

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/01 Portfolio
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Key messages

- Teachers should refer to the 0408 Syllabus and Coursework Handbook during the planning stages of the course.
- Tasks for all assignments must be worded to enable candidates to fulfil the requirements of the band descriptors and be written clearly at the start of each assignment.
- Written assignments should include focused ticking and marginal annotation by the teacher which comment on strengths and weaknesses of candidate performance and should be clearly linked to the marking criteria. Where marks are changed during internal moderation there should be a comment justifying the change.
- Administration, including clerical checks of marks transcribed from candidate work to the Individual candidate Record card, the centre Assessment Summary Form and the MS1s, should be rigorous.
- Individual Candidate Record Cards should be securely fastened to candidate work and presented without plastic or bulky folders.

General comments

The observations in this general report should be read alongside the individual report to the centre.

All centres were aware of the changes to the syllabus for 2022 and chose appropriate drama and prose texts for the two assignments. Centres are reminded that the different texts must be used for each assignment.

The Critical Response

Successful responses demonstrated clear critical engagement with the selected text in response to a well-formulated task. These responses analysed the ways writers achieve effects and were supported by well-selected and concise textual references. There were many perceptive and insightful responses seen, demonstrating knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the texts studied. Many candidates mentioned relevant linguistic terms but to be rewarded the effects created need to be explored.

Weaker responses were narrative or explanatory in approach, lacking textual detail to support ideas and a response to the ways the writer creates effects. Candidates should be reminded that personal responses should be informed and supported by specific textual detail: merely asserting a point is unlikely to achieve high reward unless supported and developed. Listing the writer's techniques in the introductory paragraph is not a helpful start to a response.

To allow candidates to meet the assessment criteria in their writing, effective tasks must be set. Examples of appropriately challenging tasks can be found in the 0408 *Coursework Handbook*.

The Empathic Response

The most successful responses focused on a specific character and moment in the text, offering a sustained and engagingly authentic 'voice' for the chosen character. These responses were firmly rooted in the text.

Less successful responses did not focus on a precise moment and relied on speculation rather than close detail to the text. Often these involved some retelling of the story rather than conveying the thoughts and feelings of the chosen character. Starting an empathic task in diary form, for example, 'Dear Diary', or as a journal entry, is not conducive to a successful response and is unlikely to result in an authentic voice for most characters. Direct quotation and imaginary conversations between characters should also be avoided.

In creating an authentic and convincing voice for a character, candidates are not expected to write in archaic Shakespearean style or to attempt to imitate African American or American English features and idioms which sometimes appear too modern.

Examples of good and unsuitable empathic tasks are given in the *0408 Coursework Handbook*.

Teacher annotation

Teachers are reminded that all assignments should show evidence of having been marked to assist the moderation process. Focused ticking of key points, supported by brief reference to the band descriptors in marginal annotation and a detailed summative comment, are a prerequisite for all written assignments. These annotations allow external Moderators to understand how the final mark was awarded. It is unhelpful for teachers to just refer to the AOs in the margin, as these need to be linked to the specific level and skills being rewarded. Marks changed during internal moderation should be written at the end of assignments and transferred to the Individual Candidate Record Card, showing clearly which is the final mark and total to be transferred to the Centre Assessment Summary Form and the MS1. All marks changed, during the internal moderation process, should be supported by a clear comment, linked to the level descriptors to indicate the reasons for the change.

Administration

Care should be taken over the presentation of the portfolios. Candidate work should be sent to the Moderator with the Individual Record Card fastened securely (e.g. by a treasury tag or staple) to the written assignments (and not placed in plastic wallets or cardboard folders) to ensure ease of access. Assignments should be organised in the order presented on the Individual Record Card. A rigorous clerical check of the transfer of marks, at all stages of the process, should be in place to ensure all candidates are awarded the correct marks and grades.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/21
Unseen

Key messages

- Candidates who are able to integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the way in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as, simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comment on these features work best when they are used to explore the way in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- Candidates who can integrate references from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by 'This shows ...' tend to lose sight of how, exactly the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the 'middle' missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should be willing to quote directly the words they are commenting on.

