

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/11

Paper 11

Key messages

The following are necessary for success in this component:

- Poetry: explore meaning, significance and personal response then show how the writer uses language for effect to create that meaning.
- Prose extracts: always discuss language.
- Drama: discussion of punctuation, form and of stage directions should always be tethered to meaning.
- Focus on the key words in a question.
- Quotations should support points and be integrated into the flow of the argument.

General comments

Prose questions were generally well answered, detailed and appreciative of themes and characters, with much personal engagement with the texts. Drama answers were often, inevitably, from a reader's perspective rather than an audience's. Close engagement with the texts was achieved much more frequently with the extract questions and good responses covered numerous points, showing the entire piece had been read.

There were some very good empathic answers with much textual evidence. Generally candidates did not include enough textual echo or reference to relevant details during their thoughts on the relevant moment. Sometimes the moment itself was not focused on with sufficient tightness.

Essay structure improves year on year. Most responses have introductions and conclusions, linked paragraphs, and points supported by textual evidence though there are still examples of formulaic introductions which contribute very little. Less effective essays had lengthy introductions and relied too much on detailed paraphrase, unnecessary biographical detail and broad discussion of related social issues. Many candidates referred closely and regularly to the question though some depended much too heavily on general and sometimes arguable assertions. As often, concise answers with precise points tended to score more highly than longer unfocused essays.

Many candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of texts and the best focused on an author's methods and techniques, the 'How' or 'In what ways' of the question.

Quotations should support the point being made. In the best answers, quotations were brief and integrated seamlessly into the argument.

In poetry questions particularly, candidates should avoid paraphrase or line-by-line identification of literary terms with no discussion of the meaning at all. Merely rehearsing sophisticated and complex language terms does not demonstrate understanding or personal appreciation. Similarly the trend to write about punctuation has grown and is unhelpful in commenting on passages from Shakespeare.

There were very few unfinished papers and very few rubric infringements.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Drama

ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons*

- 1 This was a popular question and there were some good attempts to 'explore the ways', though some candidates struggled to identify them, citing stage directions, dialogue and the characters themselves. All concentrated on Keller, with a little on Ann and Chris. Candidates might have explored Keller's pride in his humble background and being a self-made man, mixed with awareness of his educational limitations. A good differentiator was whether candidates saw the deeper implications behind Keller's words. There is more to his offer to Deever than simple goodwill and his anger over Ann's rejection of her father reveals his own fears. Good answers were perceptive and though they relied to some extent on hindsight, showed understanding of how an audience would react to the implications of what is being said without knowing the outcome. Weaker answers were not focused on the passage and spent too long on generalities and paraphrase.
- 2 There were many points of view, all supported, with the more successful attempting a balanced response and differentiating between mother and wife. Most candidates made the point that in refusing to accept Larry's death Kate stops the family from moving on and that she fails to appreciate Chris and his need to live his own life. She appears to offer little support to her husband, particularly at the end of the play although it could be argued that she has good reason for much of the above, in that she alone in the family knows her husband's guilt. She can hardly live with that knowledge, except by believing that her son is still alive and was not a victim of her husband's disgrace. At the end of the play she is the one who gives maternal comfort to her remaining son, Chris, and encourages him to go forward.
- 3 Chris is clearly in a state of anxious excitement. He cannot be sure that Ann will accept his proposal, though he hopes the fact she is coming suggests that she is likely to. He knows what a momentous step this will be to take in regard to his parents, particularly his mother. He wants to stay in the firm but cannot be sure this will be possible. This was the least popular question of the three but the best answers showed understanding of Chris's worries and fears about his parents and conveyed his idealism and also his impatience.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Julius Caesar*

- 4 This was a very popular question. Most understood Cassius's new worries and fears, and detected a change in his character or at least in the audience's perception of his character, from earlier in the play. The extract immediately follows the acrimonious parley at Philippi with Antony and Octavius. After their earlier quarrel over strategy, Brutus and Cassius are reconciled and resigned to their fates. Cassius is admitting to some superstition and there are references to birds of ill-omen which have replaced the eagles. There is a fatalism in his attitude to the coming battle, and a suggestion from both him and Brutus that they will not allow themselves to be taken as prisoners. Good answers considered the language in some detail and were sharply focused on 'sympathy'. Weaker answers tended to ignore the context and seemed unsure about what the relationship with Brutus actually was, although all recognised the farewell.
- 5 Good answers conveyed Antony's pragmatism, his keen intelligence and his passion with well-selected references from the play. Some weaker answers focused more on Brutus; some were distracted by the funeral speech at the expense of the rest of the text, and some wrote generally about Antony. Good answers ranged widely and in detail through the play.
- 6 Good answers covered Portia's anxiety for Brutus because he has been preoccupied and worried. She might be speculating on the reason for the secret visit of the conspirators – or has Brutus told her of the plot? She would be afraid for the future. They conveyed Portia's nobility and her admiration of that in her husband in an appropriate voice, and they also included some apt reference and occasional textual echoes. Detail was often lacking and this held back some answers. Weaker answers consisted of generalised emotion.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Tempest*

- 7 Although Ferdinand is on stage during the shipwreck scene, he does not speak then. These are his first words and express his bewilderment and grief. Ariel's song summarises what Ferdinand imagines to be his father's fate. Both Miranda and Ferdinand refer to the supernatural or spiritual in their comments about each other when they fall in love at first sight. Candidates sometimes commented on the dramatic irony of Ferdinand's mistaken assumption that he is *de facto* King of Naples. They also commented on Prospero's controlling role in orchestrating the scene, and on his asides to Ariel. The best answers discussed the magical and spiritual nature of the isle and its music. 'Dramatic' was covered less well than 'moving' although some saw the significance of the scene as a turning point. There was extensive quotation of the poetic language, though few analysed its rhythm and diction.
- 8 This was a 'classic' question, and quite popular, but not all that well answered. Most responses covered basic points but they were not developed or detailed. Possible points were that: Prospero has regained his usurped dukedom; the various plots against Prospero and Alonso have been exposed; Ariel has gained his freedom following his loyal service to Prospero. Most answers were straight 'yes'. Better answers commented on the treatment of Caliban and the fact that Antonio and Sebastian show no remorse. Only a very few commented on the idea of the 'rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance'. Very few commented on all the characters, variously omitting Stephano and Trinculo, Alonso and the nobles, even Caliban, or covering only a small part of his role. Quite a few were distracted by the Epilogue, perhaps interpreting 'by the end' as 'at the end'. Some interesting responses explored the idea of whether Prospero perceives that he has achieved justice and discussed the difference between justice and revenge.
- 9 All three characters are still under the influence of the drink they consumed earlier. They have all already been deceived by Ariel, and Trinculo has been beaten by Stephano, who thinks he is making comments which are actually Ariel's. They have completely fallen for the prospect of being involved in ruling the island which Caliban has put before them and Trinculo may well be anticipating the joys of wielding power. Although drunk, Trinculo may have some thoughts about Stephano and his assumption that he will be the dominant figure if their plans come to fruition. He will also be puzzled by the mysterious sound whose source he is trying to find. He may make some reference to Caliban's 'isle is full of noises' speech. He also might think back to the circumstances in which he first encountered Caliban. Although drunk, Trinculo seems to be rather pragmatic and fatalistic and good answers conveyed this. Some candidates found it difficult to capture his drunken voice, and there were certainly answers where the sophisticated diction used was far beyond him. Text references were frequently quite prolific, particularly about Caliban. There were a few exceptionally good answers, writing in the close vocabulary and style of the text, and sometimes following through to the garments and stinking pool.

