

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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<p><b>Paper 9695/31</b> <b>Poetry and Prose</b></p>
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## Key messages

The examination is designed to assess the understanding and appreciation of literary composition and expression, so candidate responses should focus on how authors' choices of language and literary methods shape meaning.

- Answers which focus primarily on the content of texts can only achieve marks in the lower bands of the Mark Scheme.
- Points in essays should be supported with specific references and quotations. This should be particularly remembered for the **(a)** questions, where candidates select their own material to answer the question.
- Successful essays develop a line of argument in response to the question, developing points to a conclusion.
- Answers to **(b)** passage questions should examine the writing of the selected poem or passage in considerable detail.

## General comments

In its final appearance on the syllabus, the selected poems of Elizabeth Jennings attracted a limited number of answers, but all other texts had been studied widely and attracted a range of responses. The most successful answers to **(a)** questions used detailed knowledge of the texts to support their points, including secure references and apt quotations, to establish and develop a clear argument in response to the question. Successful responses to **(b)** questions looked in great detail at the writing of the selected passage or poem, considering the effects of the writers' choices of language, imagery and structure. Good answers often placed the extract within the context of the wider text in the cases of prose and drama, in order to inform the discussion of the passage. Candidates who relied on narrative summary and paraphrase indicated their knowledge of the content of texts and passages, but in order to achieve marks in the higher bands of the Mark Scheme they needed to demonstrate understating of the writers' methods.

## Question specific comments

### Question 1

Robert Frost: Selected Poems

- (a)** There were very few responses to the question on Frost's presentation of rural people; among these, poems such as 'The Ax-Helve', 'The Death of the Hired Man' and 'Mending Wall' were the most successfully explored. Some candidates focused on the characters themselves, their attitudes and actions, while more successful answers considered carefully how these aspects were communicated through Frost's choices of language, imagery and structure.
- (b)** There was a larger number of answers on 'The Wood-Pile', though candidates seemed to lack confidence in their approach and there was evidence of some uncertainty. Candidates tended to discuss the bird and the wood-pile itself, but for more insightful analyses they needed to pay more attention to the way the poem is structured. Some assumed that the wood had been left by someone departing for war; the few candidates who considered the speaker's mention of

'Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks' – who had constructed the pile and left it – managed to pick up on Frost's philosophical conclusion about the unexpected discovery.

## Question 2

Elizabeth Jennings: Selected Poems

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Most candidates showed their understanding of the central concern of the poem and how the contrast between the speaker's age and that of the young people shaped this. Some essays demonstrated thoughtful consideration of how Jennings characterises the speaker but there was also some misunderstanding among less confident candidates of how she characterises herself in adolescence in comparison with the young people she observes, overlooking such language choices as 'huddled' and 'lop-sided'. Many candidates missed opportunities to analyse the structure of the poem, which offers examples of skilful use of caesura and enjambment, the caesuras emphasising the contrast between the 'young ones' and the speaker in stanza 2, for example.

## Question 3

*Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*

- (a) Candidates made some thoughtful selections of poems for the question on the presentation of family relationships, with most candidates choosing poems such as 'Song', 'On My First Daughter', 'The Forsaken Wife' and 'Sons, Departing'. Most demonstrated sound knowledge of their chosen poems and Examiners were pleased to see many essays which pursued a clear line of argument. Candidates often contrasted the forceful admonishment of the faithless husband in 'The Forsaken Wife' with the presentation of a more faithful, mutual relationship in one of the others. The strongest responses demonstrated that the candidates knew the poems well enough to support points with quotations, which were then used for analytical comment.
- (b) Fewer candidates opted to respond to the question on Charlotte Mew's poem 'Rooms' and many of those who did clearly found it a challenging poem. Some candidates noted the different locations of the rooms and descriptions of them, particularly the 'little damp room with the seaweed smell'. Many took the idea of death literally and interpreted the poem as the speaker's lament for all the lovers in different places who have died; candidates would have done well to show recognition of the poem's treatment of time, the changing nature of relationships and the movement towards eventual literal death.

## Question 4

E.M. Forster: *Howards End*

- (a) There were few responses to this question. While a number of candidates explored women in general, and there was some acknowledgement of the question of social progress, fewer tackled this directly and purposefully, needing a higher degree of engagement with the cue quotation. Consideration of this would have led answers in a productive direction and could have shaped a response with appropriate references to aspects of the novel.
- (b) In exploring the presentation of Mr Wilcox in this passage, not many candidates showed a clear understanding of the context and subject of the extract. Surprisingly few essays mentioned Leonard Bast, which limited the scope of the discussion. While candidates often selected details from the passage which were relevant to the question, they often needed to take a clearer direction. Essays included some comments on Mr Wilcox's thoughts and dialogue, but seldom discussion of the final paragraph meant that many essays overlooked what was potentially the richest section of the excerpt in the light of the Question. A small number of candidates were able to examine Forster's authorial intrusion and its effects on the reader's understanding of Mr Wilcox.

### Question 5

Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

- (a) Examiners saw some sound responses to this question, which explored the contrast between the immigrants' expectations and the reality of England effectively. Some essays contained detailed references to Hortense's imagined picture of England and several noted the irony of the term 'mother country'. Several episodes from the novel were used to support the idea of the immigrants' eventual disillusionment, including Gilbert's role as a driver and his difficulty in gaining employment, while many essays referred to Hortense's experience in the Education Office. Some responses also drew useful distinction between the voices of Hortense and Gilbert in how they voice their attitudes to England, commenting on Hortense's early snobbery and Gilbert's weary acceptance.
- (b) Candidates who were not certain about the identity of the passage's narrator, or where the passage is set, struggled to respond successfully to this question. More confident responses recognised Bernard's experience in India and some wrote well about the imagery of the passage and the way it presents the unstoppable force of the riot. Others commented on the racism of the narrative, and some strong work was occasionally seen on the distinctive shaping of Bernard's narrative voice, with its clipped sentences and sense of uncertainty.

### Question 6

*Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) Responses to this question, using stories such as 'The Hollow of the Three Hills', 'How It Happened', 'Sandpiper' and 'The Rain Horse', were often limited to description of the settings of the chosen stories. More confident answers focused clearly on how those settings are presented, through the tone of the narration or the main characters' responses to them, so that, for example, the way real settings merge into metaphor was discussed with 'Sandpiper' and 'The Rain Horse'. Other essays considered the role the setting had to play in the development of the story, considering aspects such as the gothic supernatural qualities of 'The Hollow of the Three Hills' and the focus on technology with the setting of 'How It Happened' being a new and powerful motor car.
- (b) Most answers to this task demonstrated secure focus on the question and passage, usually with balanced treatment of the narrator and Mr Wills. Knowledge of the wider story was deployed usefully to show how the characters are presented here in contrast to earlier in the story. There was focus on the narrator's bravery and his respectful approach to Mr Wills despite his earlier fear, while candidates also picked up on the softening of Mr Wills' character, with his 'hand on my shoulder' and the repetition of 'Both to blame'. Many essays commented thoughtfully on the narrative viewpoint and paid close attention to the language and structure of dialogue in the passage. Some also looked at the narrator's response to Willadean and her symbolic function in the story.

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## General comments

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## Question specific comments 9695/32

### Question 1

Robert Frost: Selected Poems

- (a)** While candidates often chose appropriate poems, such as 'The Sound of Trees', 'Mending Wall', 'Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening' and 'The Wood-Pile', they needed to pay attention to the question's focus on the presentation of landscape, rather than writing generally about the poems. Poem choices such as 'Home Burial' and 'The Ax-Helve', where landscape features fleetingly if at all, proved problematic in terms of producing a successful response to the question posed. Successful answers looked at Frost's presentation of hills, trees, undergrowth and the earth itself, and considered the response to those elements of landscape by the speaker of each poem.
- (b)** This proved to be a very popular question which prompted some very strong responses. The most successful answers moved from the physical experience of the camp to the spiritual with some confidence and some precise selection of detail. While some insisted that the speaker is Frost himself, many wrote well on his creation of the speaker, a thoughtful, educated wanderer, noting

his self-denigration in 'just a tramp'. Essays often showed some thoughtful focus on the language of the poem, including the presentation of the speaker's camp under the 'juniper' and its balance of comfort and discomfort. Many wrote well on the epiphany on seeing 'the largest firedrop' and his sense of superiority because he has seen it directly, not 'through a rusty screen'. There were a few comments on the epistolary form of the poem. Many responses would have been improved had they included discussion of the poem's structure. There was some thoughtful engagement with the way Frost characterises the speaker, with the occasional suggestion that both tramp and farmer are versions of Frost himself, the letter representing the poet's internal debate.

## Question 2

Elizabeth Jennings: Selected Poems

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Many candidates found this an accessible poem, most demonstrating sound understanding of the central concern with the relationship. Some essays showed sensitive appreciation of the presentation of the distance between father and son through the father's voice. Thoughtful candidates commented on the neutral quality of the word 'house', the simile of 'strangers' and the presence of 'Silence'. The image of the 'prodigal' was well understood and there was some subtle discussion of the use of the subjunctive in 'I would forgive him'. Some candidates grasped the nuances of the characterisation of the father in the second half of the poem, including the poignancy of the 'empty hand' in the penultimate line. A few candidates were able to discuss structure thoughtfully, often interpreting Jennings' tight regular stanzas as a method of indicating controlled emotion.

## Question 3

*Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*

- (a) There were very few responses to this question, with those candidates opting for it choosing such poems as 'The Uncles', 'The Migrant', 'On My First Daughter', 'The Forsaken Wife' and 'Death'. Where descriptions of the particular characters made for responses at the weaker end, stronger responses focused on presentation and showed how the poem's language and structure characterised the speaker or subject.
- (b) This was the most popular question on the paper and nearly all candidates found something interesting to say about the poem. The poem is not, in fact, about boys going off to war, but this reading was taken by many candidates and can be supported by careful interpretation of some of the poem's language and imagery. However, in many cases, the reading was simply imposed without looking at the poem for support, which led to limited and rather skewed essays. Stronger and more sensitive accounts of the poem read it as a description of a moment where a parent recognises that children will leave the safety and security of the family to make their own way in the world, and that part of being a parent is to accept that inevitable sense of loss. This led to some interesting comments on the emphasis on departure created by the comma in the title, on the 'hedges' representing both confinement and protection, and on the limitless and possibly dangerous possibilities of adulthood in the 'empty air', 'torn clouds' and 'Haphazard world'. The inevitability of departure was seen in 'the steadiness/of their retreating footfalls' and 'their walk was one-dimensional, and final'. Some thoughtful candidates suggested a sense of hope, in that the 'clear and blond' heads, suggestive of youth and innocence, become 'sunlit points' and a 'certain focus' – although the sons will leave to make their own life, they will remain in the parent's eye.

## Question 4

E.M. Forster: *Howards End*

- (a) Responses to this question often showed evidence of detailed knowledge of the novel, with stronger essays considering a range of women, including Ruth Wilcox and Jacky, who provide interesting contrasts in role with the Schlegels. In different ways, these two characters are shown to accept the status quo for women, especially with regard to their relationships with men. Answers focusing just on Margaret and Helen often still demonstrated useful understanding of how Forster creates comparisons and contrasts between the sisters. Candidates could have made more use of the cue quotation to shape the argument explicitly in response to the question.

- (b) There were many answers to the passage on Margaret's and Henry's marriage and they varied widely. On the one hand, some candidates wrote of the marriage as a perfect romantic union, missing the ironic tone of Forster's narrative; others railed against Margaret's abandonment of feminist principle in marrying Wilcox, again overlooking some of the subtleties of the extract. Many essays were thoughtful and focused on Forster's use of different perspectives in the extract. There were comments on the author's ironic presentation of 'our hero and heroine', while the presentation of the understated marriage ceremony was successfully explored by some candidates, focusing on its 'quiet' nature and as something Margaret had to 'go through'. The 'colourless refreshments', as well as the lack of music (which Margaret loved), were seen as lacklustre and the honeymoon, characterised by such language as 'reliable', 'failed' and 'disappointed', was also seen as uncharacteristic of this supposedly happy time. There were also thoughtful comments on Howard's End being used 'as a warehouse', showing a disconnection of values between Margaret and Henry. Some noted that the reasons for Helen's retreat become apparent later in the novel and those few candidates who focused on the details of the two paragraphs on Mr Wilcox at the end of the passage found much to discuss, often registering shock at the apparently subservient nature of Margaret, responding to his 'call' and 'ready to do what he wished'.

### Question 5

Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

- (a) Most essays on this question showed a good knowledge of the novel and candidates were able to select suitable characters and episodes to illustrate the points made. Queenie was often seen as the key exception to general attitudes of the British towards immigrants, welcoming them into her lodgings and giving further welcome to Michael, though thoughtful responses pointed out that she still holds prejudiced views, noted in her early patronising of Hortense. Queenie was effectively contrasted with Bernard and Mr Todd, while other candidates referred to episodes with American soldiers and Gilbert's and Hortense's attempts to gain work, while many candidates noted the prevalence of racism is the reason for Queenie giving away her baby at the end of the novel.
- (b) More successful answers on the passage identified ways in which Levy creates a contrast in the first paragraph between before and after the bombing, specifically 'lulled drowsy' and 'kip in Armageddon'. Other candidates noted the use of dialogue to dramatise the effects of the bombing, picking out the warden's disorientation, and such metaphors as 'the displaced intestines of buildings', presenting the ravaged buildings as bodies. There were useful comments on the verbs used by Levy, such as 'Coughing', 'spewing', 'teetering', 'gushing', 'crunching', giving Queenie's narration its characteristic vigour. Some well-developed responses noted the passage's development, moving from the physically ruined city buildings to the lost and bereft people in the classroom, trying to negotiate their way through official bureaucracy while dispossessed of everything. Answers which relied on narrative summary or paraphrase showed knowledge of the content of the passage but missed the many opportunities to explore the details of Levy's writing in the excerpt.

### Question 6

*Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) The most popular pairing of stories for this question was 'The Destroyers' with 'The Taste of Watermelon', though other stories used by candidates included 'How it Happened', 'The Rain Horse', 'The Hollow of Three Hills' and 'Elephant', though it has to be said that some of these latter choices lent themselves less successfully to fruitful discussion. 'The Destroyers' provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to explore the presentation of violent actions, which they achieved with care and meticulousness. This paired well with 'The Taste of Watermelon', as both stories explore the central characters' desire for acceptance within a peer group. Explicit descriptions of violent acts were closely discussed in some cases, with some essays analysing the boys' destruction of the watermelon as similar to the physical abuse of a human being with 'knife penetrated', meat muddled' and 'scattered seed'. The unconscious role of the lorry driver providing the *coup de grâce* after the boys' preparation in 'The Destroyers' was noted, while some candidates recalled the stages of the crashing vehicle in 'How it Happened' in impressive detail.
- (b) While Examiners saw a number of essays which presented a view that the father in 'The Fly in the Ointment' is a caring and sensitive parent, most focused clearly on his inconsistencies, with some

detailed examination of his 'two faces'. Strong answers looked carefully at the ways in which Pritchett presents these two different sides of the father, noting the contrast between 'soft warm and [...] innocent' and 'shrewd, scared and hard'. They also noted the son's response, as he 'leaned back' when his father 'leaned forward' and many saw a self-destructiveness in the father's work ethic, greed and self-deception. Candidates who were alert to detail picked up how his deceptive appearance is emphasised by his 'smiling' 'waistcoat', 'easy coat' and 'legs', the image confirmed with the deceptive 'winks of light on the shining shoes'. Much attention was paid to the dialogue, considering the imperatives in the father's speech, his claims for himself and his denigration of his son.

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## Question specific comments 9695/33

### Question 1

Robert Frost: Selected Poems

- (a)** There were plenty of poems to choose from to discuss Frost's presentation of rural life; candidates tended to opt for 'Mowing', 'Mending Wall', 'The Ax-Helve', 'The Death of the Hired Man', 'After Apple Picking' and 'Out, Out –'. Most candidates showed appropriate knowledge of the poems and there were some detailed responses, using well-selected quotations to support the points made. Some candidates looked at the work involved in rural life, examining Frost's depiction of the challenges and rewards of rural labour. Other candidates wrote on Frost's philosophy of living the rural life and on his biography, rather than the more successful approach of focussing on the details of the writing of the poems.
- (b)** Although there were examples of confusion, with some candidates unable to identify the 'resurrected tree' as a pole supporting telephone wires, most candidates wrote with some understanding. Responses which explored Frost's methods in detail were very successful. For



example, several noted the aimless quality of the speaker's wandering, suggested by the repetition of 'half' – 'half boring', 'half climbing', 'half looking'. They also noted the diction which suggests discomfort and difficulty, such as 'weary', 'overheated' and 'sorry'. Few went on to argue that the effort he takes emphasises the remoteness and inaccessibility of the location, which in turn makes the presence of the pole more surprising. A number of candidates drew attention to religious imagery in 'heaven' and 'resurrected' and the personification of the telegraph pole which presents it as something of a monster. Many argued that the speaker's responses demonstrate Frost's dissatisfaction with the development and ubiquity of new technology and its effect on the rural environment.

### Question 2

Elizabeth Jennings: Selected Poems

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There was a small number of responses to this question, which showed some understanding of Jennings' suggestion that, however protected, children will encounter horrors and learn to cope with them. Answers showed some awareness of the imagery of childish fears in the first two stanzas – 'The ghost behind the stairs' and the 'long, uneven crack' in the 'ceiling', for example – and the contrast with the actual atrocities of 'Belsen and [...] tortures' in stanza 3. Fewer successfully tackled the ideas in the closing lines of the poem, 'the wish to kill' and the final couplet.

### Question 3

*Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*

- (a) There were few responses to this question, with a focus on peace and rest as a metaphor for death, looking at 'On My First Daughter' and 'Verses Written on her Death-bed'. The content of the poems was usually understood well, but fewer candidates really looked closely at their language and structure. Candidates who argued the metaphor thoroughly wrote more successful essays than those who asserted it. It was surprising that very few answers focused on such poems as 'Care-charmer Sleep', 'Soldier, Rest!' and 'To Sleep', as these lent themselves very well to the question.
- (b) 'The White House' was a very popular choice and produced some energetic and engaged responses which often combined empathy for the speaker's experience with a thoughtful analysis of the ways in which the views are communicated. Candidates often wrote about the door as symbolic of people being shut out of society, with successful responses developing this image to consider further images in the poem. There were sensitive comments on the speaker's containment of anger, seen in the 'tightened face', and appreciation of the aural and tactile image of 'sharp as steel'. Some of the most thoughtful responses argued for the superiority of the speaker over his critics, as he needs 'superhuman power' to contain his anger, despite it being justified and borne 'proudly and unbent'. The irony of McKay's use of the word 'savage' was often noted, and given as a reason why, despite being 'sore and raw', the speaker's anger must be restrained in order to rise above the 'potent poison' of racist views. A number of candidates too noted the irony of these ideas being presented in a sonnet, a form more often associated with traditional English love poetry.