General comments

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem, before moving on to closer exploration of language. This in itself demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the keywords in the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text. With a number of responses there was an issue of extreme brevity and these candidates struggled to meet the requirements of the mark scheme. Writing a summation of the poem can be a way for candidates to create a confidence-building foundation for a more developed discussion.

In addition, some planning is needed in order to decide what parts and features of the poem need to be addressed in each of the two questions, depending upon the focus of the questions. Often, candidates gave a very brief response to 1b because they had written about the entire poem in a lengthy response to 1a. There was often a lot of overlap between responses, where much of the evaluation was repeated word for word in both answers.

Comments on specific questions

'As I Grew Older'

Generally, candidates interpreted the poem as describing the way in which someone's childhood dreams of their life's potential are gradually eroded and destroyed by aging and the onset of adult responsibilities, which are characterised as a metaphoric 'wall' and an encroaching darkness which overwhelms the speaker before he has realised it.

Question 1

(a) How does the poet portray the importance of his dream?

Most candidates were able to discuss the use of simile in the dream being *Bright like a sun*, and the power of making the comparison between the childhood dream and something as powerful and essential to life on Earth as the Sun. More detailed responses explored the use of tenses, and the

fact that the poem begins in the manner of a 'flashback', where the speaker is looking backward on the way the dream used to be a *long time ago*, and then later in the poem the use of the present tense creates the feeling that the poet is appealing directly to the reader. Many remarked that the dream must have been significant enough that although it was a *long time ago* the poet still remembered the dream and felt its loss. Many discussed the use of structure in conveying the dream's importance – the impact of repetition, *rose, /Rose slowly, /Slowly... /Rose* as well as the use of short 'staccato', end-stopped lines. The effects of these were cited as slowing the pace and adding drama as the reader takes in the way a wall rises and the shadow falls over the life of the speaker, blocking the speaker from the dream. The line, *I am black* was generally interpreted as the shocking way in which the loss of the speaker's dreams removes them from the light of the bright dream, *No longer the light of my dream before me*. One of the most developed responses looked at the use of dashes at the end of lines suggesting that the poet could not quite find words to describe his loss; the poet attempts to hand over to the reader the task of imagining just how much anguish he feels at losing his dream.

(b) How does the poet strikingly convey his feelings as he grows older?

Most candidates noted a volta at *My hands! / My dark hands*, and the shock of this darkness having overwhelmed the speaker even to the change in their physical appearance as they realise they have lost their dream and indeed themselves – 'even to their very soul' – as they have aged. The wall rises *until it touched the sky* and many candidates remarked that this description is a powerful exaggeration, or hyperbole, in suggesting that the speaker would not be able to climb the wall or break through it, which was linked to the fact that as people age they cannot recover lost abilities or dreams they had in childhood – they must deal with their adult responsibilities. The speaker then becomes frantic, as evidenced by the repeating use of exclamation points, to *Break through the wall! / Find my dream!*

Most responses included some comment on the forceful language used to *shatter ... smash ... break* the darkness of the wall in order for the speaker to get back to their dream, which is like *a thousand lights of sun, / Into a thousand whirling dreams / Of sun!* The hyperbole of these lines was generally noted as being effective in conveying the speaker's 'desperation' to break free from the shadow. The most detailed responses also discussed the movement of the dream from being *In front*, to being *Above me*, in an all-encompassing manner, and some remarked that the *thick wall* is suggestive of a jail. Many commented on the way in which the final lines add to the sense of the speaker being more frenzied, through the use of enjambment, where before the lines were so short and end-stopped. The last several lines were generally regarded as a 'return to hope' as the speaker does break through the wall and gets back to the light of their dream.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/22
Unseen

Key messages

- Candidates who are able to integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the way in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as, simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comment on these features work best when they are used to explore the way in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- Candidates who can integrate references from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by 'This shows ...' tend to lose sight of how, exactly the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the 'middle' missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should be willing to quote directly the words they are commenting on.

General comments

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem, before moving on to closer exploration of language. This in itself demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the keywords in the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text. With a number of responses there was an issue of extreme brevity and these candidates struggled to meet the requirements of the mark scheme. Writing a summation of the poem can be a way for candidates to create a confidence-building foundation for a more developed discussion.

