

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/11 Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

- Show an extensive knowledge of texts.
- Address directly the question that has been set.
- Support their arguments with relevant textual references.
- Explore sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- Have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts.
- Do not address the question set.
- Make simple assertions not rooted in the detail of the text.
- Merely label and list writers' techniques.
- Offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session, where candidates sustained perceptive and evaluative engagement with the texts they studied. Most candidates divided their time well across their two responses for the paper.

There were, once again, instances of some candidates making exclusive use of the extract in extract-based questions when answering general essay questions on Prose texts. As has been reported before, this approach is self-penalising as there is insufficient material for candidates to draw upon for their answers. It is not possible to make reasonably developed responses to general essay questions by relying solely on the content of the extract in the extract question.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question, where candidates selected relevant material and tailored it to the demands of the question. Detailed knowledge of a text cannot on its own achieve the highest reward as there must be a clear focus on the question set. Writing everything a candidate knows about the character or theme mentioned in a general essay question is not a productive approach as it can lead to character sketches or explanations of themes. Simply working through the poems in poetry questions or extracts in extract questions can result in a loss of focus on the question. Apt selection of material is the key to success.

Textual knowledge

In the strongest answers candidates skilfully embed both concise quotation and indirect textual reference to support their ideas. In answers to poetry and extract questions, candidates can take advantage of the printed text to support their ideas and to explore the ways in which the writer achieves their effects. The strongest responses to general essay questions showed detailed knowledge including much direct textual reference to support their ideas. Having recourse to learned direct quotations enabled candidates to explore the detail of the writing. Less successful responses showed only a basic and general grasp of the detail of the text, with little direct reference to enable them to explore a writer's use of language.

Writers' effects

The most convincing responses sustained a critical analysis of ways in which writers achieve their effects. In responses to poetry and extract questions, candidates embedded much well-selected, concise reference from the text printed in the question paper. Less successful responses had little evidence of direct quotation from the printed texts and missed the opportunity to explore the detail of the writing. Some less successful responses often commented discretely, and often mechanically, on connotations of specific words without relating them to the ways in which the words were used in the text. These responses sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, caesura and enjambment. In poetry responses, ABAB rhyme schemes were noted without analysis how specific examples reinforced meanings. Often unconvincing generalised claims were made about the length of lines, stanzas and paragraphs.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal engagement with texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all, preferring instead to embark on a list of pre-learned themes. Some prose answers included the phrase 'Another theme is...' rather as if the candidate wanted to write about a topic they had revised rather than engage with the specific question that had been set.

There were some good responses from capable candidates but in the majority of scripts, candidates needed to show a far more detailed knowledge of the texts. The answers were often generalised and relied heavily on narrative. Opportunities for development and expansion were often missed. There was generally a focus on the key words in a question as well as references to the question throughout, but a deeper exploration of the implications received little attention.

Summary of general comments

- Many scripts showed knowledge and understanding.
- Quotations were appropriately integrated.
- References to and quotations from the text were often neglected.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most answers addressed the question and understood that the poem was a critique of the idea of defying fate and that the man made a terrible mistake when he invoked the intervention of the three sisters. Candidates also understood the idea of the reversed life and showed some background knowledge of Greek mythology. Successful answers provided well-supported personal responses about the character, the relentlessness of his life and his agonising regret. These picked up on language features such as the images of regression and the impact of the last phrase in each stanza. Less successful answers commented on literal meaning but did not analyse how poetic devices contributed to effect. In a few answers there was some confusion about the identity of the straw-hatted girl.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular poetry question and produced many engaged personal responses which successfully addressed the question. Candidates found it easy to identify, explore and empathise with the 'strong' feelings particularly of the little boy. Many answers recognised the differing perspectives of the boy and father although some saw the boy as being abused. The most successful answers appreciated that the boy's extreme response was exaggerated and immature and that the fairy-tale images of giants and ogres were a figment of his imagination. They also understood the depth of the father's feelings of pain, love and determination to teach his son a life lesson. Less successful answers commented on the literal meaning of the poem, sometimes not understanding the implications of the fairy-tale imagery. A few considered only the boy's response and ignored the feelings of the father.

Question 3

There were few responses to this poem. Candidates generally demonstrated understanding of the man's elusive search for the woman with various interpretations of whether she was dead or had left him. Stronger answers explored some deeper implications, for example the man's increasing desperation, the details of the 'hunt' or the atmosphere. Less successful answers did not note the language features such as the tone, the punctuation effects or the narrator's voice.

Question 4

Very few candidates responded to this question and those that did were able to show some understanding of the poem but found it difficult to analyse the writer's use of language.

Question 5

Candidates seemed to enjoy this poem and produced some engaged answers showing understanding about the imaginative and creative Mrs Tilscher and the stimulating environment of her classroom. Stronger answers explored the teacher-candidate relationship and the safety of the classroom as well as the changes that occur when 'growing up'. They commented on the sensuous imagery describing the classroom and noted the atmospheric images in the last stanza, ('feverish', 'tangible alarm', 'fractious', 'sexy sky' etc.).

Weaker responses were able to understand how childhood was presented but did not consider how language contributed to the poem.

Question 6

The most successful answers focused on the key words, 'powerful impressions of the speaker', and provided convincing, relevant and well supported points to show understanding. They commented on the qualities of the speaker expressed specifically in the poem – the speaker is a habitual thief, his (or her) boredom, lack of feeling for the children etc. Stronger candidates evaluated writing effects such as the symbolism of the snowman, the images of ice, the cold and the underlying anger in the 4th stanza in the repeated kicking. Stronger answers often commented on the impact of the last line. Less successful answers were superficial and tended to offer their personal interpretation of the reasons for the demise of the speaker, without sufficient textual support.

Section B

Question 7

There were few responses to this question. In the responses seen there was some understanding of the tension between the two girls and their differences. Candidates noted qualities in Kambili such as her quietness, shyness and constrained communication. They commented on how Amaka is different from Kambili – she is outspoken, assertive and unaware of the challenges facing Kambali at home. Candidates were quite engaged and showed their empathy towards Kambili.

Question 8

There were too few responses to this question for meaningful comment.

Question 9

There were few responses to this question. Those who responded showed some awareness of John Reed's character – that he was mean, a bully, pampered by his mother and that he tried to dominate Jane. Stronger candidates drew points from the text and described his unkind treatment of Jane. Some stronger answers commented on Jane's perspective and her response to his action of throwing the book. Less successful answers ran through the passage and resorted to a narrative description of the events in the passage.

Question 10

No responses seen for this question.

Question 11

There were few responses to this question. In those seen, there was some understanding of the drama in the scene, and that this was a turning point in Janie's relationship with Joe. Candidates noted Joe's humiliating insults and Janie's response in standing up for herself. A few candidates were distracted by the injustice issue and did not draw their points from the text.

Question 12

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Successful answers were quite engaged with this question and showed some empathy for the couple, especially for Gogol. Stronger answers focused on the 'disturbing' aspects of the passage and noted in detail Moushimi's deceitful tactics. Candidates commented on details such as the initial attraction of Moushimi to Gogol, and her dismissive attitude to buying a first anniversary present. Less successful answers tended to neglect what made the moment 'disturbing' in favour of retelling moments of the relationship.

Question 16

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 17

Answers to this question varied in quality. The most successful answers focused clearly on Pi's 'thoughts and feelings' and drew out significant points from the passage such as his initial lack of alarm, his idea that he was going on an adventure, and his eventual realisation about the severity of the situation. There were some insightful responses to the storm as a dramatic spectacle, 'that even Hollywood could not orchestrate'. Less successful answers tended to run through the passage and retell the events without delving into deeper meaning. Some of these included lengthy quotations from the passage without explaining their significance.

Question 18

Candidates showed an understanding of the question and knowledge of the novel when responding to this question but many responses were narrative in nature and there was little supporting evidence to develop interpretations. Many candidates failed to respond to two moments that were shocking. The most successful answers selected two clear incidents that were 'shocking' such as the father's 'lesson' about the tiger in the zoo, the sinking of the ship or the death of the cook and provided a selection of convincing and relevant supporting points.

Question 19

This was a very popular question. Strongest answers engaged deeply with the text and picked out several significant points that make this a 'powerful' moment. They identified the context of the two minute 'Hate' and evaluated the hysteria of the masses watching the screen. Many commented on the comparison of Big Brother to a 'Saviour' and the significance of the momentary eye contact between Winston and O'Brien. Some answers demonstrated their knowledge of the whole novel by showing how this foreshadowed later tragic events. Less successful answers tended to be narrative, repetitive and superficial. Some candidates misunderstood the text and ideas and were repetitive.

Question 20

The best answers clearly identified two specific moments where Orwell creates a sense of fear such as the omnipresent scrutiny of the telescreens, children reporting on their parents, the illicit meetings of Julia and

Winston or the torture Room 101. They gave detailed descriptions of their chosen moments, with a focus on the sense of 'fear'. Less successful answers to be narrative and reliant on the extract from **Question 19**. Using only the material in the extract from **Question 19** for the general essay question is not a productive approach as there is insufficient reference to the novel as a whole. Some answers were very general, describing the disadvantage of totalitarian governments and did not address the question.

Question 21

Candidate responses to this question showed their enjoyment of the story, and there were several very good answers explaining in detail how the tension was created. The best answers explored the writing effects such as the darkening atmosphere, the disappearing stairs and rails and Caroline's self-talk. Stronger answers offered well-supported and relevant interpretations about what happened to Caroline at the end of the passage. Many candidates empathised with Caroline as a product of society, although some were distracted in doing so at the expense of solid engagement with the text.

Question 22

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

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There were, once again, instances of some candidates using only the extract when answering the general essay question on Prose texts. As has been reported before, this approach is self-penalising as there is insufficient material for candidates to draw upon for their answers. It is not possible to make reasonably developed responses to general essay questions by relying solely on the content of the extract in the extract question. Centres should emphasise to candidates that there is a clear separation between the two questions on each Prose text.

Focus on the question

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Responses were characterised by strong personal engagement. The awareness of the narrator that he had not shown gratitude towards his father seems to have struck a chord with candidates. Successful responses explored the imagery depicting the cold, especially 'blueblack', and they addressed the darker side of the poem suggested by 'chronic angers'. There was understanding of the speaker's regret and self-criticism evident in the repeated 'What did I know', with many candidates exploring the idea that the father's love was shown in his actions, not words. Less successful responses tended not to appreciate the full power of the stark phrase 'austere and lonely offices'; indeed, some candidates took 'offices' literally rather than as a reference to duty.

Question 2

The most successful responses explored the extended metaphor of the wife as 'territory' or 'geography', with the darker connotations of 'territory' as a land to be invaded and conquered. Some castigated the husband for daring to 'learn' his wife as though she were an object in a school lesson. The strongest responses focused explicitly on the key words 'memorable impressions of the wife' and tailored their material accordingly. Less successful responses worked through the poem in order, pointing out the wife's unpredictability, or focused on impressions of the husband instead.

Question 3

Successful answers explored the poet's presentation of an elderly couple and the speaker's recalling the passion of youth compared with their later companionship and memories of a shared past. Only a few candidates picked up on the phrase 'without nostalgia' that implied there was no sentimentality or looking back, but rather acceptance. Most candidates were able to explore the extended metaphor of time as a waterfall. Less successful responses strayed from the specific detail of the poem to provide more generalised commentary on regretting the passing of youth into old age, paying insufficient attention to the nuances of the poem.

Question 4

The strongest responses explored the poet's stream-of-consciousness approach which helps to convey a palpable sense of anxiety and self-doubt. Many candidates acknowledged that the speaker's concerns go beyond the usual physical and social worries of a man approaching mid-life at forty (or extreme old age, in some candidates' eyes); they explored the idea of a poet with 'vision thickening', interpreted metaphorically as losing insight and inspiration. There was some appreciation of a more contemplative tone as the poem progresses: middle age may bring cynicism and sadness but also a sense of 'elation' when poetry goes well. Less successful responses might have benefited from exploring the tone of the poem rather than embarking on a list of devices the poet uses.

Question 5

The pain of the woman (some said 'menopausal') was generally understood. The most successful responses grasped the speaker's conversational style, the abrupt changes of subject matter and the impact of the one-word interjections about quiche, shallots and cheese. Some candidates used specific detail from the poem to explore perceptively the idea of how age affects women and how society perceives them. Most candidates commented on the contrast between the speaker's memories of youth and her present experience and self-image. Less successful responses worked their way through the poem without directly addressing the key words 'powerfully portrays growing old'.

Question 6

The most successful answers focused on the key words 'movingly convey', exploring sympathetically the sense of dislocation felt by the speaker and her siblings and charting the development of the speaker's thoughts and feelings. These responses quoted the statement 'All childhood is an emigration', acknowledging the significance of the statement in lending greater universality to the poem and context for the speaker uprooted and transported to a new life. Less successful responses identified the simile 'shedding its skin like a snake' though without exploring its connotations of ease and naturalness as well as possible darker associations of deception.

Section B

Question 7

The most successful responses explored sensitively the ways in which Adichie presents this disturbing moment in the novel, focusing on the description of Papa in the first paragraph and the presentation of his bigotry and extreme violence. These answers were able to contextualise the moment: the sense of liberation that Kambili and Jaja had derived from their visit to Nsukka and their new preparedness to stand up to Papa. There was much effective commentary on the latter's hypocrisy and the difference between his public persona as a man of the church and the private viciousness evident in his dealings with his family. Less successful responses explained what is disturbing about this moment without exploring ways in which Adichie achieves her effects.

Question 8

Candidates selected moments that included Ifeoma arguing with Eugene about their father's death and funeral and her confronting the police who come to her house to intimidate her. The most successful responses showed evidence of learning much well-selected relevant reference which enabled candidates to explore specific ways in which Adichie captures Ifeoma's fearlessness. Without such reference, candidates produced descriptive and overly assertive responses.

Question 9

Many responses showed an awareness of Jane being devastated at the idea of being separated from Rochester and of the latter playing along with Jane's misunderstanding. The strongest responses showed a clear understanding of the presentation of both characters and what makes this such a moving moment in the novel. These responses explored the exaggerated description of the Irish and Ireland, Rochester's acknowledgement of the strong bond between them and the image of the piece of string. Less successful responses showed an insecure grasp of Rochester's words and motivation, taking what he says literally, with little knowledge of the wider context of the novel as a whole.

Question 10

Those who attempted this question showed an understanding of the character's back story, her inherited madness, her being imprisoned in appalling conditions and her violent and animalistic nature. Many responses referred to relevant moments in the text, such as Mason's visit, the fire in Rochester's chamber and the wedding veil, though without the direct quotation that might have helped candidates to explore Bronte's presentation of the character.

Question 11

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

Question 12

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Question 13

In the few successful responses seen, there was an understanding of Aunt Penniman's continued interference and her purporting to know more than she actually does about Morris's intentions towards Catherine. These answers recognised that this is a turning point in the development of Catherine's character as she finally sees through her aunt, with a 'consummate sense of her aunt's meddlesome folly'. Less successful responses might have explored in greater detail Catherine's vehement tone and how James uses dialogue to reveal Aunt Penniman's true self in making this a 'powerful moment in the novel'. These responses showed an insecure understanding of the moment and its position within the novel.

Question 14

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Question 15

The strongest answers explored how Lahiri makes this moment in the novel so entertaining through the salesmanship of Ashima's mother, the silence of the interested parties, and in particular the presentation of Ashoke's appearance and attitude ('glumly', 'indifferent'). These answers showed an understanding of the cultural context which memorably affects Ashima's situation: she is given no choice and marries an unknown man in a matter of weeks. There was an awareness that this is the beginning to Gogol's story. Less successful responses identified details that were 'entertaining' but needed to explore the ways in which Lahiri makes them entertaining.

Question 16

There were few responses seen. The best showed at least some understanding of the importance in Bengali families of having both a 'good name' and a 'pet name'. There was an awareness that the first time he uses the name Nikhil is when he kisses Kim and some sense of the wider theme of struggles with identity from Gogol's perspective. Generally, candidates needed a more extensive range of reference from the novel which would have enabled them to explore in greater detail ways in which Lahiri 'powerfully conveys' Gogol's feelings about his name. The least successful responses adopted a narrative rather than analytical approach.

Question 17

A focus on the key word 'impact', with examples of how Pi is affected both physically and emotionally, was a feature of more successful responses. In these responses, there was both an understanding of Pi's present suffering and predicament and also the implications for his future safety: the loss of the raft and the discovery of the one remaining whistle. Less successful responses merely identified aspects of language and structure (such as pathetic fallacy, onomatopoeia, repetition and listing) whereas stronger responses explored the ways in which Martel 'powerfully depicts the impact of the storm'. The least successful responses commented on the extract as a discrete piece of writing isolated from the rest of the novel.

