LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

> **Paper 2010/11**
> **Paper 11**

Key messages

Necessary for success in these papers are:

- *Relevance* to the question. Candidates do need to be trained to read the question and to analyse it, looking for the key words and phrases on which to base their answer.

- *Focus* on the extract in the passage-based questions and particularly on the language of the passage. Narrative or descriptive run-through is not sufficient. Successful answers will analyse and explore the writer's method, not merely through language and imagery but also through structure, theme, and characterisation, as appropriate.

- A well structured and developed *argument*. A few minutes *planning* an answer before beginning writing is time well spent.

- Detailed *support* by way of well chosen quotation/reference, or close echoes of the text.

- Detailed knowledge of the text *as a whole*. (Many answers revealed lack of knowledge of the later parts of a novel or play.)

General comments

The quality of the responses showed that the majority of candidates had been stimulated by and had enjoyed the texts that they had studied. They wrote relevantly, gave evidence of sound knowledge, and in the best answers made perceptive comments revealing strong engagement with text and question.

Many seemed well prepared: they took the opportunity to write short precise plans which focused on the question; wrote short introductions to answers outlining their argument and then followed that through getting straight to the question and sticking to it.

Most seemed to have no difficulty in understanding what was being asked of them. There were very few examples of misunderstanding or of the wrong character or incident being chosen where one was specified. Textual knowledge was generally strong and there were clear indications of enjoyment and engagement with the texts.   There were, however, cases of key words in the question such as 'memorably', 'dramatic', 'ironically', 'strikingly', being neglected. These words are intended as prompts for consideration of the writers' methods, and as an indication that narrative alone will not be sufficient to meet the demands of the task.

In answers to questions on the Shakespeare plays there was evidence of lively debate and an indication of an approach to the teaching of dramatic texts which encouraged learners to understand the contemporary relevance of classic drama. This often resulted in good candidates delivering engaging answers revealing a genuine interest in the question and the desire to create a compelling argument. There was less evidence than in previous sessions of candidates offloading 'prepared' material or of letting received interpretations take over their answers, though there were examples of biographical detail (particularly in the poetry) and of theories about the American Dream, in the context of the Miller and the Fitzgerald, being included at length and unnecessarily. There was a sense in these answers that candidates were determined to show what they had learnt, whether or not it was relevant, not always reading the questions carefully. But most did not let general background knowledge dominate or distract from the argument.

As ever, the passage-based questions were the most popular. Key to success is close reading and analysis, and many candidates could have referred much more closely to the passage in front of them. It is always

pleasing to see answers where the language and imagery, and in the case of drama, stage directions, are explored and their effect discussed. Candidates must not forget, however, that a lack of knowledge of the rest of the text will soon reveal itself and that a successful answer will draw on knowledge and understanding of the text as a whole.

For some extract questions beginning with 'How?', a significant number of candidates tended to answer, 'Why?' instead. This led to a neglect of the writer's language choices, even in some of the stronger answers. Elsewhere, extract questions were often used as springboards for candidates to show their knowledge about all the text's ideas and themes, often bringing in extraneous quotation rather than addressing the question. Perhaps teachers could work with candidates to help them to differentiate between this type of question, where detailed analysis of the language and effects is required, and the rather more general essay question where they can take a broader view of the text and still achieve a high mark. In order to encourage candidates to explore rather than simply explain particular words, it might be a useful exercise to encourage them to try and find synonyms or substitutes and to then consider the ensuing effect.

As with the work on Shakespeare, there were far fewer 'prepared' responses to poetry in evidence this session. Stronger candidates often wrote about connotations of words and the impact this had on readers and how reading and understanding were shaped by language, indicating a productive and encouraging approach to poetry resulting from classroom discussion and proper thought. This created sharp contrast with the responses from candidates who relied on arid listings of poetic techniques as if poetry were a mathematical puzzle first and an expression of unique insight second. Generally, though, answers were not overburdened with technical terms, even if there was a tendency to explanation and description rather than analysis, and a general lack of response to the *music* of poetry.

The empathic questions were not as popular as in previous sessions.

The effective use of quotation is an important skill. Candidates need to be helped to select appropriately and economically and to comment on their selection. Less successful answers often used quotation excessively to mask lack of knowledge, or they demonstrated some knowledge by inserting quotation but did not go on to comment on it. Such answers therefore tended to become a series of assertions or narrative. There was also sometimes a mismatch between the quotation and the point being made.

Section A: Drama

Death of a Salesman

Question 1

The extract question was by far and away the most popular Miller task, allowing candidates to discuss character, events, themes and author's intention. There were many stage directions and nuances in the dialogue to explore. Even the weaker candidates could find areas to discuss. Most answers focused well on 'dramatic and revealing', responding to Willy's dire situation, with many personal expressions of sympathy. There was excellent understanding of the American Dream (although some digressed into writing generally and at length about this area) and also of Willy's character, for example his desperate attempts to interest Howard, his dreams and disillusionment, and the role of Singleman and Howard's father. There were a number of comments about the respect due to older men, including Willy himself. There was effective comment on Miller's use of stage directions, especially in relation to Howard's curt and dismissive replies. Similarly the structure of the extract was well understood. Even the weakest candidates knew what this extract was about and its importance in the play; their answers were limited instead by the limited amount of detailed comment they made.

Question 2

This question was answered with well-argued opinion supported by relevant evidence. Almost all candidates were able to discuss Ben's role, and found the key scenes in the play. As in Question 1, knowledge of the American Dream featured, this time with the focus on how Willy had mistakenly idolised Ben's life with tragic consequences for himself. Several candidates looked ahead to Ben's role in Willy's suicide. Some candidates commented on the importance of Ben being an illusion.

Question 3

This was not such a popular question and answers were not always confidently in Charley's voice though many candidates caught his puzzled affection and anxieties. Most answers portrayed the friendship and understood its background. Nearly all had sufficient evidence to talk about Linda and the family, and the consequences of Willy's behaviour. Most communicated sympathy and care for Linda, and some sympathy for Willy tinged with a little frustration and a sense of drawing a line under their relationship.

My Mother Said I Never Should

Question 4

Most of the relatively few candidates writing on Keatley this session chose this extract question. The responses were adequate but did not demonstrate particular perception or sensitivity and there was little response to or exploration of the language of the text.

Question 5

Sympathy for Jackie was a central question, as she is the most dynamic character of the play. However, the few candidates who chose this task tended to narrate and to lose focus on the terms of the question.