In addition, some planning is needed in order to decide what parts and features of the poem need to be addressed in each of the two questions, depending upon the focus of the questions. Often, candidates gave a very brief response to 1b because they had written about the entire poem in a lengthy response to 1a. There was often a lot of overlap between responses, where much of the evaluation was repeated word for word in both answers.

Comments on specific questions

'Starlings'

Question 1

(a) How does the poet vividly describe the starlings?

Some weaker responses struggled with the word *starlings*, and attempted to reason that the '- ling' ending suggested a manner of diminutive, as in 'duckling', which suggested to them that *starlings* could be small stars that had fallen from the sky and were whirling towards the forest.

Most candidates were able to comment on the words used to describe the movement of the starlings, *pour*, *spill*, as creating imagery of a liquid, suggestive of a huge number of starlings flying smoothly with grace and elegance, which contrasts with *spin* and *eddy* which both suggest a circular motion that might be more frenzied. Most candidates were able to contextualise the

starlings against the backdrop of the sky, though some seemed to be unfamiliar with the word *dusk*, and interpreted the *dull* light to be that of sunrise rather than sunset.

Most candidates described the effectiveness of the image of the birds as a *fist* and stronger responses went on to discuss the effects of using a word usually associated either with 'power' and 'aggression' or 'independence' and 'victory', with the group movement of the birds. Links were then made between the *fist* and the way the poet describes the birds 'battering' their way into the trees, again suggesting strength and forcefulness. There were a number of candidates who interpreted the 'battering' of the trees by the birds as being a demonstration of their brutality and violence, as suggested by the *fist*, and many saw the birds as looking for prey or attacking the trees to feed on their sap.

Many explored the possible symbolism in the image of the black fist of birds against the sky's *red warning*. There were a variety of interpretations on this. Most argued that red must be symbolic of blood and danger and that black generally symbolises evil and/or death. Stronger responses remarked the contrast made by the birds *flashing black* and the way that this oxymoron creates an image of something that is dark *flashing* which is strange, as opposed to the sun, which is *dull* when generally bright. Some candidates were able to remark that the poet has created a silhouette of dark birds against a red sky of sunset and that the birds might *flash* because of their shiny wings or because their movements are so rapid that they appear to flash back and forth.

More developed responses explored the imagery of the sky being compared to *dark metal*, with some commenting on the contrast suggested between an industrialised connotation of *metal* and nature, as represented by starlings, sun and trees.

Some of the most detailed responses also commented on the use of the word *driven* to describe the birds, which suggests their instinct, or motivation. Some candidates also remarked the way the birds' cry is *high* and *cold as winter*, and linked this to a piercing sound 'like an alarm being sounded'.

(b) How does the poet dramatically explore the link between the starlings and the changing seasons?

Many candidates were able to make some link between the birds flying into the trees, with the trees being awoken from a winter slumber to a new Spring. Candidates noted that the poem is structured into twelve two-line stanzas which could suggest the twelve months of the year and many commented that the poem is written in free verse and that the lack of rhyme and rhythm might be argued to mimic the unpredictable wheeling of the birds' flight. In general, candidates were able to discuss the poet's description of the paradoxical *soundless voice* and *blind eyes* which describe a 'mysterious relationship' between the birds' rushing and calling and the trees being woken to a new season. Many wrote about the way that this signals an inter-connectedness between different parts of nature, which humans cannot hear, see, or understand. It is a *cycled secret* that has been changing the seasons for *ten million years*.

The image which appears to have been most puzzling to candidates was, *time hangs like a dead fruit*. There were a variety of interpretations of this image, many suggesting that it was a way of symbolising Time and the natural cycle of life and death. It is worth noting that as long as candidates are able to support their interpretation of the poem with relevant examples with justification, their individual reading can be credited even if it differs from the norm.

Stronger responses included comments on the alliterative contrast between *slow sap*, *sluggish branches* with the ferocity of the birds' movement which *quickness with clashing song*. There were a number of candidates who suggested that the *soundless voice* and the *wheeling arm* might indicate the operation of a deity who is in control of birds and trees, and *swings/this black fist of starlings* in order to bring about the change from winter to spring. Many alternatively saw the *wheeling arm* as being suggestive of the hands of a clock, linking the image back to Time.