OSCAR WILDE: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

- 10 It was good to see that all answers were very engaged with the text, and enjoyment very often communicated itself. Most candidates saw the humour in the fact that the proposal is being written down in a diary as it is delivered, Algernon is informed that he has already been engaged for three months without his knowledge, the engagement has been broken off once already and that this experienced man of the world is reduced to amazed near silence by this girl's confident poise. Better answers looked at hyperbole, absurdity, triviality and Wilde's witty, cynical view of accepted attitudes. Many found the humour hard to put into their own words. Several resorted to saying 'It is so funny!' which could be rewarded as personal response. Too many answers merely relied on stating that it was all Wilde's satire of Victorian society, without actually analysing how he did it.
- 11 Jack's life is a perpetual juggling act which gives an air of desperation to his actions. He does not know who he is. He is living two quite separate existences in London and in the country, which involve constant invention and the threat of disclosure. He is constantly worried about Cecily's existence being revealed and is in particular aware of his friend Algernon's interest in the details of his concealed life. The last thing he wants is for Algernon to meet Cecily. Most answers focused on two names and two lives. Knowledge of the whole play was not always demonstrated, even though it is quite a short text.

- 12 Gwendolen is of stout character and will not be downhearted. She is likely to be thinking how she has no intention of losing Ernest or of falling in with her mother's wishes. She will be plotting what to do next, perhaps thinking that a trip to the country is just what is needed. She is likely to be enjoying the excitement of it all. Many found the relationship with Lady Bracknell hard to explain in an authentic voice. Good answers captured her tone and vocabulary precisely and even created some aphorisms of their own.

Section B: Poetry

THOMAS HARDY: *Selected Poems*

- 13 There were some extremely impressive answers, which analysed meaning and symbolism in detail, including the etymology of 'titanic', and which understood the themes. Most picked up the sinister and dark tone to the poem, with the description of the great liner lying at the bottom of the sea. They saw the contrast between the opulence of the construction and fittings, and the gloom of the ocean resting place. Good answers also explored the idea that the collision was preordained and commented on the form of the poem, the listing of the stanzas and the rhythm and rhyme building to the final line. The focus of the question was on the words 'powerfully dramatic' and it was impossible to convey how Hardy makes the poem so without exploring the language in depth. Weak candidates, who did not know the poem and answered it as an unseen, scored poorly.
- 14 *The Pine Planters* is a projection of Marty South's unrequited feelings for Giles Winterborne in *The Woodlanders*. She feels unnoticed and knows that he is in love with another but there is no anger or jealousy, just acceptance and grief. The simplicity of the language and its conversational tone make it particularly moving and the rhyme scheme is similarly deceptive in its simplicity. There was a clear difference in quality of the answer between those who had been taught about Marty, and those who had not. Some candidates became side-tracked by 'hopeless love' into generalised statements about love. Most followed through the poem using quotations as a basis for their commentary; as the language is accessible here, this worked reasonably well for most.
- 15 Drummer Hodge is a poor and simple conscript fighting in the Boer War. He has been killed in a foreign land and his burial lacks all ceremony. The foreignness of his resting place and the imperviousness of any external powers are conveyed through the language and imagery. There were quite a lot of answers on this poem and some were very assured, responding sensitively to Hodge's fate and to the language and imagery. There was a great deal of engagement with the text. Even weaker answers showed understanding of meaning and major images such as a foreign land and stars. Textual detail was well utilised. What was good about all answers was the empathy and personal response – the best answers were superb in their understanding of Hodge's burial.

There were fewer answers on *No Buyers*, but they were also sympathetic to the old couple's situation, picking up on Hardy's feelings towards the poverty and hardship of the old couple and the sense of hopelessness and futility in the scene. In relation to either poem, the focus had to be on 'moving'.

SONGS OF OURSELVES: *from Part 4*

Responses to all three 'Songs' questions suffered from feature-spotting literary techniques, without explaining their effects.

- 16 This was probably the most popular question on the paper. Answers needed to focus on the 'disturbing' qualities of the poem. They might have commented on the sense of order and regularity in the first 16 lines and on the artificiality that is conveyed, while noting the use of the verb 'offends' and the simile 'like a rebuke'. The opposition of 'sanities' and 'hysteria' and 'madness' were worthy of comment as was the presentation of the City Planners in lines 29-38. There were answers from all abilities. Weaker answers did not grasp the satire and the implications. Many tried to unravel complex images, one at a time, rather than responding to the poem as a whole. There was a lot of mis-reading. There was, however, a good focus on 'disturbing', with candidates finding many points about which to be disturbed, even if they were not in the poem. Many weaker answers ignored the last two stanzas of the poem.
- 17 Answers needed to focus on 'memories of childhood': responses that explored the difference between the adult and childish perceptions of the horses scored very well. There was much which could be said, so answers were reasonably detailed, picking up on Muir's switch between past and

present, and a child's view of the animals – magical but terrifying and also awesome. Some imagery was a struggle, but on the whole responses were very positive and sometimes sensitive.