Question 6

Although there was some narrative at times, the few candidates attempting this task caught Margaret's voice effectively.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 7

This is a central extract and gave candidates plenty of scope to discuss characters and events. There were several characters whose responses required comment and the poetry, with all its metaphors, needed consideration too. Some candidates were reluctant to really explore specific lines or phrases in favour of going for an 'overview' approach and adopted a broad brush treatment instead - strong on personal response to the situation, but weaker on how Shakespeare uses language to develop character.

Question 8

This was a more popular question. Candidates pointed their answers more towards the terms demanded by it. Though many responded to Claudio in an entirely sympathetic way, the best answers tended to balance their arguments and to evaluate his behaviour.

Question 9

There were some good impersonations of Dogberry, which captured his role and character, although answers were seldom very wide-ranging. The best answers captured the contrast between his view of himself and that of others, including the audience, and conveyed his basic decency.

Richard III

Question 10

The concept of irony was clearly understood and responses usually retained this focus throughout. However, there were not many examples of candidates having the confidence to explore individual lines/images in terms of language. Most responses focused almost entirely on meaning and interpretation.

Question 11

This was the most popular question on the play. Even weaker answers showed some knowledge of the Princes and what happened to them though some candidates misread the question and wrote about the older Richard and Edward as opposed to the nephews. Those candidates who did focus upon the correct characters tended to see them exclusively as a pair. Only the best answers explored differences between them and drew upon quotations which highlighted character traits. Most settled for response to their situation and not upon how Shakespeare uses language to make them appear precocious, likeable and so forth.

Question 12

Impersonating Richard before his coronation was also a popular task, and many caught his cruelty, triumphalism, single-mindedness, contempt for others and self satisfaction. Even less able candidates clearly enjoyed putting themselves into his mindset. In addition, the best responses conveyed his verbal dexterity and wit.

Journey's End

Question 13

The extract invited an in-depth exploration of character and the effects of the trauma of war and there were some good responses, particularly in relating the incident to the play as a whole. In addition, candidates tended to look at the dramatic effect of pauses and of Stanhope's countdown and to show how the stage directions contribute to the effect. Answers tended to be very sharply focused on the key phrase 'gripping moment'.

Question 14

Some candidates included long portions of the printed passage for Question 13 in answering this question. This tended to be self-limiting; there was so much more to be said about Stanhope in relation to the Colonel, to Osborne and to Raleigh and his sister. Good answers ranged widely through the play and supported their answers with well chosen quotation. Weaker answers tended to maintain an 'overview' approach without really exploring Stanhope's language and behaviour at *specific* moments.

Question 15

Far too few candidates tackled this empathic question to make general comment appropriate.

Section B: Poetry

Tennyson

Question 16

Most candidates had very obviously derived a good deal of enjoyment from Tennyson's poems and even weaker answers had insight into the poet's concerns and feelings. There were some very sensitive responses to this extract, including some strong responses to language and imagery.

Question 17

Candidates attempting this usually had internalised the ideas in the poem successfully.

Question 18

All candidates had remembered the metaphor of 'crossing the bar', and even weaker answers could say something significant about the images and ideas.

Songs of Ourselves

Question 19

This was by far the most popular of the poetry questions. Candidates seemed to approach the poem spontaneously and showed clear engagement with the ideas. Although there was a fair amount of 'padding' about lying on the grass in the sun listening to chirping birds, there were also plenty of focused, relevant answers about summer and winter, with candidates understanding Keats's point about seasonal change and the roles of the grasshopper and cricket as symbols. They rarely explored the techniques used by Keats, however. There were many sensitive responses and a few that assumed that any poem in the section concerning nature must be about man's abuse of the environment, which led to some polemic on the topic which was quite distanced from the poem itself. A high level of personal response to the poem was shown, even if some candidates were distracted into personal stories of how they liked nature themselves.

Question 20

By contrast, *Amends* and *Dover Beach* were less successfully attempted, possible because they were less well known and understood, and there tended to be a loss of focus on 'striking pictures of the world at night'. There was more precise consideration of the imagery in *Amends* with pleasing understanding of the healing aspect of the moon, but the philosophical ideas of *Dover Beach* (often only partially understood) were seldom made relevant to the task, which was clearly focused on 'the poet's words'. Candidates struggled to find relevant points about night, and were reduced to describing calmness and occasionally romance. In consequence often there were 'split' answers in terms of quality. The message from this for candidates is to choose questions carefully and to avoid answering on poems with which they are not particularly familiar.

Question 21

Favoured poems included *Marrysong*, *First Love*, *Time* and *The Voice*. The freedom of choice clearly helped weaker candidates, and there was a lot of personal engagement in evidence. A marked weakness, however, was the lack of attention paid to the ending of the poems as required by the question. Candidates tended to plough through the whole text without really focusing specifically upon this. The question did not ask for comparison but many candidates gave one, sometimes effectively. *First Love* and *Marrysong* brought forth quite a lot of biographical information, candidates becoming sidetracked into talking sincerely about how 'I am often in love but no-one loves me' and how their parents' relationship was similar to *Marrysong*. There was clearly much identification with the poems' subject matter.

Section C: **Prose**

Wuthering Heights

Question 22

The 'optimistic' pointing of the question enabled candidates to discuss both extract and novel in detail. Even candidates who found the novel difficult could write with some conviction, agreeing that the ending is optimistic, if struggling to find supporting evidence. Most picked up the possible sighting of the lovers and discussed the different graves, enabling them to refer back to the characters' roles. The future of the house and who was living where, and the marriage, gave candidates the chance to talk about some happiness and an ending to tragedy.

Question 23

Candidates were able to get their teeth into Heathcliff in a detailed manner, and found plenty to write about. All saw two sides to the character and answered 'to some extent'. There was effective knowledge about Heathcliff's early life, eliciting sympathy, with effective use of quotation, and then his dark side and treatment of other characters later in the novel. Candidates saw the turning point as Cathy's comment about being degraded if she married him. Other than that, though, there was very little discussion about Heathcliff and Cathy's relationship.

Question 24

Writing as Linton proved challenging, as he had been easily influenced and lacking in insight, but was aware of the undercurrent of violence and hatred in Wuthering Heights. Generally, however, candidates made a reasonable attempt at catching his unpleasant pathetic voice.

Games at Twilight

Question 25

Candidates usually used the extract effectively, many showing good insight into the ambiguities of the relationship and the boy's feelings. Details were quite well chosen, and the best discussed Victor's lack of faith in his mother's promises while understanding her need for social status. However, very few candidates answered the 'amusingly' part of the question.