A number of responses included an interpretation of the *red warning* as being suggestive of Nature warning humanity about the destruction of the planet's eternal rhythms of seasons and climates.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/23
Unseen

Key messages

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General comments

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem, before moving on to closer exploration of language. This in itself demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the keywords in the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text. With a number of responses there was an issue of extreme brevity and these candidates struggled to meet the requirements of the mark scheme. Writing a summation of the poem can be a way for candidates to create a confidence-building foundation for a more developed discussion.

In addition, some planning is needed in order to decide what parts and features of the poem need to be addressed in each of the two questions, depending upon the focus of the questions. Often, candidates gave a very brief response to 1b because they had written about the entire poem in a lengthy response to 1a. There was often a lot of overlap between responses, where much of the evaluation was repeated word for word in both answers.

Comments on specific questions

'The Flower-Press'

Question 1

(a) How does the poet strikingly convey her thoughts about the pressed flowers?

Weaker responses were able to make a narrative recasting of the story and observe that the Mother used to love the flowers and the activity of putting them into the press, but then she got tired of them and became more interested in being a Mother. Most candidates were able to discuss the way the flowers are described as being 'in a poor state', which 'makes the Mother sad because she used to care about them'.

More developed responses noted that the Mother's nervousness in showing the flower-press to her daughter is placed in juxtaposition to the daughter's *excitement and chatter*. Many were able to add that the Mother's nervous apprehension comes in part from her neglect as shown by the way that the flower-press has lain on a shelf for years gathering dust. She remembers how carefully she placed the flowers in the press and there is a sadness in her tone as she sees that they are now only *fragments*. Most candidates noted the metaphor of comparing the flowers to ghosts of their former glory, bringing a sense of death into the midst of the occasion of showing the flowers to her daughter who is very much alive, though the word *corruption* was not always understood as signifying the decay of death. Many candidates remarked that the flowers are now *Dry, frail, faded... flawed*, where they must have once been beautiful enough for her to collect and preserve them, as they are now dead and have 'lost all of their beauty'.

Some candidates extended the ideas presented in the poem's imagery to the larger idea of the dead flowers being symbolic of the way in which people have plucked and pressed down Nature as a whole. Some responses were inclined to be somewhat overtaken by discussion of the Press as a metaphor for humankind's inclination for destruction, moving away from the focus of the question.

Stronger responses identified the poem as a dramatic monologue and included discussion of the Mother's concern that the flowers now represent a faded remnant – perhaps her memories of her past life before her daughter was born. They are *shut in, immobilized* and therefore represent ghosts of her own old life.

(b) How does the poet vividly convey her feelings about her daughter?

Most candidates were able to discuss the evident love and care felt by the Mother for her daughter, who is like a flower to her – the one flower that has now replaced the preserved flowers in the press. Where those flowers were static and faded, her daughter is *ever-growing, changing* and, therefore, the ultimate symbol of life and the future. Many candidates noted the Mother's comparison of her daughter to *pure air*, which 'is necessary for life', which creates imagery of innocence. Most commented that the Mother's attitude towards her daughter is protective. The way in which the Mother questions herself about whether she should bring her daughter *word of corruption*, was generally taken to indicate that the Mother asks herself whether she should protect her daughter 'from the cruelty of the world', which would be likely to damage her innocence.

Most responses included the idea that the Mother feels her daughter has 'changed her life', and that where she was once happy to press flowers, now she has a daughter to take care of who will grow, unlike the pressed flowers which 'just died'. Developed responses included comment on how the Mother marvels that her daughter's *bright eyes* only see the positive beauty in the flowers, and that she is eager to *press some too*.

Stronger responses were able to go further in commenting how, to the Mother, this innocence and purity of her daughter leads her forward, *without fear*, drawing her deeper *into life*, making *the dead come alive again*.

There were some responses which explored the idea that the Mother is indicating here that she has felt less than fully alive before the birth of her daughter, and that the daughter's pure life and joy has 'brought her to a kind of resurrection'.