- 18 Candidates answered quite well on Hopkins and had a secure knowledge of the theme and language of this poem. 'Striking effects' were quite well covered, with understanding of imagery ranging from convincing to very literal. Most only covered the first part of the poem; there were various attempts to explain 'brinded' cows. Rossetti was quite well discussed too, especially the use of repetition. Some good answers compared the religious imagery in both poems, while others focused on natural imagery. There was no need to compare, but good answers did so naturally.

Section C: Prose

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

- 19 The context is the return of Babamukuru and his family from England, having been greeted by Jeremiah and Nhamo. Tambu is aggrieved at being excluded from the trip to the airport to greet her returning uncle and his family. There is on-going sibling rivalry between Tambu and her brother and Tambu is still sufficiently a child to want to beat her brother up, but is now sufficiently mature to realise that this is no longer an option. She has a growing realisation of the limitations imposed on women by the culture in which she lives. This was the most popular question on this text but most answers only discussed Tambu's thoughts on not visiting the airport. There were a few good answers which explored her feelings about all the other characters in the scene, and related her anger to cultural differences. There were very few references to the writing except to the use of rhetorical questions.
- 20 Both characters are in some ways rebelling against the culture(s) in which they find themselves, both could be seen as headstrong and both are ambitious, particularly academically. Both question assumptions about their pre-ordained roles as girls/women. Candidates often saw similarities in their conflicts with their parents and between Nyasha's argument with her father after the dance and Tambu's refusal to attend her parents' wedding. The words 'vividly convey' were given very little attention on the whole. Some strong responses explored the similarities between the two girls at some length, in particular their academic ambitions and how far they were prepared to go to in order to achieve them, the sense of displacement both felt at being away from the homestead or from England, and their attitudes to the pre-ordained gender roles that were being thrust on them.
- 21 Jeremiah, of course, has not mended the thatch. Tambu and her aunt have. Nonetheless, Jeremiah would be likely to regard the praise as his due and would be pleased to receive some positive recognition from his older brother. As Babamukuru has come to take Tambu back to the mission, Jeremiah might be relieved that there is one less mouth to feed, hostile to the idea that his daughter is being given ideas above her station, and self-congratulatory that the best is being done for his family. Good answers would have captured a convincing voice of a lazy, feckless individual who assumes that everything is due to him because he is a man but there were not many good answers and knowledge of the text was limited. One very strong response captured very convincingly Jeremiah's sense of satisfaction at the way in which the rewards for his daughter's hard work were accruing to him and looked forward with relish to more of the same in future because that was his entitlement.

ANITA DESAI: *Fasting, Feasting*

- 22 Mama has told Uma that there is no point in her continuing at school since she is neither academic nor sporting, and her parents are trying to arrange a marriage for her. She loves school, and she is distraught and looking to the nuns for support. Mother Agnes disappoints because of her lack of understanding and her sexism. Most candidates understood these points and also picked up Uma's mother's response at home. Successful answers commented on the violence of Uma's emotions and responded to the pathos of the situation. Some explored the language in depth. A number of responses engaged very sympathetically with Uma, expressing very strong disapproval of Mamapapa and Mother Agnes.
- 23 There were very few answers to this question and the choice of amusing moments was ill-judged.
- 24 Some candidates found it hard to find Mrs Patton's style of speaking, so they used textual detail instead to identify attitudes and character and this worked quite well. Some created a very convincing voice and conveyed their sympathy for the character through it. They conveyed her

interest in Arun and his 'foreignness', wrote about their shopping and cooking together, and her determination to be vegetarian. They often reflected on her family particularly Melanie about whom they tended to attribute a sense of failure. Some candidates captured Mrs Patton's well-meaning earnestness very successfully.

KIRAN DESAI: *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

- 25 Most answers were on the extract. Candidates found 'ridiculous' easier than 'magical'; for the latter they used the sensuous description at the start – with the best answers re-creating the sensuality in their own descriptions. This contrasted with the sublime to the ridiculous that followed, everyone singing along with Miss Jyotsna, followed again by detailed comments on the spy. There were excellent paragraphs on the spy's activities, and language points on the mouse-hole, involving irony and satire. It was so pleasing to see that candidates could analyse their own responses to the humour.
- 26 There were some answers, all quite good in commenting on Sampath's character, though less strong on detail from the text as a whole. All candidates found him likeable because of his humorous streak, his imaginativeness, his alternative view of the world. Better answers commented on the fact that he is capable of making foolish those who deserve to be made so, of whom there are many in the novel and they also wrote about spiritualism and the lack of it, and Sampath's close relationship with the monkey companions. Differentiation came from engagement with Desai's writing, and the ways in which it makes Sampath so engaging.
- 27 Pinky would be incandescently angry as she often is with her brother, thinking that not even he has managed to bring the family name into such disrepute before. She would also be thinking about what this does to her marriage prospects and hoping that her brother leaves home for good before she does him some violence. Though it was not easy for some to find an authentic voice, the emotions were generally accurate and the best answers conveyed Pinky's characteristic tone.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

- 28 This was a very popular text, and very popular question. There were some very good answers indeed, exploring Silas's 'transformation', the spiritual connotations, and the role of Eppie. Some reference to the context – the collapse of Molly in the snow and Eppie finding her way to Marner's cottage was useful. All understood the gold references, the links back to Lantern Yard, Silas's new paternal feelings, and his being received back into the community. Candidates showed real sympathy and empathy for someone who is a fictional character and responded freely to what is moving about the extract. Good answers explored the writing in detail, commenting on the contrasts and significances and on the symbolism and imagery. It was widely recognised to be a turning point in Silas's life. The best answers used the full range of the passage. Weaker answers had narrower range but still directed and analysed the material. The weakest answers did not direct the material carefully enough and did not explore why the passage was so moving. Equally evident, but appropriately used in some responses, was sound general knowledge of the novel and links were carefully and successfully made.
- 29 The distinction between 'not good' and 'scoundrel' was key to a good answer. Answers commented on Godfrey's weakness in standing up to his brother and father, his behaviour towards Molly and Eppie and balanced this by considering his positive qualities as a husband. Most sympathised with him, blaming his brother, and seeing Nancy's inability to have children as punishment. This was well answered in terms of understanding, even if the less able did not have command of the textual details.
- 30 All recognised Dolly's authentic voice, and were able to cite plenty of textual detail about her visit. The best captured life in the village, and what it meant to be a member of it. They included stories that Dolly has heard of Marner through her husband's conversations in the pub. Although not widely popular, those who did attempt the question often achieved very convincing voices, capturing the essential benevolence of the character in a convincing vernacular.