### Question 4

E.M. Forster: *Howards End*

- (a) Successful responses to this question often began by putting the cue quotation into context, showing how Ruth Wilcox's views contrast with those of the Schlegels and their friends, which led to a comparison of different attitudes explored in the novel. Most answers focused primarily on Margaret, Helen and Ruth, looking at ways in which Forster's characterisation of the Schlegel sisters presents them as emancipated, educated women, while Ruth Wilcox fulfils a more traditional role. Subtle answers showed how Ruth nevertheless has power in the Wilcox household and Margaret in some ways is initially subservient to Henry Wilcox following their marriage. The role of Helen was often seen as pivotal, while more wide-ranging answers also included Dolly and Jacky Bast. Less successful essays focused more on characters themselves and had less to say about Forster's characterisation of them.

- (b) Strong responses to this passage question focused very clearly on the presentation of the characters and found much to support their responses. They picked up several suggestions in the passage which show that Henry is self-dramatising, with his defensive dialogue and phrases such as 'He laughed bitterly' and 'He swaggered up to it tragically'. This was compared with Margaret's calm and control, apparent in her own speeches and in her helping 'herself to the breakfast dishes', turning 'out the spirit lamp' and pouring 'herself out some coffee' while Henry postures. A small number of candidates was carefully aware of the narrative voice in the passage, particularly in the final paragraph, though it was surprising to see how few candidates commented on the final sentence of the extract. Essays which were restricted to an account of the passage and description of the characters' attitudes were much less successful than those which looked analytically at Forster's writing.

### Question 5

Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

- (a) While some candidates struggled to recall enough relevant detail to respond fully to this question, others presented arguments to the effect that the American soldiers in the novel present a more direct level of racism that was yet to fully reveal itself in British society. They sometimes linked this to the historical context of segregation and Jim Crow laws being part of life in America. Gilbert's experience of US soldiers, particularly on his visit to the US base, and the cinema incident featured strongly in most of the responses.
- (b) This was a very popular question, which appealed to candidates of all levels of achievement. Most saw the point of the long tale about Blackie and the gecko and were able to recognise the metaphor for the ensuing scene. Some observant candidates noted that the episode about the rose introduced a sense of otherness and alienation as the Jamaicans walked through the village as a preparation for the reaction of the villagers, while nearly all candidates noted the change in mood as Gilbert realises that the whole village has come out to view them. In looking at some of the details of the writing, many candidates commented on the feelings of guilt apparent in the metaphor 'thieves caught in a sunbeam' and Gilbert's use of the term 'darkies'. A few essays picked up the irony of the British woman's assumption that the men are American, despite Jamaica being a British colony, but not many commented on Gilbert's characteristic humour as he eyes her 'pert and feminine' form. Several answers read this episode as an example of racist hostility, showing a lack of awareness of the context; more successful responses were able to comment that the English here see the Jamaicans as strange, but fascinating and interesting, and that this encounter is largely friendly and jocular, in comparison with other encounters in the novel.

### Question 6

*Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) There were a few answers to this question, but among those seen, stories used included 'The Door in the Wall', 'How it Happened', 'The Happy Prince', 'The Hollow of the Three Hills' and 'The Rain Horse'. A small number of candidates chose stories not selected as set texts for the current version of the syllabus, and which could therefore attract no marks. Candidates appreciated the supernatural or fantasy elements of the stories; where such appreciation focussed on the detail of the writing and analysis of how these elements are presented by the writers, essays were much more successful than those that took a narrative approach.
- (b) A surprising number of responses to this question was unaware of, or confused by, Wodehouse's characteristic humour, and Examiners saw some strongly condemnatory essays about Lord Emsworth's failings as a father. Some candidates were more in tune with the tone of the passage and appreciated the contrasting presentations of Freddie and his father, noting the implications of Wodehouse's metaphorical descriptions of the two as a 'beaming sheep' and an 'elderly leopard' respectively. Although some candidates were hesitant in assessing Lord Emsworth's character because of the contrasting language of the passage – describing him at different points as 'fluffy-minded and amiable' and 'sour and hostile' – most candidates insightfully explored this contrast in terms of the father/son relationship. Many focused on the humorous hyperbolic descriptions of Freddie as 'white and shining', 'jaunty' and 'prancing', contrasting with his father as 'seething with anguish and fury'. Some candidates shrewdly pointed out that in his presentation of Lord Emsworth – with his low boredom threshold and dilettante attitude to life's pleasures – the writer is suggesting that he had more in common with his son than he realises. A number of candidates developed their

answer with knowledge of the rest of the story, which lends a retrospective irony to this extract and Lord Emsworth's attitude to the 'female' in whose embrace Freddie is 'entangled'.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/41  
Drama

## Key messages

- Personal response is evidenced in answers through the choice of particular moments to discuss and the quality of argument, rather than by giving an emotional reaction.
- If choosing **(b)** questions, candidates need to focus on the detail in the passage given, particularly with reference to its dramatic qualities.
- Candidates should use caution when introducing links between a text and an author's life.

## General comments

The vast majority of candidate knew their texts well. At the lower levels there was some temptation to narrate the story of the plays, and this, of course, demonstrates knowledge of a very limited kind. Better responses were able to make links across the text and show that they understood how the various parts of a text make up the whole. On these papers, context is not required and there is a real danger that candidates will digress towards speculation about the writers or to generalisation about the conditions in which the text was produced. The central focus of any answer must be on the play as a work of art which creates its own energies and parameters.

Understanding of texts varied widely. The strongest responses made detailed reference to text, focusing on language, structure and form in order to demonstrate their awareness of how a literary work is constructed. At this level, there was always a clear understanding that plays are written to be performed, that they work dramatically, not simply as words on the page. It is worth emphasising that the whole examination is about the 'how' of a literary text, so a writer's techniques will always be the central focus of any top level response. Candidates who want to deal more generally in terms of theme without close reference do not reach the top levels of the mark scheme. The clue is often in the question with key words such as 'presentation' or 'dramatic presentation,' and candidates should heed these prompts in their response.

Literature means nothing if it does not evoke a personal response. This is at times misunderstood by candidates as a matter of emoting about a text or bringing in their own world view. In this paper, it is judged by the quality of what examiners discern to be the candidate's own insights into a text. This is often revealed by the strength of a view expressed – for instance, with strong textual support – or by the analysis of particular examples in a way that is original or well-expressed.

Candidates and teachers should heed that this exam is about more than just literary appreciation. It obliges candidates to gather together their insights and weave them into a relevant response to the question asked. It follows, therefore, that candidates who plan their responses and take a strategic, targeted view towards the selected question tend to achieve the highest results. The best answers are always closely argued, with points emerging in a structured way. With this in mind, candidates should always be wary about taking a line-by-line approach to **(b)** type questions, as this tends to lead to focus on the early parts of the passage, with less attention being paid to latter parts as candidates run out of time. The extracts chosen are often part of a dramatic arc, so there is a need to demonstrate how the details of the passage – however chosen – are contributing to the development of the scene as a whole. In particular, with weaker candidates there is a temptation towards narration, often at great length. With **(a)** type answers, candidates need to be careful to provide focus on a few specific moments in the play, rather than settling for generalities. Candidates should be encouraged to think hard about selectivity, and about saying things straightforwardly and concisely. The longest essays at times receive marks at the lower end of the mark scheme; to achieve higher marks, these responses need to demonstrate a level of complexity of understanding of the text.

Readers of this report need to be aware that this paper is taken by a small number of candidates. It follows, therefore, that reports on particular questions are often based on a very small number of responses and may not cover the full range of aspects or mark ranges that might have been observed in a bigger sample.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 Tennessee Williams: *Sweet Bird of Youth***

- (a) There was, of course, much focus on Princess as an ageing film star, and on Chance's ambitions. Often this was allied to discussions of dreams of success being shattered, and of the disposability of these actors. Wider-ranging essays often focused on the contrast between the tinsel of the movie industry and the blatant manipulation of the media carried out by Boss Finlay. The best essays worked through the links between these two themes, and the various ways in which spinning reality for one's own purpose is central to the major characters in the play. There was often useful discussion of particular moments such as Heavenly's manipulation by Boss, or Princess's attitude towards Chance once she realises her career is not dead. Candidates demonstrated clear understanding of the dark side of the world of surfaces and appearances.
- (b) Most candidates were able to see that this is a crucial moment in the play, with the tension between the two characters at its most intense. The best answers brought to light the ambiguities of the scene, the way that Heavenly seems to have an affection for her father early on and of the light-hearted way in which the scenes' darker shadows emerge from Heavenly's laughing flippancy. Boss's language and behaviour was rightly categorised as boorish and coercive; at the same time, candidates were often aware that Heavenly is the only person who ever really gets to tell Boss what she thinks of him. There was useful discussion of Boss trying to buy his daughter's affection towards the end of the extract, often mixed with the view that he treats her as a trophy, having ignored what she tells him she really wants from life.

#### **Question 2 William Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night***

- (a) There was much focus on Orsino's behaviour early on in the play, and a number of responses got no further than this. Candidates were able to point to Orsino's exaggerated language and his languid selfishness. Those who went on explored much deeper aspects of the play, such as his lack of self-knowledge about his feelings towards Cesario, and, indeed, his perverse refusal to recognise what she is telling him at various points in the play. Some responses moved on from here to fruitful discussion of Shakespeare's presentation of love and gender, with many making the point that Orsino's speedy marriage to Viola once he knows she is a woman could possibly demonstrate a profound lack of integrity on his part. The best responses showed an ability to argue a variety of cases, with lots of quotation and reference to particular moments to back up what was said.
- (b) A number of candidates saw this question simply as a means to unload general opinions about Malvolio, often with full reference to external background information about Puritanism at the time. Such candidates should remember that in a (b) question, the passage has to be central. Better responses were able to locate Malvolio's complacent superiority in lines like 'do you come near me now.' They also managed to locate the various ways in which Malvolio manages to set himself up as the butt of humour ('his very genius hath taken the infection of the device') and also to see the vindictiveness of the plotters as a sign of how deeply he has offended them through his dismissive contempt ('You are idle, shallow things; I am not of your element').

#### **Question 3 William Shakespeare: *Henry IV, Part 2***

- (a) Responses to this question showed sound knowledge of the action of the play. Better responses demonstrated understanding of how politics is presented as a dirty game, corrupt in itself, where winning counts more than moral behaviour. There was often useful reference to the role of Prince John and to Shakespeare's presentation of the rebels. A number of responses, legitimately, took the question to refer to a tension between principles embodied in the tension between Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice, a battle for the soul of the nation. The best answers were able to make clear reference to specific moments in the play.

- (b) All responses showed awareness of the significance of this passage to the play as a whole. There was often useful discussion of Henry's sense of insecurity in his new role, with the robes of majesty evoked as a symbol. Responses also noted – sometimes by making reference to elsewhere in the play – that Henry uses his past experience as a means of defining his new-found maturity. The exchange with the Lord Chief Justice was used to good effect to demonstrate Henry's innate sense of fairness and his willingness to accept that the Justice's 'cold considerance' makes him a worthy counsellor for the future. As always, engagement with the language in the extract was a feature of stronger responses.

**Question 4 Brian Friel: *Philadelphia, Here I Come!***

- (a) Both of these figures loom large in Gar's life, though Kate has the added dramatic role of being an active part of Gar's imagined life, mainly seen through flash-backs. Candidates were able to contrast the two, with Madge as the mother figure – the voice of reason – and Kate as Gar's motivation for leaving Ireland. The best responses dealt with specific moments of the play and the relationship of the two characters to Gar; less satisfactory responses dealt with one then the other, often simply presenting a character study.
- (b) Most responses showed confident understanding of the fact that in the 'real life' of the scene, very little would be heard, as the most significant aspect of this extract is Private Gar's monologue. There was often useful discussion of Private Gar's garrulousness (characterised in the stage directions as 'chatter'), set against the monosyllabic 'Aye' of Public Gar in line 43. There was often close attention to stage directions and the dreary mundanity of the life that Gar shares with his father. Some of the best answers hinted that they thought Gar self-indulgent at times. Candidates would have done well to show more awareness of comic aspects of the scene, such as in the direction, 'S.B. takes out a handkerchief, removes his teeth, wraps them in the handkerchief [...].'

**Question 5 Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King's Horseman***

- (a) The Praise-Singer's role in the play was clearly understood by candidates in general. There was clear awareness of the Praise-Singer as the articulator of the values of the people, as a commentator on the action, or inaction, of the protagonists. The best responses were able to tussle with the ways in which the Praise-Singer visualises the world through poetic language, drawing imagery from nature in order to demonstrate that the values articulated are an organic part of the tribe's world view.
- (b) Responses here showed high awareness of Elesin's lust for life, for the attractions of 'the juiciest fruit on every tree'. However, such enthusiasms were always clearly set against the carefully evoked warnings of the Praise-Singer's view that he is a 'snake on the loose in dark passages of the market.' There was useful comment on ways in which the Women's uneasiness contrasts with Elesin's lust.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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<p>Paper 9695/42 Drama</p>
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## Key messages

- Personal response is evidenced in answers through the choice of particular moments to discuss and the quality of argument, rather than by giving an emotional reaction.
- If choosing **(b)** questions, candidates need to focus on the detail in the passage given, particularly with reference to its dramatic qualities.
- Candidates should use caution when introducing links between a text and an author's life.

## General comments

The vast majority of candidate knew their texts well. At the lower levels there was some temptation to narrate the story of the plays, and this, of course, demonstrates knowledge of a very limited kind. Better responses were able to make links across the text and show that they understood how the various parts of a text make up the whole. On these papers, context is not required and there is a real danger that candidates will digress towards speculation about the writers or to generalisation about the conditions in which the text was produced. The central focus of any answer must be on the play as a work of art which creates its own energies and parameters.

Understanding of texts varied widely. The strongest responses made detailed reference to text, focusing on language, structure and form in order to demonstrate their awareness of how a literary work is constructed. At this level, there was always a clear understanding that plays are written to be performed, that they work dramatically, not simply as words on the page. It is worth emphasising that the whole examination is about the 'how' of a literary text, so a writer's techniques will always be the central focus of any top level response. Candidates who want to deal more generally in terms of theme without close reference do not reach the top levels of the mark scheme. The clue is often in the question with key words such as 'presentation' or 'dramatic presentation,' and candidates should heed these prompts in their response.

Literature means nothing if it does not evoke a personal response. This is at times misunderstood by candidates as a matter of emoting about a text or bringing in their own world view. In this paper, it is judged by the quality of what examiners discern to be the candidate's own insights into a text. This is often revealed by the strength of a view expressed – for instance, with strong textual support – or by the analysis of particular examples in a way that is original or well-expressed.

Candidates and teachers should heed that this exam is about more than just literary appreciation. It obliges candidates to gather together their insights and weave them into a relevant response to the question asked. It follows, therefore, that candidates who plan their responses and take a strategic, targeted view towards the selected question tend to achieve the highest results. The best answers are always closely argued, with points emerging in a structured way. With this in mind, candidates should always be wary about taking a line-by-line approach to **(b)** type questions, as this tends to lead to focus on the early parts of the passage, with less attention being paid to latter parts as candidates run out of time. The extracts chosen are often part of a dramatic arc, so there is a need to demonstrate how the details of the passage – however chosen – are contributing to the development of the scene as a whole. In particular, with weaker candidates there is a temptation towards narration, often at great length. With **(a)** type answers, candidates need to be careful to provide focus on a few specific moments in the play, rather than settling for generalities. Candidates should be encouraged to think hard about selectivity, and about saying things straightforwardly and concisely. The longest essays at times receive marks at the lower end of the mark scheme; to achieve higher marks, these responses need to demonstrate a level of complexity of understanding of the text.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 Tennessee Williams: *Sweet Bird of Youth***

- (a) Candidates soon warmed to the similarities between the two figures, but also pointed out that the power relationship works in favour of Boss. Many responses also showed how Boss had shaped Tom's views and prejudices, with views about toxic masculinity often to the fore in discussions about the pair's relationship with Heavenly. Responses at the lower end of the mark scheme often drifted towards discussions of the Finlay family as a whole and at times allowed Heavenly a prominence that is not implied by the question.
- (b) Most responses focused on the presentation of Chance. There was, of course, much to say about other aspects of the scene, and candidates would have done well to give these aspects more attention. Chance's loudness, his incoherence, his lack of control through falling off his chair all provided comment. Some responses linked the passage to wider thematic matters in the play, often discussing either the presentation of failure or the power and influence of Boss over other people's lives. Wide-ranging answers often took in the unsettling role of the Heckler, or the complexities of Miss Lucy's responses. Less coherent responses often tracked the passage without really being able to see how Williams is manipulating an audience's response at this point.

#### **Question 2 William Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night***

- (a) At the lower levels, responses often focused on treating the characters separately, rather than on the relationship between the two. A few responses showed little understanding of the social status of these characters, despite their titles. Candidates who took on the prompt 'dramatic presentation' were able to discuss various ways in which this pairing provides much humour for the play. Many candidates saw the relationship as mutually beneficial, which is a misreading that cannot be supported, as Sir Toby is clearly in charge throughout. Some candidates linked this exploitation of love to other areas of the play, often to good effect. There was often useful discussion of the way Sir Toby sets up the duels in the play to comic effect. Candidates who dismissed and forgave Sir Toby's vicious selfishness as merely good-hearted banter would have done well to consider the less admirable view of his character.
- (b) Most responses recognised this as a crucial moment in the action of the play and were able to identify some of the ways in which the confusion over Viola as Cesario contributes both dramatically and thematically. In less secure answers, the focus was often on speculation about Antonio's relationship with Sebastian, variously interpreted, and often in sexual terms. This takes away from the sincerity of positive and negative feelings of affection that Antonio expresses in the passage itself, married to his disappointment in Viola's seeming betrayal of him. The best responses saw that the whole thrust of the scene leads towards the last line – 'He nam'd Sebastian' – and its implications for the resolution of the plot. Candidates largely missed the opportunity to discuss the issue of the aborted, comic duel, despite its very visual presence early in the scene. Although there is no need to be comprehensive in an answer, candidates need to be conscious that excessive focus on just one aspect of a passage (in this case, Antonio's relationship with Sebastian) can distort a response.