Question 26

The free choice enabled candidates to explore their own responses effectively. There was no one particularly popular story, although the sadness of the teacher and the artist were quite well discussed.

Question 27

Candidates seemed to find the empathic question on Rakesh much more challenging. Nevertheless many caught his embracing of the modern, his general air of superiority, and the discrepancy between him and his parents. The irony of Desai's portrayal of Rakesh was rarely picked up by candidates, who seemed to see him as completely the 'devoted son'.

When Rain Clouds Gather

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

The Great Gatsby

Question 31

Once again, this text prompted detailed and engaged work, with this extract on Daisy, which was by far the most popular of the options, producing many sensitive and informed discussions. Candidates had excellent knowledge of character and themes here. They tended not to have time to analyse the more poetic descriptions which the writer used for Daisy and her world, but they certainly had grasped the thrust of the novel and used the question to display their knowledge.

Question 32

Answers on Jordan Baker were less successful than those to theprevious question. It depended on candidates' knowledge of detail, and consequently it differentiated according to knowledge of the text. A significant number who attempted it seemed to have only a sketchy knowledge.

Question 33

Answers to this question tended to be repetitive and rather lacking in detail. They exuded plenty of emotion but might have been more securely anchored in the text.

Ethan Frome

Question 34

There was evidence of candidates approaching this extract as something of an 'unseen', though most made some comment on the details which showed the anxieties of the two men.

Question 35

The growing relationship between Ethan and Mattie would seem to be a central feature of the novel, but it was often not explored in any detail. Indeed many candidates did not focus on the question but wrote about 'the problem of Zeena'. The best answers explored the way in which Mattie is described in terms of colour and light from the moment that she first appears and pinpointed the moment when Ethan feels jealous about Mattie dancing with Dennis Eady.

Question 36

Most who attempted this caught Zeena's increasing anger at the realisation Ethan and Mattie were in the sled together, plus some thought that they would be in her power. There was some reminiscing about all that she has sacrificed for Ethan and how she has helped Mattie. Some answers showed the benefit of hindsight and attributed knowledge to Zeena that she would not have had on first hearing of the accident.

Stories of Ourselves

Question 37

This was a very popular question. Even less able candidates recognised and identified with the deeper implications of the story. Almost all candidates commented on the theme of class, and the changing of the boy's feelings. The dignity and honesty of the mother were very well discussed, with much admiration expressed. It seems that candidates were personally impressed by the mother's behaviour in leaving the earrings and the money behind. However, there was reluctance to explore the actual passage closely and there was some textual misreading, especially about who did what with the earrings, and when the boy and the mother were speaking.

Question 38

This was another popular question, mostly well answered. Sometimes candidates struggled to find enough to say other than the repeated 'we do not know what is going on'. No comparison was asked for but it was given, often very effectively. Textual quotation was used effectively although it sometimes masked lack of comment. All candidates responded very positively and enthusiastically to both stories, discussing futuristic houses and technology and there was some interesting discussion about the genre of science fiction.

Question 39

This was not successfully attempted in the main. Weaker candidates did not identify correctly who the character of Helen actually was but the main difficulty for all candidates was to build and develop character traits. There was a good deal to say about Mrs Croft and her Indian tenant, but the details of the story did not seem to be very well known.

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- Detailed *support* by way of well chosen quotation/reference, or close echoes of the text.

- Detailed knowledge of the text *as a whole*. (Many answers revealed lack of knowledge of the later parts of a novel or play.)

General comments

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Many seemed well prepared: they took the opportunity to write short precise plans which focused on the question; wrote short introductions to answers outlining their argument and then followed that through getting straight to the question and sticking to it.

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rest of the text will soon reveal itself and that a successful answer will draw on knowledge and understanding of the text as a whole.

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The empathic questions were not as popular as in previous sessions.

The effective use of quotation is an important skill. Candidates need to be helped to select appropriately and economically and to comment on their selection. Less successful answers often used quotation excessively to mask lack of knowledge, or they demonstrated some knowledge by inserting quotation but did not go on to comment on it. Such answers therefore tended to become a series of assertions or narrative. There was also sometimes a mismatch between the quotation and the point being made.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Drama

Death of a Salesman

Question 1

Generally candidates did not find it difficult to discuss revelations and find dramatic moments in this extract. Many picked up on Linda's comment 'It seems there's a woman' and the dramatic impact of Biff's reaction, thinking that she knows about the woman in Boston. Most commented on Willy's increasingly desperate suicide attempts: the crash and the rubber pipe and what they revealed about Willy, but, on the whole, the drama of the effect of these revelations on the boys and Linda's anguish were underplayed and some candidates did not mention Happy. The language with which Linda and the crash are described could profitably have been explored but was largely ignored. The most successful answers investigated the contrasting reactions of Happy and Biff in detail, and related the scene to the rest of the play.

Question 2

This question was less popular, but there were some very successful answers which avoided any sense of a prepared character study and focused on why Bernard was memorable. Good answers explored in depth Bernard's ironic contrast with the Loman boys and his late conversation scene with Willy. Even weaker answers showed awareness of his role as well as character. What was often lacking was the detailed reference to the play and textual support that distinguishes higher band answers. Relatively few referred to Willy's scathing comments about Bernard and the long conversation outside Charley's office was rarely mentioned; thus the link between Bernard and Charlie was missed. This was an example of candidates not travelling far enough into the play to find the best evidence, but dealing only with the early parts.

Question 3

Biff was variously portrayed as wallowing in grief or guilt, but few candidates took up material from the final scene which might have enabled them to assess his thoughts rather more precisely. Only a handful of

candidates seemed to grasp how different he has become by this point in the play; most wrote as he had been earlier in the play, or seemed to react more as if they were Happy. At the end of the play Biff helps his mother and has formed a close bond with her. This was not often noted.

My Mother Said I Never Should

Question 4

This was quite a popular question and generally well done. Most candidates understood the dramatic irony of Rosie's 'Secrecy Kills' 'you're old enough to be my Mum!' and generally showed good understanding of the extract beyond surface understanding. The better answers also responded well to Doris's comment 'Resentment is a terrible thing' and linked it to wider events in the play.

Question 5

Candidates generally dealt well with 'how far' and most, interestingly, felt that although Doris would see her treatment as unjust, they did not. Some based their answers entirely on the lines in the printed extract for Question 4, which was a self-limiting approach.