SUSAN HILL: *I'm the King of the Castle*

- 31 Kingshaw is totally weighed down. The opening description of the countryside is oppressive. Even in daylight he needs to bolster his courage by defying the gargoyles. In the church he feels the deadness of it all and of God's disapproving presence. He feels an overpowering sense of guilt and

is unable to hide either his real wishes or his fear of Hooper. The question was answered by many, of all abilities, and there was much material for candidates to find. The weakest did not cover the whole extract, or focused only on outside and inside the church. All could understand Kingshaw's state of mind, though quite a few omitted the context, i.e. his desire that Hooper would die from the fall at the castle. The best identified with Kingshaw's emotional agony, isolation, and guilt, exploring in detail how his thoughts developed during the extract, and his utter despair at the end. There was pleasing focus on language in the best answers.

- 32** Again, a popular and well answered question. Answers differed in the material they cited, from a description of the house, the rooms in it, and the garden, to the influence of Mrs Kingshaw and Hooper's father and grandfather. All understood that Warings was Hooper's territory and the source of his power. They saw that it is without any life or homeliness or beauty.
- 33** Hooper's voice needed to be in the tone of the answer, as well as the obvious text references. The best answers articulated his chilling, calculating tone in short emphatic sentences and conveyed his belief that he has all the advantages over Kingshaw, who is a mummy's boy and a wimp and that he will have little difficulty in making Kingshaw's life a misery, and possibly in getting rid of him for good.

from *Stories of Ourselves*

- 34** This question was popular and there were some insightful answers, but most did not make best use of the extract. Few explored Lucy's role, and most just concentrated on a failing marriage and feelings of cultural isolation, often explained in an assertive manner. The best answers considered the symbolism of the mirage and explored the flight incident in detail.
- 35** Very many candidates wrote at length about the whole of *Her First Ball* while omitting the actual end. Some seemed to think that the fat man's depressing comments were what Leila takes away with her and missed the fact that as soon as she begins dancing again she forgets about him and fails to recognise him. There was some understanding of the humour in *At Hiruhamara*, especially the 'throw nothing away' theme and the annual dinner, but answers were often narrative.
- 36** Some found it difficult to find a voice, even as they referred to the goats and the wife, the shopkeeper and the American. The best answers used irony and humour well to capture the character, to whom all responded very positively. The major problem was lack of detail of the moment – there was much general comment about being rich and spending the 100 rupees. Only the best answers conveyed something of the misunderstanding which is the basis of the conversation.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/12

Paper 12

Key Messages

1. *In poetry questions meaning, significance and personal response need to be explored first, then how the writer uses language for effect to create that meaning.*
2. *Language needs to be discussed in prose extracts.*
3. *The discussion of punctuation, form and of stage directions in drama contributes nothing without reference to meaning.*
4. *There needs to be far more focus on the key words in a question. Words such as 'explore', 'explore the ways', 'how', 'how far,' 'vividly', 'memorably', 'powerful', 'dramatic', 'moving'.*
5. *Quotations need to support points, not to be merely added. They should be relatively brief, pertinent and integrated into the argument.*

General Comments

Prose questions were generally well answered, detailed and appreciative of themes and characters, with much personal engagement with the texts. Drama answers were, perhaps inevitably, mostly from a reader's perspective rather than an audience's, with candidates responding to the text on page rather than on the stage. There were some very good empathic answers with much textual evidence; weaker answers kept repeating the emotions of the character or retold the plot with little sense of the character's voice / viewpoint. Generally candidates did not include enough textual echo or reference to relevant details during their thoughts on the relevant moment. Sometimes the moment itself was not tightly enough focused upon. At times the character (such as Sampath in **Question 27**) was limited to repeating the same thing several times in the monologue.

Essay structure improves year on year. There are very few essays now which lack introductions and conclusions, linked paragraphs, and points supported by textual evidence; though there are still examples of formulaic introductions which contribute very little. For example, where candidates' essay structure was less effective, this was often because they were inclined to provide lengthy introductions; detailed paraphrase; unnecessary biographical accompaniment; and broad discussion of related social issues arising from text. These features were especially apparent with 'Julius Caesar', 'The Importance of Being Earnest', and the short story 'The Rain Horse'. Many candidates referred closely and regularly to the question, though some relied much too heavily on general and sometimes arguable assertions. As often, concise answers with precise points supported by relevant quotation tended to score more highly than longer rambling essays which often lost sight of the question.

Plenty of candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of their texts, but a fair number of these candidates nonetheless produced limited responses because they overlooked the need to focus on an author's methods and techniques; the 'How' or 'In what ways' of the question.

The use of quotations could be improved in the work of some candidates. There was often a lack of connection between the point and the quotation as if the candidate had merely put it in because s/he remembered it, not because it supported the point being made. In the best answers, quotations were brief and integrated seamlessly into the argument.

We have argued for so long that candidates need to discuss language that now it has almost gone too far, with some essays being about nothing else. In responses to poetry some candidates have written pages and pages of line-by-line paraphrase, or line-by-line identification of literary terms with no discussion of the meaning of the poem at all. All the sophisticated and complex language terms in the world do not compensate for lack of understanding. For example there were responses to the drama extract questions structured so that there were separate paragraphs on dialogue, diction, stage directions and punctuation, which ultimately failed to convey any understanding of what was actually happening on the stage.

Candidates who began their answers to **Question 1** with “Miller makes the ending dramatic by his use of diction, stage directions, imagery and juxtaposition” were unlikely to be doing themselves many favours. Similarly, the trend to write about punctuation on its own has grown, and is particularly unhelpful in commenting on passages from Shakespeare.

There were very few unfinished papers and very few rubric infringements.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: DRAMA

ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons*

Question 1

This was a popular question and it was generally very well done in thematic terms. Candidates invariably recognised the power of Chris’s disillusionment as he rages against his father, and the impact of the letter in general. However, few commented upon the effect that the revelation has upon us as we now have to re-assess the events of the play so far and readjust our feelings towards Joe. Also, in thematic terms, comments upon The American Dream generally rang hollow with candidates showing little confidence in linking the ending to it in symbolic terms.

A weakness generally was the lack of awareness about the dramatic impact of events. It was highly commendable that many recognised the importance of stage directions in Miller’s plays and mentioned ‘... inaudibly’ when Joe says he has to go to turn himself in. However, the full significance was not appreciated in general. The effect of his mumbled words is to convince us and the other characters that he is a broken man, who will now meekly go along with what Chris plans. It does not occur to us that, in his present state, he has formulated an alternative plan i.e. suicide. When the gunshot is heard, the effect is stunning.