#### **Question 3 William Shakespeare: *Henry IV, Part 2***

- (a) The best responses were able to use particular moments in the play – exchanges with Falstaff, with the dying king, or with the Lord Chief Justice, perhaps – in order to demonstrate how Shakespeare turns Hal from playboy to King during the course of the play. There was often discussion of how his language gradually becomes more controlled and more authoritative during the play. Less good responses tended to work in the area of character analysis, with a significant tendency towards narration. Some of the best answers were able to demonstrate how Hal's early misbehaviour demonstrates his common touch, something that his father does not have and which he can exploit as king.
- (b) Most responses acknowledged that this passage gives an insight into the rebels' point of view and into Northumberland's motivation. Less secure was an understanding of why Shakespeare places the argument against rebellion in Lady Percy's mouth and of the raw emotion felt by the women in the face of Northumberland's blind belief in family honour, whatever the consequences. A few responses dealt with the women's resentment ('do what you will') that private grief is the price of wilful public stupidity.



**Question 4 Brian Friel: *Philadelphia, Here I Come!***

- (a) Virtually all responses showed understanding of Gar's different personas, and most were able to characterise Public's shy taciturnity and Private's exuberance. Better responses went further and drew attention to the fact that it is the connection between the two that gives the audience a complete impression of Gar. So Private Gar is not merely a sign of Gar's imaginative inner life; rather he is the voice of the unconscious mind too, as it explores the dilemma Gar faces in going to America. There is much bravado in Private Gar — the over-loud Americanisms, the over-ambitious scenarios about his future — which is, in turn compromised by an audience's certainty that the shy, diffident man they see as Public Gar will never turn himself into the extrovert of his imaginings. Many candidates brought this out through reference to Gar's flashbacks over Kate and her father, where he is seen as incapable of radical action. The best responses looked closely at the detail of the text and were able to characterise both Gars in terms of language and action.
- (b) Aunt Lizzy's desire for Gar to be the son she never had was made clear in most responses. Less secure was the need to recognise that this scene is another of Gar's flashbacks, meaning that it may not be an exact, impartial account of what actually happened. What is clear is that Lizzy dominates the relationship – Gar hardly speaks during the exchange – and that her sentimental attachment to him, visualised through a blur of alcohol, is something that perhaps gives Gar pause for thought on the night before his departure. Some answers demonstrated an awareness of how Gar's silence and Private's non-appearance in the scene is telling, as it might suggest an unwillingness to commit himself to living with Aunt Lizzy, or awe at witnessing other kinds of relationships – and successful ones, at that – which he could be a part of. Many responses suggested that to go from living with the introverted S.B to the more extroverted Aunt Lizzy would prove a real challenge for Gar. Some responses provided focus on Lizzy's relationship with her much harangued husband to support this point. A small number of weaker responses conflated Lizzy and Madge.

**Question 5 Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King's Horseman***

- (a) Most responses focused on the way that dishonour is presented in relation to Elesin. Candidates were often able to contrast Elesin's selfishness with the nobility of his son, Olunde, who behaves honourably despite it not being his duty to do so. The best responses showed an ability to widen out the discussion to see that issues of honour and saving face are also relevant to the British colonialists. There were some very good answers that linked matters of dishonour to feelings of shame as a personal tragedy. The role of Iyaloja as the voice of conscience, both personal and tribal, was often usefully discussed. Responses that focused on particular moments in the text where the issue is most vividly presented did best. Lower level responses often produced a character study of Elesin, with tangential reference to the particulars of the question.
- (b) Responses showed clear understanding of the context of this scene within the wider play. Lower end answers gave an account of what is going on and commented on some of the ways in which tensions within the British ruling class are presented here. Better responses showed more awareness of the tone of the scene, of the Resident's patronising of Jane, of his barbed hectoring remarks to Pilkings ('nose to the ground Pilkings, nose to the ground,' and 'It mustn't Pilkings. It mustn't'), and his use of 'we' to make his point about how the image of Empire must be sustained at all times. The best responses were also sensitive to Pilkings's sarcasm ('Sleeping peacefully at home') and to the Resident's complete imperviousness to cultural/religious beliefs ('What has pork to do with it?'). There were many interesting comments on the way in which Amusa is present but mute throughout, a telling feature of the scene in itself.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/43  
Drama

## Key messages

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- Candidates should use caution when introducing links between a text and an author's life.

## General comments

The vast majority of candidates knew their texts well. At the lower levels there was some temptation to narrate the story of the plays, and this, of course, demonstrates knowledge of a very limited kind. Better responses were able to make links across the text and show that they understood how the various parts of a text make up the whole. On these papers, context is not required and there is a real danger that candidates will digress towards speculation about the writers or to generalisation about the conditions in which the text was produced. The central focus of any answer must be on the play as a work of art which creates its own energies and parameters.

Understanding of texts varied widely. The strongest responses made detailed reference to text, focusing on language, structure and form in order to demonstrate their awareness of how a literary work is constructed. At this level, there was always a clear understanding that plays are written to be performed, that they work dramatically, not simply as words on the page. It is worth emphasising that the whole examination is about the 'how' of a literary text, so a writer's techniques will always be the central focus of any top level response. Candidates who want to deal more generally in terms of theme without close reference do not reach the top levels of the mark scheme. The clue is often in the question with key words such as 'presentation' or 'dramatic presentation,' and candidates should heed these prompts in their response.

Literature means nothing if it does not evoke a personal response. This is at times misunderstood by candidates as a matter of emoting about a text or bringing in their own world view. In this paper, it is judged by the quality of what examiners discern to be the candidate's own insights into a text. This is often revealed by the strength of a view expressed – for instance, with strong textual support – or by the analysis of particular examples in a way that is original or well-expressed.

Candidates and teachers should heed that this exam is about more than just literary appreciation. It obliges candidates to gather together their insights and weave them into a relevant response to the question asked. It follows, therefore, that candidates who plan their responses and take a strategic, targeted view towards the selected question tend to achieve the highest results. The best answers are always closely argued, with points emerging in a structured way. With this in mind, candidates should always be wary about taking a line-by-line approach to **(b)** type questions, as this tends to lead to focus on the early parts of the passage, with less attention being paid to latter parts as candidates run out of time. The extracts chosen are often part of a dramatic arc, so there is a need to demonstrate how the details of the passage – however chosen – are contributing to the development of the scene as a whole. In particular, with weaker candidates there is a temptation towards narration, often at great length. With **(a)** type answers, candidates need to be careful to provide focus on a few specific moments in the play, rather than settling for generalities. Candidates should be encouraged to think hard about selectivity, and about saying things straightforwardly and concisely. The longest essays at times receive marks at the lower end of the mark scheme; to achieve higher marks, these responses need to demonstrate a level of complexity of understanding of the text.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 Tennessee Williams: *Sweet Bird of Youth***

- (a) Most responses were able to make something of a comparison between Chance and Princess. Both were seen as self-obsessed narcissists whose hold on reality and their position in the world is often tenuous. There was often much discussion of the various ways in which Williams shows them engaging in discussions about ageing. There were some interesting responses in terms of both characters as actors stage-managing their own lives. The key word in the question for higher level discrimination was 'dramatise', and candidates who looked at key moments and analysed them in terms of dramatic form, structure and language were at an advantage.
- (b) The obsessive nature of Boss's desire to control Princess was clearly understood by most candidates. Most suggested insightfully that Boss's desire for control comes out of preoccupation with his own status and political reputation, not care for his daughter. Many responses saw the significance of Boss's concern that Heavenly should be 'wearing the stainless white of a virgin' at his rallies; for higher reward, candidates explored the full implications of racism here ('the pure white blood of the South'), as well as religious supremacy inherent in this desire. There was some reaction too to Heavenly's attempts to oppose her father and to the constant threats that he makes towards her ('There would be consequences that you would not like'). Some responses were sympathetic to Boss, seeing him as protective towards Heavenly and naturally concerned about keeping her away from the malevolent influence of Chance; such an interpretation is hard to support given the text, and therefore usually came across as a misreading. There was often useful reference to stage directions, to Heavenly's screams and to the fact that with Boss, violence is a steady threat ('Boss throws down his cane and grabs her').

#### **Question 2 William Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night***

- (a) Many answers looked at Orsino and Malvolio serially, missing the opportunity to compare and contrast the two. Both characters can be interpreted as being in love with themselves and with cultivating their fine affections. The strongest responses appreciated that the characters' lack of understanding of love, and indeed themselves, is crucial to overall effects of the play. With Orsino, candidates were often confident about the early parts of the play; for a successful response, they also needed to consider the ways in which Orsino reveals himself to be both foolish and naïve later on in the play. With Malvolio, responses discussed the limitations of his self-knowledge and the fact that his love makes him a butt of others' humour. The best responses were able to see that both these lovers are seen as foolish or deluded by others in the play, and went into detail of analysis beyond discussion of plot-based events. The word 'presents' in the question was an invitation to deal with the detail of particular scenes.
- (b) Most responses were aware of the comic possibilities of this scene and of its contribution towards the denouement of the play's action. Less secure responses offered narrative contextualisation of the extract rather than analysis of its details. More telling responses dealt with the farcical aspects of what is going on. The last section of the scene (from 'Enter Olivia') was often overlooked, though it gives rise to a range of misunderstandings, particularly when Sebastian can hardly believe this luck that he is being courted so fulsomely ('What relish in this?') by a complete stranger. A small number of candidates linked the scene to the theme of disguise and deception and wrote about that rather than the extract presented. There were, on the other hand, answers that raised the issue of disguise and deception (though Sebastian is not trying to deceive) as a means of commenting on various ways in which Shakespeare is thickening the plot at this point in the play. A very few astute responses commented on this moment as the beginning of the rout of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

#### **Question 3 William Shakespeare: *Henry IV, Part 2***

- (a) Nearly all responses recognised that an audience's reaction to Falstaff will be ambiguous. Many answers evaluated his larger than life qualities, and his joy for life, in very positive terms, but they were also able to see that he is a pernicious influence, a direct challenge to the forces of law and order as represented by the Lord Chief Justice. The best answers offered clear argument, rooted in detailed reference to particular moments in the text, with his role at the end of the play as a particular focus. There were some interesting discussions of Falstaff as a father-figure to Hal, someone who humanises him and therefore shapes his suitability for kingship.

- (b) Candidates were keenly aware of the dramatic irony of Falstaff's expectations, bearing in mind what the audience already know is going on in the kingdom. There was interesting reference to the joyousness energy of Pistol's language, to Falstaff's overblown references to King Cophetua and the Helicons. There was much comment on Falstaff's presumptuous 'woe to my Lord Chief Justice,' with a clear recognition that the powers of law and justice are about to rout Falstaff and the principles of misrule.

**Question 4 Brian Friel: *Philadelphia, Here I Come!***

- (a) A small number of responses were limited by a perception that the question required a character study of Madge as a mother figure, whereas in fact it was about the various ways in which she appears in the play to try and bridge the gap between Gar and his father, or to explain the gap to an audience through her revelations about the past, or her explanations to Gar about why S.B. is the way he is. In a play that is very much about flashbacks, presenting a biased view of what actually happens, the scenes in which we see Madge reacting with S.B. as he struggles with his son's impending departure, or with Gar himself as she recognises that he is racked with uncertainty, are central to an audience's emerging view that Gar's point of view is not the only one that requires sympathy in the play. The best responses were able to look closely at particular moments in order to shape and substantiate arguments.
- (b) Nearly all responses commented perceptively on the tension between the two Gars, which exemplifies his state of mind most clearly here. There were also insightful discussions of the reaction of the two to S.B. and the mundaneness of everyday life. The best responses were able to detail Public's apparent cheeriness and link it to Private's free-ranging thoughts about his past, about America and his imaginings about his future.

**Question 5 Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King's Horseman***

- (a) Responses took a clear, unsympathetic, view of Elesin and his desire for sexual satisfaction and self-indulgence over the needs of his tribe. There were useful discussions of Iyaloja as articulator of Elesin's responsibilities. Better responses often widened the argument to take in Elesin's selfishness in relation to Olunde, his son. There was some sympathy for Elesin as a weak man who comes to realise the personal cost of his role as the King's Horseman, and there were some strong discussions of his horror at the consequences of his selfishness in the last scene of the play. On the whole, responses that looked closely at detail were stronger than those that dealt with the question in more general terms.
- (b) Most responses understood the centrality of this episode to the play – it is the moment where the two cultures collide, and their mutual misunderstandings are most on show. Candidates were aware of the bizarreness of the situation, with the dance going on in the background, and of Olunde's privileged position as someone who had lived with the empire builders in their own land and sees their strength as superficial, a concealment of small-minded inadequacies. The scene brings Mrs Pilkings, almost for the first time, to examine how her own beliefs might be interrogated by another world view. In general, candidates would have done well to explore on greater detail the contrast between the dance music and the beating of the drums, which Olunde draws attention to and is of symbolic importance.

# Literature in English

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**Paper 9695/51**  
**Shakespeare and other pre-20th**  
**Century Texts**

## Key messages

Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question.

Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection.

Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery.

## General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with nearly all candidates showing knowledge of the set texts. There was however an increase in the number of rubric errors compared to last year, with some candidates selecting two **(a)** options, discursive essays. Candidates should ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the rubric. Most candidates expressed their answers appropriately, though some weaker answers used an informal style, which can limit precision.

There were three specific areas to be addressed in this session:

- (a)** Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question. It is important that candidates summarise briefly the textual context to any given passage before they begin their indepth critical analysis. This approach will enable them to consider the passage as part of the wider text and also to explain the significance of the passage in terms of the development of the key concerns in the text. This also will enable the candidate to link the individual points made in the close analysis of the detail of the passage to such ideas as the development of the plot, the methods of characterisation and any recurring themes or symbols. It is also a good way of revealing knowledge and understanding of the wider text.
- (b)** Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection. If the given passage is an extract from a longer poem, the candidate should also refer briefly to the rest of that poem. Candidates should select poems which are related to the given poem, perhaps by style, content or theme, in order to develop points made about the given poem. This is important as it helps the candidate show their knowledge of the whole text. It also enables learners to develop their analysis into a fuller appreciation of the poet's methods and concerns and to show more developed understanding.
- (c)** Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery. Many answers on poetry show candidates are able to discuss details of a poet's language choices and to unpick the effects of use of imagery. To improve, some candidates also need to discuss the effects of the poet's choices, such as verse form, rhythm and rhyme. It is worth stressing that it is the effects of these elements that should be the focus of such comments. When candidates point out there is a particular rhyme scheme for example, they should also consider what the effect of that poetic choice might be on the reader.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 William Shakespeare: *Richard II***

- (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 2 William Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale***

- (a) Most candidates identified relevant material to address the task, usually focusing on Autolycus and the country scenes in Bohemia. Better answers considered the effects of the use of comedy on the play's wider concerns and dramatic impact. Answers which developed such arguments with close reference to the text and some consideration of other interpretations did well.
- (b) This was the most popular question on the paper, with all candidates able to explore, at least to some extent, the effectiveness of the passage as the play's opening. Weaker responses tended either to paraphrase the dialogue or to discuss Bohemia and Sicilia in more general terms. To improve, candidates should focus more on the detail of the passage. Better answers explored what it revealed about the dramatic situation, the characters and the play's concerns. Answers which also explored Shakespeare's use of dramatic ironies and foreshadowing did very well, particularly when such arguments were supported with close analysis of the passage and apposite reference to the wider text.

#### **Question 3 Jane Austen: *Northanger Abbey***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Nearly all responses revealed relevant knowledge of the text. Weaker answers tended to summarise what happened to Catherine throughout the novel, with better responses at this level shaping their ideas to the passage. Good answers were alive to Austen's style, exploring the humour and how it was created, with some answers able to develop these ideas by apposite reference to the wider text and Catherine's development as the heroine.

#### **Question 4 Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights***

- (a) Most answers to this question demonstrated some knowledge of the text and were able to refer to *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange, with some knowledge of the families and characters living there. In some cases, there was confusion as to where specific events took place and some responses displayed too little knowledge of the text to engage meaningfully with the task. Better answers were able to explore Brontë's presentation of the surrounding moors and to consider their effect on Heathcliff and Cathy and their relationship. For some candidates to improve, they should aim to further develop their responses and find specific quotations or references to the text to support their arguments.
- (b) Successful responses focused on Brontë's characterisation of Heathcliff and Nellie at this point in the novel, showing how it has developed and often noting the apparent change in Heathcliff's tone and language. Other answers did not give a clear context to this passage (the approaching death of Heathcliff), and consequently tended to generalise about his character and his relationship with Nellie. These weaker answers often paraphrased the passage, whereas better answers focused on the effects of Brontë's writing in detail, considering, for example, the narrative techniques and the narrator, as well as Brontë's use of language and dialogue.

**Question 5     Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Franklin's Prologue and Tale***

- (a) Nearly every answer revealed relevant knowledge of the text. Weaker answers were mostly able to find relevant material to address the task, often giving a summary of appropriate relationships. Better answers were able to see the contrasts between Dorigen's relationships with Arveragus and Aurelius, with some exploring how Chaucer uses these contrasts to develop his concerns. Some good answers developed such ideas with appropriate reference to the detail of the text and, where some analysis of the poetic methods and their effects was included, these answers did well.
- (b) Most responses gave an appropriate, if at times general, context, Aurelius coming to terms with paying the price for the magician's help. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the passage or to write too generally about Aurelius's pursuit of Dorigen. Better answers focused on the detail of the passage. Some candidates discussed what is revealed about Aurelius here, and in good answers, considered Chaucer's methods of characterisation, such as language and imagery. Good answers were also able to refer with some precision to the wider text and to show at least some awareness of other possible interpretations.

**Question 6     Thomas Hardy: *Tess Of The D'Urbervilles***

- (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 7     Andrew Marvell: *Selected Poems***

- (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 8     Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Selected Poems***

- (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.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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**Paper 9695/52**  
**Shakespeare and other pre-20th**  
**Century Texts**

## Key messages

Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question.

Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection.

Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery.

## General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with nearly all candidates showing a sound knowledge of the set texts. There was however an increase in the number of rubric errors compared to last year, with some candidates selecting two **(a)** options, discursive essays. Candidates should ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the rubric. Most candidates expressed their answers appropriately, though some weaker answers used an informal style, which can limit precision.

There were three specific issues to be addressed in this session:

- (a)** Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question. It is important that candidates summarise briefly the textual context to any given passage before they begin their in-depth critical analysis. This approach will enable them to consider the passage as part of the wider text and also to explain the significance of the passage in terms of the development of the key concerns in the text. This also will enable the candidate to link the individual points made in the close analysis of the detail of the passage to such ideas as the development of the plot, the methods of characterisation and any recurring themes or symbols. It is also a good way of revealing knowledge and understanding of the wider text.
- (b)** Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection. If the given passage is an extract from a longer poem, the candidate should also refer briefly to the rest of that poem. Candidates should select poems which are related to the given poem, perhaps by style, content or theme. This is important as it helps the candidate show their knowledge of the whole text. It also enables learners to develop their analysis into a fuller appreciation of the poet's methods and concerns and to show more developed understanding.
- (c)** Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery. Many answers on poetry show candidates are able to discuss details of a poet's language choices and to unpick the effects of use of imagery. To improve, some candidates also need to discuss the effects of the poet's choices, such as verse form, rhythm and rhyme. It is worth stressing that it is the effects of these elements that should be the focus of such comments. When candidates point out there is a particular rhyme scheme for example, they should also consider what the effect of that poetic choice might be on the reader.