Question 6

Most answers to this empathic task were very generalised and repetitive and did not really show much knowledge of the play. Graham, Rosie's married father was rarely mentioned, and the same went for the outworn clothes that Jackie intends to keep, the red sock, and the 'rabbit language'.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 7

Most candidates could see the humour in the extract; they noted the malapropisms and explained as many of them as time or memory would allow. Weaker answers struggled to pinpoint examples of how the language worked. Seriousness proved more challenging for some, although they did usually know that Hero's shaming was the serious matter about to happen if not prevented here. Only the very best answers saw the situation from the point of view of the audience who knows what Leonato does not. Some candidates thought Dogberry and Verges were the watchmen who had heard the plot and therefore credited them with too much foreknowledge.

Question 8

This was another popular question, but was not done very well by many candidates. Most either picked one statement and adduced various reasons for it without considering any of the counter-evidence, or considered him as each in turn without apparently being disturbed by the contradictions thereby created. Very few wrote an answer which tried to account for these contradictions, or which allowed Leonato to develop as a character throughout the play. The best answers took a balanced view: that each of the descriptions of Leonato could be defended, but at different points in the play.

Question 9

Good candidates wrote answers full of confusion and contradictory emotions, which got straight to the heart of Benedick's dilemma and the horror of his situation; others, rather unconvincingly, railed at Beatrice, employed a choice range in language to insult Hero, and plotted how they would get out of this situation, but still keep the heart of Beatrice. Better answers reflected on the fact that the relationship between Benedick and Claudio goes back a long way but showed Benedick choosing to adopt Beatrice's viewpoint on all the events. There were some convincing characterisations, though very few attempted his wordplay.

Richard III

Question 10

Most answers were able to put the scene into context and show understanding of the strong emotions of the three women, though some answers were completely dominated by Anne. They usually showed understanding of her hatred of Richard and of her guilt and self-loathing at being seduced by his superficial charm. Good answers commented on the imagery of her wishing that the crown might become 'red hot

steel' and on the irony that the curses that she called down on Richard's future wife have now fallen on her. (Though it was not required, candidates who cross referenced the seduction scene tended to produce very good answers.) Responses to what is moving about this moment were often implied rather than explicit, but there were some sound comments on the way in which the three women have become united in their fear and grief, and to Anne's realisation that her death is inevitable.

Question 11

The main difficulty candidates exhibited here was in focusing on the latter parts of the play. Some took the question as an opportunity to write a character sketch of Richard referring to the play as a whole, and therefore missed the contrasts that are produced between his early confidence and his later insecuirity. Some good answers made the valuable point that he begins by being determined to 'prove a villain' but ends up troubled by conscience and admitting that he is a villain. Very few dealt with the final scenes of nightmares and guilt.

Question 12

There were few takers for the empathic task, but it produced a few very good responses showing a very wily Stanley. His thoughts are open to interpretation and this was clearly evident in the responses.

Journey's End

Question 13

This was a popular question and most candidates handled it quite well, finding plenty to say about the contrast between the Colonel's jubilance and Stanhope's sarcasm. Some also wrote thoughtfully about the change in Raleigh's attitude, and a few recalled why Osborne's watch and ring were particularly poignant for Stanhope here, showing an excellent visualisation of this as a dramatic scene.

Question 14

This question was also popular and again generally done quite well. Most candidates could at least describe how the different characters coped with life in the trenches, matching officer to distraction strategy: Stanhope to drink, Osborne to children's stories, Trotter to food etc. Weaker answers tended to describe life in the trenches, rather than to discuss fear in particular. Better answers began to notice less obvious strategies, that the men form a community and that the dug-out becomes home. Some good ones, by contrast, looked at the different kinds of fear experienced by the men, particularly Stanhope's fear of things worse than death, and how this was handled (or not).

Question 15

Some candidates did a very good job indeed of creating Stanhope's dark despair and alcohol-fuelled sense of absolutely everything now having happened to him. Weaker answers became over-romantic about Raleigh or his sister, or both.

Tennyson

Question 16

Though the candidates who had studied the Tennyson selection demonstrated enjoyment of the poems, their response to the language and imagery was limited. They tended to regard the poems as stories and to merely narrate and describe. Predictably, the better answers focused on 'powerfully' and 'prayer of hope for the future' but many answers ignored the exact terms of the question and concentrated instead on general descriptive paraphrase.

Question 17

This was a slightly more popular task and candidates fared slightly better, possibly because of the personal element of the task. However, quite a few weaker candidates relied on retelling what they could remember and did not always explain why their given extracts had captured their interest, merely asserting that they had.

Question 18

The relatively few candidates who tackled this clearly knew the poem and were able to provide textual support for their comments, explaining why they felt sorry for Mariana.

Songs of Ourselves

Question 19

This was a very popular question and perhaps because candidates perceived the poem as 'difficult', they actually had to think what to write and as a result often did very well, focusing on the task and conveying genuine personal engagement and exploration of the poem. Some struggled to convey even a basic understanding, however, and tended to work through the poem, explaining the images in isolation, but not linking them or seeing the poem as a whole. Once they understood that time is nebulous, intangible, slippery, and were comfortable with the uncertainty, then they were on the way to writing a successful answer. Better answers saw patterns and contrasts in the examples Curnow uses and that there are no similes, only metaphors; Time is not like anything, it *is* that thing. In all its manifestations, Time continues to march on and the rhythm and rhyme of the poem convey this inevitability and continuity.

Question 20

Candidates knew the text - but often they did not answer the actual question. When they focused on the word 'bitterness', and responded to the tone of the words and images, they tended to do well. Almost all understood that the poem communicates criticism about the ways in which humans are destroying the natural world but many answers read more like polemic unrelated to the poem. Many did not go much beyond paraphrase and/or assertions about what the poem was 'really' about (war or global warming) and why it was such a bad thing.

Question 21

Again, candidates knew the poems but rather than addressing 'especially moving' tended to look at 'effective' so answers lacked clear, specific focus and relevance. Candidates who did best had chosen their selected lines carefully rather than trying to cover all of both poems which inevitably led to some very generalised narrative. Crucial to success was a response to the music of the poems, not merely literal explanation.

Section C: Prose

Wuthering Heights

Question 22

Wuthering Heights clearly has a universal appeal as the ultimate romance story, something which seemed appealing to most who wrote on it. This passage-based question was not generally done very well, however, as there was often insufficient focus on the language of the passage. Many candidates effectively wrote a 'translation' of the scene in the passage, rather than concentrating on what made the passage 'vivid' and 'revealing.' Sympathy with Catherine was often misplaced (Nelly is being 'mean' to her and Edgar won't leave her alone). There seemed to be some difficulty in engaging with the detail and with Nelly's position in particular.