Stronger responses were able to identify the rhetorical questions and the 'almost stream-of-consciousness thought process' by which the Mother agonises over how to best protect her child from 'seeing too much too soon', as she suddenly sees the flower fragments as symbols of death.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/31
Set Text

Key messages

Successful responses:

- Show a detailed knowledge of texts.
- Address the question explicitly.
- Support their views with relevant textual reference.
- Explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects.
- Use much direct quotation in **Section B** answers to explore the detail of the writing.

Less successful responses:

- Have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts.
- Narrate or describe aspects of texts rather than answer the question.
- Make assertions which are not substantiated.
- Merely log or explain writers' techniques.
- Have an insufficient range of quotations to support views and explore aspects of the writing in **Section B** answers.

General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied.

The majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for this paper. The two most common problems arose from a lack of focus on the question set and a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points in **Section B** essay questions. Some of the least successful **Section B** answers restricted their range of reference to the extract printed with **Section A** questions, even where the **Section B** question instructed candidates **not** to use the extract printed in **Section A**. Candidates need to be familiar with the layout and rubric of the paper before they sit the examination.

The strongest answers showed an impressive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations to support their ideas. For **Section A** questions, the most successful responses explored the detail of the extracts with considerable sensitivity, using much well-selected reference. For **Section B** questions, the most successful candidates were able to recall from the whole text an extensive range of quotation which they deployed effectively in their response to the question. In less successful responses across both sections of the paper, an absence of direct textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation. The weakest responses to **Section A** questions tracked the content of the extract without selecting relevant material with which to address the question.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish: these answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'strikingly', 'powerful', 'amusingly', 'revealing', 'vividly', 'surprising'. There were, however, many responses that made only a limited attempt to address these key words. Again this session, in less successful responses, candidates embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Paragraphs sometimes began with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be told that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward; they should tailor relevant material from their knowledge to address the specific demands of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – The Sound of Waves

Many candidates commented on Hatsue's jealousy over Shinji's supposed feelings for Chiyoko ('All that talk about you and Chiyoko-san'). Fewer candidates mentioned his guilt about their previous encounter (that it 'seemed to smack of evil'). The most successful responses explored the significance of Shinji's sense of guilt about this intimate moment in the preceding chapter and also the impact of his long monologue, his moment of 'rare fluency' in the second half of the extract, and Hatsue's reaction to it. Less successful responses offered descriptive rather than critical responses.

Question 2 – Yerma

Most candidates commented on the evident fractiousness between the couple and showed an awareness of the tensions on and under the surface of their relationship. Nearly all responses made reference to Juan's line 'Sheep in the pen and women at home'. More successful responses were able to use this quotation to explore Juan's traditionalist perspective on the role of a wife. These responses focused on the key words 'dialogue' and 'powerful', with comments particularly on the dramatic impact of the characters' pithy and curt lines. Less successful responses relied on description and assertion, with little sense of the characters as dramatic 'constructs'.

Question 3 – The Bonesetter's Daughter

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Question 4 – The Government Inspector

Most responses mentioned the extent of the corruption among town officials. There was an acknowledgement of the humour in Khlestakov successfully gaining cash from the Warden and in the latter's complete gullibility. Only the strongest responses probed closely the Warden's polite and formal language ('Your excellency'), the language he uses to incriminate his fellow town officials and the structure of his speech in creating such an amusing and revealing moment in the play. Less successful responses re-told what is happening in the extract, working through it in order, without achieving a clear focus on the question.

Question 5 – First Love

The most successful responses explored closely Clare's use of imagery ('sweet flower', 'blood burnt', 'My legs refused...'), the contrast of 'midnight at noon day' and the effect of the winter and snow imagery in the final stanza. Most responses showed understanding of the suddenness of the experience of falling in love and the extreme physical effects on the speaker. Less successful responses tended to describe content or log poetic devices used without analysing specific effects created. The weakest responses said that the poem was (or might one day be) relatable without addressing the key words of the question.