Question 2

Comparatively few candidates attempted this question. There was recognition of the sheltered nature of the house, hiding behind the poplar trees as if in shame. Its location on the outskirts of town was also taken up by many in this respect – a desire for anonymity. The symbolism of Larry’s tree was also recognised by nearly all but here **was** an opportunity to develop ideas about the American Dream that was not taken up by many. Though some highlighted the stage directions which called for a comfortable, quite prosperous looking house, the dramatic impact of illusion over reality was not sufficiently developed. When we first meet Joe on a Sunday morning in his back yard reading his newspaper, he is the picture of the American success story. He is a family man enjoying his day of rest after no doubt working hard throughout the previous week. It is a picture of contentment and serenity. This is our opening impression and, as such, it is a powerful one – hence our shock as the revelations are made later on in the play.

Question 3

Kate will clearly be appalled and terrified by the prospect of Ann’s coming back, and will be asking herself why she is doing so. She might well guess what the object of the trip is and will possibly see this as undermining all her attempts to shield the family from the consequences of Joe’s actions. On the whole this question was not very well done. Too many candidates took a narrow and even superficial view of the moment. It is rare to actually be wrong in an empathic response, but here some candidates did not recognise Kate’s anxiety about the return of Ann. Whilst she comforts herself with the thought that Ann has kept herself loyal to Larry, there are more ominous fears also.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Julius Caesar*

Question 4

This was a popular question and most candidates were able to make some relevant comment. There was much to comment on here: the secretiveness of the discussion between Brutus and Casca; the popularity of Caesar and his growing power, and the play-acting over the offering of the crown; the excitableness of the ‘common herd’; and the news of the execution of Marullus and Flavius for going against Caesar. Good answers understood and commented on the cynicism of Casca, and the fact that his thoughts are expressed in prose rather than verse. They considered the context of this scene in relation to the conspiracy. Weaker

responses chose an 'overview' approach rather than exploring the passage in detail and relating it to the 'atmosphere in Rome'. Significantly, in this respect, many responses omitted to mention the presence of Cassius and Brutus at all. Quite a lot of candidates failed to mention the fact that the version of events we are given is narrated by Casca – hardly an unbiased account.

Question 5

This was a popular question. Good answers went beyond the character sketch, and presented knowledge of the two women in an argument that demonstrated an understanding of their dramatic significance. Both are well-born noble women, married to powerful men. Portia seems to be treated as more of an equal to Brutus than Calphurnia is to Caesar. Both reveal dramatically aspects of their husband's characters – e.g. Calphurnia's dreams expose Caesar's belief in superstition, as well as his vanity and then his susceptibility to being flattered. Portia's death occurs at the worst possible moment for Brutus and Cassius, but is to some extent responsible for their reconciliation. Weaker answers showed a basic knowledge of the two women, but were far less successful in exploring 'how' Shakespeare made them both 'so significant'.

Question 6

Lots of candidates showed excellent knowledge of the play in general here. Many candidates recognised Brutus' tendency towards introspection and they were able to capture this whilst conveying his resignation, fatalism and possible regrets. A weakness of many, however, was to concentrate entirely on the ghost and its reasons for appearing and not mentioning Portia's suicide – particularly the harrowing nature of it which must haunt Brutus as much as the ghost of Caesar, or his feelings towards Cassius and their earlier argument.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Tempest*

Question 7

This was a popular question but it did elicit mixed responses. Prospero is dissembling here, to the bewilderment of Miranda but unfortunately also to the bewilderment of a number of candidates. Some answers were rendered ineffectual by their inability to convey the fact that his anger is feigned. His behaviour as a stern but loving father to Miranda is credible, but his aside to the audience helps to explain the reason for his behaviour. Similarly, the use of magic in staying Ferdinand's sword, whilst mentioned, was not fully explained in dramatic terms. The sheer power of this demonstration of Prospero's art is the first time we see it for ourselves and it is very impressive, visually and verbally. What needed to be stressed overall is the authority of Prospero at this moment – over Ferdinand, Miranda and Ariel. Good responses recognised the recurrence of the theme of usurpation and how this relates to the play as a whole; they also paid close attention to the language of the extract, commenting for example on the intensive use of imperatives. Where candidates commented on the behaviour of the other characters, they needed to make it relevant to the question.

Question 8

This was well done on the whole. Most were able to refer to moments such as Prospero's account of earlier events when speaking to Miranda; their treatment of Gonzalo when he is trying to console Alonso; Sebastian's insensitive reproaches to Alonso; the thwarted plot against Alonso; and their attempts to cover their behaviour when Gonzalo wakes up to foil their plans and the lack of any sign of remorse. Good answers were able to reflect on their sustained cynicism throughout the play and consider the language they used. Most recognised that there are differences in character between Sebastian and Antonio, despite the fact that they always appear together on stage. Equally, the fact that Prospero's brother never repents of his sins is important to note as it adds an interesting 'realistic' twist to the theme of forgiveness. Shakespeare seems to recognise that some people are simply beyond the pale – Antonio's assurance of good behaviour in future is only obtained by Prospero's threat to disclose his attempted treachery to Alonso were he to sin again. Whereas good responses focused on both 'memorable' and 'villains', weaker responses described their villainy in quite general, narrative terms.

Question 9

Of those who chose this question, most were able to convey a sense of Stephano's ribald / drunken nature quite well, although some candidates were less effective in this respect. There was generally a relatively good understanding of his motivation to become king and make Miranda his queen. The best responses showed close awareness of text and character, for example having him sing a snatch or two from his song when he first enters the play, and were able to capture his voice with a sense of inflated and intoxicated self-esteem and entitlement; but many indulged in wild speculation involving drink, the creation of magnificent palaces and even invading Naples.

OSCAR WILDE: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Question 10

This was a very popular choice, but it was not always well done. The obvious point of the triviality of the obsession with muffins at this time of supposed distress for the two men was made, but attempts to link this with satire on the aristocracy were not often helpful. There is undoubtedly some truth in this idea but only in the most general sense – assertions about the Victorian obsession with food (particularly as a substitute for sexual gratification) were not usually convincing. The vast majority of the candidates were able to comment on the content in terms of *what* makes the passage an amusing end to Act Two (the obsession with food and the christening), but far fewer candidates actually engaged with the language and explored *how* Wilde makes it amusing.