Question 18

Successful responses showed an ability to draw upon moments in the text where Pi and Richard Parker are presented as potential allies or enemies and responded sensitively to the ways in which Martel portrays the two 'characters'. Some referred to the alternative potential interpretation of the story and considered Richard Parker as symbolic of Pi's 'dark side' and therefore an 'enemy'. Less effective responses gave character sketches of the two, without the range of direct textual detail both to support points and to explore ways in which Martel 'vividly conveys' that Pi and Richard Parker are both enemies and allies.

Question 19

The strongest answers explored the contrast between the vivid picture of decay, the 'grimy', 'rotting', 'sagging' buildings for the proles and the 'startlingly different', impressive and well-maintained Ministries which dominated London. The best answers explored what this contrast shows about the Party's values and the care for the people it governs. Perceptive comments on how the 'chicken-houses' show the dehumanising of the proles were sometimes linked to the inhuman and terrifying 'gorilla-faced guards'. Less effective answers tended to lack focus on the key words 'striking impressions' or concentrated too much on one aspect of the extract (such as the slogans) or focused on general background information.

Question 20

There were many successful responses to this question showing a perceptive and evaluative engagement with the text and task. These responses addressed the key prompt 'methods of controlling thoughts' with an extensive range of textual reference to the Thought Police, the Ministry of Truth, the Two Minutes Hate, the role of party spies and the function of Newspeak ('The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought.'). There was much sensitive exploration of the loss of individuality and the inability to show emotion, as enforced by the Party. Less successful responses described examples of Party control without focusing on 'people's thoughts'. Other responses lapsed into narrative or extraneous background material on Stalin and Hitler without focusing clearly on analysis of relevant textual detail to answer the question.

Question 21

Many of the stronger responses commented on the forbidden as something that is exciting for all children, on the idea of rebellion, particularly as part of a gang which explores and confronts the unknown, contrary to the edicts of adults. There was an appreciation of childhood naivete, with close analysis of the childish perspective in both thought and diction. Many candidates wrote engagingly about imagination, mystery and fear, the idea of a quest and links with myths / fairy tales. Less successful responses offered narrative and an over-reliance on assertion rather than a close analysis of language, structure or narrative viewpoint.

Question 22

The strongest responses included analysis of the narrative structure leading up to the ball, the passage from innocence to experience and from excitement to disappointment and despair. They analysed the force and impact of the words 'She didn't take.' Candidates showed sympathy for Dolly in the expectation to please men regardless of her own feelings, compounded by her aunts being complicit in this. The most successful responses explored the presentation of societal expectations and the rank unfairness of a patriarchal society, though it should be emphasised that these responses were rooted in the detail of the text. Less successful responses commented on these issues with little reference to the text or question or lapsed into re-telling the story. For high reward, candidates needed an extensive range of direct reference to the text to address the question and to explore features of Richardson's writing.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a very popular choice with candidates. They engaged with the description of the spring and of the little boy and recognised how significant the difference between being four or five is for a child. The comparison of ageing to the cycle of nature was frequently referenced. Candidates understood how the world is constantly changing; that we look too much to the future, neglecting to enjoy the present; and how rapidly time passes. The contrasting images of youth versus death were well considered by candidates, as was the repetition of 'rising' with its attendant changes as the poem progresses. Many too were able to link the second reference to toffee back to the earlier image. The main discriminating factor here was the depth and range candidates attained in their analysis.

Question 2

Less successful candidates focused only on the caged bird and rephrased the poem with limited analysis. Some spent far too much of the response in exploring the context of slavery and the background of the poet. Stronger responses compared the lives of the two birds, considered the repetition of stanzas 3 and 6 and explored the diction and imagery used including, 'dares to claim the sky', 'fearful trill', 'grave of dreams' and 'nightmare scream'.

Question 3

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 4

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 5

This was another popular question. Many understood the arrogance of the teacher and her dismissive attitude towards the poet but failed to pick up on the irony and humour of the text. Less successful candidates were less able to explore beyond the surface meaning and did not always consider the whole poem. Stronger answers considered the teacher's sarcasm and the sense of haste and dismissiveness conveyed by the verse. They were also aware of Duffy's implicit criticism. These answers were supported with detailed and appropriate references to the poem.

Question 6

Less effective responses simply identified the mother-child relationship with the mother not wishing to leave the child alone. The more successful answers clearly focused on, 'memorable' and 'the ways' in which Duffy achieves her effects. There was awareness of the closeness yet separateness of the mother and the child, how the child is untouched by life or experience having no 'history'. Consideration was given to the reverential tone of the speaker, the warm sensuous imagery and the associations with light.

Section B

Question 7

The extract itself presented numerous opportunities to explore Adiche's language and symbolism preventing many paraphrases or narrative responses. Many candidates considered Mama's appearance, her comparison with the roadside vagrants, the symbolism of the figurines and the way in which Kambili's thoughts and feelings are described. A number of candidates found the forcefulness of Papa's character in making the family recite sixteen different novenas was disturbing because everyone obediently complied without, as Kambili said, 'I did not think, I did not even think to think, what Mama needed to be forgiven for'. Candidates often made meaningful connections with other parts of the novel. 'Disturbing' was at the forefront of most candidates' responses and it was the development of the supporting ideas that provided the differentiation.

Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

The majority of responses consisted of surface level description. Stronger answers understood Jane's dislike of the Ingrams and were aware of their general unpleasantness – Jane clearly sees through Blanche's tactics with Mrs Dent. They were able to comment on the unpleasant description of Lady Ingram's features, 'double chin' and 'hard eye', and again with the description of Blanche, the significance of the low brow and the satirical laughter.

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There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

The most successful candidates understood Janie's situation and her desire for 'change and chance' which contradicts Nanny's warnings. They also understood that Janie knew that this opportunity did not represent, 'sun-up and pollen and blooming trees', just a 'far horizon'. The manipulative language of Joe was recognised and the difference in the conversations between Janie and Joe and Janie and Logan with the latter being insulting contrasting with the former's flattery. Less successful responses tended to be descriptive.

Question 12

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

Overall, candidates demonstrated understanding of the extract, the novel as a whole and the question exploring the relationship between father and daughter. Less successful answers were narrative. Stronger answers considered how Catherine's development throughout the novel was showcased here together with her determination to maintain her dignity. Consideration was also given to James's writing: the ironic comments about Mrs Penniman, reinforcing her stupidity, and the directness of the dialogue with the significance of the silences.

Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

The passage provided plenty of opportunity to find evidence of attraction in both language choices and plot features as well as dialogue. Better answers focused on 'strikingly' in a range of ways. They considered the language used, Gogol envies her students who can, 'stare at her continuously'. In the detailed descriptions of Moushumi he, 'admires the light on her face, the faint pale hairs that shine'. Gogol's behaviour illustrates his attraction in his choice of restaurant, his anticipation all morning of the meeting, 'unable to concentrate'. The fact that Moushumi cannot recollect the party where she played the piano under duress and yet he vividly remembers it perhaps lays the foundations for the split that is to come.

Question 16

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 17

Few candidates seemed to be able to respond to the dual focus of the question. The 'frightening' aspect was the one that was most addressed as few candidates picked up the real irony of the extract or the narrator's attempts to lighten up a potentially life-threatening situation. The numbered plans were often paraphrased with no recognition of the black humour. Candidates linked the frightening effect of the poem to the presence of Richard Parker on board in general and to the references to the storm being like a snake, 'the sea hissed and coiled'.

Question 18

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 19

This was an extremely popular question with candidates. Stronger responses addressed Winston's thoughts and feelings, exploring the range of emotions manifested together with his thought processes and effectively contextualising this with the whole novel. These candidates explored many of the language features such as the capitalised repetition of his true feelings about Big Brother and the use of, 'voluptuously'; the exaggerated use of the tautology: 'removed', 'wiped out', 'abolished', 'annihilated', 'vaporized' to emphasis the inevitability of his fate; his hysterical untidy scrawl without any punctuation. These candidates tended to continue their analysis right until the end of the passage considering his starting, 'violently' at the knock; his fear expressed by the simile, 'He sat as still as a mouse' and his 'expressionless' face as he moved, 'heavily' towards the door. Less successful candidates tended to paraphrase the extract and often used language terminology without following through and explaining how the actual effect created worked in the passage.

Question 20

Most candidates focused on the relationship between the two, relating how it was established and developed. In general, this was well contextualised in terms of the situation in the novel illustrating how difficult it was to meet regularly and freely. Many compared the enjoyment of freedom and being with each other in The Golden Country and in Mr Charrington's room with the depressing contrast to the reality of their lives. Others also contrasted the relationship that Winston had with his former wife. Some also referenced the final meeting when they had to acknowledge the truth that they had both betrayed each other whilst being tortured in the Ministry of Love. The answer showed that almost all the candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of the text. Although the relationship was well described its 'compelling' nature was less securely addressed.

Question 21

This was a reasonably popular question with students. In general, candidates could see the irony and the humour in the short story and how it contributed to making it, 'entertaining'. Essays were well supported from the extract.

Question 22

Successful responses provided sensitive and thoughtful accounts. These considered the cultural clash and how significant it was that the daughter mainly speaks in English. The lack of communication was developed with the irony being that Mr Shi communicates more effectively with someone with whom he has no shared language, 'Madam'. Further irony was considered in the gift from his daughter of a trip around America when he had come to America to see it with his daughter and not on his own.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/21 Drama
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Key messages

- The most successful responses demonstrated a personal engagement with the text's characters, ideas and stagecraft.
- Candidates would be advised to write introductions which avoid lengthy historical background or plot summary and to focus on a couple of central points in response to the terms of the question.
- Direct, contextualised quotation from the set passages, or from the text as a whole in answer to discursive questions, is the most effective method of supporting points.
- The strongest responses to passage-based questions considered primarily the context and the content of the scene.
- Less successful responses commented on the use of literary techniques or themes, without relating these to the content and context of the passage.

General comments

The sooner the candidates begin to answer the question, the better. Too often the time spent on a lengthy introduction meant that a candidate did not write about the final section of the passage, therefore sometimes missing key points and curtailing an otherwise sound response. Some introductions were entirely general with biographical information about the author and no reference to the question. Others cited a list of literary features, seemingly chosen at random, as ways in which a passage was made moving or dramatic, for example. The most successful introductions briefly summarised three of four points that were then fleshed out in the main body of the essay. The selection of the most relevant and central issues to be discussed is a key skill.

Whilst the vast majority of candidates showed knowledge of and engagement with their set texts, many responses remained generalised, without demonstrating detailed knowledge and close reading. This was often revealed by misreading of the passages or in trying to find themes in them, rather than answering the question.

An awareness that these texts are written to be performed onstage informed the most successful answers. These responses looked at the text from an audience perspective and commented on author's intentions in regard to the audience. They were aware that, although stage directions inform an actor's performance, an audience is not a reader, so commenting on the punctuation in the stage directions seems unproductive.

The most frustrating answers continue to assert that a passage 'is dramatic because...' followed by an indiscriminate list of terms such as 'punctuation, words, dialogue, hyperbole.' Whereas the scene in question is dramatic mainly because of the onstage action and conflict. Whilst a focus on AO3 is totally necessary, this needs to be embedded in the approach to the text rather than as an end in itself. A more successful way forward would be to consider the key words in the question, such as 'moving ... powerfully ... entertaining ... revealing'; what is happening in the scene and why; and then to explore *how* the author conveys his or her intentions to the audience.

The terms dramatic irony, juxtaposition and caesura were the most commonly misused this session. Many candidates handled the first two terms very well. Others referred to dramatic irony where it did not exist and others used juxtaposition when they meant contrast. Caesura is rarely applicable when writing about drama texts.

The strongest answers to discursive questions selected a range of material from the text as a whole and support points with quotation or very specific textual reference. The ability to use well-chosen, brief

references from the text is often a key discriminator. As the Level Descriptors indicate a reasonable answer can be turned into a very strong one by 'integrating much well-selected reference to the text'.

Several questions on the paper asked to what extent a candidate agreed with a statement about the text or a character in it. Candidates are free to argue on one side or the other but the strongest responses tend to see that there is a debate to be had and write a balanced argument.

There were very few brief answers. There were still a small but significant number of rubric infringements where candidates answered two passage-based questions or two discursive questions or two questions on one text. Far fewer candidates than in past sessions used the information in the passage to answer the discursive question.

Most responses showed knowledge, though with some gaps, understanding and an engaged response to their set texts.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) This new text produced some strong responses. Candidates showed understanding of the causes of the tension and of how it was created by the writing. The uncomfortable relationship between Gerte and Ernestine was generally fully explored. The strongest answers showed awareness of the play as whole, understanding that the radio was won by Sandra Crump and the significance of Gerte criticising the sewing on Ernestine's dress. Less successful answers missed the fact that Gerte was German and World War Two had finished only recently, making it hardly surprising that Ernestine was wary of her. Candidates blaming this entirely on racism or the media was somewhat wide of the mark.
- (b) Successful responses to this question commented on the contrast in personality between Godfrey and Lily, the intrigue of their partially explored past relationship and their different ways of escaping from racial oppression. Less developed answers showed knowledge of both characters but did not focus sufficiently on the terms of the question. Lily's response to Godfrey marrying Gerte could have been more fully explored.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) This question was answered by a large number of candidates with very varying degrees of success. Effective responses had a clear understanding of the context and of the main issues and focused on what was moving in this powerful climax to the play. They knew that John Proctor had already signed a confession to witchcraft in order to save his life but that when Danforth wanted to nail this to the church door, it was a step too far for Proctor's integrity and sense of self and he destroys the confession. Having despised himself for his adultery with Abigail, he 'finds his goodness', is movingly forgiven by his wife, forgives himself and dies a noble death. The less successful responses misplaced the context thinking he had confessed to adultery; thought he was dying to save his friends or that he has sold his friends and that he would not sign the confession. There was a common misconception that Elizabeth made the speech beginning: 'Give them no tear...' Nevertheless most candidates could explore, often in effective detail, the powerful emotions in the scene and how they were conveyed. Some sound responses were derailed by the insistence on writing about the play being a response to McCarthyism at great length and losing focus on the task. Some wildly asserted that thousands of people had been killed during the 'red scare'. There is no reward for bringing a great amount of historical background into answers and candidates should be warned very firmly against doing so.

The subtleties of John Proctor's stance in the scene were fully grasped by the most successful but eluded the less perceptive. Insightful responses also commented on the injustice perpetrated by Danforth, the drama of Hale's altered perspective and Parris's self-interest and the moving rebirth of passion in the Proctor marriage.

- (b) Taking a straightforward approach to this question by looking at what the girls do in the play, their motives for doing it, the consequences and how their actions might anger the audience proved to be successful. Most saw Abigail as the chief villain, commenting on her lying, her domination over the other girls and ultimately over Salem. Surprisingly some answers did not mention her aim of getting rid of Elizabeth Proctor and the lengths she was prepared to go to achieve this aim. The other girls were seen as weak and passive, missing Mary Warren's attempt to turn against Abigail, though others looked carefully at why this was not successful. Some answers concentrated on the wrongs of Abigail's relationship with Proctor, not fully exploring the consequences of his rejection of her. Other responses looked at the women in the play which seemed perverse as the girls are so much an entity and referred to as 'the girls'. It is also difficult to see why one would be angered by Elizabeth or Rebecca.

Effectively balanced answers looked at the girls' role in Salem society and how that made their newly acquired power attractive, the gullibility of Hale and Danforth and Proctor's relationship with a young girl in his employ as factors mitigating against anger.

R.C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) It was surprising that many candidates answered this question without mentioning that Stanhope was threatening to shoot Hibbert. Successful responses noted that the audience are unaware that Stanhope is testing Hibbert and that this creates a powerful amount of tension and suspense. There were perceptive comments on the contrast between the aggressive Stanhope of the early part of the passage and the kindness and encouragement shown to Hibbert at the end, revealing his own fears. There was ample appreciation of the horror of the trenches making Hibbert prefer to die than to face it any longer. Sensitive points were made on the comradeship and bonding which for Stanhope is the only positive in the situation. Much was made of Stanhope having being indoctrinated by the jingoistic approach to the war, which is a fair point but not fully taking into account his aims in trying to save Hibbert from himself, or typical of him in the rest of the play. Less effective responses made much of the coping mechanisms the soldiers used; in this case Stanhope's drinking and Hibbert's fake neuralgia but this seemed directed at a different essay and not where the power of this passage lies. Further attention to the onstage action would have enhanced several responses.
- (b) There were many well-balanced answers to this question showing good knowledge of the play. Raleigh was admired for his courage, his ability to make friends, his lack of snobbery, his largely unwavering admiration of Stanhope. In his detraction his naïve romanticisation of war was cited as less admirable. Only the most perceptive answers commented on how he misjudges Stanhope's response to Osborne's death. The questionable wisdom in using his connections to join Stanhope's C Company in the first place was rarely discussed. His courage after his fatal injury was explored in some detail. Those who could support their argument with precise and direct textual reference fared well.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates understood the dramatic irony in the scene and the entertainment factor of neither Sir Andrew nor Viola/Cesario wanting to fight the duel. Successful answers commented on the comings and goings onstage and the paralleling of the Fabian/Viola and the Sir Toby/Sir Andrew pairings. Many grasped the humour in the exaggerated descriptions of valour and Sir Andrew's trying to pacify his supposed opponent by giving him his horse. Candidates with an appreciation of staging were aware of the slapstick comedy that will ensue. Less effective responses took a rather humourless view of Fabian and Sir Toby being evil, supported by all the religious references to the devil and so on. Many quite rightly pointed out how Sir Toby mocks and uses Sir Andrew with support from the passage but the play is a comedy and Sir Andrew is a fair target. Many responses commented on Viola's aside and that her possible exposure as a woman also contributes to the audience's enjoyment. The least effective answers were confused about who was speaking to whom and found the language difficult to decode.