### Comments on specific questions

#### **Question 1 William Shakespeare: *Richard II***

- (a) Nearly every answer revealed relevant knowledge of the text. Weaker answers tended to overlook the given quotation and to narrate the history of the rebellion, with better answers at this level able to explore some of the characters involved, though many focused exclusively on Bolingbroke. More successful answers considered the quotation and explored some of the ambiguities of Bolingbroke's statement. Moreover, better answers widened the view to consider other ambiguous characters, such as the Duke of York and Aumerle. Good answers tended to move beyond the characters and see the rebellion in more abstract terms, such as comparing Richard II's reliance on divine right to the Machiavellian way of ruling. Others developed this comparison of Richard and Henry and explored how Shakespeare presented the various political views through the contrasting characterisation. Such arguments, when supported by an awareness of different interpretations and apposite reference to the text, often did very well.
- (b) Most answers were able to give an appropriate context, though weaker responses were often confused as to whether Richard had yet been deposed or not. Less successful answers tended to summarise the passage, with some awareness of the underlying symbolic significance of the garden imagery. Better answers considered the details of the writing, exploring how the gardener's instructions reflect the common people's (and thereby the audience's) view of Richard's lack of genuine leadership. Others wondered how the gardener could be so up to date with the latest politics and the Queen so ignorant, with better answers exploring the dramatic significance of the contrast. Very good answers were able to develop arguments with careful analysis of the dramatic and poetic methods here, supported by precise references to the wider text.

#### **Question 2 William Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale***

- (a) Nearly all responses to this question revealed a sound knowledge of the text and were able to select relevant material to address the task. Weaker answers often summarised what happened to Hermione, often showing detailed textual knowledge. Better answers explored her relationships with the other characters, often noting the diversity of those who admired her, from Paulina to Mamillius. Good answers used the given quotation to consider the character's dramatic role, in terms of structure, plot and the wider characterisation, usually of Leontes, but also of Paulina and Perdita. These approaches did very well when the arguments were supported by appropriate reference to the text, understanding of Shakespeare's dramatic methods and awareness of other interpretations of the text.
- (b) This was the most popular question on the paper, with most candidates able to give an appropriate context. Weaker answers tended to either paraphrase the passage or to give a more general essay on Paulina. Better answers explored her role here in revealing Leontes's character and her representation as a woman. Some answers developed this by considering Shakespeare's use of the contrasting language and imagery of Paulina and Leontes, often noting how this might affect an audience's view of Hermione as well as Leontes. Good answers noted the dramatic intensity of the scene, the use of the baby for example, though others explored the near comedy of some of the exchanges. Very good answers developed such points with close analysis of Shakespeare's dramatic choices and apposite reference to the wider text.

#### **Question 3 Jane Austen: *Northanger Abbey***

- (a) Nearly every answer was able to select relevant material to address the task. Weaker answers tended to summarise what happened in the different locations, such as the Abbey or Bath. Better answers linked this into Austen's methods of developing the reader's response to Catherine and those around her. Good answers further developed this by exploring how Austen used these characterisation methods to also develop the concerns and themes of the text, such as friendship, marriage and attitudes to wealth. Other answers considered how the settings compared and

contrasted. Very good answers supported such arguments with apposite quotation and some consideration of Austen's style, especially the language and tone.

- (b) Nearly every answer recognised the general context to this passage and to some extent considered what is revealed about Catherine and Isabella here. Weaker answers offered a summary of the relationships between Catherine and James and Isabella, often with little attention to the detail of the passage. Better answers considered Austen's methods of characterisation in detail, exploring the use of dialogue and the contrasting attitudes to wealth, for example. Answers which looked closely at language often did well, noticing for example the beginnings of maturity in Catherine and how Isabella reveals her true self in her disappointment. Good answers also noted how Isabella's reaction to money issues is a foreshadowing of the General's later in the novel. Where such points were developed with precise reference to the wider text and considered other possible interpretations, the answers did very well.

#### Question 4     **Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights***

- (a) Nearly every essay revealed relevant, often detailed, knowledge of the text, with which to address the task. Weaker answers tended to summarise characters, which were representative of love or hate, with many focusing on Heathcliff and his relationships with Hindley and Linton, contrasted to his love for Cathy. Better answers saw how Brontë used contrasting settings. There were many good, detailed explorations of how love and hate were intertwined by Brontë, with many citing Hareton and young Cathy as positive examples, contrasted with, for example, Heathcliff and Isabella. Many candidates revealed very good knowledge of and engagement with the text, the best of which explored the text as a construct, considering Brontë's use of language, setting and characterisation, as revealed in her presentation of love and hate in the text.
- (b) This was a popular question in Section B, with nearly every answer able to give a relevant context, the death of Heathcliff, though some weaker responses were confused as to the precise point this took place in the novel. Weaker answers often paraphrased the passage or made general points about Heathcliff and sometimes Nellie, here and elsewhere in the text. More successful responses focused on Brontë's development of the reader's response to Heathcliff, even at the end of his life. Good answers focused on Brontë's choices of language and imagery, often noting Nellie's role as participant and narrator, and how Brontë uses Joseph to manipulate the reader's response to Heathcliff's death. Where such points were supported by precise reference to the wider text and by an understanding of other interpretations, the answers often did very well.

#### Question 5     **Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Franklin's Prologue and Tale***

- (a) Weaker answers were mostly able to find relevant material to address the task, often summarising the loyalty shown by different characters in the text. Better answers considered how Chaucer's presentation of the different kinds of loyalty through contrasting characters. Good answers also saw loyalty as one of a number of interrelated and at times opposing concerns, including honesty, chastity and chivalry. Some good answers also considered the layered narration, seeing Chaucer's concerns as perhaps separate from those of the narrator in the tale. Very good answers developed such ideas with appropriate reference to language and imagery and an awareness of the poetic effects created.
- (b) Most responses gave an appropriate context and were able to see this as a key moment in the poem, when Aurelius is first introduced. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the passage or to write too generally about Aurelius and what he did in the text as a whole. Better answers focused on the detail of the passage. Many responses explored Chaucer's methods of introducing Aurelius, with some seeing the description as humorous. Some good answers explored the narrator. Essays did well when comments were supported by precise reference to the wider text and with some detailed analysis of the style, especially the use of language and imagery.

**Question 6 Thomas Hardy: *Tess Of The D'Urbervilles***

- (a) Nearly every answer had sufficient knowledge of the text to discuss this topic relevantly. Weaker answers concentrated on Tess, Angel and Alec, often summarising what each character did. Better answers explored their contrasting behaviour, as well as the selfishness of Alec. Good responses often referred to the influence of families, contrasting Tess's and Alec's mothers for example. Very good answers analysed some of the methods Hardy uses to present these contrasting attitudes, especially language and imagery, often supporting these points with appropriate reference to the text and a recognition of other interpretations. Few answers though were comfortable with discussing narrative methods, such as voice or structure, and this was a limiting factor in some responses.
- (b) Almost every answer recognised this context for this passage, though some weaker answers were confused as to the precise point this occurs. Nearly all answers demonstrated a secure knowledge of the events leading up to Tess's return home, though few referenced her pregnancy. Better answers saw the contrasting attitudes of mother and daughter, with many either surprised or horrified by Joan's lack of understanding and her manipulation of her daughter. Good answers explored the language and in particular Hardy's use of dialect. Very good answers also analysed the narrative techniques in detail, showing how the various effects are created through the dialogue, the structure and the narrative voice. Such answers did very well when the points were developed with apposite, precise references to the passage and the wider text.

**Question 7 Andrew Marvell: *Selected Poems***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the poem, with some unable to link it to the rest of the poem or the wider selection. Better answers explored how Marvell presents the tears and the eyes as contrasting through his use of language. Others explored the use of imagery in detail, particularly images drawn from nature, with some developing ideas by reference to other poems, such as 'On a Drop of Dew' and 'The Fair Singer'. Good responses explored the detail of the poem, noting for example, the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas and moods. Answers which explored the poetic structure and rhyme scheme in detail with apt reference to the rest of the selection, often did very well.

**Question 8 Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Selected Poems***

- (a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Some weaker answers approached the question as though responding as to an unseen poem, with a consequent lack of understanding or context. Better answers showed understanding of the meaning of the poem and were able to relate it to other poems such as 'The Mask of Anarchy'. Good answers considered what this poem reveals about Shelley's attitudes to rulers and to time. Where this was developed with detailed analysis of the poetic methods, such as language, sonnet form and rhyme, and their effects, the answers often did well.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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**Paper 9695/53**  
**Shakespeare and other pre-20th**  
**Century Texts**

## Key messages

Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question.

Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection.

Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery.

## General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with nearly all candidates showing at least a sound knowledge of the set texts. There was however an increase in the number of rubric errors compared to last year, with some candidates selecting two **(a)** option, discursive essays. Candidates should ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the rubric. Most candidates expressed their answers appropriately, though some weaker answers used an informal style, which can limit precision.

There were three specific issues to be addressed in this session:

- (a)** Candidates should give a brief context when answering a passage option **(b)** question. It is important that candidates summarise briefly the textual context to any given passage before they begin their in-depth critical analysis. This approach will enable them to consider the passage as part of the wider text and also to explain the significance of the passage in terms of the development of the key concerns in the text. This will also enable the candidate to link the individual points made in the close analysis of the detail of the passage to such ideas as the development of the plot, the methods of characterisation and any recurring themes or symbols. It is also a good way of revealing knowledge and understanding of the wider text.
- (b)** Candidates who choose to answer passage option **(b)** questions on one of the poetry selections should include some reference to the rest of the selection. If the given passage is an extract from a longer poem, the candidate should also refer briefly to the rest of that poem. Candidates should select poems which are related to the given poem, perhaps by style, content or theme. This is important as it helps the candidate show their knowledge of the whole text. It also enables learners to develop their analysis into a fuller appreciation of the poet's methods and concerns and to show more developed understanding.
- (c)** Candidates writing about poetry should refer to poetic form as well as language and imagery. Many answers on poetry show candidates are able to discuss details of a poet's language choices and to unpick the effects of use of imagery. To improve, some candidates also need to discuss the effects of the poet's choices, such as verse form, rhythm and rhyme. It is worth stressing that it is the effects of these elements that should be the focus of such comments. When candidates point out that there is a particular rhyme scheme for example, they should also consider what the effect of that poetic choice might be on the reader..

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Question 1 William Shakespeare: *Richard II***

- (a) Most responses were able to select relevant material to address the task, often showing detailed knowledge of the text. Other answers overlooked the critical comment and gave a general character study of Bolingbroke. More successful answers developed the implicit contrast between Richard and Henry, often contrasting their actions and words to develop their understanding of the dramatic effect of such choices. Better answers developed such arguments into considering how Shakespeare presents his concerns and themes through characterisation and dramatic action. Very good answers were able to explore both the dramatic concerns and more abstract arguments, with precise, detailed reference to the text. Other very good answers also often revealed a thoughtful awareness of how the text, in terms of these two central characters, might be interpreted in very different ways, with some perceptive references to contrasting productions of the play.
- (b) This was the most popular question on the paper. Nearly every answer gave an appropriate context to this passage. Weaker responses paraphrased or moved away from the detail of the passage into summarising the preceding events and sometimes Richard's death. More successful approaches often discussed the importance of this passage to an audience's perception of Richard. Good answers saw the passage as completing the isolation of Richard and they explored the dramatic nature of the situation. Very good answers considered Shakespeare's use of language and imagery, such as the contrast between the quicker dialogue between husband and wife and Richard's more poetic predictions of the future civil war occasioned by Northumberland. Responses which identified the effects created and the significance to the concerns, with appropriate support from both passage and wider text, often did very well.

#### **Question 2 William Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale***

- (a) Nearly all responses had a sound knowledge of the text and were able to select relevant material to address the task. Weaker answers often summarised what happened to older and younger characters, often contrasting Leontes, Hermione and Polixenes to Perdita and Florizel. Better answers linked these contrasts to Shakespeare's presentation of the play's wider concerns such as jealousy and forgiveness, often noting the use of Bohemia and Sicilia as contrasting settings. Good answers developed the ideas beyond characterisation and considered for example Perdita's comments on hybrid flowers or the juxtaposition of birth and death at various points in the play. Some very good answers linked such arguments into a consideration of time more generally, both as a character and as a concern in the play. Where such arguments were supported by close reference to the text and an awareness of alternative readings, the answers did very well.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give an appropriate context and to recognise this as an important point in the play's development. Weaker answers considered the characters and to some extent the contrasting tones in the passage. To improve candidates should move away from paraphrase or generalisation. Better answers developed their arguments by considering Shakespeare's wider concerns, such as innocence and jealousy, relationships and trust, and family in the world of politics. Where such ideas were supported by apposite reference to the wider text and detailed consideration of Shakespeare's use of language and tone, the responses did very well.

#### **Question 3 Jane Austen: *Northanger Abbey***

- (a) Nearly all answers showed relevant knowledge of the text. Weaker answers tended to summarise what happened to Catherine in the novel, with some awareness of how she changes in different locations and with different characters. Better answers considered how Austen uses Bath and Northanger Abbey in particular to expose Catherine to different situations and characters. Good answers explored Austen's use of language, dialogue and symbols to develop the reader's response to Catherine's various relationships, with some very good arguments about the use of

Gothic tropes. Other very good answers were able to support such arguments with apposite reference to the text and good understanding of different possible responses to Catherine.

- (b) Nearly every answer recognised the context to this passage and was to some extent able to consider what is revealed about Isabella and Catherine. Weaker answers provided a summary of the passage and events in Bath or a more general essay on Isabella and James's relationship. These answers could have been improved by a detailed exploration of the given passage. Some better answers considered Austen's methods of characterisation in detail, noting, for example, contrasts between Catherine and Isabella's response to the dancing, each other and James. Other very good answers explored the dialogue and the language to develop their interpretation, with others also noting the social and moral ambiguities Austen is presenting through the contrasting opinions. Where such ideas were also supported by reference to the wider text, the response often did very well.

#### Question 4 **Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights***

- (a) Nearly every essay revealed some relevant knowledge of the text, with which to address the task. Weaker answers tended to focus on characters, with most discussing Heathcliff and Nellie as victims of social attitudes. Many noted Heathcliff's arrival at Wuthering Heights, his exclusion from Thrushcross Grange and his treatment by Hindley, though often relying on narrative summary. Better answers also addressed the prompt of 'Brontë's presentation', exploring how Brontë contrasts the two houses and their attitudes. Other good answers considered style, especially language and tone, noting for example the way Lockwood describes the Heights and its occupants on his first visit there. There was also often good discussion about Brontë's choice of Nellie, a servant, as the main narrator. Where answers were supported with quotations and understanding of alternative interpretations, they often did very well.
- (b) Most responses were able to place the passage in its textual context, though there was some confusion in weaker answers, which tended to summarise the relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff. To improve candidates should focus on the detail of the passage. Better answers recognised this as the last meeting between them, before Cathy's death and the birth of Catherine, and were able to explore how Brontë creates tension, through her use of language and dialogue. Good answers analysed the language and dialogue in detail, noting the hyperbole and passion revealed. Other good answers considered the action in this passage. Very good answers, mindful of the context, developed such arguments through reference to the wider text. These high attaining responses analysed the detail of the passage thoroughly, as well as showing its significance in terms of the wider novel by precise references and at the same time keep the main focus on the relationship as directed by the question.

#### Question 5 **Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Franklin's Prologue and Tale***

- (a) Most answers were able to find relevant material to address the task. Weaker answers were mostly able to summarise what each character did that was 'fre', though some were unsure as to what this might mean. Better answers saw how Chaucer used the contrasting actions and responses to conflict to develop his characterisation and the storyline. Good answers were alive to the multiple layers of narration and also explored some of the poetic methods such as language and imagery. These good answers were able to support the arguments with precise reference to the text and some understanding of alternative interpretations.
- (b) Most responses gave an appropriate context. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the passage or to write too generally about the Arveragus and Aurelius's situations. Better answers focused on the detail of the passage. Many responses explored this contrast between the husband and the lover, with some noting, for example, how the brother here is as concerned as Dorigen's friends were earlier in the poem. Others explored the importance of this moment in the development of the plot and the concerns of the text – for example, the Franklin's (or Chaucer's, depending on the interpretation) dismissal of magic through the power of religion. Answers which referred to the wider text relevantly and had awareness of different interpretations often did very well.

**Question 6 Thomas Hardy: *Tess Of The D'Urbervilles***

- (a) Most answers focused on Tess's family in Marlott, the farm with Dairyman Crick and Alec's family home with his mother. Weaker answers tended to summarise the events and the characters at each location, often in great detail. Better answers explored some of the ways Hardy uses contrasts between the settings and the people there to develop his wider concerns, such as relationships and attitudes to innocence. Good answers ranged widely through the text, but offered specific examples to support the arguments, often with detailed analysis of Hardy's methods such as language, imagery and descriptive narration.
- (b) Nearly every response was able to place the passage in an appropriate context, just before the marriage of Tess and Angel. Weaker answers summarised the wider relationship with little focus on the passage. Better responses were able to explore the passage's significance in terms of the development of the relationship and the characterisation of the characters. Some good responses analysed Hardy's narrative structures, noting, for example, how he shapes the reader's response to Tess through his choice of narrative voice and perspective. Others explored the language and imagery in detail. The increasing tension was often remarked on, and in some cases well analysed. Responses which referred specifically and relevantly to the wider text to support insights often did very well.

**Question 7 Andrew Marvell: *Selected Poems***

- (a) Responses to this question usually demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the text to address the task, with reference made to the Damon poems, 'To His Coy Mistress', and 'The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers'. Weaker answers offered a summary of the poems or a more detailed paraphrase. Better answers considered the different kinds of relationships presented, with some able to explore the contrasting attitudes. Responses which considered how Marvell presents his ideas through his poetic choices, with appropriate support from the text, often did well.
- (b) Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the poem, with some unable to link it to the wider selection. Better answers explored how Marvell presents the speaker's attitudes to the infant, through language and imagery. Most responses were alive to the nuances of the father/child relationship, particularly in terms of the historical and social context. Good answers considered Marvell's choice of poetic structures and rhymes in detail, with better responses linking the ideas and the poetic style to the wider text with specific and apposite references.