Question 11

This also proved a very popular choice. Better candidates recognised the humour in a character who makes such strong assertions which, upon closer examination, turn out to be completely nonsensical. One weakness was the choice of so many to overlook her disagreement and reconciliation with Gwendolen, which has so much to say about feigned politeness in respectable circles. Candidates should be aware of the danger of making Cecily representative of Victorian women in general. To call all aristocratic women 'empty headed' is rather sweeping – Wilde has to be given some credit for creating a delightfully eccentric character in her own right. Stronger candidates were able to draw on some of the following: she is not the demure, innocent young girl she is supposed to be; she has a strong will of her own and detests the studies laid down by her guardian and Miss Prism; and she is intent on capturing the first eligible man she can find. However, too many candidates simply narrated character sketches and needed to consider Wilde's methods in greater detail.

Question 12

This was the least popular question on the text. The best answers showed clear understanding and awareness of character and plot. Some took Miss Prism into the room and gave a summary of the final scene from her point of view; however, few managed to sustain a really convincing voice, instead relying on quotation cohabiting uneasily with modern vernacular such as 'I really fancy Dr Chasuble'. However knowledge of narrative details was evident and most responses began to assume a voice.

Section B: POETRY

THOMAS HARDY: *Selected Poems*

Question 13

Of the questions on Hardy, this and **Question 15** were the most popular. Generally, candidates wrote with good understanding of these poems; what distinguished better responses were those candidates who were able to comment with precision on the effects of particular words / images / poetic devices. Most candidates demonstrated good contextual knowledge as far as Hardy's background is concerned. The same point can be made for all three questions: candidates might be advised to see the poem in terms of definite movements or phases to help them organise responses in a coherent manner, rather than simply work through each stanza.

The key words in **Question 13** were 'how' and 'moving portrayal of despair'. Good responses engaged with Hardy's use of language, such as his use of contrasting imagery – the allusions to nature and to death, the broken rhythm and rhyme, and were able to show how this conveyed his feelings. The initial shock and sadness of her death is followed by an inability to believe that his wife has gone. This leads on to memories

of happier times before returning to the stark realisation that he must now face life alone. Weaker responses tended to work through the poem, paraphrasing the quotations (thus showing some level of understanding of ideas) but comments lacked the necessary focus on the question.

Question 14

Not many responses were seen to this question. Good answers focused on 'feelings' about the passage of time, rather than just describing how time passes by. *In Time of the Breaking of Nations* reflects on timelessness in a way; some situations go on in the same way from one generation to another; the allusion to war suggests that despite the chaos it creates, time will heal. Some candidates knew the context of the poem and the significance of its title. Stronger responses showed understanding of the poem's ideas that even though war might kill the individuals, the rural way of life goes on, love endures.

Question 15

Of those candidates who chose this question, most wrote on *I Look into My Glass*. There were a few candidates who clearly misunderstood the term 'glass' thinking it was a drinking glass, but most candidates were able to make some relevant comment about Hardy's 'feelings about growing old'. It is a short poem, and those candidates who were able to focus clearly and in detail on the effects on particular words and phrases fared better than those who relied on paraphrase. Good answers were able to comment on Hardy's use of language: for example the double meaning of 'wasting'; the accumulative effect of the negatives of 'undistress', 'cold' and 'lonely'; the assonance and internal rhyme of the final stanza that links words such as 'make me grieve ...shakes this...frame' together; while showing just how this conveyed his grief, sadness, loneliness and despair. Less successful answers still managed to show some general understanding, but frequently failed to comment on *how* Hardy felt about his ageing.

SONGS OF OURSELVES: *from Part 4*

Question 16

This was probably the most popular poetry question, and it inspired many different theories about the source of the narrator's happiness! Perhaps the best answers were those that recognised that the poem works on several levels. Most candidates were able to identify the celebratory nature of this poem, and how the imagery employed by Rossetti supported that feeling. The candidates who backed up their assertion that her happiness is rooted in spiritual re-birth did so by pointing out the pattern of images with religious connotations. Some candidates showed rather limited understanding of imagery such as 'halcyon sea', generally coupling it with 'rainbow shell' as biblical imagery. Many however were well-prepared in this respect. Regardless of the specific source of her happiness, it was important to define it in some way. Consideration of individual images out of the poem's overall context cannot really be appreciated in terms of effectiveness, relevance or appropriateness unless we know this.

Question 17

This was also a popular question and candidates had clearly been taught a variety of interpretations, some more convincing than others. Nevertheless, most were able to show a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the poem and the idea that fear does not negate admiration. Successful responses paid some attention to points such as the description of the snake in the second stanza, and the impact of the metaphorical language; were able to comment on the contrasts between warm and cold. Less successful candidates tended to provide a broad discussion about man and nature, some focusing entirely on the poem as an allegory of the racial tension between the Aborigine and the white man, while exhibiting an uncertain grasp of some poetic devices used - especially personification and metaphor.

Question 18

Very few candidates attempted this question, and most with limited success. There were a few candidates who answered on *The Horses* by Muir, a different poem that is not in the anthology. The question asked candidates 'how' the poets communicated a 'vivid sense of the past'. Most candidates showed some knowledge and understanding of each poem, but few managed to relate this to the task. In *Horses*, candidates might have considered the interplay of verb tenses within the poem, and the references to childhood whilst exploring the imagery of the poem. In *The Planners*, candidates needed to select the material carefully: too many concentrated on the present day and showed understanding of Cheng's criticisms of the planner's destruction of the past and history, but closer attention to how this communicated a

vivid sense of the past was needed - for example the contrast between imagery related to the present and what it implies about the past.

Section C: Prose

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

Question 19

The context is that Babamukuru has returned to the homestead with the news of Nhamo's death. The sadness of the actual event is confirmed by the reactions of the parents and his other siblings. There was much to be said on the mother's reaction in particular, both to this news and the later revelation that Tambu is to take his place at the mission, and on Tambu's rather more muted and nuanced reaction to news of her brother's death, as well as her sense of triumph at the end of the passage. This was the most popular of the three questions on *Nervous Conditions*. The key phrases in the question were 'how' and 'so sad and yet so hopeful'. Quite a few candidates' responses were very imbalanced, or only dealt with either 'sad' or 'hopeful'. Many were keen to go beyond the extract and discuss the significance of the opportunity being offered to Tambu in the thematic context of the novel, without really exploring the grief that is so palpable at the funeral first. In particular, the ability of the narrator to create such a visual picture was recognised and commented on by comparatively few candidates. Most responses focused on the content and meaning of the passage, rather than explore *how* Dangaremba's writing makes the moment both sad and hopeful.