- (b) This question was generally answered less well. There were two main lines of argument. One was that Orsino would always love Olivia therefore it was impossible to believe that Viola could be anything but second best. The other was that he had proved his ability to love loyally despite being rejected by Olivia and would therefore make a good husband to Viola. One candidate forcefully pointed out that Viola kept giving him massive hints that she loved him and if he could not see what was right under his nose, he did not deserve her. Few responses looked at his self-indulgent 'being in love with love', his changeability, the violence he proposes towards 'Cesario' or at Viola's superior loyalty, intelligence and resourcefulness. Answers were often at a disadvantage by not being able to support their points by precise textual reference or by an ability to consider the play as a whole, concentrating on the earlier scenes only.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates knew that Iago reveals that he is using Roderigo for money, that he hates Othello and that he is going to use Cassio to make Othello jealous. There were many competent answers though some candidates needed to explore the passage in greater depth to go beyond a reasonably developed response. Successful answers analysed the clever ways in which Iago manipulates Roderigo into thinking they are in this together and looking at the language he uses to denigrate Roderigo. They commented on his disdain for Othello's openness and honesty and the comparison of him to an ass. Many saw that Iago suspected Othello of cuckolding him but few noted that he is acting out of 'mere suspicion', the very thing he uses against Othello later in the play and very revealing of his own pathological jealousy. Strong points were made about the 'monstrous birth' metaphor indicating Iago's awareness of his own evil. There were some odd misconceptions about Iago referring to Othello as 'The Moor' suggesting that Othello was an animal. Some candidates thought Othello was 'framed to make women false' rather than Cassio.
- (b) Most candidates could see that the most straightforward way of approaching this question was to balance the respective responsibilities of Iago and of Othello himself. Most did this quite competently. Others took the line that the inbuilt racism of the society created Othello's insecurities. Unfortunately answers who took this approach concentrated too much on the racism and not enough on what these insecurities were. An examination of the disparities in Othello's and Desdemona's ages, races and backgrounds and Othello's inexperience of love and Venetian culture would have made these answers much more convincing. The fact that no-one in the play recognises that Iago is not 'honest' was not taken much into consideration when asserting that Othello was too gullible. He was criticised quite rightly for trusting Iago over his wife but the circumstances of having to conduct a campaign and the brief time he has known Desdemona could have been explored. The contemporary attitudes to women were explored effectively in some answers but others tried to impose a modern sensibility on the play, saying for example that Emilia is a feminist, which seems anachronistic and unhelpful.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22 Drama
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Key messages

- Successful responses focused on the key words in the question and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Opening paragraphs should be brief and avoid lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writers' techniques to be addressed. Conclusions need to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Successful answers to passage-based questions briefly contextualised the passage, selecting relevant material from across the whole passage and analysed both content and the writer's methods effectively.
- Identifying technical terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and intended impact on the audience is an unproductive response to the set task.
- All questions require a response to the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain. There was a lot of excellent work seen. The most successful responses showed detailed appreciation of texts and made perceptive comments on characterisation and stagecraft. The most popular texts across all syllabi were *Twelfth Night* and *Othello*. *The Crucible* and *Journey's End* were popular on the 0992 syllabus. There were two new texts this series, *Othello* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*.

Candidates should be made aware that in answering questions on *The Crucible*, introductions about the religious, socio-historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism are not a prerequisite to answering the question. Similarly, in *Othello*, comments on the role of Elizabethan women should be relevant and brief; how wives were expected to be obedient is a sound point as this, ironically, is the quality that undoes Desdemona but there is little to reward in arguing that '*Emelia is a feminist*'.

Many candidates wrote lengthy, general introductions, summarising the plot or listing irrelevant social, cultural, historical or biographical details of the writer, as mentioned above. Others wrote a list of the things to cover, for example, the techniques the writer had used, including punctuation, which they would analyse in their answer. In an examination with 45 minutes to write a response these are unproductive ways to start an answer and there is little to reward in responses which list the range of punctuation the writer uses in the text.

The most successful answers wrote a brief introduction, focusing on the key terms of the question, for example, 'disturbing', 'dramatic', 'revealing' or 'entertaining' and sustained a link to the question throughout their answer. A brief plan to help to select the most important points to include, and the most suitable material to use to support these points, is helpful. In answering a passage-based question, a few sentences to contextualise the passage, before exploring the passage itself in detail, was helpful in demonstrating a candidate's understanding of the structure of the text. Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and used a range of precise textual references from across the whole text.

A common approach for less successful answers was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text with little or no attempt to link this to the question. Retelling the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question wastes valuable time which should have been spent answering the question. These responses were self-penalising as little time was left to spend on the set passage.

Candidates need to remember that drama is visual and uses language that has an impact on an audience. The most successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as performance, referring to

the 'audience' rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book'. These were able to explore stagecraft and the authors' methods to convey the main concerns of their chosen texts.

The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. Many candidates used juxtaposition incorrectly as a synonym for 'contrast'. Simply asserting the playwright uses a technique is unlikely to be rewarded; techniques identified should be relevant, supported and the effects achieved analysed. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language', 'diction', 'end-stopping' or 'caesura' to convey ideas or to write a list of techniques they will be writing about in their introduction.

There are lessons candidates need to learn about quotation. Most know that close reference to the text and quotations are needed to support ideas to achieve highly. However, some candidates work through the extract, line by line, writing out a quotation and then offering paraphrase, sometimes followed by the statement: 'which makes it such a significant moment in the play'. To achieve a coherent, relevant response to the question, the argument should come first, followed by a supporting quotation, containing a link to the task. For example, as one candidate wrote: *'Abigail focuses on accusing the weakest person in the room in order to deflect attention away from herself: "She makes me drink blood". This demonstrates her cunning, and ruthlessness but also starts a process that will only lead to violence and destruction. This makes this a very significant moment in the play.'*

There were some rubric infringements on where candidates answered on two passage-based questions instead of one passage-based question and one discursive. In these instances, both essays are marked but only the higher mark awarded. Time management was good with very few unfinished responses seen. Candidates are reminded not to refer to line numbers instead of quoting from the text and to remember to label their answers clearly, with the question number at the top of the response.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were able to identify both the amusing and serious: the racism Lily has experienced; the lack of black representation in the film industry; societal expectations of women and the girls needing a mother figure. They understood how Nottage approaches these serious issues with humour and the joking between characters. More successful answers explored how Ernestine is making fun of herself, adopting her film star pose, knowing she will never be a movie star.
- (b) More successful responses commented on Gerte's racial and national contrast with the Crumps and Godfrey's religious views over Father Divine. Her sympathetic personality was approved by the few who wrote about her. There was little mention of the attack on Godfrey because he was with a white woman, or the shock of the marriage for both the girls and the audience. Less successful responses did not fully grasp that Gerte was a white woman, missing a key aspect of Nottage's portrayal of the character. Very few candidates understood the significance of her being German or the Nazi connection with its racial undercurrents.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context: to distract attention from her own guilt and the dancing in the wood, Abigail has accused Tituba of calling up the Devil, which starts the accusations of witchcraft in Salem. Brief reference to the Puritan theocracy were made providing an important background in which extreme beliefs in God and the Devil would make the idea of witchcraft very threatening. Hence Abigail's determination to deflect blame from herself onto someone more vulnerable, a black slave from another culture, alien to the white, Puritan society of Salem. Abigail's cunning and lying manipulation of the situation was effectively explored, starting with her wild accusation, *'She makes*

me drink blood! with Hale and Parris immediately seizing on this. Her realisation of her power over Tituba and Hale was noted, leading to further accusations of dreaming 'corruptions', difficult to substantiate, but enough to convince the onlookers of Tituba's guilt and evidence of her working for the Devil. Hale's naivety in accepting the accusations and the dramatic pace of his aggressive interrogation were effectively analysed with some insight into his questioning in that the answer he is looking for is already in the question and all she can do is to agree to save her life and, when pressed, name others. The dramatic impact of Tituba's shock and terror at being betrayed by Abigail with the threats of whipping and hanging were established as powerful and significant factors for the later witch trials. The most successful answers made brief, pertinent reference to McCarthyism where naming others was necessary to save oneself, moving from individual actions to the bigger themes of the play including betrayal, self-preservation, hysteria and the abuse of power. The best answers focused closely on the writing, the accusations, pauses and exclamation marks, for example, Abigail's '*Do not lie!*', then observing the powerful impact of her remaining silently on stage watching during the interrogation.

Many less successful answers started with a lengthy recap of the play, Miller's intentions in writing the play with reference to Senator McCarthy and Communism, and the history of the Salem Witch trials themselves. Others worked through the passage, commenting on the situation and punctuation, particularly exclamation marks but without understanding these reflect a tone of voice, or linking comments to the terms of the question. There was little sense of drama and there were many half-true assertions. Some thought the scene takes place in court and Tituba is innocent but confesses, forgetting the key point that she is dealing with witchcraft but at Abigail's insistence and it is the attempt to deflect from this that starts the accusations and interrogations.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this question with many finding it difficult to go beyond a narrative overview of the relationship or character studies of Proctor and Abigail, without looking at the consequences of the relationship in the wider context of the play. The most successful answers considered Proctor's adultery, Abigail's determination to replace Elizabeth and the disturbing consequences of Abigail's ruthlessness in attempting to achieve this. These included: the witch trials and framing of Elizabeth with the most disturbing aspect being the deaths of innocents and, ironically, Proctor himself. The disturbing way in which Proctor thinks he can cast Abigail off without consequences and to preserve his reputation led to justifiable condemnation of Proctor. Better answers observed the similarities between them and how their lust and adultery made them both 'villainous' prepared to defend their reputations at all costs. Well-selected textual detail and awareness of the dramatic impact of their meetings, and dialogue, were features of these responses. However, few explored Proctor's guilt and refusal to expose Abigail and the effects of this dilemma on his own conscience and his family.

Candidates had mixed feelings about Abigail and Proctor. Many sympathised with Abigail as a victim, due to her childhood and background, claiming she was taken advantage of by an older man and effectively abandoned when no longer needed. This was contrasted to Proctor's greater status and maturity. His clear ambivalence towards Abigail was well-supported and his view of his 'sin' being a minor error, partly caused by Elizabeth, led many to sympathise further with Abigail. Some candidates applied modern ideas to the relationship including the fact that it was 'grooming' and Proctor was a 'paedophile' which undermines engagement with both the relationship and the text as there is so much evidence to support Abigail's malice.

Less successful answers adopted a narrative approach to the relationship and focused on the age difference and the personal relationship, seeing the characters as real rather than constructs. This limited exploration of its disturbing effects on stage. Abigail was frequently depicted as an abused child with little close reference to the text or textual detail to support ideas.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) This question focused on a profoundly 'moving' moment at the end of the play which most candidates were able to engage with, eliciting many detailed, personal responses. There were many sensitive responses to Raleigh's innocence and youth with understanding of the dramatic impact on audiences who had witnessed the arrival of the hero-worshipping young boy, just out of school, now fatally injured. Comparisons to his 'rugger' injuries and expectations that he would soon re-join the men were explored and brief contrasts drawn between his heroic qualities and Hibbert's lack of them. The most successful answers contextualised the passage: Stanhope and

Raleigh's strained relationship before the attack and previous comments on the use of first names. Most found tenderness in Stanhope's ministrations and pathos in Raleigh's slow realisation of the seriousness of his injuries with '*the different note*' in his voice and inability to move his legs. There were perceptive comments on Stanhope's kindness and euphemisms in making light of the moment and giving hope to Raleigh so as not to panic him. There was understanding of the more friendly use of 'Jimmy' and 'Dennis' at this moment, contrasted with Stanhope's previous anger at the use of his first name as Stanhope provides comfort despite the battle raging outside. Stanhope's tone, proximity to Raleigh and perceived desperation to keep him comfortable, 'rising quickly' to get water, were effectively commented on. There was understanding of his attempts at humour with the water and tea leaves. There was much to explore in the stage directions, the silence and the pauses in speech. There was close analysis of the language, the symbolism of the rose light in the dawn sky, Raleigh's request for a light and the dark and cold. More perceptive answers commented on the losing battle above ground with Stanhope's response that the guns were '*Mostly theirs*', symbolising a losing battle both above and below ground.

Less successful answers did not know the context with some unaware that Raleigh dies and did not comment on the changes in Stanhope. There was limited focus on 'moving', or the passage, with lapses into descriptions of the war and Stanhope's previous behaviour and some misconception that Stanhope survives.

There was some misunderstanding of the use of first names, with some calling them 'nicknames'. The terms 'old boy' and 'old chap' were often understood as Raleigh's experience having aged him, rather than being terms of endearment at a sensitive and moving moment. There was confusion of the guns making a 'row' with this understood as an argument between the men.

- (b) There were fewer answers to this question. The relationship between Stanhope and Osborne was one in which candidates were able to empathise and there was some sensitive detail to the friendship, particularly following the death of Osborne when Stanhope grieves for his lost friend. Most answers traced the friendship in a chronological manner. The most successful answers knew the text well and were able to identify key scenes where the relationship is clearly portrayed: Osborne's admiration and loyal defence of Stanhope and his drinking in front of Hardy; him putting Stanhope to sleep when he was drunk; the father-like image which Osborne had and the fact that Osborne gives Stanhope his personal possession when he goes out on the raid, and the effect his death has on Stanhope. They recognised the trust Stanhope has in Osborne and the compassion shown by him. Better answers explored the powerful moments when Osborne comforts and supports Stanhope after Raleigh's arrival, and by reading what Raleigh has written about him. Stanhope's powerfully dramatic reaction to Osborne's death and furious conflict with Raleigh were effectively explored.

Less successful answers were unable to recall specific textual details to support points. This resulted in general comments on their friendship and much retelling of the scenes where Osborne puts Stanhope to bed or calms him down when he is angry over the prospect of Raleigh informing his sister of Stanhope's drinking problem. Weaker answers focused entirely on Stanhope's drinking or wrote character sketches of the men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

- (a) There were some very impressive answers to this question but also many of the weakest. This is a pivotal scene which shows Malvolio, having previously found Maria's fake letter, setting in motion the sub-plot, effecting his own downfall in a most amusing manner. There was little sympathy expressed for Malvolio but considerable enjoyment at the success of the prank. It is dramatically effective and entertaining as the audience anticipates Malvolio's appearance and behaviour, dictated by the contents of the letter. The most successful answers anticipated and eagerly awaited Olivia's reaction to the change in her previously '*sad and civil*' steward. The dramatic irony of the moment featured highly with effective focus on Olivia's present state of mind, and her shock and confusion upon seeing Malvolio and at his attempts to remind her of what she had supposedly written in the 'letter'. Maria's contribution was neglected by most, but better answers saw her role in setting up the scene with her warning Olivia to be on her guard as he was in a '*strange*' manner and surely '*possess'd*'. The humour in her pretence at not knowing the reasons for his behaviour whilst questioning his '*ridiculous boldness*' was well-noted. There was engagement with the hilarious visual impact of Malvolio's yellow stockings, cross-gartered, smiling and kissing his hand.

There was some confusion over Olivia's words on how best to court Cesario as she awaits his arrival, with some thinking she says this to Malvolio himself. The language provided plenty of material to explore with many commenting on the perceived madness of Malvolio and the significance of 'greatness', the sexual element and misunderstanding of going 'to bed' and his being a 'nightingale'. Better answers linked status to form: Olivia speaks in blank verse whereas Maria and Malvolio speak in prose, showing their social class, and were able to make the link to wider themes of class, disguise, appearance versus reality, and madness in love. A few answers showed some sensitivity, seeing the humour in the gulling of Malvolio but also the cruelty in his humiliation and being 'notoriously abused', leading to his later incarceration.