**Question 8 Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Selected Poems***

- (a) Answers demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the text to discuss Shelley's presentation of rulers and people in authority relevantly. Popular choices were 'Ozymandias', 'The Mask of Anarchy' and 'England in 1819'. Weaker answers tended to summarise the poems, with little reference to Shelley's presentation. Better answers saw how Shelley's choice of language in particular enabled him to undermine his targets. Other good answers explored Shelley's different attitudes and tone across the selection, often by discussing his use of the mock heroic and satire. Other answers discussed how, for Shelley, poets and nature were the true rulers of the world rather than mere men. Where such arguments were supported by appropriate reference to the wider text and some awareness of Shelley's poetic methods, the answers often did very well.
- (b) Some weaker answers approached the question as though responding as to an unseen poem, with a consequent lack of understanding or context. Better answers showed understanding of the meaning, though some answers lapsed into paraphrase or gave too much attention to biographical details. Good answers considered what this poem reveals about Shelley's state of mind, as well as his methods, relating them to the wider selection. Where this was developed with detailed analysis of the poetic methods, such as language and verse form, and their effects, the answers often did well.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/61  
1900 to the Present

## Key messages

- Candidates should bear in mind that while knowledge of the plot or subject matter is essential, questions at this level require understanding and analysis of the ways writers shape meaning. This involves consideration of form, structure, language and dramatic effects.
- Candidates should read the question carefully and ideally make a brief plan before attempting an answer. They should avoid reiterating answers to questions they have practised, as they are unlikely to address the given question directly. Addressing the question from the outset is more effective than writing an introduction that summarises the text and its themes.
- Candidates need to demonstrate good knowledge of characters, their relationship to others and their chief role in each text.
- Once a point has been made and supported with comment and analysis it is important to move on. The best answers are well developed with a range of different points.
- In answers to passage questions, candidates need to bear in mind two requirements: to analyse the ways the writer has shaped meaning within the passage, paying close attention to features of language, form and structure; to consider how characteristic the writing is of the whole text or selection of poems/plays.
- Responses to the passage questions should contain short quotations to enable detailed analysis of the effects of language choice and structure. Candidates should avoid copying out large quotations.
- For shorter references to a text, clearer reading is facilitated by quoting an individual line or part of it than by referring to a line number or by giving the first and last word of the quotation e.g. 'I...sister'.

## General comments

Most candidates expressed ideas clearly and were able to structure essays coherently with appropriate division into paragraphs. Some answers were very well expressed, showing evidence of detailed knowledge and good engagement with texts, contexts and critical opinions. Except for in a few examples, communication was mostly clear.

There were hardly any rubric infringements, with almost all candidates attempting two questions. They nearly always appeared to have allocated sufficient time to each question. The few who did not complete their answers had either written long introductions, spent much time on biographical details or had laboured some points in their answer, repeating the same idea in slightly different ways where it would have been more effective to move on to a new point.

Most candidates who quoted critical opinions made use of them as part of the argument in a convincing way, and used criticism that was relevant. Candidates who write on Ishiguro and Williams could generally improve their answers by making more use of this – there is much accessible and available literary criticism on these works. The highest achieving candidates also employed critical approaches such as Marxism, Feminism or Post-Colonialism, which are useful tools in considering many texts.



**Comments on specific questions**

**Question 1**

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Americanah*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 2**

ELEANOR CATTON: *The Rehearsal*

- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (d) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 3**

T.S. ELIOT: *Four Quartets*

- (e) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (f) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 4**

ATHOL FUGARD: *Township Plays*

- (g) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (h) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 5**

KASHUO ISHIGURO: *Never Let Me Go*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There was a good overview of whole text concerns with some engaged personal response and some discussion of whether clones should be regarded as human as well as of the general morality of cloning to harvest organs. Some features of the passage were discussed coherently and confidently, such as the atmosphere of mystery and oppression surrounding the lives and origins of the clones and the way this gives rise to speculation. There was some specific reference to the wider text to support the argument. Responses of a higher standard would have paid more attention to the details of the passage with more analysis of the ways the writer shapes meaning.

**Question 6**

DEREK WALCOTT: Selected Poems

- (i) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (j) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 7**

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *The Glass Menagerie*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

- (b) This passage question was tackled competently, with good focus on the key requirement of 'audience response'. Laura's fragility was seen as symbolised by and reflected in her glass menagerie. Her embarrassment about being crippled was linked appropriately to other areas of the text. Jim was considered to be at first viewed as Laura's saviour in the eyes of the audience, supported by his apparently sympathetic words and behaviour towards her. His inability to remember Laura clearly from their schooldays could have been contrasted to her enthusiastic recollection and her preservation of The Torch. Jim's failure to 'be further along by this time' was linked to the American Dream and the falseness of its promises as was the failure of Jim to live up to expectations. Reference was made to what follows this passage, the kiss and revelation of Jim's engagement. The most successful responses on the passage questions gave balanced consideration to its connections to the wider text and its concerns, as well as detailed analysis of the passage and its dramatic effects.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/62  
1900 to the Present

## Key messages

- Candidates should bear in mind that while knowledge of the plot or subject matter is essential, questions at this level require understanding and analysis of the ways writers shape meaning. This involves consideration of form, structure, language and dramatic effects.
- Candidates should read the question carefully and ideally make a brief plan before attempting an answer. They should avoid reiterating answers to questions they have practised, as they are unlikely to address the given question directly. Addressing the question from the outset is more effective than writing an introduction that summarises the text and its themes.
- Candidates need to demonstrate good knowledge of characters, their relationship to others and their chief role in each text.
- Once a point has been made and supported with comment and analysis it is important to move on. The best answers are well developed with a range of different points.
- In answers to passage questions, candidates need to bear in mind two requirements: to analyse the ways the writer has shaped meaning within the passage, paying close attention to features of language, form and structure; to consider how characteristic the writing is of the whole text or selection of poems/plays.
- Responses to the passage questions should contain short quotations to enable detailed analysis of the effects of language choice and structure. Candidates should avoid copying out large quotations.
- For shorter references to a text, clearer reading is facilitated by quoting an individual line or part of it than by referring to a line number or by giving the first and last word of the quotation e.g. 'I...sister'.

## General comments

Most candidates expressed ideas clearly and were able to structure essays coherently with appropriate division into paragraphs. Some answers were very well expressed, showing evidence of detailed knowledge and good engagement with texts, contexts and critical opinions. Except for in a few examples, communication was mostly clear.

There were hardly any rubric infringements, with almost all candidates attempting two questions. They nearly always appeared to have allocated sufficient time to each question. The few who did not complete their answers had either written long introductions, spent much time on biographical details or had laboured some points in their answer, repeating the same idea in slightly different ways where it would have been more effective to move on to a new point.

It would be to the advantage of some candidates to consider appropriate expression for literature essays. Use of colloquial language strikes a jarring note, and the Mark Scheme states that at Level 3 expression is expected to be 'appropriate' and at the very highest level expression should also be 'accomplished'.

Most candidates who quoted critical opinions made use of them as part of the argument in a convincing way, and used criticism that was relevant. Candidates who write on Eliot and Williams could generally improve their answers by making more use of this – there is much accessible and available literary criticism on these works. The highest achieving candidates also employed critical approaches such as Marxism, Feminism or Post-Colonialism, which are useful tools in considering many texts.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Americanah*

High attaining candidates moved nimbly around the text, using short, appropriate quotations and demonstrating an overview of themes and concerns. Lower achieving candidates tended to show less command of detailed reference while still showing some general knowledge of concerns.

- (a) The key words in this question were 'ways', 'effects' and 'role'. Most successful answers addressed all three of these aspects. They saw Kosi as a foil to Ifemelu and some viewed her as an example of the kind of Nigerian woman mentioned in the novel who marries a man who can afford to keep her in a lavish lifestyle. Some made comparisons between her and Uju. The light colour of her skin was identified as significant in the context of the theme of colour. Kosi was also identified as a plot device, obstructing the reunion of Obinze and Ifemelu and increasing the tension in the final chapters of the novel. Weaker answers provided character sketches, often with only general illustration or assertion, treating Kosi as a real person, rather than as a construct and with little consideration of the ways Adichie shapes the reader's response to her. Well-constructed answers showed a balance of condemnation of the materialistic aspects of Kosi and sympathy for her predicament, with appropriate support. Some candidates were carried away by moral disapproval – either of Kosi's shallowness or of Obinze's 'white man behaviour' and while some consideration of these aspects was appropriate, it was not beneficial to candidates who moved away from the text and spent too much time on them.
- (b) This passage was attempted with widely varying success. Nearly all candidates identified the theme of racism which clearly dominates the passage. High achieving candidates made detailed connections to the wider text. The concern with hair and body image was reflected in the description of the 'large-hipped' Haitian lady with the Afro hairstyle. Ifemelu's outspoken behaviour in this scene was seen as more typical of her blogs than her usual social behaviour. She was also identified as a mouthpiece for Adichie. Her reference to mixed race relationships was linked to her affair with Curt and the comments made by strangers, such as the waitress in the restaurant or the man in the shop who mentioned 'jungle' in relation to Ifemelu. The dramatic effect of the repetition of 'that's a lie', the use of rhetorical questions, profane language, the ironic reference to 'nice liberal friends' and the contemptuously dismissive tone of 'blah blah blah', all linked to Ifemelu's intoxicated state, were noted and helped candidates to achieve higher marks. Other responses suggested that Ifemelu's message about the tendency to keep quiet and deny the existence of racism seemed borne out by the reaction of her fellow guests and the fact that she felt the need to send an apology later. Ifemelu's claim that colour was not an issue in Nigeria was disputed by some candidates who remembered the advice given to Obinze to find a white manager to ensure success of a company in Nigeria. Some made the minor error of thinking Obama had just been elected President, rather than being selected as the Democratic Party's candidate, but more serious evidence of lack of detailed knowledge was the confusion between Blaine and Curt, some believing Blaine to be white. Weaker answers were simply narrative accounts of the passage, often paraphrased, or general personal reflection condemning racial prejudice with little direct reference to the passage.

### Question 2

ELEANOR CATTON: *The Rehearsal*

Candidates dealt well in treating this text as a construct, and use the phrase 'Catton shows/presents' to good effect. This could be because the structure of the text allows them as readers to be distanced from the characters. Many candidates viewed the theme of adolescence and the problem of finding and establishing one's individuality as one with which they could identify.

- (a) Candidates took the opportunity offered by the question to write about the narrative perspective of Stanley, the struggle to find a persona, his naivety at the Theatre of Cruelty and his impersonation of his father. The Drama school teachers with their heartless and cynical attitudes, their attempts to 'break down' the students and the demand that they should share their most intimate moments provided a contrast with the saxophone teacher who elicits intimate information from her students and manipulates them in a more subtle way. Many candidates revealed a need for a firmer grasp of

the details of this text by confusing the Drama school with Abbey Grange. While comparisons were valid and the central scandal of Victoria and Mr Saladin is appropriated by the Drama school, involving much speculation in their rehearsal for the play, the two establishments needed to be seen as distinct from each other. The most successful answers paid attention to the key words 'ways' and 'effects'.

- (b) Candidates responding to this passage question took the opportunity to discuss roles, performance and identity. The narrative perspective was correctly identified by some with some wider reference, showing how the narrative perspective shifts at different points in the novel. The use of words relating to performance and role playing were linked to the central concerns of the text. There was some exploration of the significance of descriptive details such as Isolde's chain. The attraction of her proximity to the scandal was discussed and comparisons were made between her victimhood and that of Bridget. Candidates generally needed to make more connections to the wider text, such as Bridget later being 'written out' like a superfluous character in a soap opera. There was some analysis of the striking comparison of the girl playing Bridget to a 'rind of raw bacon shrinking away from the heat of the pan' and the adjectives 'virginal' and 'sullied' as well as the 'self-loathing' of Julia. Higher attaining candidates referenced the observational skills of the saxophone teacher as an extension of her habit of 'watching', looking out 'over the rooftops and the clouds', but also commented on her own assumption of a role as she 'smoothes her trouser leg' and prepares for the next candidate. Her 'black leaf' tea was seen as evidence of her sinister characterisation.

### Question 3

T.S ELIOT: *Four Quartets*

Responses to this question demonstrated candidates' skills of analysis and the ability to shape a coherent reading, with some displays of originality of interpretation. Candidates showed engagement with some of the religious and philosophical ideas expressed in the poems, but were less inclined to comment on the ways Eliot shapes meaning.

- (a) Most candidates who answered this question demonstrated some detailed knowledge of *Four Quartets*. They identified a variety of symbols including the religious symbols such as fire, water and the dove as well as less obvious ones such as the bird in *Burnt Norton*, symbolising various entities like freedom or the soul. The 'dark' in the third section of *East Coker* was interpreted in several ways, including death, purgatory or just a state of godless despair or ignorance. An overview of the four poems suggested a journey representing the journey of the soul. There was a great deal to choose from here with the proviso that the candidate could justify the choice of symbol with some extended reference and explanation rather than simply asserting that one thing represented another. Thus, the garden in *Burnt Norton* is referred to as 'our first world', enabling it to be interpreted as the garden of Eden or a place of childhood innocence and so a representation of childhood itself. High attaining candidates made connections between various parts of the poems such as the rose featuring at the beginning of *Burnt Norton* and at the end of *Little Gidding*. Some less convincing answers claimed to find symbols relating to the First or Second World Wars.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this passage question were usually able to identify its concern with time past and the ways in which we interpret the past and its significance. This was linked by some to the general meditation on time running through all the poems. In stronger responses, candidates selected phrases like 'superficial notions of evolution' in relation to the 'pattern of the past' and 'development'. They made links between 'not the experience of one life only but of many generations' and the 'earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth' of those 'long since under the earth' in *East Coker*. They observed that the writer is carefully thinking out and trying to explain complicated ideas conveyed by tentative phrases such as 'it seems', the repetition of 'meaning' the use of additional phrases in brackets to supplement his statements and his reiteration of ideas already mentioned, 'I have said before'. They explored the impact of adding to 'the backward look' with 'the backward half-look' and some associated 'the agony of others, nearly experienced' with injuries sustained in air raids during the Second World War. The 'sudden illumination' was appropriately linked to other areas of the quartets such as 'knowing the place for the first time' and the whole passage seen as part of the meditation on the nature of time past resolved in *Little Gidding* with the conclusion that 'history is a pattern of timeless moments'. Less successful answers explained or paraphrased the passage without commenting on the ways Eliot shapes the meaning or on its connection to other areas of the poem.

### Question 4

ATHOL FUGARD: *Township Plays*

Most candidates demonstrated ways in which these plays are still relevant to today's world despite being set during the apartheid era in South Africa. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the context of these plays and usually deployed their knowledge appropriately in both the essay and the passage question. A small number of candidates referred to *The Coat* in their answers though this play is not included in the set texts for the syllabus. While it is perfectly acceptable to use the play as wider reference, it should not be selected as one of the two texts under discussion in **Question (a)**.

- (a) Most candidates paid attention to the key idea of 'dignity' and demonstrated sound understanding of its implications. Those who chose to answer on only two plays tended to answer in more depth and detail than those who chose to use all four plays. A good compromise was to base the answer mainly on a detailed consideration of two plays while making some passing reference to the other two. Characters striving to maintain dignity were appropriately selected, with the use of supporting details and quotations. Feminist interpretations viewed Rebecca's decision to leave Willie as a justified decision to maintain or reassert her dignity. Similarly, feminist interpretation was applied to *Nongogo* and Queenie's predicament, particularly the inability of Johnny to accept Queenie's past when his own is equally shameful. Willie's attempt to educate himself was seen as a failure by some as he appears to gain nothing but disillusionment, reflected in his use of language, 'Bloody Ass! That's what I think of a B.A.' though most viewed his actions at the end of the play as heroic. Minor characters such as Pinkie and Blackie were relevantly incorporated, though some candidates thought Shark and his gang were white. The only white character in *No-Good Friday* is Father Higgins. *The Island* proved a particularly apt choice for this question as Winston initially views the role of Antigone, a woman, as a loss of his dignity. More successful responses considered effects of language and dramatic effects such as the use of the coconut shells for Antigone's costume and the laughter they provoke, humiliating Winston. They noted the effect of the change in register from 'take your Antigone and shove it up your arse' to 'I go now to my living death because I honoured those things to which honour belongs'. Less successful responses usually identified examples of characters maintaining dignity, but were confined to narrative accounts of plot.
- (b) Strong candidates demonstrated detailed, relevant contextual knowledge here, especially in relation to the pass-book system and Ciskeian Independence. They were able to link the role play of Buntu to the play within the play in *The Island* and the theme of identity was linked to the photography sessions. Most explored the central issue of the passage, Sizwe's change of identity to that of the dead man Robert Zwelinzima, though some thought Sizwe was the dead man. Some interestingly connected the theft of Robert's identity with the theft of identity implied by the pass-book system. Better answers dealt with the religious significance of the opening, seeing it as symbolic of Sizwe receiving his new identity in a form of christening. 'We welcome you into the flock of Jesus'. The abrupt change from the role of priest to policeman highlights the lack of humanity of those in authority, as enacted by Buntu as he exchanges his benevolent words of blessing for very short commands. Attention to stage directions enabled candidates to consider the dramatic effects of the rough behaviour of the policeman in contrast with Sizwe's subservient demeanour as he stands quietly looking at his feet. There was consideration of Sizwe's reluctance to lose his identity, the emphasis on the importance of family and the need to sacrifice all to keep them alive. Buntu's suggestion that the black population are complicit in their own humiliation exemplified by 'Ja Baas' and the significance of the story of Buntu's father's hat, a symbol of his dignity, were discussed in the best responses.

**Question 5**

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *Never Let Me Go*

This text elicited engaged responses from candidates, who showed an awareness of the topicality of cloning in the 1990s and of its moral implications. As well as responding to the plight of the clones, candidates extended the idea of 'otherness' to include those they perceived as less privileged or to the human condition in general. The most successful answers linked arguments and opinions to the text and the question, rather than writing general, impassioned personal condemnations of the ill-treatment or lack of humanity implied by a system of alienation.