Question 20

Candidates were asked which male character they found 'most admirable'. Babamukuru was the more popular choice, but some saw Mr Matimba as admirable, as his help for Tambu is not affected by family ties or responsibilities. On the surface, Matimba was the more straightforward option, as he makes few appearances and there is no ambiguity about his essential goodness. However, more scope was available for candidates who opted for Babamukuru: the most able candidates were not only well aware of the negative aspects of his character, but also recognised that even he is torn between his cultural heritage and the westernisation of his family. A few made the case for Chido for his attempts to mediate between Nyasha and her father, and his concern for his mother's well-being. It could have been argued that none of the male characters in the novel is presented as admirable, but very few candidates took this view.

Question 21

Relatively few answers were seen to this question. Candidates were asked to write the thoughts of Tambu's mother after Babamukuru has just driven her back to her home after the birth of her son Dambudzo. She will certainly be pre-occupied with the baby, particularly as he is her only surviving male child and may well recall what happened to Nhamo. It is possible she will be thinking about her sister Lucia and the job Babamukuru has found for her, for which she expresses her gratitude. She may be contemplating her own forthcoming wedding, which Babamukuru has arranged for her. She could well express mixed feelings about Babamukuru and his wife, and she may be regretting leaving baby-clothes behind her in her excitement. Responses were often very generalised and narrative; although most showed some general knowledge and understanding of some of the events, very few managed to capture her excitable and emotionally volatile voice.

ANITA DESAI: *Fasting, Feasting*

Question 22

The context is that Arun has just arrived at the Patton house following an unsuccessful stay in a room near the university, and with the help of an introduction from Mrs O'Henry. Mrs Patton shows a fascination for his different culture, especially the food, seizing the opportunity to 'mother' him and to make him feel at home. Her interest is focused on food, and her realisation that he is vegetarian is dramatic to the extent that she wants to join in. Arun is uncomfortable, even oppressed by her interest. The question asked candidates what Desai's writing made them feel about Mrs Patton at this moment. There was a tendency here for candidates to provide extensive narrative accounts and not address the question in detail. However, good candidates attempted to create an argument grounded in the text and often provided a balanced viewpoint. It was, however, clear that many candidates had not worked out their feelings about Mrs Patton beforehand. The complexity of her character was appreciated by relatively few; many applauded her friendliness towards Arun (and her kindness) without making any connection between this and the dysfunctional relationship she has with her own family. In many ways, she lives in her own head just as much as Arun does. We do not

know what she feels about any aspect of her own life, except that she does not want her sister to have a bad impression of her. If she allowed herself to dwell upon her life, we imagine she might be desperately unhappy.

Question 23

This was a very popular question, and candidates clearly felt very strongly about MamaPapa and their success as parents. There was much that could be, and was, said. For example, their intentions are honourable, but some of their children get more attention than others. Arun, being the only boy, gets all of the attention but he also gets all of the pressure. Uma is used pretty much as a skivvy; they see no point in continuing her education. They go to great lengths to arrange marriages for the daughters, but do not show much discrimination in selecting husbands; although Papa does rescue Uma from her unhappy marriage. Candidates engaged enthusiastically with this question and a surprising number were totally supportive of MamaPapa, believing that, despite their shortcomings as parents in some respects, they only had their children's best interests at heart. The best answers were able to offer a more subtle verdict on this – that, beneath the facade of looking out for their children, they were perhaps really only protecting their own best interests. Also to be commended were those responses that took the balanced view of suggesting that the decisions taken by MamaPapa in the course of the novel were totally in line with their cultural conventions and beliefs.

Question 24

The relationship between Uma and Aruna has always been slightly awkward, in that Aruna has shone in every respect beside Uma. In previous visits she has tended to dump the children on Uma and go off visiting her friends. Dinesh is a rather sinister child, as shown by the shooting of the pigeon, his blame of Uma, and the mysterious activities with Panna. Good answers showed empathy for Uma, and captured her feelings which would probably be mostly those of relief. Weaker answers merged all the visits of Aruna and her family into one and became rather too narrative, giving Uma a voice that was too outspoken and confidently articulate.

KIRAN DESAI: *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

Question 25

Candidates were asked to show how Desai made the experts consulted by the family so ridiculous. There was much to comment on: the energetic good sport Dr. Banerjee with his conventional medicine, who in the end can only declare Sampath crazy; the Tibetan who thinks that sea mice and other non-existent animals might do the trick; the nature doctor who prescribes starvation as a cure; and finally the holy man, who ironically is perhaps the most sensible in his down to earth comments and advice. This was a popular choice and the overwhelming majority of candidates were able to produce reasonable responses, but few were able to go beyond this. As ever, the way to gain higher marks lay in the willingness to explore language in detail. Few highlighted the exchanges between Mr Chawla and the holy man, and how comic effect is gained from the rapid-fire questions which become increasingly bizarre in nature and the largely monosyllabic responses: no comment is given about how the questions were asked, it is left to the reader to imagine this ridiculous but deadly serious conversation. What unites all the 'experts' is their absolute confidence in their own wisdom. Stronger answers were able to identify Desai's use of caricature and satire: weaker answers retold the extract.

Question 26

Desai presents Mr Chawla as endlessly self-important, directing his family like a policeman. He is full of bustling, often mindless, energy but without an ounce of imagination. He is greedy enough to reverse his view of Sampath once he has recognised his son's potential as a cash cow. Candidates who chose this question were able to show a range of knowledge of his character, but responses were often lacking in the necessary focus on how Desai ridicules him through her descriptions of his behaviour. The best engaged with her writing and satire, but most retold what he did without drawing any relevant conclusions.