Less successful answers referred to the letter, Olivia's obvious confusion and Malvolio's conviction that she is in love with him, without supporting or developing how this is dramatic. Some stated that he was indeed insane and that it was right he should be locked away. The weakest answers retold the plot up to and beyond the moment, with minimal engagement with the question and passage. There were some attempts to explain what happened in the passage where it was clear the play had not been studied.

- (b) There were fewer answers to this question. The more successful answers were able to go beyond Feste's intelligence and witty banter, quite unexpected for a 'Fool', and supported their argument and observations with textual evidence including, 'better a witty fool than a foolish wit' to show Shakespeare's true message through this character. There were many aspects of his role considered 'fascinating' and explored: his role in moving between households and social levels, being accepted in both; his part in the plot against Malvolio and disguise as Sir Topas, and the insight and melancholy of some of his songs which open and close the play. Better answers observed his almost omniscient nature as a mouthpiece for Shakespeare and a link with the audience, as a kind of 'Master of Ceremonies' who presides over the whole tangle of love stories, misunderstandings and pranks. He sees through Viola's disguise and wittily chastises Olivia for mourning a brother who is in heaven, getting away with calling her a 'Fool' and is the only character who could mock Maria.

A few less successful answers used prepared character studies of Feste which would have benefitted from closer links to the question and the ways in which Shakespeare makes him such a fascinating character. The weakest answers were undeveloped with many stating little more than Feste works at Olivia's court and he is witty and intelligent which is fascinating for someone employed as a 'Fool'. Some were able to identify moments in the plot when he appears, but these were narrative in approach and lacking in specific detail. There was much repetition of his being witty and intelligent but with very little textual detail to support this.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) There were some engaging responses with the most successful candidates demonstrating clear understanding of the dramatic irony and that it was Shakespeare doing the foreshadowing and not Desdemona. The most successful were able to contextualise the passage and understood that Othello has changed, convinced by Iago of Desdemona's infidelity and planning to kill her that night. There was close focus on how this was made a 'sad' moment with sensitive comments on her love and loyalty to Othello even though in the previous scene he had called her names and hit her. Better answers referred to the inevitability of impending doom as conveyed through references to time, driven by Othello's insistence that his orders are carried out the 'th' instant', 'forthwith'. Fear is aroused by his instructions to 'dismiss' Emilia, leaving Desdemona vulnerable to his wrath and there was some effective analysis of her uneasiness and premonitions. Her words to Emilia, 'If, I should die...' were understood with emphasis on the 'If'. Less successful answers argued she has accepted her death and wanted Emilia to use her wedding sheets, from happier times, for her 'shroud'. Better answers understood that the 'Willow' song eerily parallels her situation, recognising that they are not her words but the words of a song which she could not get out of her mind. The symbolism of the willow and the pathos of the song: '...sighing...moans...salt tears' were effectively explored.

There were many misconceptions in answers to this question, such as: Desdemona knows she is going to be killed, her mother sang the song and then dies, Barbary relates to barbary horse as well as Desdemona being attracted to Ludovico so not as innocent as the audience thinks. Less

successful answers seemed quite confused over who was who in the extract and over the 'willow' song, believing Desdemona was mourning for her dead mother and that is why she is sad in this scene. These responses stated that she knew she was going to be killed and accepted her fate, exonerating Othello's behaviour with, '*Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve.*'

The weakest answers attempted a linear analysis of the passage showing little understanding of the text or question or simply lapsed into retelling the plot. Some tended to lose focus on the passage completely and drifted into discussion of such general matters as the patriarchal society in Venice, male and female roles in Shakespeare's time and toxic masculinity.

- (b) There were very few responses to this question but those who did attempt it demonstrated varying degrees of textual knowledge and understanding of Cassio's dramatic role. The more successful answers knew Cassio and his importance to the plot. There was a focus on his qualities, most of which were the opposite of Othello's. His charm and success with ladies were recognised as was his respectful manner when discussing Desdemona. They understood his manipulation and the reasons why he was so easy to use for Iago's purposes. Better answers were able to link him to Othello, Desdemona and Emilia and how this contributed to the plot. Less successful answers struggled with the question and described the plot instead of how Cassio drives the plot as a victim of Iago's jealousy and hatred of both Cassio and Othello. The weakest answers focused more on Iago and his motives, becoming speculative in nature, commenting mainly that Cassio should not have been so gullible.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/23 Drama
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Key messages

- The most successful responses avoided introductions which were lengthy discussions of historical context and focused on the key words of the question. Effective conclusions were more than a reiteration of points.
- A range of textual support and full analysis of references was a feature of the most successful responses. Brief and precise quotations were the best form of textual support.
- Passage-based responses benefited from contextualisation of the passage, with material selected from throughout the passage, including the ending. Close exploration of the language was a feature.
- In successful discursive responses the question remained in focus and precise textual references were sourced from throughout the text.
- If literary terms and punctuation are identified but their intended effect is not considered the response will not progress.
- Successful responses showed an awareness of the text as drama and engaged with the impact of the play onstage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts, and a sense of engagement with the drama was evident in many responses. The most successful responses showed critical understanding of the texts and made perceptive comments about characterisation, stagecraft and language. The most popular texts were *The Crucible*, *Othello* and *Journey's End*. There was one new text this series, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*.

In order to produce a successful response to a question, candidates are required to focus carefully on the key words of the question, such as 'strikingly', 'vividly', 'dramatic', 'moving' or 'fascinating'. This focus on the question needs to be sustained throughout the response. A response which makes only brief reference to the question at the beginning or end is unlikely to achieve high reward. A brief plan is a good idea to help candidates choose relevant material for inclusion, and to help them to remain focused on the question. It is always worthwhile for candidates to spend time in annotating a passage before attempting the question.

The most successful responses showed a clear awareness of the text as drama and of the action onstage. These responses sustained engagement with the visual nature of the drama and the impact on the audience. Referring to 'audience' rather than 'reader', and to 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book' demonstrated this awareness. Some less-successful responses tended to summarise the plot and wrote all they knew about the text, with no link to the question.

In answering a passage-based question, briefly setting the passage in context at the start of the response before exploring the passage in detail is very helpful in demonstrating understanding of the structure of the text. Rather than writing a lengthy introduction with details of historical context or lists of the writer's techniques, a more successful approach is to consider key words in the question, the events of the scene and an exploration of the writer's methods in conveying his or her intentions to the audience. Brief, well-selected references should be analysed fully.

Focus on literary techniques such as dramatic irony and foreshadowing was often successful. However, many responses tended to point out literary techniques with no exploration of the effect of these techniques. Similarly, punctuation was often referred to, with no consideration of the effects in context. This is not helpful in developing a constructive argument. Any techniques referred to should be supported and their effects fully analysed.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) Very few responses were seen, and in these the passage was rarely set in context. The most successful responses recognised the different attitudes of Lily and Godfrey to religion and politics. There was some awareness of the effect of the stage directions, though very few picked up the hint that Lily and Godfrey might have had prior feeling for each other. Few responses commented on the reactions of Ermina.

Less successful responses did not progress beyond stating the obvious and missed the subtleties of the text such as Lily's contempt of Father Divine and her political views.

- (b) Too few responses to this question were seen to make meaningful comment.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) A very popular text and question.

Stronger candidates showed good personal engagement with the passage and analysed it in depth. A personal sense of the unfairness of the trials was strongly expressed. The context of Proctor bringing Mary Warren to the court to claim that the girls' accusations are false was understood, and there was understanding of the dramatic context of Proctor wishing to present the deposition in order to have Elizabeth and the wives of Giles and Francis released. There was close focus on the passage, on Parris's undermining of everything Proctor says, Hale's realisation that every defence is taken as an attack on the court and on the irony of Danforth's comment that those of good conscience have nothing to fear. Many candidates were able to see the value of commenting on stage directions which led to them analysing rather than describing. These candidates explored Parris's movements onstage, Francis's '*trembling with anger*' and Mary Warren's sudden sobbing. Valid observations were made on the interruptions within the scene linking to the unequal power balance and silencing the voice of reason. By referencing the 'sarcasm' employed by Parris, candidates were able to identify how he viewed Proctor's testament together with his manipulation of Danforth.

Many less successful responses began by summarising historical details of 17th century Salem and/or McCarthyism and Communism in 1950s America. Others discussed the content of the passage with some reference to stage directions, but with little focus on the question and often incomplete coverage of the passage. Many responses did not reference Parris's nervousness and motivation to dismiss the deposition out of fear that he will be brought down if the girls are exposed as liars. There was much focus on Danforth's 'dogmatic' nature and the importance of status but often lacking full understanding and development. There was little focus on Hale's role in the scene.

The least successful responses relied on narration of events of the play or the passage with little awareness of the question. Many focused on only one character from the passage. There was some misreading of Danforth as open-minded and willing to believe Proctor. Coverage of the passage was often limited, and it was rare that candidates responded to the ending. Several responses showed misunderstanding, believing that the '91 signatories' of the deposition have already been accused of witchcraft, or that Parris is the mayor of Salem. Most responses were able to comment on how characters are interrupted, showing unfairness.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this question, but it provided an opportunity for stronger candidates to explore the play quite thoroughly. To achieve highly, candidates needed to explore how Miller 'strikingly' depicts revenge in the play. Those candidates who performed well were able to select key incidents and develop them in the light of the question. Most were able to recognise some aspects of revenge and analyse them carefully with textual support and comment on the language. They understood that the witch trials became an opportunity for people to settle old scores and grudges. Abigail was identified as the main character seeking revenge and successful responses

carefully explored the way she goes about this. Other instances of revenge were also recognised, such as Ann and Thomas Putnam's wish for revenge on community members due to land wars, and on Rebecca Nurse due to the loss of their babies when she was acting as midwife. A few candidates suggested that by sacrificing his reputation, Proctor was taking revenge on Parris and Abigail.

Less successful responses focused on one instance of revenge—usually Abigail—and became a character study. Others did not provide reasons for some characters' revenge and failed to appreciate the hysteria of Salem. Many drifted into narrative.

Other less successful responses discussed the idea that Mary Warren is seeking revenge on the Proctors, although her actions are largely prompted by fear of Abigail and pressure from the other girls, and these responses lacked convincing support. There were some examples of Tituba seeking revenge on Parris although not all were fully supported or developed. Responses often lost focus on revenge and drifted into general comment on the play and its themes. Weaker responses did not identify how the pent-up resentments in Salem are a catalyst for revenge.

RC SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) Many responses provided clear introductions and contextualisation of the passage. Some gave a little appropriate historical context. Stronger responses showed personal engagement with the vivid presentation of Stanhope's state of mind—his paranoia, stress and exhaustion, and understanding of how the audience will relate to the scene. These responses showed understanding of how Stanhope toys with the idea of dying so that his image in Madge's mind will not be tainted—'*for ever and ever...*'; and understood his horror of mingling his home life with life at the front.

In less successful responses there was little focus on the interaction between Stanhope and Osborne, although many candidates understood the supporting role of Osborne and noted the name 'Uncle' used by Stanhope. Greater focus was needed on the language of Stanhope's drunken rant and the way that his fragmented speech is a result of his drunken state. Some lacked explicit focus on Stanhope's fear of Madge finding out about his alcoholism, and that she is Raleigh's sister. Responses were not always fully focused on the fact that Stanhope is drunk. There was little focus on the stage directions such as 'strange high-pitched voice', or 'dull voice' and 'laughs gaily'. Less successful responses listed themes of the text and although the coping mechanism of alcohol was understood, responses did not progress and develop from this point. Some responses missed altogether Stanhope's alcoholism and the censorship issue, both of which are central to the scene.

- (b) A smaller number of responses were seen. Although most of the responses focused on the cowardice of Hibbert, some were able to see him as a representative of how many soldiers would have felt when being placed on the Front Line, showing empathy towards his situation. Those candidates who were able to compare Hibbert's feigned neuralgia, and the desire to go home, to the bravery and dignity of others such as Raleigh and Osborne were able to engage more fully with the question. Likewise, responses that explored the scene when Stanhope threatens to shoot Hibbert showed understanding of how unbearable the situation had become for him; it was preferable for him to die in this way than face the German onslaught. By addressing this incident together with Stanhope's confession of also being afraid, candidates were able to explore the effects of war on individuals and thus the dramatic impact Hibbert has in the play. Stronger responses covered the unpleasant aspects of Hibbert's characterisation and how they contribute to the dramatic impact. They also looked at his attitude to women and his inability to read situations, the tension of his exchange with Stanhope, and his cowardice and reluctance as the others leave to take part in the raid.

Less successful responses tended to only focus on the exchange with Stanhope and were therefore narrow in range. These responses gave little or no consideration to how Hibbert is viewed by other characters. A few responses confused Hibbert with Trotter. There was rarely any consideration of Hibbert's behaviour during the dinner.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

- (a) This was a reasonably popular question, and the passage allowed much scope for personal engagement. Stronger responses engaged with the moving nature of the passage. They clearly understood the differing gender attitudes towards love and were able to explore the language relating to this effectively. The best responses commented on the language and evaluated the interaction between Orsino and Viola, recognising the dramatic irony of the scene and expressing a strong personal response to Viola's plight and Orsino's sense of superiority.

The most successful responses were able to identify the change in mood created by Viola's story of her lost 'sister' and her grief for the 'loss' of her brother. There were some comments on Orsino's '*rantings*'/'*moaning*' and '*needing to get a grip*' indicating that his 'love' for Olivia should not be taken too seriously; his words reflecting more show than substance, leading to some candidates seeing him as a comical figure. In contrast, the true love felt by Viola following her speech when referencing the 'worm i' th' bud' became more apparent. In considering the imagery candidates could more fully engage with the term, 'moving'.

The least successful responses tended to provide a few quotations and paraphrase them (not always accurately) and did not understand the wordplay between Orsino and Viola. Many missed the significance of Viola's lines about her background and there was some misreading of 'queen of gems' and 'pranks'. Less successful responses did not engage with the debate about the strength of men and women's love. A few candidates seemed to have learned all or parts of a general response by heart, which was self-penalising as the response often lacked focus on the question and relevant textual support was lacking. There was often little focus on 'moving' and much reliance on narration.

- (b) A less popular question. Stronger responses were able to consider how the arrival of Olivia on stage is anticipated by Orsino's devotion to her and examined how she is presented through the eyes of other characters. They focused on many aspects of Olivia's character and recognised her ability to change affections quickly and even mentioned her sympathy for Malvolio. Many recognised that she was fascinating without being an endearing character. There was some interesting discussion of her as a bold woman who makes a choice of who to love, breaking societal stereotypes. Stronger responses understood her relationship with Feste, the power that her mourning brings and her lack of control over her household. Some responses identified how Olivia breaks gender and class rules but lacked development of these ideas.

Many responses lacked focus on 'fascinating' and less successful responses often became a character profile of Olivia with little sense of how she is seen by other characters. There was some focus on her fickle nature when she breaks her vow of mourning upon meeting Cesario. There was some undeveloped selection of material, for example on her relationship with Maria. Comments were often narrow in range, being very generalised with little or no textual support and narrative responses were quite common. Several responses appeared to try to make the essay fit the theme of love. Some responses drifted into too much discussion of Orsino, not necessarily with relevance to Olivia. There was some lengthy and irrelevant discussion of gender issues in Shakespeare's time.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) There were some convincing responses to this question, with candidates engaging with the term 'dramatic moment'. The best responses considered the whole extract, referencing both speech and stage directions to convey the pace and action of this chaotic scene. Some candidates gave a brief overview of the context before addressing the focus of the question which allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge of Iago's plan. This proved to be a good strategy to use for the first paragraph. Many candidates wrote coherently and at length with responses identifying the dramatic irony in Iago's pretence of being the innocent bystander leading to Othello's considering him as 'honest'. There was some valid comment on both Cassio and Othello, their behaviour, and reactions to the brawl. The impact of the scene on the audience was also mentioned by candidates, reinforcing their understanding of the question.

Successful responses were able to reference language features to illustrate the points they were making, such as Cassio's use of insults and the way that his drunken behaviour contrasts with his usual well-mannered and honourable character. There was clear understanding of Iago's use of

language to 'avoid' blaming Cassio and of the dramatic effect of the scene on the audience. Stronger responses also understood the hyperbole of 'I am hurt to the death!' and identified Othello's anger at the brawl which has disturbed his wedding night and how he compares the men with 'Turks'-their enemies.

Less successful responses did not engage with the context, lacked focus on language and were unable to visualise the dramatic moment. They tended to lose focus on the passage and drift into discussion of such general matters as the patriarchal society in Venice, male and female roles in Shakespeare's time, and toxic masculinity. There was much misreading thinking that Montano dies and little focus on the dramatic arrival of Othello with weapons, and upon his imperative language. There was often no reference to the final speeches of Iago and Othello, but most candidates quoted Othello's use of 'Honest Iago'. There was hardly any mention of the dramatic moment of the bell being rung and there was some misunderstanding that Iago rings it. There was some misunderstanding of Roderigo's intention when he shouts, 'Beat me!'