- (a) Most candidates selected relevant material to discuss the importance of art and creativity in the novel. They extended their consideration beyond drawing, painting, poetry and music to Ruth's fantasies and sometimes unconvincingly to areas such as sexual activity at the Cottages. Some

interesting points were made about the ways creativity can act as an outlet for frustrated feelings, explaining the reason for Tommy's tantrums as he is unable to express himself through art. The importance of the gallery, the uncertainty and rumour that surrounds it and the failure of Tommy to produce acceptable works of art at Hailsham were discussed. Some candidates saw Tommy's failure as a refusal to conform to the system and the bullying he experiences as indicative of the way the vast majority try to force the rest into conformity, the laughter at his elephant indicating that he is more creative than his fellow clones who conform to rigid conventions rather than having original ideas. The collecting of the works of art for submission to the gallery was identified as practice for the clones in giving away items that were precious to them and in some way part of their identity in preparation for the donation of their organs. The Judy Bridgewater tape was relevantly considered as a poignant reminder of the infertility of the clones. Good answers took into account the way Ishiguro sets up false hope for the reader as well as for the clones in their hope of obtaining referrals through evidence of their sincerity of feeling demonstrated in works of art. Tommy's final outburst after the revelation that works of art were only to prove they had souls at all was viewed as his final exasperation with the system.

- (b) Most candidates were able to place the passage in context, explaining the significance of the pencil case and the cause of Kathy's distress. The effects of the first person narrative were discussed by many and linked to other areas of the text. The best answers focussed on the way the writer presents the dynamics of relationships within the enclosed atmosphere of Hailsham. Kathy colludes with Ruth's lies in the same way she does years later in the discussion about deferrals. Ruth's demeanour in this passage was contrasted with her usual assertiveness while the willingness of the other candidates to accept Kathy's statement by nodding in agreement was seen as symptomatic of the passive acceptance of the clones and their conformity to an oppressive system especially when being told of 'a mystery'. Weaker responses tended to re-tell the passage or drift into expressions of pity for the clones or anger about the process of farming their organs, and would have been improved if they had related ideas more clearly to the passage. Some noted the element of suspense introduced at the end of the passage with the mention of the missing tape, some speculating that Ruth might have been to blame for its disappearance.

## Question 6

### DEREK WALCOTT: Selected Poems

Though the context of the colonial history of the Caribbean is essential for understanding much of Walcott's work, candidates should take care not to assume that the enslavement of many islanders during the colonial period is the central topic of every poem.

- (a) The presentation of death in Walcott's poetry offers a wide range of poems from which to select. *Oddjob*, *a Bull Terrier* was a popular choice. Candidates who achieved high marks recognised the extension of the theme of death from that of a friend's pet dog to the concept of death in general and its accompanying silence. They paid attention to the key words 'how' and 'to what effect' in discussing such features as the poet's characteristic use of description of weather and scenery to evoke mood and the structure of the poem with its short, end-stopped lines. *Sea Canes* is another obvious choice, where the poet laments the death of so many friends but again the landscape with sea canes 'the seraph lances of my faith' brings him comfort and reassurance, leading him to conclude that 'out of what is lost grows something stronger'. References to Walcott's religious faith and Methodist background were useful contextually. *The Walk* and *Lampfall* were relevantly selected, demonstrating the persona's temporary consideration of suicide. Other candidates selected less obvious forms of death, such as the death of poetic inspiration, also featuring in *The Walk*, the end of a love affair in *A Careful Passion* or the end of colonisation in *Ruins of a Great House*. The best responses always focussed on the way Walcott achieves effects rather than merely summarising the subject matter of the poems.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question usually offered a coherent reading. As links to the wider selection of poems were rare, many needed to explore more fully how characteristic this poem is of Walcott's presentation of the sea. The characterisation of Shabine was identified as a central feature of the poem through the use of West Indian dialect and the love of his homeland evoked in the descriptive language and exclamatory phrases such as 'I bless every town'. The veiled face of Shabine's deserted mistress, Maria Concepcion, was relevantly interpreted as a ghostly vision or a reference to the Virgin Mary. Connections could have been made with other poems describing the islands of the Caribbean, and 'the almond's shadow does not injure the sand' provided opportunities for links to other poems dealing with the history of colonisation and slavery in these

islands. Some candidates did not get as far as the end of the poem to discuss the significance of the 'road in white moonlight taking me home'. This could signify issues both with time management and with the line-by-line approach.

### Question 7

#### TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *The Glass Menagerie*

Candidates performed across the whole range, some demonstrating a very impressive, detailed knowledge of the text and of critical opinions together with a very good understanding of Williams's dramatic methods, while others showed a general knowledge of plot and some response to characterisation. There was a tendency for some candidates to spend much time on biographical details such as the connection between Laura and Williams's sister, Rose. To improve responses, candidates need to show evidence of reading criticism, of which there is much now available. Additionally, they could take the opportunity to examine the text from a feminist or Marxist viewpoint. Some candidates made relevant contextual comment about the effects of the economic problems of the time or the American Dream, especially in relation to Jim.

- (a) The best answers focussed on 'the ways Williams presents' rather than on the causes of family tension. Some essays looked more like sociological studies of family problems than literary essays. Other candidates focussed too closely on the theme of escape, perhaps reflecting questions they had practised. While some of these ideas could have been usefully incorporated, they needed to be made relevant to the question. Candidates considered in detail the tensions existing between Amanda and each of her children with some relevant personal response, usually either blaming Amanda for over-zealous attempts to control her children's lives or sympathising with her predicament as a single mother. Those who focussed on 'ways of presenting' understood the necessity for quoting some of the language used by characters, such as 'you babbling old witch' or 'what is to become of us?', but also recognised the need to consider the claustrophobic atmosphere evoked by the stage setting with the 'dark, grim rear wall of the Wingfield apartment', the dominating presence of Mr Wingfield's blown-up photograph and the use of the fire escape. The plastic theatre elements such as the legend on the screen 'Ave Maria', the red smoke which is in evidence during the quarrel between Tom and his mother, the knocking over of the glass ornaments and the scream emitted by Laura were all cited by candidates as examples of 'ways of presenting'.
- (b) Most candidates managed to place this scene contextually and showed some understanding of its significance, mainly in terms of its effect on Laura which was interpreted in various ways. The weakest answers were restricted to retelling of the scene with some commentary on the significance of 'Blue Roses' or the appearance of 'a souvenir' on the screen. More ambitious responses considered dramatic features such as the music, the stage directions such as Jim backing away from Laura after the kiss, and made connections between this scene and the wider text, such as the way both Tom (in earlier scenes) and Jim resort to cigarettes as a form of escape. The peal of laughter heard from Amanda was interpreted by some to indicate that she is eavesdropping, while others more convincingly saw it as an ironic indication of the gap between her expectations from the visit of this gentleman caller and the reality of the scene unfolding before the audience. Good responses focussed on the key words and the shaping of audience response, especially to Jim, and the apparent contradiction between his wish that Laura were his sister and the urge to kiss her on the lips. Some saw the 'sister' references as an implied criticism of Tom's careless treatment of Laura. Many viewed the end of the scene with Laura gazing at her broken glass ornament as symbolic of her broken-hearted condition. Others interpreted the end of the scene as an indication that the change of the ornament from a unicorn to an ordinary horse means that Laura has been made into an ordinary, normal person through her encounter with Jim. Those focussing on the key idea of audience response felt that Williams had shaped the response so that hopefulness and expectation of a happy outcome for Laura had shifted to disapproval of Jim for kissing her under false pretences and a pessimistic view of Laura's future.



# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/63  
1900 to the Present

## Key messages

- Candidates should bear in mind that while knowledge of the plot or subject matter is essential, questions at this level require understanding and analysis of the ways writers shape meaning. This involves consideration of form, structure, language and dramatic effects.
- Candidates should read the question carefully and ideally make a brief plan before attempting an answer. They should avoid reiterating answers to questions they have practised, as they are unlikely to address the given question directly. Addressing the question from the outset is more effective than writing an introduction that summarises the text and its themes.
- Some candidates could improve by demonstrating better knowledge of characters, their relationship to others and their chief role in each text.
- Candidates need to demonstrate good knowledge of characters, their relationship to others and their chief role in each text.
- Once a point has been made and supported with comment and analysis it is important to move on. The best answers are well developed with a range of different points.
- In answers to passage questions, candidates need to bear in mind two requirements: to analyse the ways the writer has shaped meaning within the passage, paying close attention to features of language, form and structure; to consider how characteristic the writing is of the whole text or selection of poems/plays.
- Responses to the passage questions should contain short quotations to enable detailed analysis of the effects of language choice and structure. Candidates should avoid copying out large quotations.
- For shorter references to a text, clearer reading is facilitated by quoting an individual line or part of it than by referring to a line number or by giving the first and last word of the quotation e.g. 'I...sister'.

## General comments

Most candidates expressed ideas clearly and were able to structure essays coherently with appropriate division into paragraphs. Some answers were very well expressed, showing evidence of detailed knowledge and good engagement with texts, contexts and critical opinions. Except for in a few examples, communication was mostly clear.

There were hardly any rubric infringements, with almost all candidates attempting two questions. They nearly always appeared to have allocated sufficient time to each question. The few who did not complete their answers had either written long introductions, spent much time on biographical details or had laboured some points in their answer, repeating the same idea in slightly different ways where it would have been more effective to move on to a new point.

It would be to the advantage of some candidates to consider appropriate expression in literature essays. 'He was pissed off with his mother' or 'She went mental' strike a jarring note and while candidates are not directly penalised for use of an unsuitable register, it should be noted that at Level 3 expression is expected to be appropriate and at the very highest level expression should be accomplished and appropriate.

Most candidates who quoted critical opinions made use of them as part of the argument in a convincing way, and used criticism that was relevant. Candidates who write on Eliot and Williams could generally improve their answers by making more use of this – there is much accessible and available literary criticism on these works. The highest achieving candidates also employed critical approaches such as Marxism, Feminism or Post-Colonialism, which are useful tools in considering many texts.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Americanah*

High attaining candidates moved nimbly around the text, using short, appropriate quotations and demonstrating an overview of themes and concerns. Lower achieving candidates tended to show less command of detailed reference while still showing some general knowledge of concerns.

- (a) The key word in this question was 'ways' and those who paid attention to this usually avoided simple narrative accounts of Ifemelu's experiences in America. The 'outsider' theme is common in literature and some candidates saw this theme as part of the bildungsroman structure of the novel, demonstrating how Ifemelu's identity develops through her time in America. Good answers focussed on some of the problems she faced, her feeling that she only became black when she went to America and her attempts to fit in, such as the hair straightening. Emphasis on the language used to describe the physical pain of this was identified as representative of her mental suffering in trying to force herself to become so different. The role of the blogs was considered as an outlet for feelings she could not express in person, with examples of strikingly outspoken language such as 'initiation into the Society of Former Negroes' or the occasion when she is drunk at a party and voices her feelings about racism to the embarrassment of fellow guests, alienating herself from other black people such as Blaine and the Haitian poet who should have been her allies. Good answers considered the question more widely, with some focus on Obinze's experience in England, Uju's experience in America and Dike's inability to fit in. It was also noted, with reference to the Nigeropolitan Club, that Ifemelu is to some extent an outsider when she returns to Nigeria, evidenced by the mocking tone she uses to distance herself from the assumed sophistication of other Nigerians who have lived abroad 'all dripping with savoir faire'. Though Ifemelu feels an unease creep up on her while talking to other Americanahs, she has to admit to herself that she has become a 'they have the kind of things we can eat' person.
- (b) Candidates responding to the passage question took the opportunity to refer in detail to the wider text in discussing the relationship of Obinze and Ifemelu. Higher attaining candidates balanced the discussion to cover the passage and the wider text. They referred to Adichie's method of characterisation with evidence from the passage that the two had undergone change, with hints of Obinze's lack of personal happiness, 'I live my life' and Ifemelu's admission to her changes in taste, 'I'm now a person who admires exposed wooden rafters'. The undercurrent of feeling viewed through the narrative perspective of Ifemelu was noted in 'the crush of emotions' and the smile from Obinze that felt to her 'like a prize'. Candidates who achieved the highest marks discussed more political concerns, triggered by the reference to the 'mentality of scarcity' which 'breeds a kind of desperation in everybody' which led to wider reference about the way Obinze has become prosperous with 'layer of pretension after pretension'. There were comparisons between Obinze's shallow relationship with Kosi and the deeper level of communication he shares with Ifemelu as evidenced in the passage. Most answers were at least competent with only a few discussing the relationship too generally at the expense of analysing the passage or focusing on recounting the passage.

### Question 2

ELEANOR CATTON: *The Rehearsal*

Candidates dealt well in treating this text as a construct, and use the phrase 'Catton shows/presents' to good effect. This could be because the structure of the text allows them as readers to be distanced from the characters. Many candidates viewed the theme of adolescence and the problem of finding and establishing one's individuality as one with which they could identify.

- (a) Candidates achieved a wide range of marks on this question, some responses suggested candidates' difficulty in unpacking the given quotation while others addressed the key words of the question confidently and intelligently with some convincing examples from across the text. These included Stanley's experience in the 'Theatre of Cruelty' and his response to it, his impersonation of his father, the demand that students should reveal their most intimate moments and the condemnation of the student who plays his performance for laughs. The ways in which the students explore imagined conversations of Saladin and Victoria and the recreated version of the affair in the play they perform were considered as well as some of the 'scenes' between Isolde and Julia.

Weaker answers showed insufficient grasp of detail and some confused the Drama school students with the Abbey Grange girls.

- (b) Most responses focussed well on 'shapes a reader's response' with some close analysis of the extract as well as sound understanding of Julia's characterisation and role in the novel. They discussed the aptness of the extended comparison of the other submissive girls to 'roosting hens' with their 'rustling swoop' in contrast to Julia's combative, challenging behaviour as she 'snaps' at the counsellor. Some candidates identified that the dramatic effect of the anaphora in several of her 'lines' adds a theatrical effect to her performance with much repetition of 'exciting' and 'lose'. 'Gaining control is not exciting.....taking a risk is exciting'. 'He would not just lose her, he would lose everything'. Others commented on the change in Julia's demeanour when she finds Isolde is looking at her marks the end of her 'performance' as she experiences acute embarrassment with a 'horrible thrill', underscoring the central concern of what is real and what is performance in the novel as a whole. Most answers extended consideration to the relationship of Isolde and Julia in the wider text.

### Question 3

T.S ELIOT: *Four Quartets*

Responses to this question demonstrated candidates' skills of analysis and the ability to shape a coherent reading with some displays of originality of interpretation. Candidates showed engagement with some of the religious and philosophical ideas expressed in the poems, but were less inclined to comment on the ways Eliot shapes meaning.

- (a) Many of those attempting the essay overlooked the opening quotation and focussed more generally on Eliot's presentation of time. There were some responses of a very high quality. Candidates showed a command of details of the text, some noting for instance that each of the opening movements in *Four Quartets* discusses time in some form: *Burnt Norton* presents the overarching theme of time present, time future, time past and 'what might have been'; *East Coker* opens with a discussion of the cyclical nature of time, the relationship between endings and beginnings and 'succession'; *The Dry Salvages*, while seeming at first to be focussed on the river and the sea concludes the opening movement with the clanging of the bell, measuring 'time not our time' while *Little Gidding* opens with a consideration of seasonal time. They were able to trace the journey of the poems to a point where time ceases to be significant and the beginning and the end become one. They expressed complicated ideas with fluency and were able to comment on such features as Eliot's metapoetic struggle to make meaning clear, sometimes directly addressing the reader as 'you' and at others becoming part of the experience as in 'We shall not cease from exploration'. Less successful answers tended to make general assertions with little textual support, often including moralistic comment about mankind's materialism.
- (b) Those candidates who attempted the passage question mostly recognised the reference to Christ and to the sacrament of Communion. Better answers focussed on such features as the contradictions in the language, 'the wounded surgeon', 'sharp compassion' (with some analysis of its connection to the surgeon's steel instrument), 'our only health is the disease' and so on right through this section from *East Coker*. They commented on the verse form and structure with its use of rhyme in contrast to other sections of the poem and the way this more lyrical form is usually employed in movements II and IV of *Four Quartets* in contrast with the more conversational tone which follows this section and others, 'So here I am, in the middle way'. Sound answers moved beyond paraphrase and explanation and related the passage to the wider concerns of the poem.

### Question 4

ATHOL FUGARD: *Township Plays*

- (a) There were too few responses to comment on this question.
- (b) There were too few responses to comment on this question.

## Question 5

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *Never Let Me Go*

This text elicited engaged responses from candidates who showed an awareness of the topicality of cloning in the 1990s and of its moral implications. As well as responding to the plight of the clones, candidates extended the idea of 'otherness' to include those they perceived as less privileged or to the human condition in general. More successful answers linked their arguments and opinions to the text and the question, rather than writing general, impassioned personal condemnations of the ill-treatment or lack of humanity implied by a system of alienation.

- (a) Most responses demonstrated detailed knowledge of the text, an understanding of effects of first person narrative and showed engagement. Candidates usually chose to discuss the development of the three central characters, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, some viewing the novel as a bildungsroman. Good answers went beyond narrative or character description to address the ways each character responds to their predicament as clones, contrasting Kathy's passive acceptance with Ruth's escapist dreams of office work or fantasies and Tommy's frustrated tantrums. The disappointed search for 'possibles' was seen as symbolically set in the lost corner of England. The best responses focussed on the key words, 'methods of characterisation' and were able to quote extensively to support such points as the assertive, strong-headedness of Ruth or Kathy's melancholy passivity as she drives along 'long grey roads' with only her memories to comfort her. Some responses were not fully focussed on the question and candidates were more inclined to discuss whether the clones deserved to be regarded as human, possibly reflecting a question they had practised earlier. While it was valid to discuss the clearly human characteristics of the clones, a fully developed response required wider consideration of role and identity and the way they are shaped in the course of the novel. Some excellent discussions of roles took a Marxist approach, with candidates seeing the clones as the exploited underclass. Other critical views were usefully quoted, including some of Ishiguro's own comments.
- (b) Most candidates went beyond description of events in the passage to place the passage in context, explaining the significance of the secret guard and the cause of Kathy's distress. The effects of the first person narrative were discussed by many and linked to other areas of the text. Many good answers focussed on the way the writer presents the dynamics of relationships within the enclosed atmosphere of Hailsham. Kathy colludes with Ruth's fantasies in the same way she does years later when Ruth lies about her knowledge of deferrals. Some noted the childish use of language ('secret guard stuff') and the uncharacteristic, hostile behaviour of Kathy towards Moira. Candidates contrasted her behaviour here with her normal, passive acceptance of her fate as a clone. Some very good responses found subtle references to the central concern of organ donation and its consequences, of being 'told and not told', the sense of helpless inevitability when 'you realise it's there but there's nothing you can do about it' and the 'something harder and darker' lying beyond the line Kathy is not prepared to cross.

## Question 6

DEREK WALCOTT: Selected Poems

Though the context of the colonial history of the Caribbean is essential for understanding much of Walcott's work, candidates should take care not to assume that the enslavement of many islanders during the colonial period is the central topic of every poem.

