with Benedick as well as her scathing comments about men in general and husbands in particular. Where such interpretations considered Shakespeare's use of language and imagery, with specific supporting examples, as well as dramatic effects such as irony, the answers did very well.



- (b) This choice was often well done, with most answers able to give some contextualisation to the passage, the tricking of Benedick about Beatrice's love for him. Weaker answers tended to retell the story of that gulling and often Beatrice's as well, often ignoring the second part of the passage. Better answers at this level were aware of the change in tone with Don John's entrance, though some were confused as to whom he was accusing and of what. More competent answers saw some of the dramatic contrasts Shakespeare uses here – how 'the deceived Benedick exits to be replaced by the deceiving Don John', as one suggested. Others saw how the deceivers become the deceived with some analysing the effects of this on the audience. Good answers often started with a clear focus on the audience, analysing how the reactions might shift from laughter to anger and concern. Many thought audiences would be 'appalled at how easily Don Pedro and Claudio are tricked, especially as they have served a similar turn on Benedick', as one suggested. Others wondered why 'they would so easily believe a known liar and villain like Don John'. Very good answers developed such ideas into considering the attitudes to women on display in this scene. 'Perhaps very amusing to a Jacobean audience, but shockingly predictable to a modern one', as one put it. Other very good responses analysed the language, the hint of expectant malice in 'two bears' and 'biting' for example, becoming the shifty, even sinister tones and words of Don John. Many discussed the audience's potential shock at the speed with which Claudio and Don Pedro 'move onto discussing how they will punish Hero with the most public disgrace they can imagine, with no thought for the girl or her family', as one argued. Where such ideas were supported with specific and detailed reference to the passage and the wider text, the responses did very well.

**Question 3 WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero and Jero's Metamorphosis***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Question 4 THOMAS MIDDLETON AND WILLIAM ROWLEY: *The Changeling***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Section B**

**Question 5 ROBERT BROWNING: Selected Poems**

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Nearly all answers were able to explore the poem with some knowledge and at times understanding. Very weak answers, however, were often puzzled by the details and appeared to be responding as to an unseen poem, with consequent weaknesses in understanding and the supporting comments. Answers in the lower levels of assessment often attempted a paraphrase of the poem; at this level some ability to explain the poem's meaning often lifted the overall performance. Answers which were able to shape the paraphrase partly to the topic of the question, 'a sense of anticipation', did better at this level. More competent answers showed knowledge and understanding of Browning's concerns and had a clear grasp of the meaning of the poem. Interpretations at this level tended to be asserted with occasional supporting quotations, and candidates who were able to show some awareness of Browning's poetic choices tended to do better. There was also a tendency to speculate as to 'why the meeting was across water and land on an isolated farm', and where support from the poem was selected such ideas were often sound. Good answers explored some of the poetic methods in detail, often the language and Browning's use of telling detail, 'such as ringlets and sleep, all suggesting lovers meeting together', as one put it. Others explored the character of the speaker, the tone with which the journey is described and how Browning leads up to 'the climax of the two beating hearts', as one suggested. Where such analyses were supported by reference to the poem and with some contextualisation, either biographical or textual, the answers often did very well.

**Question 6 OWEN SHEERS: *Skirrid Hill***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Nearly all answers were able to explore the poem with some knowledge and at times understanding. Answers in the lower levels of assessment often attempted a paraphrase of the poem; at this level some ability to explain the poem's meaning often improved the overall performance. A few responses seemed to struggle with basic knowledge of the poem, with consequent unevenness in the interpretation. Answers which were able to shape the paraphrase partly to the topic of the question, 'shapes a reader's response to the fishmonger', did better at this level, where the beginnings of understanding of the character and his work led to increasing competence in the response. Sound answers showed knowledge and understanding of Sheers' concerns, offering interesting interpretations of the relationship between the man, the fish and his work, sometimes rather assertively or speculatively presented. Interpretations at this level were improved by supporting quotations and candidates who were able to show some awareness of Sheers' poetic choices, such as language and tone, did better. Good answers often explored the language in detail, noticing, for example, how Sheers creates the connections between 'the man and fish by the coldness and emotionless description of both', as one suggested. Others explored the tone and its effects in 'showing the reader the anger and even the suppressed violence of the fishmonger', as one candidate stated. Very good answers focused on the effects of language, imagery and verse form, often exploring in detail how Sheers use all these techniques to present 'not just the facts of the fishmonger's life but also his inner life, from his violence and cruel kindness, hinting of Hamlet and Gertrude, to his heart break and loneliness', as one put it. Where such interpretations and analyses were supported by an awareness of contexts, the essays often did very well.