Question 23

Some good responses addressed the function of the moors both in creating atmosphere and as a setting for passionate love. Most candidates, however, found it difficult to move beyond the moors as playground to the young Catherine and Heathcliff and the place where they were finally united in death.

Question 24

There were some wonderful spoilt and whimsical Catherines but other less convincing responses threatened to run away to Heathcliff and to make Edgar's married life a misery (possibly influenced by the extract on the opposite page). Most candidates showed awareness of the very different nature of Catherine's love for

Heathcliff and her feelings for Edgar but many seemed to have forgotten the conversation with Nelly and their responses remained somewhat undeveloped in consequence.

Games at Twilight

Question 25

This was a very popular question, presumably because of Suno's situation but very few answers acknowledged how comic the passage was, or noticed any obvious features such as Suno's exaggeration (which several took literally). Many candidates seized the opportunity to write general accounts of Suno's difficulties in the story as a whole, or of the pressures on this son to get a good education, while others took a more problem-solving approach, thinking of ways in which he could improve his concentration. No-one considered him as in any way complicit in his failure to study here. Only a few candidates fully developed 'memorably'.

Question 26

Answers to this question frequently displayed a lack of textual knowledge and some candidates took it as a prompt to write about the position of women in India, either misreading the roles of the women they used as examples, or not even bothering to include any examples at all. Some used the mother from *Studies in the Park,* based on the extract for Question 25, and a number chose *Scholar and Gypsy* as one of their stories, which was difficult to manipulate to the requirements of the question. *Private Tuition by Mr Bose* and *Pigeons at Daybreak* were also popular and could have provided material for a developed argument but frequently very little detail of the stories was cited.

Question 27

There were some good answers to this question, using Bina's anxiety about the practicalities and her tendency to look down on the superficial society guests she is expecting. (Some focused very appropriately on the women in particular here.) Weaker answers told the story of her life and her disabled son. One or two answers were confused about who she was and seemed to think she might be Pat from the beginning of *Scholar and Gypsy* (who attended a particularly disastrous party).

When Rain Clouds Gather

Question 28

This was the most popular of the three questions on Head, and it was generally quite well answered. Good answers focused on why the moment was significant in terms of its plot and how Head's writing conveyed this. Most picked up on Makhaya's 'friendly natural' voice/manner, his 'magic'; they also understood the significance of the tobacco growing for the community. Generally a move towards gender equality and a possibility that the women could help alleviate grinding poverty were seen. Some answers went on to discuss tribalism and the changes coming to Botswana, ironically through the agency of foreigners. Not all mentioned the significance for Makhaya's future relationship with Paulina. The best were focused on the task, while the weaker responses relied on paraphrase of the extract.

Question 29

Success tended to relate to the choice of moment. Most chose either the lead up to and suicide of Matenge or the arrival at the cattle station where Paulina's son had died. One of the most successful, however, chose the attempted prosecution of the old lady for witchcraft and her being saved by Sekoto. Success lay in how the candidate justified the choice and explored the drama of the moment. Simply retelling it could not lead to high reward. Some candidates who chose the question selected the moment used in the passage printed for Question 28, which was self-limiting, but, overall, choices were interestingly varied and candidates generally responded in some way to Head's writing as well as to the content of the chosen moment. The weakest answers were summaries of Makhaya's life, including those parts of it which take place 'before' the novel starts. Some candidates chose to write about over-long sections of text, which did not help them.

Question 30

Far fewer attempted this, and those who did seemed to have very little knowledge of Appleby-Smith as a character or of his attitude towards Makhaya. Occasionally, candidates wrote as Gilbert. They sometimes

gushed rather unconvincingly about Makhaya or they were highly suspicious of him. Often they did not heed the instruction that this is George's perspective quite early in the novel and wrote about Makhaya's successes and his personal development. Some actually wanted him to meddle in politics. Very few made reference to the dialogue between Makhaya and George.

The Great Gatsby

Question 31

Candidates needed to select their material carefully in order to ensure its relevance. There was a lot they could have commented on for both Gatsby and Daisy and the more successful answers dealt with the two characters separately. Weaker ones retold the story of Gatsby and Daisy, ignoring the passage for the most part, while the better answers proved amongst the best seen for the whole paper. Some noticed the tiniest details of Gatsby's attempts to create a romantic atmosphere and the fragility of his happiness (in his "trembling" match), while others wrote very penetrating comments on Daisy's ability to remain polite and conventional whilst joining Gatsby in his romantic fantasy here (being nice to Klipspringer and holding out her hand to Nick at the end).

Question 32

This proved the least popular of the *Gatsby* questions. Weaker candidates barely remembered who Myrtle was, or felt sympathy only for her violent death, while stronger candidates intelligently analysed the ways in which her relationship with Tom both deserved and repelled sympathy. A few candidates, however, got side-tracked by spending too long in general terms describing the American Dream and not looking in enough detail at how Myrtle was presented. Surprisingly, perhaps, most felt quite a lot of sympathy for her.

Question 33

Weaker answers to this question made Tom too 'pleasant' a character, especially with regards to how he felt about Daisy. The best responses conveyed his arrogance, totally careless attitude, racism, greed, contempt and gloating and his tendency to treat Daisy as his possession. They also made perceptive comments on Daisy from his perspective and how she would quickly recover/forget Gatsby,l and also on Nick. Some attributed an unlikely level of sympathy to Tom, while others went too far in the other direction and had him gloating over the success of his plan to kill off both his 'rivals'. Some candidates thought that he knew Daisy had been driving the car which killed Myrtle. Several thought that he and Daisy ran away to evade the law at the end of the novel, and wrote his thoughts as having to lead towards that conclusion. This was a clear example of candidates not knowing the whole text.

Ethan Frome

Question 34

This produced some varied interpretations of Zeena. Weaker candidates tended to spend a long time explaining what exactly had happened to the pickle dish earlier in the book, but most candidates considered why Zeena might be so attached to it and what her reaction to its breakage might reveal.

Question 35

Most of the candidates who attempted this question understood which episode was meant – but not all of them did. The word 'sled', strangely, seemed to cause some difficulty. Many answers were at pains to explain the deep and significant symbolism of the tree, and most commented on the outcome of the crash as being what Ethan deserved for trying to leave his wife/having an affair (sic) with Mattie. There were very few reasonably good answers, though, suggesting a lack of familiarity with the later parts of the novel.