- (b) This was a popular discursive question. Most responses focused on Iago's jealousy of Othello, Roderigo's jealousy of Othello and Othello's jealousy of Desdemona and Cassio. Several relevant scenes were selected. The best responses focused on how jealousy in two specific moments was portrayed vividly and were able to put the moments into context and explain the dramatic significance with relevant comment on the language. These responses showed a clear and detailed understanding of jealousy's psychological destructiveness and its effect on the characters. Successful candidates gave thoughtful consideration to the transformation of Othello's character and his inner turmoil. Likewise, they explored the vindictive nature of Iago and his pleasure in recognising the true power of jealousy. There was evidence of good and comprehensive knowledge of motives displayed by many candidates with ideas being supported by apt use of textual detail. Other themes, such as vulnerability and racism, were often explored with reference to the text. All saw the influence of Iago and of how he was 'pulling the strings'. There were also personal views supported by relevant references that were evaluated quite thoroughly.

Less successful responses struggled to define two precise moments. They gave no context and there was limited understanding of the motivation of the characters and little personal response. Although most candidates could reference the theme of jealousy within the play, the question demanded that they should '*explore two moments*'; unfortunately, the incidents of jealousy in responses were often blurred especially if candidates selected just one character's jealousy to explore. This led to some unbalanced essays and responses.

Many responses were quite repetitive, often with little textual support and general comments. References were often not fully analysed. There was much quoting of 'green-eyed monster' and 'I am not what I am' with no analysis or context. Several candidates thought that Iago calls Othello a green-eyed monster. Responses which simply focused on the feelings or nature of jealousy in the play ran into the danger of their responses lapsing into narrative.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/31 Drama (Open Text)
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Key messages

- The most successful responses demonstrated a personal engagement with the text's characters, ideas and stagecraft.
- Candidates would be advised to write introductions which avoid lengthy historical background or plot summary and to focus on a couple of central points in response to the terms of the question.
- Direct, contextualised quotation from the set passages, or from the text as a whole in answer to discursive questions, is the most effective method of supporting points.
- The strongest responses to passage-based questions considered primarily the context and the content of the scene.
- Less successful responses commented on the use of literary techniques or themes, without relating these to the content and context of the passage.

General comments

The sooner the candidates begin to answer the question, the better. Too often the time spent on a lengthy introduction meant that a candidate did not write about the final section of the passage, therefore sometimes missing key points and curtailing an otherwise sound response. Some introductions were entirely general with biographical information about the author and no reference to the question. Others cited a list of literary features, seemingly chosen at random, as ways in which a passage was made moving or dramatic, for example. The most successful introductions briefly summarised three of four points that were then fleshed out in the main body of the essay. The selection of the most relevant and central issues to be discussed is a key skill.

Whilst the vast majority of candidates showed knowledge of and engagement with their set texts, many responses remained generalised, without demonstrating detailed knowledge and close reading. This was often revealed by misreading of the passages or in trying to find themes in them, rather than answering the question.

An awareness that these texts are written to be performed onstage informed the most successful answers. These responses looked at the text from an audience perspective and commented on author's intentions in regard to the audience. They were aware that, although stage directions inform an actor's performance, an audience is not a reader, so commenting on the punctuation in the stage directions seems unproductive.

The most frustrating answers continue to assert that a passage 'is dramatic because...' followed by an indiscriminate list of terms such as 'punctuation, words, dialogue, hyperbole.' Whereas the scene in question is dramatic mainly because of the onstage action and conflict. Whilst a focus on AO3 is totally necessary, this needs to be embedded in the approach to the text rather than as an end in itself. A more successful way forward would be to consider the key words in the question, such as 'moving ... powerfully ... entertaining ... revealing'; what is happening in the scene and why; and then to explore *how* the author conveys his or her intentions to the audience.

The terms dramatic irony, juxtaposition and caesura were the most commonly misused this session. Many candidates handled the first two terms very well. Others referred to dramatic irony where it did not exist and others used juxtaposition when they meant contrast. Caesura is rarely applicable when writing about drama texts.

The strongest answers to discursive questions selected a range of material from the text as a whole and support points with quotation or very specific textual reference. The ability to use well-chosen, brief

references from the text is often a key discriminator. As the Level Descriptors indicate a reasonable answer can be turned into a very strong one by 'integrating much well-selected reference to the text'.

Several questions on the paper asked to what extent a candidate agreed with a statement about the text or a character in it. Candidates are free to argue on one side or the other but the strongest responses tend to see that there is a debate to be had and write a balanced argument.

There were very few brief answers. Far fewer candidates than in past sessions used the information in the passage to answer the discursive question.

Most responses showed knowledge, though with some gaps, understanding and an engaged response to their set texts.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) This new text produced some strong responses. Candidates showed understanding of the causes of the tension and of how it was created by the writing. The uncomfortable relationship between Gerte and Ernestine was generally fully explored. The strongest answers showed awareness of the play as whole, understanding that the radio was won by Sandra Crump and the significance of Gerte criticising the sewing on Ernestine's dress. Less successful answers missed the fact that Gerte was German and World War Two had finished only recently, making it hardly surprising that Ernestine was wary of her. Candidates blaming this entirely on racism or the media was somewhat wide of the mark.
- (b) Successful responses to this question commented on the contrast in personality between Godfrey and Lily, the intrigue of their partially explored past relationship and their different ways of escaping from racial oppression. Less developed answers showed knowledge of both characters but did not focus sufficiently on the terms of the question. Lily's response to Godfrey marrying Gerte could have been more fully explored.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) This question was answered by a large number of candidates with very varying degrees of success. Effective responses had a clear understanding of the context and of the main issues and focused on what was moving in this powerful climax to the play. They knew that John Proctor had already signed a confession to witchcraft in order to save his life but that when Danforth wanted to nail this to the church door, it was a step too far for Proctor's integrity and sense of self and he destroys the confession. Having despised himself for his adultery with Abigail, he 'finds his goodness', is movingly forgiven by his wife, forgives himself and dies a noble death. The less successful responses misplaced the context thinking he had confessed to adultery; thought he was dying to save his friends or that he has sold his friends and that he would not sign the confession. There was a common misconception that Elizabeth made the speech beginning: 'Give them no tear...' Nevertheless most candidates could explore, often in effective detail, the powerful emotions in the scene and how they were conveyed. Some sound responses were derailed by the insistence on writing about the play being a response to McCarthyism at great length and losing focus on the task. Some wildly asserted that thousands of people had been killed during the 'red scare'. There is no reward for bringing a great amount of historical background into answers and candidates should be warned very firmly against doing so.

The subtleties of John Proctor's stance in the scene were fully grasped by the most successful but eluded the less perceptive. Insightful responses also commented on the injustice perpetrated by Danforth, the drama of Hale's altered perspective and Parris's self-interest and the moving rebirth of passion in the Proctor marriage.

- (b) Taking a straightforward approach to this question by looking at what the girls do in the play, their motives for doing it, the consequences and how their actions might anger the audience proved to

be successful. Most saw Abigail as the chief villain, commenting on her lying, her domination over the other girls and ultimately over Salem. Surprisingly some answers did not mention her aim of getting rid of Elizabeth Proctor and the lengths she was prepared to go to achieve this aim. The other girls were seen as weak and passive, missing Mary Warren's attempt to turn against Abigail, though others looked carefully at why this was not successful. Some answers concentrated on the wrongs of Abigail's relationship with Proctor, not fully exploring the consequences of his rejection of her. Other responses looked at the women in the play which seemed perverse as the girls are so much an entity and referred to as 'the girls'. It is also difficult to see why one would be angered by Elizabeth or Rebecca.

Effectively balanced answers looked at the girls' role in Salem society and how that made their newly acquired power attractive, the gullibility of Hale and Danforth and Proctor's relationship with a young girl in his employ as factors mitigating against anger.

R.C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) It was surprising that many candidates answered this question without mentioning that Stanhope was threatening to shoot Hibbert. Successful responses noted that the audience are unaware that Stanhope is testing Hibbert and that this creates a powerful amount of tension and suspense. There were perceptive comments on the contrast between the aggressive Stanhope of the early part of the passage and the kindness and encouragement shown to Hibbert at the end, revealing his own fears. There was ample appreciation of the horror of the trenches making Hibbert prefer to die than to face it any longer. Sensitive points were made on the comradeship and bonding which for Stanhope is the only positive in the situation. Much was made of Stanhope having being indoctrinated by the jingoistic approach to the war, which is a fair point but not fully taking into account his aims in trying to save Hibbert from himself, or typical of him in the rest of the play. Less effective responses made much of the coping mechanisms the soldiers used; in this case Stanhope's drinking and Hibbert's fake neuralgia but this seemed directed at a different essay and not where the power of this passage lies. Further attention to the onstage action would have enhanced several responses.
- (b) There were many well-balanced answers to this question showing good knowledge of the play. Raleigh was admired for his courage, his ability to make friends, his lack of snobbery, his largely unwavering admiration of Stanhope. In his detractor his naïve romanticisation of war was cited as less admirable. Only the most perceptive answers commented on how he misjudges Stanhope's response to Osborne's death. The questionable wisdom in using his connections to join Stanhope's C Company in the first place was rarely discussed. His courage after his fatal injury was explored in some detail. Those who could support their argument with precise and direct textual reference fared well.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates understood the dramatic irony in the scene and the entertainment factor of neither Sir Andrew nor Viola/Cesario wanting to fight the duel. Successful answers commented on the comings and goings onstage and the paralleling of the Fabian/Viola and the Sir Toby/Sir Andrew pairings. Many grasped the humour in the exaggerated descriptions of valour and Sir Andrew's trying to pacify his supposed opponent by giving him his horse. Candidates with an appreciation of staging were aware of the slapstick comedy that will ensue. Less effective responses took a rather humourless view of Fabian and Sir Toby being evil, supported by all the religious references to the devil and so on. Many quite rightly pointed out how Sir Toby mocks and uses Sir Andrew with support from the passage but the play is a comedy and Sir Andrew is a fair target. Many responses commented on Viola's aside and that her possible exposure as a woman also contributes to the audience's enjoyment. The least effective answers were confused about who was speaking to whom and found the language difficult to decode.

- (b) This question was generally answered less well. There were two main lines of argument. One was that Orsino would always love Olivia therefore it was impossible to believe that Viola could be anything but second best. The other was that he had proved his ability to love loyally despite being rejected by Olivia and would therefore make a good husband to Viola. One candidate forcefully pointed out that Viola kept giving him massive hints that she loved him and if he could not see what was right under his nose, he did not deserve her. Few responses looked at his self-indulgent 'being in love with love', his changeability, the violence he proposes towards 'Cesario' or at Viola's superior loyalty, intelligence and resourcefulness. Answers were often at a disadvantage by not being able to support their points by precise textual reference or by an ability to consider the play as a whole, concentrating on the earlier scenes only.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates knew that Iago reveals that he is using Roderigo for money, that he hates Othello and that he is going to use Cassio to make Othello jealous. There were many competent answers though some candidates needed to explore the passage in greater depth to go beyond a reasonably developed response. Successful answers analysed the clever ways in which Iago manipulates Roderigo into thinking they are in this together and looking at the language he uses to denigrate Roderigo. They commented on his disdain for Othello's openness and honesty and the comparison of him to an ass. Many saw that Iago suspected Othello of cuckolding him but few noted that he is acting out of 'mere suspicion', the very thing he uses against Othello later in the play and very revealing of his own pathological jealousy. Strong points were made about the 'monstrous birth' metaphor indicating Iago's awareness of his own evil. There were some odd misconceptions about Iago referring to Othello as 'The Moor' suggesting that Othello was an animal. Some candidates thought Othello was 'framed to make women false' rather than Cassio.
- (b) Most candidates could see that the most straightforward way of approaching this question was to balance the respective responsibilities of Iago and of Othello himself. Most did this quite competently. Others took the line that the inbuilt racism of the society created Othello's insecurities. Unfortunately answers who took this approach concentrated too much on the racism and not enough on what these insecurities were. An examination of the disparities in Othello's and Desdemona's ages, races and backgrounds and Othello's inexperience of love and Venetian culture would have made these answers much more convincing. The fact that no-one in the play recognises that Iago is not 'honest' was not taken much into consideration when asserting that Othello was too gullible. He was criticised quite rightly for trusting Iago over his wife but the circumstances of having to conduct a campaign and the brief time he has known Desdemona could have been explored. The contemporary attitudes to women were explored effectively in some answers but others tried to impose a modern sensibility on the play, saying for example that Emilia is a feminist, which seems anachronistic and unhelpful.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/32

Drama

(Open Text)

Key messages

- Successful responses focused on the key words in the question and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Opening paragraphs should be brief and avoid lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writers' techniques to be addressed. Conclusions need to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Successful answers to passage-based questions briefly contextualised the passage, selecting relevant material from across the whole passage and analysed both content and the writer's methods effectively.
- Identifying technical terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and intended impact on the audience is an unproductive response to the set task.
- All questions require a response to the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain. There was a lot of excellent work seen. The most successful responses showed detailed appreciation of texts and made perceptive comments on characterisation and stagecraft. The most popular texts across all syllabi were *Twelfth Night* and *Othello*. *The Crucible* and *Journey's End* were popular on the 0992 syllabus. There were two new texts this series, *Othello* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*.

Candidates should be made aware that in answering questions on *The Crucible*, introductions about the religious, socio-historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism are not a prerequisite to answering the question. Similarly, in *Othello*, comments on the role of Elizabethan women should be relevant and brief; how wives were expected to be obedient is a sound point as this, ironically, is the quality that undoes Desdemona but there is little to reward in arguing that '*Emelia is a feminist*'.

Many candidates wrote lengthy, general introductions, summarising the plot or listing irrelevant social, cultural, historical or biographical details of the writer, as mentioned above. Others wrote a list of the things to cover, for example, the techniques the writer had used, including punctuation, which they would analyse in their answer. In an examination with 45 minutes to write a response these are unproductive ways to start an answer and there is little to reward in responses which list the range of punctuation the writer uses in the text.

The most successful answers wrote a brief introduction, focusing on the key terms of the question, for example, 'disturbing', 'dramatic', 'revealing' or 'entertaining' and sustained a link to the question throughout their answer. A brief plan to help to select the most important points to include, and the most suitable material to use to support these points, is helpful. In answering a passage-based question, a few sentences to contextualise the passage, before exploring the passage itself in detail, was helpful in demonstrating a candidate's understanding of the structure of the text. Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and used a range of precise textual references from across the whole text.

A common approach for less successful answers was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text with little or no attempt to link this to the question. Retelling the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question wastes valuable time which should have been spent answering the question. These responses were self-penalising as little time was left to spend on the set passage.

Candidates need to remember that drama is visual and uses language that has an impact on an audience. The most successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as performance, referring to the 'audience' rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book'. These were able to explore stagecraft and the authors' methods to convey the main concerns of their chosen texts.

The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. Many candidates used juxtaposition incorrectly as a synonym for 'contrast'. Simply asserting the playwright uses a technique is unlikely to be rewarded; techniques identified should be relevant, supported and the effects achieved analysed. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language', 'diction', 'end-stopping' or 'caesura' to convey ideas or to write a list of techniques they will be writing about in their introduction.

There are lessons candidates need to learn about quotation. Most know that close reference to the text and quotations are needed to support ideas to achieve highly. However, some candidates work through the extract, line by line, writing out a quotation and then offering paraphrase, sometimes followed by the statement: 'which makes it such a significant moment in the play'. To achieve a coherent, relevant response to the question, the argument should come first, followed by a supporting quotation, containing a link to the task. For example, as one candidate wrote: *'Abigail focuses on accusing the weakest person in the room in order to deflect attention away from herself: "She makes me drink blood". This demonstrates her cunning, and ruthlessness but also starts a process that will only lead to violence and destruction. This makes this a very significant moment in the play.'*

Time management was good with very few unfinished responses seen. Candidates are reminded not to refer to line numbers instead of quoting from the text and to remember to label their answers clearly, with the question number at the top of the response.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were able to identify both the amusing and serious: the racism Lily has experienced; the lack of black representation in the film industry; societal expectations of women and the girls needing a mother figure. They understood how Nottage approaches these serious issues with humour and the joking between characters. More successful answers explored how Ernestine is making fun of herself, adopting her film star pose, knowing she will never be a movie star.
- (b) More successful responses commented on Gerte's racial and national contrast with the Crumps and Godfrey's religious views over Father Divine. Her sympathetic personality was approved by the few who wrote about her. There was little mention of the attack on Godfrey because he was with a white woman, or the shock of the marriage for both the girls and the audience. Less successful responses did not fully grasp that Gerte was a white woman, missing a key aspect of Nottage's portrayal of the character. Very few candidates understood the significance of her being German or the Nazi connection with its racial undercurrents.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context: to distract attention from her own guilt and the dancing in the wood, Abigail has accused Tituba of calling up the Devil, which starts the accusations of witchcraft in Salem. Brief reference to the Puritan theocracy were made providing an important background in which extreme beliefs in God and the Devil would make the idea of witchcraft very threatening. Hence Abigail's determination to deflect blame from herself onto someone more vulnerable, a black slave from another culture, alien to the white, Puritan society of Salem. Abigail's cunning and lying

manipulation of the situation was effectively explored, starting with her wild accusation, '*She makes me drink blood!*' with Hale and Parris immediately seizing on this. Her realisation of her power over Tituba and Hale was noted, leading to further accusations of dreaming 'corruptions', difficult to substantiate, but enough to convince the onlookers of Tituba's guilt and evidence of her working for the Devil. Hale's naivety in accepting the accusations and the dramatic pace of his aggressive interrogation were effectively analysed with some insight into his questioning in that the answer he is looking for is already in the question and all she can do is to agree to save her life and, when pressed, name others. The dramatic impact of Tituba's shock and terror at being betrayed by Abigail with the threats of whipping and hanging were established as powerful and significant factors for the later witch trials. The most successful answers made brief, pertinent reference to McCarthyism where naming others was necessary to save oneself, moving from individual actions to the bigger themes of the play including betrayal, self-preservation, hysteria and the abuse of power. The best answers focused closely on the writing, the accusations, pauses and exclamation marks, for example, Abigail's '*Do not lie!*', then observing the powerful impact of her remaining silently on stage watching during the interrogation.