Question 6 – Stories of Ourselves

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Section B

Question 7 – The Sound of Waves

Most candidates commented on Terukichi's wealth, his effect on other islanders (such as the gossiping men at the baths) and his arrogance to the women who call at his house. The most successful responses explored Mishima's depiction of a larger-than-life character, with some making reference to the memorable line 'His aged nudity was a marvel to behold' as well as the presentation of his dismissive and rude attitude towards others. These responses noted his eventual approval of Shinji, who has 'get up and go', as a suitable husband for his daughter. Less successful responses offered simple character sketches, with insufficient textual detail to address Assessment Objective 3.

Question 8 – Yerma

The most successful responses explored the attitudes of not only Yerma and Juan but also those of Maria, the Pagan Woman and Dolores. These responses analysed the contribution of their varying attitudes to the dramatic impact of the play. They considered the increasingly desperate nature of Yerma's words in the later part of the play, leading to the dramatic climax in the strangling of Juan. The weakest responses made use only of the **Section A** extract on pages 4 and 5 of the question paper to address this **Section B** general essay question on page 14. This was not a productive approach since most of the play was ignored.

Question 9 – The Bonesetter's Daughter

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Question 10 – The Government Inspector

Most responses were able to see that the Mayor was the very embodiment of municipal corruption and sleaze and noted his delusions of grandeur. The most successful responses explored the lines the Mayor speaks and aspects of the play's structure and form to show how Gogol sets the Mayor up as a character to despise. These candidates took delight in the Mayor's comeuppance in the play's penultimate scene and his response to the Postmaster's revelation that Khlestakov was not an inspector. In his defence, some argued that the Mayor is not the only town official mired in sleaze. Less successful responses had an insecure grasp of the detail of the play and few direct quotations either to support points or explore Gogol's use of language.

Question 11 – Songs of Ourselves

There were few responses seen that had the necessary detail to address the focus of the question, the ways in which Clarke creates disturbing impressions of the natural world in her poem *Lament*. Without such detail, it was not possible to explore relevant aspects of Clarke's use of language, structure and the form of the poem to 'create disturbing impressions'. Only a very few candidates were able to explore the imagery (of, for example, 'nest of sickness', 'whale struck dumb by the missile's thunder', 'scalded ocean') or the form of the lament.

Question 12 – Stories of Ourselves

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/32 Set Text

Key messages

Successful responses:

- Show a detailed knowledge of texts.
- Address the question explicitly.
- Support their views with relevant textual reference.
- Explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects.
- Use much direct quotation in **Section B** answers to explore the detail of the writing.

Less successful responses:

- Have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts.
- Narrate or describe aspects of texts rather than answer the question.
- Make assertions which are not substantiated.
- Merely log or explain writers' techniques.
- Have an insufficient range of quotations to support views and explore aspects of the writing in **Section B** answers.

General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied.

The majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for this paper. The two most common problems arose from a lack of focus on the question set and a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points in **Section B** essay questions. Some of the least successful **Section B** answers restricted their range of reference to the extract printed with **Section A** questions, even where the **Section B** question instructed candidates **not** to use the extract printed in **Section A**. Candidates need to be familiar with the layout and rubric of the paper before they sit the examination.

The strongest answers showed an impressive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations to support their ideas. For **Section A** questions, the most successful responses explored the detail of the extracts with considerable sensitivity, using much well-selected reference. For **Section B** questions, the most successful candidates were able to recall from the whole text an extensive range of quotation which they deployed effectively in their response to the question. In less successful responses across both sections of the paper, an absence of direct textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation. The weakest responses to **Section A** questions tracked the content of the extract without selecting relevant material with which to address the question.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish: these answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'strikingly', 'powerful', 'amusingly', 'revealing', 'vividly', 'surprising'. There were, however, many responses that made only a limited attempt to address these key words. Again this session, in less successful responses, candidates embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Paragraphs sometimes began with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be told that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward; they should tailor relevant material from their knowledge to address the specific demands of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – The Sound of Waves

Most candidates commented on Shinji's deep anxiety at losing his pay packet, the encounter between Hatsue and Shinji's mother, Shinji's unfounded jealousy of Yasuo and his 'feeling of guilt at this first experience of life'. The most successful responses explored Mishima's focus on physical description of Hatsue and Shinji and his use of sensuous diction and natural imagery – and how this makes the moment memorable. Less successful responses offered descriptive rather than close analysis. Some responses talked in general terms about the island and nature without rooting their comments in the detail of the extract.