Question 36

This was also not done particularly well overall. A few candidates who attempted it wrote as the (completely different) narrator from the film version of the novel, while other candidates took it as a prompt to write about whether the story would make their name as an author and whether they had included enough drama in it. A very few of them remembered what the narrator said about himself at the beginning and looked at his sympathy for a man who was not dissimilar in his aspirations but very different in his circumstances and fate.

Stories of Ourselves

Question 37

Those candidates who tackled this question best made an attempt to focus on the language but there was a good deal of misunderstanding of the plot and resort to simple paraphrase. Most answers began quite well by writing about it as a 'powerful' ending to the story (i.e. because they did not expect it/ it proved the existence of ghosts etc.), but very few addressed the passage itself with any thoroughness although some did note the contrast between the peaceful atmosphere created at the beginning and the events which are subsequently narrated.

Question 38

Most of the candidates who chose this option wrote about *The Taste of Watermelon* rather than *On Her Knees*. Some of them wrote about it in purely narrative terms, with general comments about how teenagers tend to get more mature as they get older but many candidates showed real engagement with the plight of Deal's narrator and this made all the difference. A good deal was commented on about contrition and remorse, but very little about Mr Wills' reaction and its effect on the Narrator. Few noticed any details of the writing, although a very few looked at the contribution made by the different descriptions of Mr Wills to the narrator's growing understanding of life (and, more cynically, the part played by his daughter in the narrator's decision to be helpful to Mr Wills at the end!). The ones who wrote about the Winton story were more concerned with exploring the moral ideas presented, but generally inattentive to details of the writing.

Question 39

Answers covered a range from the very perfunctory to the excellent. The former made little effort to imagine Jenny from the few details about her in the story and wrote as if they were the narrator herself, while the latter created a superbly inquisitive and observant character responding to every sound from the narrator's room. Jennie was usually fairly compassionate, but in many cases there was inadequate knowledge of the text here. Many candidates did not realise that this was Jennie at the end of the short story and that by now the sister-in-law had pulled a lot of wallpaper down. Fear of the 'oppressive' John was quite plausible. The voice was sometimes distorted by 21st century perspectives on the sister-in-law's illness.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Necessary for success in these papers are:

- *Relevance* to the question. Candidates do need to be trained to read the question and to analyse it, looking for the key words and phrases on which to base their answer.

- *Focus* on the extract in the passage-based questions and particularly on the language of the passage. Narrative or descriptive run-through is not sufficient. Successful answers will analyse and explore the writer's method, not merely through language and imagery but also through structure, theme, and characterisation, as appropriate.

- A well structured and developed *argument*. A few minutes *planning* an answer before beginning writing is time well spent.

- Detailed *support* by way of well chosen quotation/reference, or close echoes of the text.

- Detailed knowledge of the text *as a whole*. (Many answers revealed lack of knowledge of the later parts of a novel or play.)

General comments

The quality of the responses showed that the majority of candidates had been stimulated by and had enjoyed the texts that they had studied. They wrote relevantly, gave evidence of sound knowledge, and in the best answers made perceptive comments revealing strong engagement with text and question.

Many seemed well prepared: they took the opportunity to write short precise plans which focused on the question; wrote short introductions to answers outlining their argument and then followed that through getting straight to the question and sticking to it.

Most seemed to have no difficulty in understanding what was being asked of them. There were very few examples of misunderstanding or of the wrong character or incident being chosen where one was specified. Textual knowledge was generally strong and there were clear indications of enjoyment and engagement with the texts. There were, however, cases of key words in the question such as 'memorably', 'dramatic', 'ironically', 'strikingly', being neglected. These words are intended as prompts for consideration of the writers' methods, and as an indication that narrative alone will not be sufficient to meet the demands of the task.

In answers to questions on the Shakespeare plays there was evidence of lively debate and an indication of an approach to the teaching of dramatic texts which encouraged learners to understand the contemporary relevance of classic drama. This often resulted in good candidates delivering engaging answers revealing a genuine interest in the question and the desire to create a compelling argument. There was less evidence than in previous sessions of candidates offloading 'prepared' material or of letting received interpretations take over their answers, though there were examples of biographical detail (particularly in the poetry) and of theories about the American Dream, in the context of the Miller and the Fitzgerald, being included at length and unnecessarily. There was a sense in these answers that candidates were determined to show what they had learnt, whether or not it was relevant, not always reading the questions carefully. But most did not let general background knowledge dominate or distract from the argument.

As ever, the passage-based questions were the most popular. Key to success is close reading and analysis, and many candidates could have referred much more closely to the passage in front of them. It is always pleasing to see answers where the language and imagery, and in the case of drama, stage directions, are explored and their effect discussed. Candidates must not forget, however, that a lack of knowledge of the

rest of the text will soon reveal itself and that a successful answer will draw on knowledge and understanding of the text as a whole.

For some extract questions beginning with 'How?', a significant number of candidates tended to answer, 'Why?' instead. This led to a neglect of the writer's language choices, even in some of the stronger answers. Elsewhere, extract questions were often used as springboards for candidates to show their knowledge about all the text's ideas and themes, often bringing in extraneous quotation rather than addressing the question. Perhaps teachers could work with candidates to help them to differentiate between this type of question, where detailed analysis of the language and effects is required, and the rather more general essay question where they can take a broader view of the text and still achieve a high mark. In order to encourage candidates to explore rather than simply explain particular words, it might be a useful exercise to encourage them to try and find synonyms or substitutes and to then consider the ensuing effect.

As with the work on Shakespeare, there were far fewer 'prepared' responses to poetry in evidence this session. Stronger candidates often wrote about connotations of words and the impact this had on readers and how reading and understanding were shaped by language, indicating a productive and encouraging approach to poetry resulting from classroom discussion and proper thought. This created sharp contrast with the responses from candidates who relied on arid listings of poetic techniques as if poetry were a mathematical puzzle first and an expression of unique insight second. Generally, though, answers were not overburdened with technical terms, even if there was a tendency to explanation and description rather than analysis, and a general lack of response to the *music* of poetry.

The empathic questions were not as popular as in previous sessions.