Many less successful answers started with a lengthy recap of the play, Miller's intentions in writing the play with reference to Senator McCarthy and Communism, and the history of the Salem Witch trials themselves. Others worked through the passage, commenting on the situation and punctuation, particularly exclamation marks but without understanding these reflect a tone of voice, or linking comments to the terms of the question. There was little sense of drama and there were many half-true assertions. Some thought the scene takes place in court and Tituba is innocent but confesses, forgetting the key point that she is dealing with witchcraft but at Abigail's insistence and it is the attempt to deflect from this that starts the accusations and interrogations.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this question with many finding it difficult to go beyond a narrative overview of the relationship or character studies of Proctor and Abigail, without looking at the consequences of the relationship in the wider context of the play. The most successful answers considered Proctor's adultery, Abigail's determination to replace Elizabeth and the disturbing consequences of Abigail's ruthlessness in attempting to achieve this. These included: the witch trials and framing of Elizabeth with the most disturbing aspect being the deaths of innocents and, ironically, Proctor himself. The disturbing way in which Proctor thinks he can cast Abigail off without consequences and to preserve his reputation led to justifiable condemnation of Proctor. Better answers observed the similarities between them and how their lust and adultery made them both 'villainous' prepared to defend their reputations at all costs. Well-selected textual detail and awareness of the dramatic impact of their meetings, and dialogue, were features of these responses. However, few explored Proctor's guilt and refusal to expose Abigail and the effects of this dilemma on his own conscience and his family.

Candidates had mixed feelings about Abigail and Proctor. Many sympathised with Abigail as a victim, due to her childhood and background, claiming she was taken advantage of by an older man and effectively abandoned when no longer needed. This was contrasted to Proctor's greater status and maturity. His clear ambivalence towards Abigail was well-supported and his view of his 'sin' being a minor error, partly caused by Elizabeth, led many to sympathise further with Abigail. Some candidates applied modern ideas to the relationship including the fact that it was 'grooming' and Proctor was a 'paedophile' which undermines engagement with both the relationship and the text as there is so much evidence to support Abigail's malice.

Less successful answers adopted a narrative approach to the relationship and focused on the age difference and the personal relationship, seeing the characters as real rather than constructs. This limited exploration of its disturbing effects on stage. Abigail was frequently depicted as an abused child with little close reference to the text or textual detail to support ideas.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) This question focused on a profoundly 'moving' moment at the end of the play which most candidates were able to engage with, eliciting many detailed, personal responses. There were many sensitive responses to Raleigh's innocence and youth with understanding of the dramatic impact on audiences who had witnessed the arrival of the hero-worshipping young boy, just out of school, now fatally injured. Comparisons to his 'rugger' injuries and expectations that he would soon re-join the men were explored and brief contrasts drawn between his heroic qualities and

Hibbert's lack of them. The most successful answers contextualised the passage: Stanhope and Raleigh's strained relationship before the attack and previous comments on the use of first names. Most found tenderness in Stanhope's ministrations and pathos in Raleigh's slow realisation of the seriousness of his injuries with '*the different note*' in his voice and inability to move his legs. There were perceptive comments on Stanhope's kindness and euphemisms in making light of the moment and giving hope to Raleigh so as not to panic him. There was understanding of the more friendly use of 'Jimmy' and 'Dennis' at this moment, contrasted with Stanhope's previous anger at the use of his first name as Stanhope provides comfort despite the battle raging outside. Stanhope's tone, proximity to Raleigh and perceived desperation to keep him comfortable, 'rising quickly' to get water, were effectively commented on. There was understanding of his attempts at humour with the water and tea leaves. There was much to explore in the stage directions, the silence and the pauses in speech. There was close analysis of the language, the symbolism of the rose light in the dawn sky, Raleigh's request for a light and the dark and cold. More perceptive answers commented on the losing battle above ground with Stanhope's response that the guns were '*Mostly theirs*', symbolising a losing battle both above and below ground.

Less successful answers did not know the context with some unaware that Raleigh dies and did not comment on the changes in Stanhope. There was limited focus on 'moving', or the passage, with lapses into descriptions of the war and Stanhope's previous behaviour and some misconception that Stanhope survives.

There was some misunderstanding of the use of first names, with some calling them 'nicknames'. The terms 'old boy' and 'old chap' were often understood as Raleigh's experience having aged him, rather than being terms of endearment at a sensitive and moving moment. There was confusion of the guns making a 'row' with this understood as an argument between the men.

- (b) There were fewer answers to this question. The relationship between Stanhope and Osborne was one in which candidates were able to empathise and there was some sensitive detail to the friendship, particularly following the death of Osborne when Stanhope grieves for his lost friend. Most answers traced the friendship in a chronological manner. The most successful answers knew the text well and were able to identify key scenes where the relationship is clearly portrayed: Osborne's admiration and loyal defence of Stanhope and his drinking in front of Hardy; him putting Stanhope to sleep when he was drunk; the father-like image which Osborne had and the fact that Osborne gives Stanhope his personal possession when he goes out on the raid, and the effect his death has on Stanhope. They recognised the trust Stanhope has in Osborne and the compassion shown by him. Better answers explored the powerful moments when Osborne comforts and supports Stanhope after Raleigh's arrival, and by reading what Raleigh has written about him. Stanhope's powerfully dramatic reaction to Osborne's death and furious conflict with Raleigh were effectively explored.

Less successful answers were unable to recall specific textual details to support points. This resulted in general comments on their friendship and much retelling of the scenes where Osborne puts Stanhope to bed or calms him down when he is angry over the prospect of Raleigh informing his sister of Stanhope's drinking problem. Weaker answers focused entirely on Stanhope's drinking or wrote character sketches of the men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

- (a) There were some very impressive answers to this question but also many of the weakest. This is a pivotal scene which shows Malvolio, having previously found Maria's fake letter, setting in motion the sub-plot, effecting his own downfall in a most amusing manner. There was little sympathy expressed for Malvolio but considerable enjoyment at the success of the prank. It is dramatically effective and entertaining as the audience anticipates Malvolio's appearance and behaviour, dictated by the contents of the letter. The most successful answers anticipated and eagerly awaited Olivia's reaction to the change in her previously '*sad and civil*' steward. The dramatic irony of the moment featured highly with effective focus on Olivia's present state of mind, and her shock and confusion upon seeing Malvolio and at his attempts to remind her of what she had supposedly written in the 'letter'. Maria's contribution was neglected by most, but better answers saw her role in setting up the scene with her warning Olivia to be on her guard as he was in a '*strange*' manner and surely '*possess'd*'. The humour in her pretence at not knowing the reasons for his behaviour whilst questioning his '*ridiculous boldness*' was well-noted. There was engagement with the

hilarious visual impact of Malvolio's yellow stockings, cross-gartered, smiling and kissing his hand. There was some confusion over Olivia's words on how best to court Cesario as she awaits his arrival, with some thinking she says this to Malvolio himself. The language provided plenty of material to explore with many commenting on the perceived madness of Malvolio and the significance of '*greatness*', the sexual element and misunderstanding of going '*to bed*' and his being a '*nightingale*'. Better answers linked status to form: Olivia speaks in blank verse whereas Maria and Malvolio speak in prose, showing their social class, and were able to make the link to wider themes of class, disguise, appearance versus reality, and madness in love. A few answers showed some sensitivity, seeing the humour in the gulling of Malvolio but also the cruelty in his humiliation and being '*notoriously abused*', leading to his later incarceration.

Less successful answers referred to the letter, Olivia's obvious confusion and Malvolio's conviction that she is in love with him, without supporting or developing how this is dramatic. Some stated that he was indeed insane and that it was right he should be locked away. The weakest answers retold the plot up to and beyond the moment, with minimal engagement with the question and passage. There were some attempts to explain what happened in the passage where it was clear the play had not been studied.

- (b) There were fewer answers to this question. The more successful answers were able to go beyond Feste's intelligence and witty banter, quite unexpected for a 'Fool', and supported their argument and observations with textual evidence including, 'better a witty fool than a foolish wit' to show Shakespeare's true message through this character. There were many aspects of his role considered 'fascinating' and explored: his role in moving between households and social levels, being accepted in both; his part in the plot against Malvolio and disguise as Sir Topas, and the insight and melancholy of some of his songs which open and close the play. Better answers observed his almost omniscient nature as a mouthpiece for Shakespeare and a link with the audience, as a kind of 'Master of Ceremonies' who presides over the whole tangle of love stories, misunderstandings and pranks. He sees through Viola's disguise and wittily chastises Olivia for mourning a brother who is in heaven, getting away with calling her a 'Fool' and is the only character who could mock Maria.

A few less successful answers used prepared character studies of Feste which would have benefitted from closer links to the question and the ways in which Shakespeare makes him such a fascinating character. The weakest answers were undeveloped with many stating little more than Feste works at Olivia's court and he is witty and intelligent which is fascinating for someone employed as a 'Fool'. Some were able to identify moments in the plot when he appears, but these were narrative in approach and lacking in specific detail. There was much repetition of his being witty and intelligent but with very little textual detail to support this.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) There were some engaging responses with the most successful candidates demonstrating clear understanding of the dramatic irony and that it was Shakespeare doing the foreshadowing and not Desdemona. The most successful were able to contextualise the passage and understood that Othello has changed, convinced by Iago of Desdemona's infidelity and planning to kill her that night. There was close focus on how this was made a 'sad' moment with sensitive comments on her love and loyalty to Othello even though in the previous scene he had called her names and hit her. Better answers referred to the inevitability of impending doom as conveyed through references to time, driven by Othello's insistence that his orders are carried out the '*th' instant*', '*forthwith*'. Fear is aroused by his instructions to '*dismiss*' Emilia, leaving Desdemona vulnerable to his wrath and there was some effective analysis of her uneasiness and premonitions. Her words to Emilia, '*If, I should die...*' were understood with emphasis on the '*If*'. Less successful answers argued she has accepted her death and wanted Emilia to use her wedding sheets, from happier times, for her '*shroud*'. Better answers understood that the 'Willow' song eerily parallels her situation, recognising that they are not her words but the words of a song which she could not get out of her mind. The symbolism of the willow and the pathos of the song: '*...sighing...moans...salt tears*' were effectively explored.

There were many misconceptions in answers to this question, such as: Desdemona knows she is going to be killed, her mother sang the song and then dies, Barbary relates to barbary horse as

well as Desdemona being attracted to Ludovico so not as innocent as the audience thinks. Less successful answers seemed quite confused over who was who in the extract and over the 'willow' song, believing Desdemona was mourning for her dead mother and that is why she is sad in this scene. These responses stated that she knew she was going to be killed and accepted her fate, exonerating Othello's behaviour with, '*Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve.*'

The weakest answers attempted a linear analysis of the passage showing little understanding of the text or question or simply lapsed into retelling the plot. Some tended to lose focus on the passage completely and drifted into discussion of such general matters as the patriarchal society in Venice, male and female roles in Shakespeare's time and toxic masculinity.

- (b) There were very few responses to this question but those who did attempt it demonstrated varying degrees of textual knowledge and understanding of Cassio's dramatic role. The more successful answers knew Cassio and his importance to the plot. There was a focus on his qualities, most of which were the opposite of Othello's. His charm and success with ladies were recognised as was his respectful manner when discussing Desdemona. They understood his manipulation and the reasons why he was so easy to use for Iago's purposes. Better answers were able to link him to Othello, Desdemona and Emilia and how this contributed to the plot. Less successful answers struggled with the question and described the plot instead of how Cassio drives the plot as a victim of Iago's jealousy and hatred of both Cassio and Othello. The weakest answers focused more on Iago and his motives, becoming speculative in nature, commenting mainly that Cassio should not have been so gullible.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/33

Drama

(Open Text)

Key messages

- The most successful responses avoided introductions which were lengthy discussions of historical context and focused on the key words of the question. Effective conclusions were more than a reiteration of points.
- A range of textual support and full analysis of references was a feature of the most successful responses. Brief and precise quotations were the best form of textual support.
- Passage-based responses benefited from contextualisation of the passage, with material selected from throughout the passage, including the ending. Close exploration of the language was a feature.
- In successful discursive responses the question remained in focus and precise textual references were sourced from throughout the text.
- If literary terms and punctuation are identified but their intended effect is not considered the response will not progress.
- Successful responses showed an awareness of the text as drama and engaged with the impact of the play onstage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts, and a sense of engagement with the drama was evident in many responses. The most successful responses showed critical understanding of the texts and made perceptive comments about characterisation, stagecraft and language. The most popular texts were *The Crucible*, *Othello* and *Journey's End*. There was one new text this series, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*.

In order to produce a successful response to a question, candidates are required to focus carefully on the key words of the question, such as 'strikingly', 'vividly', 'dramatic', 'moving' or 'fascinating'. This focus on the question needs to be sustained throughout the response. A response which makes only brief reference to the question at the beginning or end is unlikely to achieve high reward. A brief plan is a good idea to help candidates choose relevant material for inclusion, and to help them to remain focused on the question. It is always worthwhile for candidates to spend time in annotating a passage before attempting the question.

The most successful responses showed a clear awareness of the text as drama and of the action onstage. These responses sustained engagement with the visual nature of the drama and the impact on the audience. Referring to 'audience' rather than 'reader', and to 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book' demonstrated this awareness. Some less-successful responses tended to summarise the plot and wrote all they knew about the text, with no link to the question.

In answering a passage-based question, briefly setting the passage in context at the start of the response before exploring the passage in detail is very helpful in demonstrating understanding of the structure of the text. Rather than writing a lengthy introduction with details of historical context or lists of the writer's techniques, a more successful approach is to consider key words in the question, the events of the scene and an exploration of the writer's methods in conveying his or her intentions to the audience. Brief, well-selected references should be analysed fully.

Focus on literary techniques such as dramatic irony and foreshadowing was often successful. However, many responses tended to point out literary techniques with no exploration of the effect of these techniques. Similarly, punctuation was often referred to, with no consideration of the effects in context. This is not helpful in developing a constructive argument. Any techniques referred to should be supported and their effects fully analysed.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

- (a) Very few responses were seen, and in these the passage was rarely set in context. The most successful responses recognised the different attitudes of Lily and Godfrey to religion and politics. There was some awareness of the effect of the stage directions, though very few picked up the hint that Lily and Godfrey might have had prior feeling for each other. Few responses commented on the reactions of Ermina.

Less successful responses did not progress beyond stating the obvious and missed the subtleties of the text such as Lily's contempt of Father Divine and her political views.

- (b) Too few responses to this question were seen to make meaningful comment.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) A very popular text and question.

Stronger candidates showed good personal engagement with the passage and analysed it in depth. A personal sense of the unfairness of the trials was strongly expressed. The context of Proctor bringing Mary Warren to the court to claim that the girls' accusations are false was understood, and there was understanding of the dramatic context of Proctor wishing to present the deposition in order to have Elizabeth and the wives of Giles and Francis released. There was close focus on the passage, on Parris's undermining of everything Proctor says, Hale's realisation that every defence is taken as an attack on the court and on the irony of Danforth's comment that those of good conscience have nothing to fear. Many candidates were able to see the value of commenting on stage directions which led to them analysing rather than describing. These candidates explored Parris's movements onstage, Francis's '*trembling with anger*' and Mary Warren's sudden sobbing. Valid observations were made on the interruptions within the scene linking to the unequal power balance and silencing the voice of reason. By referencing the 'sarcasm' employed by Parris, candidates were able to identify how he viewed Proctor's testament together with his manipulation of Danforth.