**Question 7 *Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2***

- (a) Most responses were able to choose relevant poems to discuss. Some very weak responses, however, discussed poems not in the selection, for which no credit could be given, or poems from the selection in which time passing was not a central concern – Dickinson's *I Years had been from Home* or Browning's *If thou must love me*, for example. The success of the essays based on these choices was very limited. Weak answers chose at least one relevant poem and were often able to show some knowledge of the basic meaning of the poems. At this level there was often very little or no attempt to link the writing of the two poems, so that the response read as two separate essays. Some implicit sense of the poetic methods or that the poems were constructed improved some of the responses, though in many weak essays there was very little evidence of any appreciation of the genre or that the works were 'poems'. More competent responses made better choices of poems to discuss. Shakespeare's *Sonnet 19* 'Devouring time...', Yeats's *When You are Old* and Byron's *When we two parted* were popular choices. Answers at this level showed understanding of the concerns and were able to link their chosen poems, finding similarities in topic and at times treatment. Better answers at this level explored some of the poetic methods, usually the language and the imagery, with some responses adding relevant contexts in support of their ideas. Good answers kept the focus on the presentation of time passing in their chosen poems, exploring how the different choices of form, rhythm and rhyme, as well as language and imagery, enable the poets to create different tones and emotions in the readers. Very good responses developed such points into sophisticated interpretations of the poets' concerns, often embedding the comparison throughout the essay, with apposite quotations and a telling use of appropriate contexts.
- (b) Nearly every answer showed knowledge of the basic meaning of the poem, though there were some very weak responses which struggled with many of the details— resulting in some unconvincing discussions. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the poem line by line or offer a general summary with some generally relevant comments on the speaker's state of mind. Better answers at this level were able to show knowledge and at times some understanding of the poem, often showing understanding of some of the key themes in it, with many noticing the structure and repetition, for example. More competent answers linked such ideas to the poetic methods, often focusing on language and imagery, for example. Others explored the structure of the poem, 'Warren's use of the repetitive "take back" enabling him to reveal the total rejection by the despairing lover of everything they had been given', as one suggested. Good answers developed their understanding of the meaning of the poem by close reference to each stanza in turn, often showing good awareness of the 'wide range of subjects used by Warren, from food to hunting to funerals', as one noted. Very good answers linked such interpretations to the poetic methods, exploring the different effects of his choices – such as the verse form itself, the use of rhyme and

particularly the poetic voice and how he draws the reader into the despair. Others noted the absence of specific details about the relationship in the speaker's rejections, 'so that the reader never gets a picture of the lover being rejected, since we never see the gifts or hear his/her words', as one put it. Where such discussions were structured and focused on the task with an analytical purpose, the answers often did very well.

**Question 8 GILLIAN CLARKE: Selected Poems**

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Nearly every answer showed some knowledge of the basic meaning of the poem, though there were some very weak responses which struggled with many of the details, showing confusion over the setting for the poem and not understanding the relevance of the cat, for example. This lack of basic knowledge often resulted in very uneven discussions. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the poem line by line or tell the story of the poem with little reference to the poetic methods or acknowledgement that the text was a poem. Better answers at this level were able to show clear knowledge and at times some understanding of the poem, Clarke's use of the 'ice splinters to reveal the boy's suffering is very moving', as one suggested, for example. More competent answers focused on Clarke's presentation often focusing on the language of nature and the natural imagery that Clarke uses to contrast the boy's suffering. Good answers developed their interpretations by analysing some of the details, her 'contrasting of the white rose, a symbol for death, but still living after the boy has passed', as one suggested. Very good answers linked such interpretations to different poetic methods, her use of contrasts, the enjambement of the lines, the 'simple statements describing the unconcern of the natural world, the cat, the sun and the roses, as the boy dies create a sense of poignancy in the reader', as one put it. Some responses at this level were also able to integrate telling contextual details to support their interpretation on how and why Clarke presents the sick boy in the poem and these answers often did very well.

**Section C**

**Question 9 E M Forster: *Howards End***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Question 10 ANDREA LEVY: *Small Island***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Question 11 *Stories of Ourselves, Volume 2***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

**Question 12 NGŪGĨ WA THIONG'O: *Petals of Blood***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.