Question 2 – Yerma

Most candidates were able to write in at least general terms about the audience's introduction to the married couple, the tensions within the relationship evident from the start of the play and their very different perspectives on having children. The most successful responses acknowledged that Yerma and Juan were dramatic 'constructs' rather than real-life people, exploring the description of Juan that Lorca puts in Yerma's words ('pale', 'growing backwards'), the image of the rain falling on mustard seeds and the impact of the lines towards the end of the extract after the stage direction of Yerma 'taking the initiative'. Less successful responses worked through the extract without achieving a clear focus on the key words 'dramatic' and 'revealing'.

Question 3 – The Bonesetter's Daughter

In the few responses seen, there was an understanding of LuLing's delusion about being present in Los Angeles at the OJ chase shown on TV and of Ruth's anxiety about her mother's condition evident in her desperation to put a positive spin on her mother's odd behaviour. There was some exploration of LuLing's scared account of being a spectator at the scene of the crime and the medical jargon used by the doctor and Ruth. Some responses simply re-told the content of the extract with an insecure understanding of its position within the wider novel.

Question 4 – The Government Inspector

Most candidates showed an understanding of the dramatic impact of the revelation that Khlestakov is not a government inspector. Many noted the comic nature of the Mayor's initial response to the Postmaster's news – 'I'll have you arrested'. The most successful responses explored the ways in which Gogol creates suspense in the gradual revelation to the Mayor of Khlestakov's deception and commented on the dramatically satisfying nature of the Mayor's comeuppance, with detailed reference to the lines given to him. Less successful responses worked through the extract, stating that particular lines or moments were 'entertaining' without analysing why.

Question 5 – Songs of Ourselves

There were many responses, of varying standard, to this question on Tuwhare's poem *Monologue*. Most candidates were able to comment on the noise of the factory, the speaker's position near the big doors, his empathy for unsuccessful job applicants and his deep-seated anxiety about an economic downturn. The most successful responses explored the description of the setting, the verbs describing the machines and people, and specific aspects of the poem's unusual form and structure. Less successful responses worked through the poem without focusing on the key words 'vividly capture'; some responses tried to cram into their answers too much detail from the poem with insufficient tailoring of their material to the question.

Question 6 – Stories of Ourselves

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Section B

Question 7 – The Sound of Waves

Most candidates showed an understanding of Shinji's mother as the sole breadwinner for two sons after her husband's death and of the modest living she earns as a pearl diver. She was widely regarded as a

sympathetic and admirable character with a keen sense of duty as mother and widow – though some candidates drew attention to what they saw as her shortcomings in the preparation of unappetising meals. The most successful responses explored Mishima's depiction of her strength and expertise in the diving competition, the account of the family's visit to the father's grave and the portrayal of her visit to Terukichi. Less successful responses provided simple character sketches, lacking the range of textual reference to explore the ways in which Mishima strikingly portrays Shinji's mother.

Question 8 – Yerma

Most candidates were able to articulate reasons for feeling sympathy for Yerma: her unhappy marriage, with the evident tensions between Yerma and Juan whenever they appear on stage, and her childlessness. Some candidates were concerned that her attitude towards having children is unhealthily obsessive. The most successful responses explored the ways in which Lorca presents the tensions and her despairing attitude towards her lack of fertility and the play's climax with her strangling of Juan. The strongest responses included much relevant material upon which to draw, including the language she uses to describe her marriage to Juan, her interactions with other women in the play and Victor's song. Candidates who ignored this question's instruction (on page 14) not to use the extract printed in **Question 2** (on pages 4 and 5) put themselves at a disadvantage, especially in cases where their textual references were restricted to the extract.

Question 9 – The Bonesetter's Daughter

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Question 10 – The Government Inspector

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

Question 11 – Songs of Ourselves

The strongest responses included an extensive range of direct quotation from the poem to support their points as they explored specific 'ways in which Shelley uses words and images to dramatic effect' in the poem. They showed a clear understanding of Shelley's critique of the pampered rich with their overweening sense of entitlement and of his direct challenge to the workers to rebel. These candidates explored the impact of imagery, rhetorical devices, and specific aspects of rhythm and rhyme. Less effective responses made overly assertive comments on the rhyme scheme and other general aspects of structure and form. Those candidates who lacked a range of textual detail found it difficult to explore aspects of Shelley's writing and often showed an insecure understanding of the poem.