Question 27

This was a popular question, and most candidates who chose to answer on it did quite well. Sampath would clearly be feeling horror at the idea of being married to anyone as far from his dream of a woman as his father's choice. He would be shuddering at the memories of her ice cold touch, and her scrawny form pointing out the chasm between her and the dream of his ideal woman. No doubt he would be ever more

certain that he must stay where he is. Stronger candidates engaged well with this task, capturing Sampath's voice, which ranged from panic to a state of ecstatic dreaminess. Those who were less successful with his voice nonetheless showed relevant knowledge of the context, and conveyed his revulsion at his father's choice.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Question 28

The focus of the question was on how Eliot vividly reveals the relationship between Squire Cass and his sons in the passage. There is evidence of the irascibility of the Squire, the excessiveness of his reactions, and the way in which the sons conspire to avoid their father's anger. We see Godfrey's feeble attempts to placate him – and his failure to achieve anything, as well as the Squire's lack of faith in him. There is dissatisfaction expressed towards both sons. Good answers were able to comment on this and see implications such as an uncaring and inconsistent father, and two sons (perhaps even four) who have turned out badly as a result; they were also able to comment on the way in which Eliot makes the dialogue so revealing. Some mistakenly saw the Cass family as aristocracy, and asserted that Eliot was making a political point about the ineffectiveness of the ruling class.

Question 29

A pity more did not attempt this question, as most candidates who chose it did reasonably well. Dolly is a delightfully positive character who has significance in the overall context of the novel in terms of the rehabilitation of Silas Marner. Her unfailing kindness was recognised and illustrated by all candidates who responded warmly to it. Candidates were generally able to cite instances of Dolly's helpfulness to Silas Marner, and others could additionally discuss her significance in the novel. The best answers focused on showing how Eliot's writing makes Dolly 'so memorable' to them, for example through direct description and authorial comment, and instances of Dolly's religious fervour and her behaviour, which reflect her Christian principles. Some responses showed knowledge, but were restricted to a general character study with no personal response to her character or reasons why she is 'so memorable'.

Question 30

Nancy is a good and pragmatic character. She has just learnt from Godfrey of his parentage of Eppie. No doubt she will be thinking of own childlessness, and Godfrey's earlier suggestion of adoption. It is possible this will affect how she feels towards Godfrey at this moment. However, her thoughts about the way forward will no doubt be influenced by what she knows of Silas and his relationship with Eppie. The best answers showed understanding and knowledge of its context, but not many managed to capture the sheer horror Nancy must have felt upon her husband's confession of his earlier transgressions. It must have been a real struggle for her to reconcile herself to this. Having done so, however, the prospect of adopting Eppie must have seemed like a God-sent opportunity to her but, again, candidates did not always convey this excitement. There were some extremely creative expressions of emotion which really bore little relationship to either the events of the novel or Nancy's character.

SUSAN HILL: *I'm the King of the Castle*

Question 31

At first, this moment appears to be a decisive turning point. For the first time Hooper cringes in the face of Kingshaw's violence, instead of the other way round. Kingshaw feels totally superior even when he gives the immediate advantage away. It is possible that the reader feels Kingshaw to be terribly mistaken. The best answers were those that recognised that, by clinging to his sense of morality and goodness (despite his initial outburst), Kingshaw is doomed to lose the battle in the long run, as Hooper is constricted by no such concepts. They also engaged with Hill's writing, making the point for example that the dramatic quality of the short sentence 'But Kingshaw could feel him, listening' towards the end of the passage creates a terrifying, almost tangible sense of fear for the future.

Question 32

This was a question that was well answered on the whole. Better responses were those that looked for the fine detail when describing incidences of Hooper's cruelty. Closer examination of fewer of his actions was more effective than a simple overview of his wickedness. What is truly terrifying about him is the sense of omniscience in Kingshaw's mind, and this was recognised by many. The majority of candidates were able to

cite relevant instances of Hooper's behaviour and treatment of Kingshaw. The strongest responses showed awareness of Hill's methods, and engaged with language effects. There was also some understanding of Hooper's psychological abnormality illustrated by most by his reaction to his grandfather's death and to Hooper's suicide. The key phrase was 'such a terrifying figure', and those who focused their response on this did best.

Question 33

Not many candidates chose this question. Fielding's voice would be quite matter of fact. He might be considering whether it is worthwhile remaining friends with Kingshaw if that is to be his attitude. He no doubt would be thinking about the relationship between Hooper and Kingshaw, and life at Warings. He might also be thinking about Kingshaw's behaviour: why did he refuse to come home with him and Hooper, and why did Kingshaw seem so angry and upset? Better responses showed an understanding of this and knowledge of the context; there were, however, quite a few candidates who clearly found it hard to decide what he would be thinking about his new acquaintances, and instead wrote entirely creative responses describing daily life of the farm with no reference to what had just happened.

from *Stories of Ourselves*

Question 34

This story appears to have been greatly enjoyed by candidates, although some viewed the father particularly harshly. He was often seen to care about nothing but money, and some went as far as to say that the boy hated him. The text itself suggests nothing more than a retrospective irony, with some gentle mockery. The best answers were those that were able to stand back from the content of the story, and recognise that this story is not told by a 13 year old boy but by an adult looking back to the time when he was at that age. Thus the humour is refined and filtered through an adult's eyes. The 'how', 'vivid' and 'amusing' was explored quite effectively by stronger candidates, but there was a tendency with weaker responses to simply assert that a point was 'amusing' and retell the extract without making any comment on Lurie's writing.

Question 35

This was a popular choice with candidates, but many struggled to focus clearly enough on just what makes the story so shocking, relying instead on a narrative summary of the entire story. There was much that could be commented on such as the deliberate targeting of the man by the horse; the potential violence throughout; and the nightmarish quality of the writing. The best did do this, engaging sensitively with Hughes' writing, recognising the 'man versus nature' symbolism at the heart of the text. Most candidates were able to respond at some level, commenting on the strangeness and terrifying portrayal of the horse. Stronger candidates considered the man's expectations in returning; the part played by descriptions of the weather and landscape; even going on to consider different possible perspectives of the narrative. The best focused on 'so shocking', whereas some focused instead on the psychology of the protagonist or the significance of the horse, without much or any reference to the question.

Question 36

Candidates had the opportunity to capture Lord Emsworth's style of speech, that of an aristocratic buffoon; they also engaged with the humour of the situation. There were many highly entertaining responses. One answer even had Lord Emsworth prevaricate on whether Donaldson's produced dog biscuits or cat biscuits. Whilst some candidates found it hard to sustain a developed response and the voice - wrongly supposing that Lord Emsworth might use such Americanisms as 'gotten' - most candidates were able to capture something of Lord Emsworth's self-centred view of the world; his obsessive concern for the pumpkin; and his basic stupidity. What is most clear is that the story is clearly a favourite.