The effective use of quotation is an important skill. Candidates need to be helped to select appropriately and economically and to comment on their selection. Less successful answers often used quotation excessively to mask lack of knowledge, or they demonstrated some knowledge by inserting quotation but did not go on to comment on it. Such answers therefore tended to become a series of assertions or narrative. There was also sometimes a mismatch between the quotation and the point being made.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Drama

Death of a Salesman

Question 1

Good answers considered all the possibilities presented by this question, from the sad legacy of Willy to his sons to the dramatic / poignant quality of the scene with its flute music and possibilities for stage lighting. Less successful answers tended to describe at length the broader context and recount much of the narrative of the drama i.e. focusing on what led up to this moment which, while in some ways legitimate, missed the potential of the question. There were many who were highly selective: some ignoring tranches of text such as Charley's long speech, the stage directions and the music. The best answers responded to the dialogue in the extract, commenting on the reactions of the characters to the event of the death and funeral, and illuminating their characters and roles in the play as a whole. Less successful were those who remained at a general level, and were often preoccupied with ideas about the American Dream and Willy's obsession and failure.

Question 2

Most candidates who attempted this question selected moments from Act 2 with Howard and Charley where Willy's desperation was most evident. Some candidates misread the word 'desperation' and substituted 'depression' which might well be appropriate for the drama, and within a similar range of emotions, but lacks the unhappy energy of 'desperation'. Weaker answers tended to provide glossed summaries of the events without exploring what the desperation was or how it was being demonstrated. The word 'increasing' in the question was usually ignored.

Question 3

This was generally quite well done. It was not a particularly popular question but those who attempted it captured Linda's anxiety, love and fears for Willy very well. As always, the best responses made reference

to events and details about Willy that we learn of once the play has begun; the weakest candidates simply repeated their worries in a variety of ways.

My Mother Said I Never Should

Question 4

There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.

Question 5

Candidates found it easy to sympathise with the character and the material was generally well known.

Question 6

There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 7

Good answers explored the relationship between the male players and how they might act as foils to each other, illuminating differing characteristics. Ironically, weaker answers tended to describe events far beyond the passage, possibly to demonstrate breadth of knowledge, and this was unnecessary for high reward. Additionally, weaker candidates tended to provide simple character study and little else. Most seemed to miss Benedick's wit, faring better with Claudio. Both were taken very literally, however, with a lot of paraphrase. With Don Pedro, most commented on what he said to Claudio but ignored what was said, along with its implications, to Benedick. 'How?' – so essential a word in the question – was frequently ignored.

Question 8

Candidates often created compelling arguments and suggested a subtlety in the drama. Weaker candidates were able to describe differences between the characters, generally Hero and Beatrice, while some candidates were able to explore the subtleties of power and control and suggest (but no more than that) the contemporary relevance of the drama. Patriarchy was often mentioned, and the female characters' powerlessness, but better answers discussed the presentation of the women characters more simply as they reveal themselves through the language and the action of the play. They showed a good understanding of the contrasts drawn between Beatrice and Hero, and some of the subtleties in the parallels and ironies suggested. Some also reflected on Margaret and Ursula in the play. Conversely, some candidates spent time describing life for women in Shakespeare's day as if answering a question in a History paper and loosely connecting those understandings to characters in *Much Ado About Nothing.*

Question 9

Candidates who tackled this did manage to convey Margaret's shock and distress and growing sense of guilt and were usually quite competent, especially when Margaret was shown to first realise her part in the plot at this moment and consider with horror what she had done to her mistress and all the consequences. A few thought she was part of the plot. A number gave her knowledge of the previous evening that she would not have had.

Richard III

Question 10

The vast majority of candidates choosing this play answered on the extract passage but the same problem that arose in responses to Question 1 cropped up here: many candidates ignored the given extract and instead wrote a general essay on the overall ending of the play. Some ignored 'dramatically' and focused instead on their personal satisfaction (or otherwise) and some ignored 'satisfying'. There was a lot of general retelling of what had led up to the ending and not enough focus on the extract. Very few candidates dared to find this ending anything other than satisfying, perhaps suggesting they felt it safer to go along with propositions rather than to challenge them, which in this case would have produced more interesting and balanced responses. The few that contrasted the poverty of Richmond's wordplay with Richard's wit and responded to the latter's absence, produced far more vibrant essays. A few really good answers met the

challenge of the question and wondered whether Richmond's speech, despite rounding off the play and giving it a 'happy' ending, was something of a 'let down' after the wit and exciting villainy of Richard throughout the play. Those who agreed with the proposition could find plenty of general points about how Richmond provided the peace that had to come, but only a minority engaged with the language of the passage.

Question 11

There was quite a lot of inaccuracy in dealing with the text and muddling of the characters, especially with Stanley – a number of candidates had him dead at the end of the play. Most fared better with Hastings. Most engaged well with the idea of how dangerous the English Court was, however.

Question 12

There were some very enjoyable answers to this question; candidates clearly relished the task and the best captured Richard's manipulative, contemptuous character along with his black humour. Most candidates grasped Richard's self-congratulation at this point.

Journey's End

Question 13

This was the most popular option on this play by far. Most candidates were able to identify the parts which were most fruitful for their purposes: Stanhope's seeing 'right through things', his distancing from the universe and Osborne's appreciation of the sunrise. But they almost invariably shied away from exploring just what they both were feeling and why. Many just managed to bring in the idea of Stanhope being 'potty'. Many got caught up in long discussions about Trotter and his circles which were not very productive. Most showed some surface understanding of the extract but responses were largely narrative and very few dealt successfully with much from the second half of the passage, especially Stanhope's admission that he 'looks right through things'. Hardly anyone made any comment on the discussion about the sunrise and the silence between the two of them. They tended to end up generalising about the strain of WW1 on soldiers. The best answers responded to the thoughtful tone of the extract and the ways it revealed the relationship between the two men, and contrasted their coping mechanisms. There were some interesting explanations of the worms and what they might symbolise.

Question 14

Not many chose this, but those who did managed reasonably well and addressed 'how far' rather than falling into the trap of offloading a prepared character sketch. Most candidates showed sympathy for him, and nearly all those who mentioned it approved of his handling of Hibbert – they were all very critical of the latter. There were different responses to his likeability too. Differentiation came through the quality of the arguments, choice of supporting reference, and the balance in response to 'how far?'

Question 15

This was mainly well done with a range of emphases, e.g. the death of Osborne, the reactions of Stanhope, reflections on war and its newly perceived horrors etc. Some perhaps overplayed his guilt, suggesting it was his fault Osborne died, when in fact his waiting for Raleigh was all part of the plan.

Section B: Poetry

Tennyson

Question 16

There was a good focus on the words from candidates who tackled this question and a refreshing tendency to focus on how the language might shape readers' understanding. Weaker answers, however, tended to quote a line, interpret it and then move on to the next line with no enlightening analysis in between.