Question 12 – Stories of Ourselves

There were too few responses to make useful comment.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/33
Set Text

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- address the question explicitly
- support their views with relevant textual reference
- explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects
- use much direct quotation in **Section B** answers to explore the detail of the writing.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- narrate or describe aspects of texts rather than answer the question
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely log or explain writers' techniques
- have an insufficient range of quotations to support views and explore aspects of the writing in **Section B** answers.

General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied.

The majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for this paper. The two most common problems arose from a lack of focus on the question set and a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points in **Section B** essay questions. Some of the least successful **Section B** answers restricted their range of reference to the extract printed with **Section A** questions, even where the **Section B** question instructed candidates **not** to use the extract printed in **Section A**. Candidates need to be familiar with the layout and rubric of the paper before they sit the examination.

The strongest answers showed an impressive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations to support their ideas. For **Section A** questions, the most successful responses explored the detail of the extracts with considerable sensitivity, using much well-selected reference. For **Section B** questions, the most successful candidates were able to recall from the whole text an extensive range of quotation which they deployed effectively in their response to the question. In less successful responses across both sections of the paper, an absence of direct textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation. The weakest responses to **Section A** questions tracked the content of the extract without selecting relevant material with which to address the question.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish: these answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'strikingly', 'powerful', 'amusingly', 'revealing', 'vividly', 'surprising'. There were, however, many responses that made only a limited attempt to address these key words. Again this session, in less successful responses, candidates embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Paragraphs sometimes began with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be told that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward; they should tailor relevant material from their knowledge to address the specific demands of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

This paper had a small entry. It is possible to make useful comment only on the questions below.

Section A

Question 1 – The Sound of Waves

There was generally an understanding that this moment described the lunch break after fishing and that the Terukichi was 'bringing his girl back' to the island. Some of the stronger responses commented on how Shinji's horizons and aspirations are determined by life on the island. Only a few candidates explored aspects of the dialogue between Jukichi and the boys or the narrative perspective on Shinji (in observations such as 'filled the boy's heart with strange emotions').

Question 5 – Songs of Ourselves

Most candidates worked through the poem describing the different impressions of time. Some candidates went beyond a descriptive approach to look more closely at Curnow's use of sensory language in words such as 'yellow', 'screech' and 'mist'. Only a few commented on the biblical references such as the final line's 'the Beginning and the End'.

Question 6 – Stories of Ourselves

Responses tended to work through the extract, with some understanding of the unexpected nature of the encounter between father and son. Candidates showed an awareness of Lord Emsworth's irritation with his son Freddie throughout the extract, though only a few were able to explore the precise effects of Wodehouse's use of language, for example, the hyperbole in 'fermenting parent', 'thundered' and 'seethed' to describe the father. This meant that there was generally insufficient exploration of the ways in which Wodehouse 'amusingly conveys' the father-son relationship.

Section B

Question 7 – The Sound of Waves

The few responses seen tended to be character sketches of the lighthouse keeper's shy and unsociable daughter, a student in Tokyo. There was an awareness of the impact on the plot and Shinji and Hatsue's relationship of her jealousy and gossiping. The more successful responses seen touched on some of the ways in which Mishima depicts the character's insecurities.

Question 11 – Songs of Ourselves

The few responses seen selected Shelley's *Song to the Men of England*. There was some understanding of Shelley's presentation of the wealthy and his challenge to the workers to rise up. There tended to be a lack of direct textual reference which was needed to address the question on how Shelley 'strikingly captures the voice' of the speaker.

Question 12 – Stories of Ourselves

Candidates showed some understanding of the mystery of the bus journey and the girl's errand. In some responses, there was an appreciation of her family's poverty and reference to her loss of innocence as she confronts her mother's sickness. There was little reference to the brief but telling description of her siblings and father. Candidates generally needed a more extensive and secure range of textual detail to be able to address the question's key words 'movingly portray'.