- (a) The most successful answers made use of the many poems in this selection which are either directly or indirectly concerned with the sea. The key words in the question were 'ways', 'presents' and 'relationship'. Poems such as *A Careful Passion* make use of the sea as a backdrop which reflects the mood of the couple who have reached the end of their affair. Some candidates successfully identified that, as in many poems, Walcott presents the sea as an embodiment of his own experience: 'Wave after wave of memory silts the mind.' At other times he sees himself as a vessel travelling on the sea, 'an old Greek freighter quitting port' or the gulls, hunting the water's edge are employed as a simile to represent 'our lives, seeking something worth the pity'. Some excellent responses suggested that poems such as *Lampfall* move from a cosy vision of the family gathering around a lamp at the sea's edge to the 'old fish that drives barrelling under sea', an image of death and destruction tempting him away from his life and family. Some candidates' answers suggested that they found difficulty in selecting three poems. Others identified that *Ebb*, *The Castaway*, *Landfall Grenada* and *The Schooner Flight* offer a rich source of material in which

Walcott makes use of the sea to suggest mood, to describe his own feelings or to evoke the landscape and history of the Caribbean.

- (b) Many candidates wrote competently about the opening lines of *The Walk* and how closely the poet sees his own situation reflected in the weather. The religious imagery was connected by some to details of Walcott's background as a Methodist. The agony involved in haemorrhaging poetry was well analysed as was the comparison between his own work and 'a housemaid's novel'. Some were able to make connections with other poems lamenting the loss of poetic inspiration such as *Nearing Forty* where 'your life bled for the household truth'. Some candidates selected features of language like the onomatopoeic use of 'hisses', though few linked the snake-like image to temptation, in this case temptation to end his life. Candidates found some difficulty in interpreting the end of the poem and some suggested the lions were real. The significance of 'here's your life's end' was missed or evaded by many candidates. Other answers focussed on a post-colonial interpretation, but it was difficult to make this coherent or convincing.

### Question 7

#### TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *The Glass Menagerie*

Candidates performed across the whole range, some demonstrating a very impressive, detailed knowledge of the text and of critical opinions together with a very good understanding of Williams's dramatic methods while others showed a general knowledge of plot and some response to characterisation. There was a tendency for some candidates to waste too much time on biographical details and the connection between Laura and Williams's sister, Rose. To improve responses, candidates need to show evidence of reading criticism, of which there is much now available. Additionally, they could take the opportunity to examine the text from a feminist or Marxist viewpoint. Some candidates made relevant contextual comment about the effects of the economic problems of the time or the American Dream, especially in relation to Jim.

- (a) There were many engaged, well-detailed responses to this question with some candidates judging Amanda harshly for her over-zealous interference in her children's lives. While many paid close attention to Williams's presentation of her, some spent too much time analysing the causes of her behaviour, making their essays more sociological than literary in tone. Candidates who achieved high marks wrote balanced essays, examining both aspects, 'witch' and 'martyr' while others focussed only on 'witch,' not always fully understanding the implications of 'martyr'. Some paid attention to context, explaining the difficulties of finding lucrative work for a single mother, sometimes developing this point with a feminist critical approach. The best answers examined the presentation of her character through the use of plastic theatre and the screen devices, such as 'Ave Maria' or 'Ou sont les neiges'. The red smoke which is in evidence during Amanda's quarrel with Tom was seen as supporting the 'witch' interpretation as well as her wishing on the moon. Almost all referred to the seventeen gentleman callers and to Tom's accusation that she is a 'babbling old witch'. Those who considered the 'martyr' aspect of Amanda were able to excuse much of her tyranny as indicative of her sincere love and concern for her children. The image of her wearing her husband's old dressing gown which is much too big was interpreted as symbolic of her efforts to shoulder the family burden which is much too big a task for her. They also used the final scene where Amanda is seen comforting Laura 'her silliness is gone and she has dignity and tragic beauty' to point out that, as this is a memory play, we have seen only Tom's one-sided version of his mother throughout the play and now that he looks back in regret, his vision of her is softened.
- (b) Responses to the passage were clearly divided into those which stayed at the surface of the text, approving of Jim as the only realistic character who will break the spell of Laura's shyness when the horn is broken from the unicorn, and those which provided a more in-depth and detailed analysis of the passage, sometimes judging him very harshly but supporting their views. Answers which achieved the highest marks gave balanced consideration to both characters in the scene while some focussed only on Jim or almost exclusively on Laura. Jim was viewed by some as an embodiment of the American Dream with his ambition for self-improvement and belief in science and technology. His enthusiasm is reflected in his exclamations, 'Knowledge – Zzzzzp! Money – Zzzzzp! – Power', but some pointed out that he has made little progress beyond the shoe warehouse and has not lived up to the glorious promise of his schooldays. He does not pay attention to what Laura is telling him at the beginning of the passage, his claim to be able to analyse people better than doctors was seen as arrogant and his analysis of Laura's problems patronising. His glancing in the mirror was judged as conceited and his disposal of the chewing once it has lost its taste as foreshadowing his later kissing and disposal of Laura. The glass menagerie's fragility was identified by most candidates as an embodiment of Laura's fragile

sensitivity. Candidates reflected on the implications of her initial reluctance to speak and her hesitancy compared with her evident enthusiasm and willingness to trust Jim with her unicorn by the end of the passage. The peal of girlish laughter from Amanda was linked by some to the way she has dressed for the occasion in youthful clothes, as though she is receiving the gentleman caller.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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<p><b>Paper 9695/71</b> <b>Comment and Appreciation</b></p>
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## Key messages

- Good answers show that candidates have read and considered their chosen poems or passages as a whole before starting to write.
- Good answers focus on the form, structure and language of the poems or passages and on how these shape meaning, and do not rely upon narrative or paraphrase.
- Good answers discuss how literary devices and techniques are used by the writers.
- Good answers show personal responses to the ways in which the poems or passage are written, beyond simply to what is said.
- Good answers maintain a tight focus on the poems or passage throughout their response, rather than discussing other writers, other texts or other ideas.

## General comments

*'This was an enjoyable Paper to mark. Most candidates reacted positively to their choices of passage or poem, and it appeared that they were trying hard to respond to the various skills of the writers, rather than just to the story, pictures or scenes in front of them. There was also a greater awareness of genre than has often been the case in the past.'* These words from one experienced examiner seem a good way to open a report on what was in many respects a very pleasing session, particularly the points about the writers' skills and genres; reliance upon narrative or paraphrase was much less prevalent than has sometimes been the case. To quote another examiner's words: *'The most successful answers showed evidence of close reading: they supported their views with judicious use of quotations and at the same time displayed an impressive amount of detailed, critical analysis, with appropriate use of technical vocabulary and sensitive appreciation of the effects of the writing. In these ways they were able to create sophisticated, personal, coherently argued responses which often showed how much they understood and relished the complexities of the writers' concerns and craft.'*

What these two examiners saw, and what their comments show, is that more candidates were determined to explore not just *what* each writer says, but *how* she or he says it, with clear focus on defined and well supported reference to particular literary techniques and skills. This was perhaps most noticeably the case in responses to the two poems and the piece of drama, the latter of which was often addressed with clear awareness that the extract was written to be seen and heard, as well as just written – it is a piece of theatre.

Many responses opened with a high emphasis upon which techniques were going to be focused on, and combined with closing paragraphs which simply echoed the introduction there was often less time for close critical exploration than might ideally have been the case. Nonetheless, the emphasis on technique was right, and encouraging to read.

A few candidates appeared to rely rather heavily upon some often relatively unusual literary terms; where such terms are used, the candidate must demonstrate confident understanding of what they mean, and more importantly they must properly illustrate not just when the terms are used, but also consider the impact that they have upon the reader or audience. It is worth at this point noting a few of the most frequent instances of this: many candidates used an expression such as 'the author also uses the literary device of diction', when of course all writers use words; many referred to 'literal devices' instead of 'literary devices'; and rather unusually, there was a frequent misuse of the word 'satire' instead of the much simpler and more correct

'criticism'. There was also evidence of confusion between the terms 'images' and 'imagery', between which there is a big and important difference.

There were no significant rubric infringements; just a very small number of candidates addressed only one question, and a handful of responses were clearly cut short by the pressure of time, but this almost never seriously weakened a response. Handwriting was again a concern, and in a few cases a serious concern; it is vital that candidates are aware that it is impossible to give reward to points made if they are not legible. All candidates should be reminded of the instruction on the front of the examination paper: '*You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers*'.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 *The Unbelonging***

This passage was by far the most popular, and there were some very thoughtful and perceptive responses. A few appeared uncertain about the situation being described, sometimes seemingly unaware of exactly what Hyacinth is dreaming about, and indeed why she is doing so; but the great majority were clear that the first part of the passage shows Hyacinth's deep love for her old life in Jamaica, with repeated reference to the warmth, both literal and metaphorical, that she felt in her home island, contrasted vividly and painfully with the cold, again literal and metaphorical, of where she is now. A number of responses felt that Aunt Joyce and the yellow-skinned woman were the same person, and argued some quite convincing reasons for this, but most seemed confident that they were two entirely different people, the latter perhaps being Hyacinth's father's new wife or possibly housekeeper. Many referred to her as being the stereotypical evil stepmother, whose anger at the girl's bed-wetting is inhumane and cruel, and her final threat to 'Wait till your father gets home!' is unimaginably cruel, especially if, as many candidates suggested, the three people mentioned at the start of the passage were Hyacinth and her parents. The ominous closing sentence of the passage was frequently commented upon, with its frightening and almost military image suggesting an utterly different and humiliated Hyacinth.

Many candidates drew interesting attention to some possible foreshadowings and contrasts in the Jamaican dream: Hyacinth felt the warm air 'wrap her in well-being', whereas in London 'coldness enveloped her'; because of the heat, Hyacinth's back and under-arms had 'wet patches of sweat', whereas in reality she had wet herself and her bed; she was dreaming about the Independence parade, whereas in London she had lost all independence; Aunt Joyce had 'the usual smile on her face', totally unlike the cruel and animal-like appearance of the woman in London. Most candidates spent valuable time comparing the slow and lazy Jamaican descriptions, contrasting painfully with the harsh, colourless and bitter London ones. A number noted the irony of Hyacinth's name: she is in this respect neatly linked with the flower images in the Jamaican paragraphs, so brutally out of place in London. There is much to discuss, and most candidates found plenty.

A few – and this was also the case in responses to the poems – felt that the writer was actually discussing something, or some things, very far from what is written; at least one actually used the expression 'hidden meanings' as though the passage or poems are some kind of code that the writers want readers to decipher. The passage is probably not about slavery, nor about colonialism, though these ideas were at time sensibly mentioned and argued to good effect. One ingenious response saw the passage as an updating of a Greek myth, but while this was argued with some conviction it seemed unnecessarily complicated, in response to what is in fact quite a straightforward situation and narrative. Most candidates understood the situation being depicted, made brief but productive use of the title of the novel, and explored the contrast between the description of life in Jamaica in Hyacinth's dream and the harsh reality of her experience in London.

#### **Question 2 *After the Winter and In time of silver rain***

The most significant and pleasing aspect of responses to the two poems was the fact that almost without exception candidates sustained a constant and often very thoughtful comparison between the two; a few did write about them separately, with a comparative summing-up, which is of course perfectly fine, but most moved with some fluency and ease between the two throughout the whole of their responses. This showed candidates' ability to see some *overall* similarities and differences, rather than just a sequence of discrete points of comparison or contrast. There were no responses which simply outlined what each poet says.

Having said this, there were some rather curious misreadings, especially of the first poem, which a surprising number seemed to feel was a very depressing poem about the hardships of winter, whereas surely the poet spends at least half the first stanza and the whole of the second thinking fondly about how life will become



warmer and happier once spring and summer arrive; the speaker and – presumably – his wife or lover will move southwards to an idyllic countryside and build a perfect cottage for a possibly mythical but certainly paradisiacal life, with bluebells and ferns that never fade – life there will be utterly flawless and content. Many noted the firmly consisted iambic rhythm of the two stanzas, with a steady and constant rhyme pattern, reflective perhaps of the poet's certainty about the future life that he will lead.

The second poem is strikingly different in structure and style, with no regular rhythm or rhyme, and with three uneven stanzas, the second being especially strange but powerful. The difference in its contents, noted by almost every response, lies in the fact that the whole poem is set in the present, and the present is spring; winter is implied in its opening, as 'the earth puts forth new life again', but the emphasis throughout is on what is happening now, and the impact that the silver rain has on nature and on humans. The word 'silver' was ignored by many, but several suggested that it refers to the richness that rain can bring, or even simply to its light colour – it is gentle rain, not stormy.

There are some unusual and even surreal images – butterflies have 'silken wings' in order to 'catch a rainbow cry', trees 'put forth new leaves to sing' – and some candidates found these quite hard to grasp or explain. The simplest ones suggested, probably rightly, that the poet deliberately mixes a number of senses to illustrate how rain and spring can affect everything, in ways that are not easily put into words. One or two made the interesting suggestion that there is a kind of musical quality about the final stanza, which affects our feelings and emotions but not easily our rational minds; the poem has indeed been set to music by more than one composer, though candidates were of course not expected to be aware of this. Much was often made of the repeated phrase in the middle of the poem, and especially the fact that 'Life' twice has an upper case 'L', while the third is lower case; it may be that the first two are deliberately suggestive of an almost unearthly, perhaps religious, sense, but the third, anticlimactically but actually very powerfully, says that rain affects everyday natural and human life too.

As noted in comments on **Question 1** there were some candidates who wanted the poems to be about something other than what they actually say: the 'hidden meaning' idea. The fact that one was published in 1919 and one in 1947 (published, note, not necessarily written) does not automatically mean that the poems are about society rebuilding at the end of a world war; there is nothing at all in either poem to support this idea. And probably less still is there support for arguing that in different ways the poems are both about human sexuality. Candidates would be much wiser to assume that poems and passages are actually and simply about what they say.

### **Question 3 Fail/Safe**

This was the second most popular question, and two things are immediately worth saying: firstly there was a frequently clear awareness that this is a piece of drama, and that the actions shown in the stage directions are intended to suggest what an audience in the theatre will see and hear; almost all candidates noted this, sometimes implicitly but often with a clear understanding of the significance of movement. Secondly, it was very pleasing to see how few candidates spent time worrying about the title of the play; comments have often been made in past Reports about this, and about the fact that when an extract is set it may not have any obvious connection with the title of the whole text, and this is very much a case in point; candidates who tried to explain the title rarely spent this time valuably.

There were plenty of interesting thoughts about the relationship between the two characters, and about how this seems to change as the extract develops: there are moments when Jo is presented as a very unappealing and discourteous daughter (several assumed that Jo is male, but this did not in any way influence assessment), and Gwen as a weak and downtrodden mother, but by the end it is clear that neither view is wholly correct. Those few who thought that the final stage direction shows either that Jo is aiming to kill Gwen, or that Gwen is trying to kill Jo, were surely wrong in their views of the two.

The opening (*'in media res'* as many put it) is initially, and on the face of things, a quiet domestic picture: Gwen is preparing breakfast for her daughter, who has just returned from work. What this work is we are not told, but the idea given by some candidates that Jo, and indeed Gwen too, are prostitutes is nowhere even hinted at, so surely unhelpful. Jo is late, and Gwen has understandably been worried; Jo's responses to Gwen are certainly brusque, and the way she 'shoo's her off' in line 10 is arguably unnecessarily rude, but on the other hand she is 42 years old and Gwen could treat her as an adult rather than still as a child. But Jo's quite entertaining actions – pretending to be a strange person, and pretending to be typing – can either reinforce our dislike of her character, or show her trying to lessen the growing tension between her and Gwen. These actions were frequently seen by candidates as evidence of the extract's theatrical qualities, to be seen, shared, and perhaps laughed about.

There are moments of genuine sentiment in lines 27 and 29, and it may be that Jo coughs because she is truly moved by Gwen's loneliness, but her response (*'pushes her away'*) and her surely sarcastic uses of the word 'Mummy' in lines 33-34 again switch an audience's feelings; the playwright is very skilfully manipulating our feelings towards the characters. So it continues, with some genuine warmth between the two: Jo's suggestion about a lover, and Gwen's light-hearted response that she already has two upstairs, are clearly evidence of a real fondness between the two. Those few candidates who assumed that Gwen actually does have two lovers (in a cupboard?), or who saw this as clear proof that the two women are prostitutes, did not manage to grasp the humour here.

The passing of the bus in lines 57–60 was ignored by most candidates, but several made some interesting and quite thoughtful comments about this. The two women are trapped in a relationship with each other – neither seems to have any other friends or relatives, apart from the weekly and unwelcome trip to Aunt Ella – but life continues outside the house. Although the bus passes by without any direct impact on the characters, the light that it shines upon the two women can be 'maddening or comforting', which is indeed the ambiguity of the relationship that is presented by the playwright.

There was much to like and enjoy in responses to the extract, and even when candidates proposed some unlikely suggestions these were often well argued and supported. There were few responses that relied entirely upon simple paraphrase, and most were clear that this was a piece of theatre.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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<p><b>Paper 9695/72</b> <b>Comment and Appreciation</b></p>
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#### **Question 2 *After the Winter and In time of silver rain***

The most significant and pleasing aspect of responses to the two poems was the fact that almost without exception candidates sustained a constant and often very thoughtful comparison between the two; a few did write about them separately, with a comparative summing-up, which is of course perfectly fine, but most moved with some fluency and ease between the two throughout the whole of their responses. This showed candidates' ability to see some *overall* similarities and differences, rather than just a sequence of discrete points of comparison or contrast. There were no responses which simply outlined what each poet says.

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warmer and happier once spring and summer arrive; the speaker and – presumably – his wife or lover will move southwards to an idyllic countryside and build a perfect cottage for a possibly mythical but certainly paradisiacal life, with bluebells and ferns that never fade – life there will be utterly flawless and content. Many noted the firmly consisted iambic rhythm of the two stanzas, with a steady and constant rhyme pattern, reflective perhaps of the poet's certainty about the future life that he will lead.

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There are some unusual and even surreal images – butterflies have 'silken wings' in order to 'catch a rainbow cry', trees 'put forth new leaves to sing' – and some candidates found these quite hard to grasp or explain. The simplest ones suggested, probably rightly, that the poet deliberately mixes a number of senses to illustrate how rain and spring can affect everything, in ways that are not easily put into words. One or two made the interesting suggestion that there is a kind of musical quality about the final stanza, which affects our feelings and emotions but not easily our rational minds; the poem has indeed been set to music by more than one composer, though candidates were of course not expected to be aware of this. Much was often made of the repeated phrase in the middle of the poem, and especially the fact that 'Life' twice has an upper case 'L', while the third is lower case; it may be that the first two are deliberately suggestive of an almost unearthly, perhaps religious, sense, but the third, anticlimactically but actually very powerfully, says that rain affects everyday natural and human life too.

