

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

Paper 0427/01
Poetry and Prose

There were too few candidates for us to be able to produce a meaningful report.

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

Paper 0427/02

Drama

Key Messages

- The strongest answers show an awareness that the text is intended to be acted on stage. In answering the question, they respond to features of drama such as: stage directions, action, dialogue and audience reaction.
- Answers to the passage-based questions need to analyse the writing of the passage, as well as show understanding of the narrative, characters and setting.
- Answers to discursive questions need to develop an argument in answer to the question, and to support by quotations or well-selected references to the text.

General Comments

The most popular text was *A Raisin in the Sun*, with too few answers on either *Macbeth* or *Our Town* for comment. Candidates knew the text well, and gave some strong personal responses. These often needed to be more firmly supported by evidence from the text.

The majority of candidates followed the rubric and answered one question. There were several examples of candidates using the passage for the first question to answer the second, discursive question; this is self-limiting, since the discursive questions require a whole-text approach. Limiting a response to a short passage makes it difficult for such an answer to move beyond the lower marking bands.

Candidates at all levels showed a genuine engagement with the texts they had studied. This was especially apparent in answers to **Question 1**, where candidates showed much sympathy for Travis as he waited to be punished by Ruth for being so late home.

Candidates who answered the discursive questions needed to develop an argument in response to the specific question asked, supported by evidence gathered from throughout the play. A sound overview of the text is needed in order to select judicious material. Some candidates made assertions which were not backed up by textual support.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

This was a popular question. Most candidates were able to identify several different emotions which they were encouraged to feel by Hansberry at this moment. Many found the way Mama ignores Walter's questions at the start to be irritating; some found Walter's questions rather forceful and intimidating; Travis prompted sympathy for having to wait for his punishment for being late home. Many candidates thus showed empathy with the characters at this moment in the play. What marked the better answers was the level of support used for the candidates' stated feelings; this often showed a deeper understanding of the characters' situations. The strongest answers were able to respond critically to Hansberry's writing; thus, they commented on the suspense Hansberry builds as she makes the audience (and Walter) wait to find out what Mama has done, and explored the moment when Walter resorts to violently hitting the table to express his frustration and fear that the money is gone, only to be interrupted by Travis entering and dramatically delaying further the moment when we learn what Mama has done. Perceptive candidates identified future dispute in the play, indicated here in Ruth and Walter's opposing attitudes to Mama's buying the house – often supporting their comments with aptly selected text such as Ruth "turning radiantly" and Walter "in a fury".

Question 2

This was also a popular question. Most candidates knew the text well and could select details about Walter. A basic response tended to narrate pertinent events, such as Walter wanting to buy a drug store, and losing the money. Good responses addressed the question directly and explored what they disliked about Walter – often focusing on his attitude to his mother, wife and sister – and supported comments with relevant textual details. The best candidates were able to consider “To what extent” in the question by bringing some balance to their response, recognising that despite his arguments with his family, and his lack of respect for Beneatha’s studies, Walter does ultimately stand up against Lindner, and that one of his motives for wanting so badly to be a success is to care financially for his family. Again, the selection of apt supporting textual detail was key to a strong response.

Questions 3 to 6

There were too few answers to these questions to make general comment appropriate.

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Coursework

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