Question 17

There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.

Question 18

There were too few answers to this question to make general comment appropriate.

Songs of Ourselves

Question 19

This was the poetry question most candidates selected. On the whole the poem was well understood and candidates were able to describe how Clare vividly communicated his feelings. There was, however, a tendency with some candidates to allude to a poetic technique, e.g. alliteration, and then not to describe how this affects readers. It was as if they knew there was a technique employed and felt obliged to suggest it but had no idea why it was there. These candidates would have been better directed to thinking about words and how those affected their understanding. A feature of some answers to this question was the outlining of unnecessary biographical material which did not support clear answers and often bogged candidates down in discussion of topics such as class, which was not relevant.

Question 20

Comments for Question 19 apply equally here. There was likewise evidence of unhelpful, lengthy biographical information deployed in responses to Hardy which diverted answers away from a focus on the words of the poem.

Question 21

The poems most usually explored here were *Full Moon and Little Frieda; Lament; The Flower Fed Buffaloes;* and *Report To Wordsworth.* The difficulty with answers to this question arose over the notion of 'place'. Some candidates selected poems where the nature and location of the place they had selected needed to be explained clearly, e.g. Nature in *Report To Wordsworth*. Where this justification of selection was not made it was sometimes difficult to see how a question had been answered.

Section C Prose:

Wuthering Heights

Question 22

There were some very good responses to this question. The best not only selected appropriate references but also explored how they demonstrated the differences between Catherine and Linton. Weaker answers chose appropriate references but did not develop their own comments in sufficient detail.

Question 23

Of those who attempted this question, the vast majority felt Edgar was 'good and decent' and they excused or justified what might be considered 'pathetic and weak'. Generally answers were well focused and there were few prepared character studies. The best answers took a balanced view and explored evidence to support both interpretations of Edgar, but there were convincing cases presented also for either of the two. Knowledge of the whole text was key to this.

Question 24

Most answers captured Heathcliff's disgust and contempt of Linton and gave some hint his future plans for revenge. Heathcliff is such a strong character, monstrous in so many ways, that it was possible for candidates to create a convincing voice for him, clearly demonstrating his cruelty and need for revenge.

Games at Twilight

Question 25

The relatively few answers on this were not well done. It was clearly a passage that hinged on knowing all that came before in the story, and those that did not know it well had little chance of success with this question. There was very little close engagement with the extract.

Question 26

This was far more popular and successful choice, one which seemed to engage those who answered it with the idea of cruelty in a child's world. Most did better with *Games at Twilight* especially if they went for the more obvious moment of Ravi's disappointment at being forgotten. Many were able to expand on how he felt at the moment in some detail with support, including the new game the others were playing with its connotations of death. A few chose to interpret as cruel how the whole group was kept inside by the parents for so long but there were few ways to develop this. Most struggled with *Pineapple Cake*, despite clearly engaging with the Victor's plight. They saw the cruelty quite superficially as the mother eating the cake she'd promised him. Those who scored more highly saw the 'deeper implications' of how cruelly blasé both she and the other adults were about the death of the fellow wedding guest.

Question 27

This empathic task was also often done well, including by weaker candidates who understood old Varma's frustration with Rakesh, including his comparison with how it used to be. Those who did less well were those who underplayed just how desperate he was.

When Rain Clouds Gather

Question 28

Even weaker candidates could find plenty of material to support the drama of this early moment. The best answers dealt thoroughly with the extract, exploring the atmosphere, picking up on the sounds and on the use of the pronoun 'he' rather than Makaya which made him somehow more mysterious as if wanting to hide his identity. Weaker answers relied heavily on narrative summary. A common problem was the ignoring of the term 'dramatic', for which some candidates substituted 'intriguing' or 'interesting' and a number of responses were lacking in clear focus.

Question 29

There were some good personal responses to this task. Sekoto seemed to provoke a range of reactions and those who chose this question clearly enjoyed considering the term 'charming half wit.' The use of 'charming' certainly made the better candidates think. One concluded that he was a 'charming slacker' and another that he must be charming since he has so many mistresses. Many chose to use Matenge as a useful foil but it was felt that some of these over used him as padding to compensate for lack of material on Sekoto.

Question 30

Some stronger voices captured the joy Paulina must have been feeling at this point after all her heartache.

The Great Gatsby

Question 31

This was a popular question, and responses showed engagement and understanding across the ability range. The best answers stayed close to the extract, tracing the subtleties of the ways the power shifts between the two men at this moment in the novel and showing understanding of how the writer exposes their feelings. Weaker answers simply retold the extract. Stronger responses engaged with 'powerfully' by way of looking at the language, and also saw this as a significant turning point in the Gatsby/Daisy relationship. Other strong points included the use of Nick as both narrator and observer of this conflict. Very often, however, there was too much focus on Daisy.

Question 32

Most candidates showed a clear grasp of Tom and could refer widely across the text for support for their response. Lower-scoring answers tended to run through the main things we know about him rather than how he makes us feel. There were a lot of character-study approach essays where Examiners had to assume the candidate's feelings by the selection of the material. Unusually there were a few candidates who felt a lot of sympathy for Tom, perhaps in relation to his feelings for Daisy.

Question 33

Candidates had to decide when after the crash to position Gatsby's thoughts and to judge just how much he knew about who it was at that point. Stronger responses saw him considering where the accident and what preceded it left him in terms of Daisy, and concluded that he would continue whatever to be totally sacrificial towards her. There were also some bland and character-less narrative accounts, with the only glance at Gatsby's voice being the occasional 'old sport', but many others established an appropriate voice.

Ethan Frome

Questions 34-36

There were too few responses to this text to make general comment appropriate.

Stories of Ourselves

Question 37

There were some very perceptive responses here, but a common shortcoming lay in ignoring the given extract entirely and using evidence from elsewhere in the story to justify comments on the narrator's 'disturbed mind'. As a result few concentrated on the extract and so often became generalised and narrative. Very few commented on the structure and form and there was a lot of quasi-Freudian interpretation applied without any supporting evidence from text.

Question 38

Many candidates who tackled this did not understand the term 'revelation' and so quite a few responses simply retold the two stories and commented in general terms on the endings. The best, however, selected sensibly and focused on both the specific moment and why it was particularly powerful for them. Weaker candidates tended to ignore the second part of the question. Quite a few candidates answered on only one of the stories.

Question 39

There were too few responses to this empathic task to make general comment appropriate.