As noted in comments on **Question 1** there were some candidates who wanted the poems to be about something other than what they actually say: the 'hidden meaning' idea. The fact that one was published in 1919 and one in 1947 (published, note, not necessarily written) does not automatically mean that the poems are about society rebuilding at the end of a world war; there is nothing at all in either poem to support this idea. And probably less still is there support for arguing that in different ways the poems are both about human sexuality. Candidates would be much wiser to assume that poems and passages are actually and simply about what they say.

### **Question 3 Fail/Safe**

This was the second most popular question, and two things are immediately worth saying: firstly there was a frequently clear awareness that this is a piece of drama, and that the actions shown in the stage directions are intended to suggest what an audience in the theatre will see and hear; almost all candidates noted this, sometimes implicitly but often with a clear understanding of the significance of movement. Secondly, it was very pleasing to see how few candidates spent time worrying about the title of the play; comments have often been made in past Reports about this, and about the fact that when an extract is set it may not have any obvious connection with the title of the whole text, and this is very much a case in point; candidates who tried to explain the title rarely spent this time valuably.

There were plenty of interesting thoughts about the relationship between the two characters, and about how this seems to change as the extract develops: there are moments when Jo is presented as a very unappealing and discourteous daughter (several assumed that Jo is male, but this did not in any way influence assessment), and Gwen as a weak and downtrodden mother, but by the end it is clear that neither view is wholly correct. Those few who thought that the final stage direction shows either that Jo is aiming to kill Gwen, or that Gwen is trying to kill Jo, were surely wrong in their views of the two.

The opening (*'in media res'* as many put it) is initially, and on the face of things, a quiet domestic picture: Gwen is preparing breakfast for her daughter, who has just returned from work. What this work is we are not told, but the idea given by some candidates that Jo, and indeed Gwen too, are prostitutes is nowhere even hinted at, so surely unhelpful. Jo is late, and Gwen has understandably been worried; Jo's responses to Gwen are certainly brusque, and the way she 'shoo's her off' in line 10 is arguably unnecessarily rude, but on the other hand she is 42 years old and Gwen could treat her as an adult rather than still as a child. But Jo's quite entertaining actions – pretending to be a strange person, and pretending to be typing – can either reinforce our dislike of her character, or show her trying to lessen the growing tension between her and Gwen. These actions were frequently seen by candidates as evidence of the extract's theatrical qualities, to be seen, shared, and perhaps laughed about.

There are moments of genuine sentiment in lines 27 and 29, and it may be that Jo coughs because she is truly moved by Gwen's loneliness, but her response (*'pushes her away'*) and her surely sarcastic uses of the word 'Mummy' in lines 33-34 again switch an audience's feelings; the playwright is very skilfully manipulating our feelings towards the characters. So it continues, with some genuine warmth between the two: Jo's suggestion about a lover, and Gwen's light-hearted response that she already has two upstairs, are clearly evidence of a real fondness between the two. Those few candidates who assumed that Gwen actually does have two lovers (in a cupboard?), or who saw this as clear proof that the two women are prostitutes, did not manage to grasp the humour here.

The passing of the bus in lines 57–60 was ignored by most candidates, but several made some interesting and quite thoughtful comments about this. The two women are trapped in a relationship with each other – neither seems to have any other friends or relatives, apart from the weekly and unwelcome trip to Aunt Ella – but life continues outside the house. Although the bus passes by without any direct impact on the characters, the light that it shines upon the two women can be 'maddening or comforting', which is indeed the ambiguity of the relationship that is presented by the playwright.

There was much to like and enjoy in responses to the extract, and even when candidates proposed some unlikely suggestions these were often well argued and supported. There were few responses that relied entirely upon simple paraphrase, and most were clear that this was a piece of theatre.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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<p><b>Paper 9695/73</b> <b>Comment and Appreciation</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

- Good answers show that candidates have read and considered their chosen poems or passages as a whole before starting to write;
- Good answers focus upon the form, structure and language of the poems or passages and upon how these shape meaning, and do not rely upon narrative or paraphrase;
- Good answers discuss how literary devices and techniques are used by the writers;
- Good answers show personal responses to the ways in which the poems or passage are written, not simply to what is said;
- Good answers maintain a tight focus on the poems or passage throughout their response, and do not discuss other writers, other texts or other ideas.

## **General comments**

*'This was an enjoyable Paper to mark. Most candidates reacted positively to their choices of passage or poem, and it appeared that they were trying hard to respond to the various skills of the writers, rather than just to the story, pictures or scenes in front of them. There was also a greater awareness of genre than has often been the case in the past.'* These words from one experienced examiner seem a good way to open a report on what was in many respects a very pleasing session, particularly the points about the writers' skills and genres; reliance upon narrative or paraphrase was much less prevalent than has sometimes been the case. To quote another examiner's words: *'The most successful answers showed evidence of close reading: they supported their views with judicious use of quotations and at the same time displayed an impressive amount of detailed, critical analysis, with appropriate use of technical vocabulary and sensitive appreciation of the effects of the writing. In these ways they were able to create sophisticated, personal, coherently argued responses which often showed how much they understood and relished the complexities of the writers' concerns and craft.'*

What these two examiners saw, and what their comments show, is that more candidates were determined to explore not just *what* each writer says, but *how* she or he says it, with clear focus on defined and well supported reference to particular literary techniques and skills. This was perhaps most noticeably the case in responses to the two poems and the piece of drama, the latter of which was often addressed with clear awareness that the extract was written to be seen and heard, as well as just written – it is a piece of theatre.

Many responses opened with a high emphasis upon which techniques were going to be focused on, and combined with closing paragraphs which simply echoed the introduction there was often less time for close critical exploration than might ideally have been the case. Nonetheless, the emphasis on technique was right, and encouraging to read.

A few candidates appeared to rely rather heavily upon some often relatively unusual literary terms; where such terms are used, the candidate must demonstrate confident understanding of what they mean, and more importantly they must properly illustrate not just when the terms are used, but also consider the impact that they have upon the reader or audience. It is worth at this point noting a few of the most frequent instances of this: many candidates used an expression such as 'the author also uses the literary device of diction', when of course all writers use words; many referred to 'literal devices' instead of 'literary devices'; and rather unusually, there was a frequent misuse of the word 'satire' instead of the much simpler and more correct

'criticism'. There was also evidence of confusion between the terms 'images' and 'imagery', between which there is a big and important difference.

There were no significant rubric infringements; just a very small number of candidates addressed only one question, and a handful of responses were clearly cut short by the pressure of time, but this almost never seriously weakened a response. Handwriting was again a concern, and in a few cases a serious concern; it is vital that candidates are aware that it is impossible to give reward to points made if they are not legible. All candidates should be reminded of the instruction on the front of the examination paper: '*You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers*'.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1 *The Unbelonging***

This passage was by far the most popular, and there were some very thoughtful and perceptive responses. A few appeared uncertain about the situation being described, sometimes seemingly unaware of exactly what Hyacinth is dreaming about, and indeed why she is doing so; but the great majority were clear that the first part of the passage shows Hyacinth's deep love for her old life in Jamaica, with repeated reference to the warmth, both literal and metaphorical, that she felt in her home island, contrasted vividly and painfully with the cold, again literal and metaphorical, of where she is now. A number of responses felt that Aunt Joyce and the yellow-skinned woman were the same person, and argued some quite convincing reasons for this, but most seemed confident that they were two entirely different people, the latter perhaps being Hyacinth's father's new wife or possibly housekeeper. Many referred to her as being the stereotypical evil stepmother, whose anger at the girl's bed-wetting is inhumane and cruel, and her final threat to 'Wait till your father gets home!' is unimaginably cruel, especially if, as many candidates suggested, the three people mentioned at the start of the passage were Hyacinth and her parents. The ominous closing sentence of the passage was frequently commented upon, with its frightening and almost military image suggesting an utterly different and humiliated Hyacinth.

Many candidates drew interesting attention to some possible foreshadowings and contrasts in the Jamaican dream: Hyacinth felt the warm air 'wrap her in well-being', whereas in London 'coldness enveloped her'; because of the heat, Hyacinth's back and under-arms had 'wet patches of sweat', whereas in reality she had wet herself and her bed; she was dreaming about the Independence parade, whereas in London she had lost all independence; Aunt Joyce had 'the usual smile on her face', totally unlike the cruel and animal-like appearance of the woman in London. Most candidates spent valuable time comparing the slow and lazy Jamaican descriptions, contrasting painfully with the harsh, colourless and bitter London ones. A number noted the irony of Hyacinth's name: she is in this respect neatly linked with the flower images in the Jamaican paragraphs, so brutally out of place in London. There is much to discuss, and most candidates found plenty.

A few – and this was also the case in responses to the poems – felt that the writer was actually discussing something, or some things, very far from what is written; at least one actually used the expression 'hidden meanings' as though the passage or poems are some kind of code that the writers want readers to decipher. The passage is probably not about slavery, nor about colonialism, though these ideas were at time sensibly mentioned and argued to good effect. One ingenious response saw the passage as an updating of a Greek myth, but while this was argued with some conviction it seemed unnecessarily complicated, in response to what is in fact quite a straightforward situation and narrative. Most candidates understood the situation being depicted, made brief but productive use of the title of the novel, and explored the contrast between the description of life in Jamaica in Hyacinth's dream and the harsh reality of her experience in London.

#### **Question 2 *After the Winter and In time of silver rain***

The most significant and pleasing aspect of responses to the two poems was the fact that almost without exception candidates sustained a constant and often very thoughtful comparison between the two; a few did write about them separately, with a comparative summing-up, which is of course perfectly fine, but most moved with some fluency and ease between the two throughout the whole of their responses. This showed candidates' ability to see some *overall* similarities and differences, rather than just a sequence of discrete points of comparison or contrast. There were no responses which simply outlined what each poet says.

Having said this, there were some rather curious misreadings, especially of the first poem, which a surprising number seemed to feel was a very depressing poem about the hardships of winter, whereas surely the poet spends at least half the first stanza and the whole of the second thinking fondly about how life will become



warmer and happier once spring and summer arrive; the speaker and – presumably – his wife or lover will move southwards to an idyllic countryside and build a perfect cottage for a possibly mythical but certainly paradisiacal life, with bluebells and ferns that never fade – life there will be utterly flawless and content. Many noted the firmly consisted iambic rhythm of the two stanzas, with a steady and constant rhyme pattern, reflective perhaps of the poet's certainty about the future life that he will lead.

The second poem is strikingly different in structure and style, with no regular rhythm or rhyme, and with three uneven stanzas, the second being especially strange but powerful. The difference in its contents, noted by almost every response, lies in the fact that the whole poem is set in the present, and the present is spring; winter is implied in its opening, as 'the earth puts forth new life again', but the emphasis throughout is on what is happening now, and the impact that the silver rain has on nature and on humans. The word 'silver' was ignored by many, but several suggested that it refers to the richness that rain can bring, or even simply to its light colour – it is gentle rain, not stormy.

There are some unusual and even surreal images – butterflies have 'silken wings' in order to 'catch a rainbow cry', trees 'put forth new leaves to sing' – and some candidates found these quite hard to grasp or explain. The simplest ones suggested, probably rightly, that the poet deliberately mixes a number of senses to illustrate how rain and spring can affect everything, in ways that are not easily put into words. One or two made the interesting suggestion that there is a kind of musical quality about the final stanza, which affects our feelings and emotions but not easily our rational minds; the poem has indeed been set to music by more than one composer, though candidates were of course not expected to be aware of this. Much was often made of the repeated phrase in the middle of the poem, and especially the fact that 'Life' twice has an upper case 'L', while the third is lower case; it may be that the first two are deliberately suggestive of an almost unearthly, perhaps religious, sense, but the third, anticlimactically but actually very powerfully, says that rain affects everyday natural and human life too.

As noted in comments on **Question 1** there were some candidates who wanted the poems to be about something other than what they actually say: the 'hidden meaning' idea. The fact that one was published in 1919 and one in 1947 (published, note, not necessarily written) does not automatically mean that the poems are about society rebuilding at the end of a world war; there is nothing at all in either poem to support this idea. And probably less still is there support for arguing that in different ways the poems are both about human sexuality. Candidates would be much wiser to assume that poems and passages are actually and simply about what they say.

### **Question 3 Fail/Safe**

This was the second most popular question, and two things are immediately worth saying: firstly there was a frequently clear awareness that this is a piece of drama, and that the actions shown in the stage directions are intended to suggest what an audience in the theatre will see and hear; almost all candidates noted this, sometimes implicitly but often with a clear understanding of the significance of movement. Secondly, it was very pleasing to see how few candidates spent time worrying about the title of the play; comments have often been made in past Reports about this, and about the fact that when an extract is set it may not have any obvious connection with the title of the whole text, and this is very much a case in point; candidates who tried to explain the title rarely spent this time valuably.

There were plenty of interesting thoughts about the relationship between the two characters, and about how this seems to change as the extract develops: there are moments when Jo is presented as a very unappealing and discourteous daughter (several assumed that Jo is male, but this did not in any way influence assessment), and Gwen as a weak and downtrodden mother, but by the end it is clear that neither view is wholly correct. Those few who thought that the final stage direction shows either that Jo is aiming to kill Gwen, or that Gwen is trying to kill Jo, were surely wrong in their views of the two.

The opening (*'in media res'* as many put it) is initially, and on the face of things, a quiet domestic picture: Gwen is preparing breakfast for her daughter, who has just returned from work. What this work is we are not told, but the idea given by some candidates that Jo, and indeed Gwen too, are prostitutes is nowhere even hinted at, so surely unhelpful. Jo is late, and Gwen has understandably been worried; Jo's responses to Gwen are certainly brusque, and the way she 'shoo's her off' in line 10 is arguably unnecessarily rude, but on the other hand she is 42 years old and Gwen could treat her as an adult rather than still as a child. But Jo's quite entertaining actions – pretending to be a strange person, and pretending to be typing – can either reinforce our dislike of her character, or show her trying to lessen the growing tension between her and Gwen. These actions were frequently seen by candidates as evidence of the extract's theatrical qualities, to be seen, shared, and perhaps laughed about.

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# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 9695/08  
Coursework

## Key messages

Good folders will:

- address their two texts with clear, concise and consistent focus upon what the questions ask
- explore how each writer creates particular effects, discussing some of the literary or dramatic techniques used
- support comments with brief but apt textual quotations and references
- make some brief use of critical and/or contextual material to support arguments
- where practicable, write on individually selected and worded questions, to make responses as personal as possible
- ensure that the work submitted remains within the overall 3000-word limit (NB quotations do not count towards this total). Work that exceeds the limit is almost always found to be self-penalising against the Mark Scheme.

## General comments

This was in general a very good session, with almost all submissions showing careful and critically confident responses to a wide range of texts (see details below). Folders were carefully and professionally composed, with proposed marks that were in most cases close to agreed standards for the Syllabus and in line with what the Marking Criteria require. Centres' marginal annotations and summative comments were full and detailed, referring explicitly to the Marking Criteria and where possible demonstrating some thoughtful internal moderation, often supported by double marking. Reading and moderating work was an enjoyable experience, and it was very evident that candidates had been well prepared for what they wrote and submitted.

Texts were suitably selected, with questions that led almost inevitably to individual and independently argued responses; in the relatively rare instances where candidates shared a question there was never any significant overlapping of ideas, but a strong sense that each response had been personally considered and developed. Inevitably, there was much sharing of texts, but the greater freedom offered to each candidate led in most cases to a freshness of understanding and discussion; this was a real strength in the overall submission this year.

It was good that almost all centres had submitted Outline Proposal Forms (OPFs) before candidates had begun work; the Syllabus does require this, and the very few instances where this had not been done did lead to less satisfactory work. For example, where an insufficient number of poems or short stories was addressed, candidates' responses were necessarily limited and did not demonstrate that a wider collection had been studied; if an OPF had been submitted this would have been noted by the Adviser, and consequently more likely avoided. It is very important that centres make sure that advice is sought from Cambridge International, and that candidates do follow such advice. A criterion to keep in mind is that texts studied for Coursework should be in every way as academically demanding, and of the same substance, as texts that are set for all other papers in the Syllabus. Having said this, the great majority of folders responded to texts that were satisfactory in every way.

Candidates almost invariably supported their ideas with textual reference and/or quotation, and the most confident acknowledged these quotations by means of page numbers where appropriate (though in the case of drama a scene or act reference is usually more helpful). Most candidates made use of at least some contextual material – frequently biographical or historical – and made sure that such material was not just relevant but that it positively added weight to an ongoing argument. In a similar way, there was some apt and thoughtful use of secondary critical material, usually supportive of what was being said but sometimes included because the candidate wished to take issue with another critic; though this is not essential, it added some authority and conviction to what was being written by the candidate. Doing so also, of course, addressed the ‘O’ bullet point in the Marking Criteria. It is important to note that the three factors referred to in this paragraph – contexts, critics, alternative views – must not be, and never were, more important than the candidates’ own thinking.

As noted above, centres’ annotations and summative comments were good and helpful; it made the moderation process much more straightforward when Moderators could see how and why a mark had been reached and agreed, particularly where – as was the case with most centres – these comments were closely linked to the words and requirements of the Marking Criteria.

The 3000-word limit was adhered to by almost every candidate this session, and it was particularly helpful when each response was given a word-count, ideally a double count, one counting every word, and one that omitted quotations. Many candidates added a short bibliography, listing secondary texts and/or websites that were referred to in their responses; this is not a requirement, but as with other factors noted above, doing so added academic weight to a piece of work.

Presentation of work was good, with very few of the heavy card folders and plastic wallets that in the past have made the external moderation process unnecessarily cumbersome. One or two centres, however, did not attach each candidate’s work securely: the best simply stapled the two responses together with the cover sheet, so that there was no danger of anything going astray.

This was, in brief, an almost uniformly good session; the great majority of candidates and teaching staff had undertaken a lot of good and critically thoughtful work, and they should be thanked for this.

**The following is a list of some of the texts used by candidates this session; it is not intended as a list of recommendations, but simply to illustrate the kind of text that led to some good critical responses.**

#### **PROSE**

Burgess	<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>
Dickens	<i>David Copperfield</i>
Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Greene	<i>Brighton Rock</i>
Lahiri	<i>The Namesake</i>
Orwell	<i>1984</i>
Rhys	<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>
Stoker	<i>Dracula</i>

#### **DRAMA**

Auburn	<i>Proof</i>
Miller	<i>The Crucible</i>
Pinter	<i>Old Times</i>
Shaw	<i>Pygmalion</i>
Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>

#### **POETRY**

Duffy	<i>The World’s Wife</i>
Keats	A selection of poems
Plath	A selection of poems