Many less successful responses began by summarising historical details of 17th century Salem and/or McCarthyism and Communism in 1950s America. Others discussed the content of the passage with some reference to stage directions, but with little focus on the question and often incomplete coverage of the passage. Many responses did not reference Parris's nervousness and motivation to dismiss the deposition out of fear that he will be brought down if the girls are exposed as liars. There was much focus on Danforth's 'dogmatic' nature and the importance of status but often lacking full understanding and development. There was little focus on Hale's role in the scene.

The least successful responses relied on narration of events of the play or the passage with little awareness of the question. Many focused on only one character from the passage. There was some misreading of Danforth as open-minded and willing to believe Proctor. Coverage of the passage was often limited, and it was rare that candidates responded to the ending. Several responses showed misunderstanding, believing that the '91 signatories' of the deposition have already been accused of witchcraft, or that Parris is the mayor of Salem. Most responses were able to comment on how characters are interrupted, showing unfairness.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this question, but it provided an opportunity for stronger candidates to explore the play quite thoroughly. To achieve highly, candidates needed to explore how Miller 'strikingly' depicts revenge in the play. Those candidates who performed well were able to select key incidents and develop them in the light of the question. Most were able to recognise some aspects of revenge and analyse them carefully with textual support and comment on the language. They understood that the witch trials became an opportunity for people to settle old scores and

grudges. Abigail was identified as the main character seeking revenge and successful responses carefully explored the way she goes about this. Other instances of revenge were also recognised, such as Ann and Thomas Putnam's wish for revenge on community members due to land wars, and on Rebecca Nurse due to the loss of their babies when she was acting as midwife. A few candidates suggested that by sacrificing his reputation, Proctor was taking revenge on Parris and Abigail.

Less successful responses focused on one instance of revenge—usually Abigail—and became a character study. Others did not provide reasons for some characters' revenge and failed to appreciate the hysteria of Salem. Many drifted into narrative.

Other less successful responses discussed the idea that Mary Warren is seeking revenge on the Proctors, although her actions are largely prompted by fear of Abigail and pressure from the other girls, and these responses lacked convincing support. There were some examples of Tituba seeking revenge on Parris although not all were fully supported or developed. Responses often lost focus on revenge and drifted into general comment on the play and its themes. Weaker responses did not identify how the pent-up resentments in Salem are a catalyst for revenge.

RC SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) Many responses provided clear introductions and contextualisation of the passage. Some gave a little appropriate historical context. Stronger responses showed personal engagement with the vivid presentation of Stanhope's state of mind—his paranoia, stress and exhaustion, and understanding of how the audience will relate to the scene. These responses showed understanding of how Stanhope toys with the idea of dying so that his image in Madge's mind will not be tainted—'*for ever and ever...*'; and understood his horror of mingling his home life with life at the front.

In less successful responses there was little focus on the interaction between Stanhope and Osborne, although many candidates understood the supporting role of Osborne and noted the name 'Uncle' used by Stanhope. Greater focus was needed on the language of Stanhope's drunken rant and the way that his fragmented speech is a result of his drunken state. Some lacked explicit focus on Stanhope's fear of Madge finding out about his alcoholism, and that she is Raleigh's sister. Responses were not always fully focused on the fact that Stanhope is drunk. There was little focus on the stage directions such as 'strange high-pitched voice', or 'dull voice' and 'laughs gaily'. Less successful responses listed themes of the text and although the coping mechanism of alcohol was understood, responses did not progress and develop from this point. Some responses missed altogether Stanhope's alcoholism and the censorship issue, both of which are central to the scene.

- (b) A smaller number of responses were seen. Although most of the responses focused on the cowardice of Hibbert, some were able to see him as a representative of how many soldiers would have felt when being placed on the Front Line, showing empathy towards his situation. Those candidates who were able to compare Hibbert's feigned neuralgia, and the desire to go home, to the bravery and dignity of others such as Raleigh and Osborne were able to engage more fully with the question. Likewise, responses that explored the scene when Stanhope threatens to shoot Hibbert showed understanding of how unbearable the situation had become for him; it was preferable for him to die in this way than face the German onslaught. By addressing this incident together with Stanhope's confession of also being afraid, candidates were able to explore the effects of war on individuals and thus the dramatic impact Hibbert has in the play. Stronger responses covered the unpleasant aspects of Hibbert's characterisation and how they contribute to the dramatic impact. They also looked at his attitude to women and his inability to read situations, the tension of his exchange with Stanhope, and his cowardice and reluctance as the others leave to take part in the raid.

Less successful responses tended to only focus on the exchange with Stanhope and were therefore narrow in range. These responses gave little or no consideration to how Hibbert is viewed by other characters. A few responses confused Hibbert with Trotter. There was rarely any consideration of Hibbert's behaviour during the dinner.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*



Question 4

- (a) This was a reasonably popular question, and the passage allowed much scope for personal engagement. Stronger responses engaged with the moving nature of the passage. They clearly understood the differing gender attitudes towards love and were able to explore the language relating to this effectively. The best responses commented on the language and evaluated the interaction between Orsino and Viola, recognising the dramatic irony of the scene and expressing a strong personal response to Viola's plight and Orsino's sense of superiority.

The most successful responses were able to identify the change in mood created by Viola's story of her lost 'sister' and her grief for the 'loss' of her brother. There were some comments on Orsino's '*rantings*'/'*moaning*' and '*needing to get a grip*' indicating that his 'love' for Olivia should not be taken too seriously; his words reflecting more show than substance, leading to some candidates seeing him as a comical figure. In contrast, the true love felt by Viola following her speech when referencing the 'worm i' th' bud' became more apparent. In considering the imagery candidates could more fully engage with the term, 'moving'.

The least successful responses tended to provide a few quotations and paraphrase them (not always accurately) and did not understand the wordplay between Orsino and Viola. Many missed the significance of Viola's lines about her background and there was some misreading of 'queen of gems' and 'pranks'. Less successful responses did not engage with the debate about the strength of men and women's love. A few candidates seemed to have learned all or parts of a general response by heart, which was self-penalising as the response often lacked focus on the question and relevant textual support was lacking. There was often little focus on 'moving' and much reliance on narration.

- (b) A less popular question. Stronger responses were able to consider how the arrival of Olivia on stage is anticipated by Orsino's devotion to her and examined how she is presented through the eyes of other characters. They focused on many aspects of Olivia's character and recognised her ability to change affections quickly and even mentioned her sympathy for Malvolio. Many recognised that she was fascinating without being an endearing character. There was some interesting discussion of her as a bold woman who makes a choice of who to love, breaking societal stereotypes. Stronger responses understood her relationship with Feste, the power that her mourning brings and her lack of control over her household. Some responses identified how Olivia breaks gender and class rules but lacked development of these ideas.

Many responses lacked focus on 'fascinating' and less successful responses often became a character profile of Olivia with little sense of how she is seen by other characters. There was some focus on her fickle nature when she breaks her vow of mourning upon meeting Cesario. There was some undeveloped selection of material, for example on her relationship with Maria. Comments were often narrow in range, being very generalised with little or no textual support and narrative responses were quite common. Several responses appeared to try to make the essay fit the theme of love. Some responses drifted into too much discussion of Orsino, not necessarily with relevance to Olivia. There was some lengthy and irrelevant discussion of gender issues in Shakespeare's time.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

- (a) There were some convincing responses to this question, with candidates engaging with the term 'dramatic moment'. The best responses considered the whole extract, referencing both speech and stage directions to convey the pace and action of this chaotic scene. Some candidates gave a brief overview of the context before addressing the focus of the question which allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge of Iago's plan. This proved to be a good strategy to use for the first paragraph. Many candidates wrote coherently and at length with responses identifying the dramatic irony in Iago's pretence of being the innocent bystander leading to Othello's considering him as 'honest'. There was some valid comment on both Cassio and Othello, their behaviour, and reactions to the brawl. The impact of the scene on the audience was also mentioned by candidates, reinforcing their understanding of the question.

Successful responses were able to reference language features to illustrate the points they were making, such as Cassio's use of insults and the way that his drunken behaviour contrasts with his

usual well-mannered and honourable character. There was clear understanding of Iago's use of language to 'avoid' blaming Cassio and of the dramatic effect of the scene on the audience. Stronger responses also understood the hyperbole of 'I am hurt to the death!' and identified Othello's anger at the brawl which has disturbed his wedding night and how he compares the men with '*Turks*'-their enemies.

Less successful responses did not engage with the context, lacked focus on language and were unable to visualise the dramatic moment. They tended to lose focus on the passage and drift into discussion of such general matters as the patriarchal society in Venice, male and female roles in Shakespeare's time, and toxic masculinity. There was much misreading thinking that Montano dies and little focus on the dramatic arrival of Othello with weapons, and upon his imperative language. There was often no reference to the final speeches of Iago and Othello, but most candidates quoted Othello's use of 'Honest Iago'. There was hardly any mention of the dramatic moment of the bell being rung and there was some misunderstanding that Iago rings it. There was some misunderstanding of Roderigo's intention when he shouts, 'Beat me!'

- (b) This was a popular discursive question. Most responses focused on Iago's jealousy of Othello, Roderigo's jealousy of Othello and Othello's jealousy of Desdemona and Cassio. Several relevant scenes were selected. The best responses focused on how jealousy in two specific moments was portrayed vividly and were able to put the moments into context and explain the dramatic significance with relevant comment on the language. These responses showed a clear and detailed understanding of jealousy's psychological destructiveness and its effect on the characters. Successful candidates gave thoughtful consideration to the transformation of Othello's character and his inner turmoil. Likewise, they explored the vindictive nature of Iago and his pleasure in recognising the true power of jealousy. There was evidence of good and comprehensive knowledge of motives displayed by many candidates with ideas being supported by apt use of textual detail. Other themes, such as vulnerability and racism, were often explored with reference to the text. All saw the influence of Iago and of how he was 'pulling the strings'. There were also personal views supported by relevant references that were evaluated quite thoroughly.

Less successful responses struggled to define two precise moments. They gave no context and there was limited understanding of the motivation of the characters and little personal response. Although most candidates could reference the theme of jealousy within the play, the question demanded that they should '*explore two moments*'; unfortunately, the incidents of jealousy in responses were often blurred especially if candidates selected just one character's jealousy to explore. This led to some unbalanced essays and responses.

Many responses were quite repetitive, often with little textual support and general comments. References were often not fully analysed. There was much quoting of 'green-eyed monster' and 'I am not what I am' with no analysis or context. Several candidates thought that Iago calls Othello a green-eyed monster. Responses which simply focused on the feelings or nature of jealousy in the play ran into the danger of their responses lapsing into narrative.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/41 Unseen

Key messages

- Most candidates address AO1 and AO2 very successfully by selecting brief quotation to show knowledge of texts and most moved beyond surface meaning to explore ideas and attitudes.
- AO3 is best addressed through developed analysis of how the writer achieves effects.
- Less successful candidates list devices, or use technical terminology without exploring effects, or make very generalised comments.
- Personal engagement with some interesting, insightful interpretations (AO4) was evident across the ability levels.
- Candidates should practise writing focused introductory overviews of the text and conclusions that do not simply repeat points already made.

General comments

This was a successful session for this optional paper, which remains a popular alternative. The large number of outstanding scripts seen by examiners confirmed that candidates' ability to read closely and to respond personally to Literature texts which offer quite a high level of demand have not been adversely affected by the disruptions of the last two years. Clearly candidates remain well taught and appreciate this paper as a final opportunity to bring together all the skills involved in the study of Literature, as it tests all the Assessment Objectives for the subject, but has no pre-learnt content, so demands flexibility and an individual approach. Most candidates were able to express a thoughtful individual personal response, with varying levels of critical engagement, and the paper is a good discriminator of candidates' ability to respond to literary language.

Most candidates confidently approach supporting their understanding of the meaning of a text by selecting supporting evidence (AO1). Quotation is best kept short, and both preceded and followed by commentary. Effective word-level analysis enabled candidates to demonstrate knowledge and explore the connotations or possible meanings of individual words in order to demonstrate understanding of deeper meaning. This leads to precise analysis which was lacking in middle band responses. Where there were significant misunderstandings, this was usually because candidates had not read the introductory rubric carefully enough, as this explains any necessary context.

Deeper understanding of ideas and attitudes (AO2) can be achieved through more appreciation of the overall structure and cohesion of a text, looking more at linked images, the development of an idea or narrative structure and contrast. Stronger candidates do not just work through texts line by line or paragraph by paragraph but move backwards and forwards to comment on the connection and development of ideas. Less confident candidates are helped by the advisory bullet points but should observe that these do not simply work through the text chronologically but also encourage the development of ideas about the writing and the reader's personal response to it.

Appreciation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects (AO3) remains central to success in this paper. However, it is not the only Assessment Objective, and the full wording given here points out the role of language in making meaning (AO2) and shaping a personal response (AO4). Many candidates showed an impressive knowledge of wide-ranging subject specific vocabulary, especially for poetry. It was also encouraging to see greater numbers overall choosing to write about prose and demonstrating they had good tools for analysing narrative viewpoint and description. However, middle-range scripts often prioritised quantity of technical analysis over quality and depth, spotting devices and listing techniques but sometimes stopping with identification instead of exploring effects. Others made very generalised comments, such as 'it makes the reader excited'. Comment on language is more successful when linked to clear understanding of deeper meaning, through the influence on mood and tone.

There were some adventurous and ambitious personal interpretations of texts (AO4). However, some strong scripts did not reach the top levels due to the 'over-thinking' of their interpretation of 'big ideas' in the texts, such as environmentalism, or humans and the natural world. Some made tenuous links between the text and these ideas and, as a result, moved away from close textual analysis. Responses need to be rooted firmly in the critical analysis of the text and the way the writer achieves effects, with interpretation coming out of close analysis of language, imagery, sound effects and narrative structure. All the Assessment Objectives are assessed but they need to be closely linked.

Finally, candidates would benefit from more advice on good introductions and conclusions. Good introductions are short and show an overview of the writer's probable purpose and the overall structure of the text. Dividing the text into three sections and giving an overview of the development of meaning and the reader's response over those three sections would be a good start. Weak introductions simply repeat the terms of the question and bullet points. While this can help some candidates to focus, there is nothing for examiners to reward here. Another popular but unsuccessful tactic is simply to list all the literary devices that may (or may not) be present in the text. There is no reward for simply identifying devices without comment on effects. Likewise, too many conclusions gain no extra credit because they simply repeat points made earlier. A strong conclusion draws together observations in a personal response to the text as a whole, appreciating how language and structure have shaped the reader's thoughts and feelings, and their reaction to the experience described. It links all the Assessment Objectives by making direct connections between language, form, meaning and effect on the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates chose to write about the poem. Examiners reported seeing some highly sensitive responses to '*The Fall*' by Kim Moore, where candidates had first worked out the 'narrative' of the poem, allowing them to focus in some detail on an analysis of the poet's methods. Others revealed restricted understanding of what the poem is about.

In better answers, candidates revealed an understanding of what had happened to the husband. They appreciated that he had had a fall in the middle of the night in a hotel bathroom, that he had lost consciousness and that his wife had been awoken by a sound – source unknown – and managed to revive her husband, possibly through her frantic shouting. In better answers, the bullet points were used to help to structure the response.

It was a feature of better answers that they noticed a range of imagery relating to geography, place and language. The towels hang 'like flags in a tiny hot country', the husband fell with his feet in the 'North' and his head in the 'South' of the country. The husband's spell of unconsciousness is described as a 'journey' and his incoherent mutterings, as he regains consciousness, are described as 'another language'. Some candidates thought that this travel-related language was linked to the couple being on holiday, with the hotel bathroom representing the 'foreignness' of the husband's near-death experience.

In other well-developed answers, candidates remarked upon the water imagery in the poem that begins in the third stanza. They noted the analogy between the husband's limp head and the movement of water at the bottom of a tilted bowl. This was also seen to be linked to the unsettling image of the husband's body as an 'empty house abandoned' to the wind and rain – more water – and some said how fitting it was that this water imagery was used to describe the prone body in a bathroom. Others linked the reference to the husband 'surfacing' from unconsciousness to the water 'theme', as the poet seems to suggest a recovery from an underwater incident; others included the verb 'leaked', seen as contributing the 'liquid' theme in the bathroom.

Some candidates struggled with the final stanza. Having lauded the bath for its faithfulness, some found the poet's apparent 'aggression' towards the bath, and the bathroom floor, at odds with her proclaimed love for the bathroom. Better answers found an answer to this conundrum in the idea that the poet, desperate to understand what woke her from her sleep and therefore what saved her husband from certain death, is trying to identify 'which voice pulled me from my sleep'. In kicking the bath, she is rewarded with 'a low familiar tone', whereas when she stamps on the floor, there is a bellow in 'reply' and an echo from the room below. Most candidates who actually dealt with this part of the poem concluded that it was the familiar 'voice' of the bath that had alerted her to the danger that her husband was in.

Many candidates did not deal with the final stanza at all and there was some real confusion about the 'narrative' of the poem as a whole. The opening of the poem caused confusion for many. Some missed the fact that the fall occurred in a hotel bathroom, and they wrote about a housewife's delight in her own pristine and lovingly maintained bathroom. Some took the title of the poem, '*The Fall*', to refer to the season of Autumn, while others interpreted the poem's title to be some sort of pun, conflating the husband's near fatal fall in the bathroom with the wife's related 'falling in love' with the bathroom.

Most misunderstandings hinged upon whether the poet's husband died as a result of his 'fall' or whether he survived. The phrase 'only this room to witness your passing' in the penultimate stanza convinced many candidates that the husband had 'passed' from life to death. Those that had already recognised that the husband had indeed 'surfaced' wrote about the 'passing' from consciousness to unconsciousness and that helped them to understand that the other 'language' that the husband brought back with him, was caused by the lapse in consciousness and the 'deletion' of moments from his conscious life.

Some candidates also struggled with the attitude of the poet towards her husband, with several commenting upon a detached tone in the poetic voice that led them to suspect that the poet might have actually murdered her husband and was attempting some sort of 'cover up' of her crime, in collusion with the toilet and the bath or sink. One or two candidates suggested that the poet acted as an interrogator of the bathroom although some considered that the 'blank faced' reference was attached to the husband, and not to the bathroom fixtures.

Most noted the vocative case employed by the poet/persona, but there was very little attempt to discuss the form of the poem, apart from noting some use of enjambment and caesura. Few insights resulted from the identification of these poetic occurrences.

Question 2

There were some good answers on the prose extract – this year taken from the novel *The War Between the Tates* by Alison Lurie – and there were many candidates who chose the passage in preference to the poem. Some struggled to discover 'memorable' aspects of the writing, although they were drawn to the 'story'.

Many candidates were engaged with the family dynamics as presented in the passage. The harassed mother, struggling to keep her composure, the ungrateful teenage Jeffrey and his soon-to-be teenage sister, Matilda, were perhaps too familiar to the candidates to be considered with the degree of literary objectivity necessary for the composition of a critique of the writing. Some expressed empathy for Erica, often commenting upon their own family breakfast routines and, in the main, they considered Jeffrey and 'Muffy' to be 'jolly lucky' to have their breakfast prepared for them by a mother so apparently solicitous for their well-being.

The familiarity of the pre-school breakfast, served with 'one eye on the clock', amid the general morning rush to catch the bus, struck a chord with some candidates who took the scenario as a cue to express their admiration of mothers as a whole and of Erica in particular.

There were some candidates who took a more objective view and tried to analyse the style of writing as well as its contents. In better answers, there was a good focus on the narrative perspective, which most identified as being that of an omniscient, third person viewpoint. Some noted the opening of the passage. 'March 20' which suggested a diary entry to many. This, followed by a reference to the weather, 'A cold spring morning' made some candidates think about their own daily chronicles with some confessing that the weather and what they had had for breakfast was sometimes the only entry that they tended to make in their diary on a particularly mundane day.

In good answers, candidates noted the ratio of dialogue to description and expressed their appreciation of how clearly the lumpen Jeffrey and 'picky' Matilda were characterised so vividly through their interactions with Erica and with each other. The children revealed their 'awfulness' in what they said, and how they said it, as well as being presented through the unfiltered thoughts of their mother. Their silence, in response to Erica's attempts to be cheerful, also 'spoke volumes' to astute readers. In better answers, candidates focused on the writer's methods, and they used the bullet points to guide them through the construction of a cogent response.

Examiners had the impression that candidates who adopted the bullet points, to structure their answers, had benefited from re-reading the passage to look for evidence of Erica's feelings about her children, evidence for Erica's response to the bulldozer and evidence of Erica's changing moods. If candidates had also read the passage in its entirety at the outset, this resulted in a further three focused readings of the passage. This

close engagement with the three discrete bullets allowed candidates to notice more and more relevant points, before they began writing their answers. This led to a more focused response based on a more thorough acquaintance with the text and tasks.

Stronger responses generally noted the subtle ways in which the writer presented Erica's feelings about her children. This included the narrative descriptions of Erica's interactions with Jeffrey and Matilda: 'Erica tries to keep her voice cheerful', 'Suppressing several possible answers', 'Again Erica suppresses several rejoinders ...she asks rather thinly', that show Erica's conscious efforts not to reveal her feelings of frustration. As well as the omniscient narrator's insight into Erica's inner thoughts: 'Erica contemplates her children, whom she **once** thought the most beautiful beings on earth'; here better answers noted the use of the past tense for Erica's previous feelings.

Very good answers also included the writer's inclusion of the substance of Erica's 'contemplation' of the children now sitting in front of her. What she actually sees now, rather than 'beautiful beings' is Jeffrey who 'hunches awkwardly' while 'cramming fried egg into his mouth and chewing noisily' and Matilda 'wearing a peevish expression and an orange tie-dyed jersey' which looks as if it has been 'spat on'. Candidates mostly acknowledged the negative tone of the description, and some even remarked on the effective use of zeugma in relation to Matilda. Some candidates noted how, at this point, the sounds of Jeffrey's chewing and Matilda's 'stripping' of the crusts off her toast, blended together in Erica's head and were echoed by the 'CHOMP, CRUNCH, SCRATCH' of the bulldozer. Both the children and the bulldozer have become an irritant to Erica. Better answers also included Erica's painful 'weeping' after the children have left for school, in their section on Erica's feelings about her children.

When candidates tackled Erica's responses to the bulldozer, there was a fairly even split between viewpoints. Some read her outburst 'You don't care....' literally, suggesting that Erica was keenly interested in the environment, locally and possibly the fate of the planet, more generally. Others recognized the arrival of the bulldozer as a tipping point for Erica, whose previous 'restraint' with her children had been stretched to its limit. In the latter category, candidates saw in the children's 'neutral, even conversational' response as the trigger for Erica's emotional meltdown.

Regarding Erica's mood changes in the passage, there was also divided opinion. Some candidates were sympathetic and noted that Erica had much to put up with. Some looked for reasons for her 'ultra-sensitivity' and noted that she appeared to be dealing with the teenagers as a 'single mum'. More careful and more literary responses noted Erica's 'emotional temperature' before the children appeared for breakfast and they noted that Erica had been cheered by the sunshine and the prospect of spring. These candidates also registered that Erica's mood had previously been 'unnaturally low' and that the children's equally indifferent responses to her announcement of the first day of spring had prevented her 'emotional temperature' from rising any further. Indeed, they acknowledged that, at the end of the passage, this 'temperature' had plummeted into desperate solitude and painful weeping.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/42 Unseen

Key messages

- Most candidates address AO1 and AO2 very successfully by selecting brief quotation to show knowledge of texts and most moved beyond surface meaning to explore ideas and attitudes.
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- Personal engagement with some interesting, insightful interpretations (AO4) was evident across the ability levels.
- Candidates should practise writing focused introductory overviews of the text and conclusions that do not simply repeat points already made.

General comments

This was a successful session for this optional paper, which remains a popular alternative. The large number of outstanding scripts seen by examiners confirmed that candidates' ability to read closely and to respond personally to Literature texts which offer quite a high level of demand have not been adversely affected by the disruptions of the last two years. Clearly candidates remain well taught and appreciate this paper as a final opportunity to bring together all the skills involved in the study of Literature, as it tests all the Assessment Objectives for the subject, but has no pre-learnt content, so demands flexibility and an individual approach. Most candidates were able to express a thoughtful individual personal response, with varying levels of critical engagement, and the paper is a good discriminator of candidates' ability to respond to literary language.

Most candidates confidently approach supporting their understanding of the meaning of a text by selecting supporting evidence (AO1). Quotation is best kept short and both preceded and followed by commentary. Effective word-level analysis enabled candidates to demonstrate knowledge and explore the connotations or possible meanings of individual words in order to demonstrate understanding of deeper meaning. This leads to precise analysis which was lacking in middle band responses. Where there were significant misunderstandings, this was usually because candidates had not read the introductory rubric carefully enough, as this explains any necessary context.

Deeper understanding of ideas and attitudes (AO2) can be achieved through more appreciation of the overall structure and cohesion of a text, looking more at linked images, the development of an idea or narrative structure and contrast. The 'building blocks' that a writer uses create meaning and are not just devices to log. Hence stronger candidates do not just work through texts line by line or paragraph by paragraph but move backwards and forwards to comment on the connection and development of ideas. Less confident candidates are helped by the advisory bullet points but should observe that these do not simply work through the text chronologically but also encourage the development of ideas about the writing and the reader's personal response to it.

Appreciation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects (AO3) remains central to success in this paper. However, it is not the only Assessment Objective, and the full wording given here points out the role of language in making meaning (AO2) and shaping a personal response (AO4). Many candidates showed an impressive knowledge of wide-ranging subject specific vocabulary, especially for poetry. It was also encouraging to see greater numbers overall choosing to write about prose and demonstrating they had good tools for analysing narrative viewpoint and description. However, middle-range scripts often prioritised quantity of technical analysis over quality and depth, spotting devices and listing techniques but sometimes stopping with identification instead of exploring effects. Others

made very generalised comments, such as 'it makes the reader excited'. Comment on language is more successful when linked to clear understanding of deeper meaning, through the influence on mood and tone.

There were some adventurous and ambitious personal interpretations of texts (AO4). However, some strong scripts did not reach the top levels due to the 'over-thinking' of their interpretation of 'big ideas' in the texts, such as environmentalism, or humans and the natural world. Some made tenuous links between the text and these ideas and, as a result, moved away from close textual analysis. Responses need to be rooted firmly in the critical analysis of the text and the way the writer achieves effects, with interpretation coming out of close analysis of language, imagery, sound effects and narrative structure. All the Assessment Objectives are assessed but they need to be closely linked.

Finally, candidates would benefit from more advice on good introductions and conclusions. Good introductions are short and show an overview of the writer's probable purpose and the overall structure of the text. Dividing the text into three sections and giving an overview of the development of meaning and the reader's response over those three sections would be a good start. Weak introductions simply repeat the terms of the question and bullet points. While this can help some candidates to focus, there is nothing for examiners to reward here. Another popular but unsuccessful tactic is simply to list all the literary devices that may (or may not) be present in the text. There is no reward for simply identifying devices without comment on effects. Likewise, too many conclusions gain no extra credit because they simply repeat points made earlier. A strong conclusion draws together observations in a personal response to the text as a whole, appreciating how language and structure have shaped the reader's thoughts and feelings, and their reaction to the experience described. It links all the Assessment Objectives by making direct connections between language, form, meaning and effect on the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The poem '*House at Sea*' by Kate Miller proved to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. They understood the meaning of this poem and were able to explore deeper implications and show critical appreciation of the methods used by the poet. The poem presents a personal view of the experience of being flooded and many saw this very much as the fears of a child or young person. Some perceptively linked this to the choice of title: the house is not 'by' the sea but appears to be about to sail away. A few realised the title can also be interpreted metaphorically as an allusion to how much the lives of the house and its inhabitants is upset by the encroachment of the waters. A few, who had not read the rubric carefully, thought the family lived on a boat or houseboat. Good responses saw the overall structure of the poem which zooms in from harbour to house to cellar, ending with a particular and individual human encounter with a terrifying personification of the force of the sea. Stronger scripts noticed that the poet uses the present tense throughout so that the reader relives the experience as it happened. The approach was generally to deal with the poem in chronological order using the bullet points as prompts.

Most candidates commented on the opening line and many wrote effectively about the impact of the verb 'hoisted'. Candidates confident in word-level analysis were able to show the ability to analyse on a deeper level with this word, linking it to other nautical imagery, or to ways in which nature is compared to human actions. For example, one candidate wrote that 'you only hoist heavy objects implying that at some point it will have to fall and wreak damage'. Another candidate wrote 'Flags of countries are hoisted up in invasions so this is symbolic of the rampage throughout the harbour that the water is taking'. The most frequent citations in the first stanza were 'swirling rotted rope', 'milky as an oyster' and the 'stew-brown tarpaulin' which led to some particularly effective analysis that linked these to gustatory or olfactory imagery. Analysis of the 'oyster' simile relied on some knowledge of oysters but many candidates were helped by 'milky' and so likened this to the white froth of the sea. Stronger candidates linked 'rotted', 'oyster' and 'stew' often drawing out negative connotations. For example: 'This simile presents an oxymoron, although oysters do have light colours, they are often dark, grimy and pungent and are often seen as repulsive – this could be an allusion to the harbour itself'. However, other candidates were rewarded for seeing a natural beauty in the oyster imagery, recognising oysters as delicacies or the home of pearls, and used these observations to develop interpretations which set the strength and beauty of nature at odds with the human world which had exploited the resources of the sea. Many wanted to see this stanza as the beginning of the sea's revenge. It was notable when a candidate made a perceptive comment about the 'caul' linking it to birth imagery. Only strong candidates did this and many struggled with this image, despite the attempt to help them with a gloss, unable to make the connection with the tarpaulin in the previous line. Many candidates made comments on the alliteration of 'dry dock' and contrasted this with the high tide, but without understanding what a dry dock is. Those more familiar with nautical vocabulary could make more sense of the portrait of the harbour, but most

were able to understand that this was a threatened and possibly archaic way of life subject to the moods of the ocean and larger forces than the merely human.

In this poem, the first stanza is probably the most difficult, and those who wrote best about it tended to have already developed an overview of the whole text. The second stanza, describing the house, was more accessible, with plenty of descriptive imagery. This was also a stanza in which the poet's use of enjambment really did equate to the movement of the water as it threatened the house's very existence. Candidates who developed their ideas further showed perception in linking ideas rather than writing about lines singularly. For example, some candidates linked the verb 'tugs' to the verbs 'stomp and smack' comparing these verbs to the personified sea whose behaviour could be interpreted as childlike and demanding – one candidate likened it to the 'flood represents a raging child' or the motif of an angry child. Many commented on the 'salt-swollen doors' and many made effective comments linking 'swollen' to personification, the doors 'metaphorically injured by protecting its owners from the sea'. The 'cummerbund of fog' also brought interesting interpretations – the glossary enabling candidates to consider the deeper meaning of this image such as 'encircling the occupants waist, holding them tight and shrouding them in fog'. Candidates appreciated that the house, and implicitly the family within it, had their very existence threatened by a battering force, conveyed through alliteration and sibilance mimicking the force of the waves, and increasingly personified as a threatening and angry creature. Many saw this personification as beginning with the way 'sea' lacks a definite article in the first line of the stanza, and so is an undefined but unstoppable antagonist, undermining the house and the family within it, and making their living conditions intolerable. Interestingly, some linked this to their own experiences of the global pandemic, not least because they interpreted the phrase 'we must sit out the winter' as a family confined to their home for a whole season – an experience which they could identify with, showing understanding both of potential underlying family tensions and the wider implications of human existence threatened by nature.

The vast majority of candidates found the animalistic imagery of the third stanza especially engaging. They commented in detail on the personification of the 'dark green creature' and the verbs 'rears, recoils and lunges'. How far this imagery was analysed beyond recognition of the sea as a dangerous animal often gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate critical understanding. Some saw the sea as like a crocodile, perhaps drawing on their own cultural background, and some as a mythical beast, such as a Kraken. Again, recognising the development of ideas was especially effective such as these examples: 'winking' shows the personified qualities of cunning' or 'the flood is personified as a primal monster' or 'the personification of the water as an antagonist is almost gladiatorial'. Many focused on the colour of the creature, as possibly signifying envy or the revenge of nature or some kind of sea dragon, some linked this to sound effects in this stanza and the previous one, or the malevolent way in which it is shown to 'claw' and 'mount' the steps, threatening to advance further. Many appreciated the dramatic impact of the short phrase 'My father lifts the hatch'. They saw the caesural pause that follows as the moment when the child takes in the conflict between father and 'monster'. Many commented on the Gothic element of this confrontation, especially as the sea monster appears to be mocking the human beings while 'winking' and 'spitting'. This was seen as both the movement of the water and the revenge of nature for being ignored or ill-treated. Many wanted to see the lantern as a symbol of light and hope threatened by dark forces. Certainly the monster seemed to have a whole number ('doubling') of malevolently winking eyes and 'o's, connoting voracious mouths, perhaps; 'Uneasy' is placed both emphatically and awkwardly at the end of the line and used ambiguously – it certainly applies to the monster's reaction to the light but also seems to describe the onlookers too – and the creature responds like some cornered, yet venomous creature. There were different responses to the father: most saw him as brave and protective of his family, heroically confronting and seeing off the 'beast' but others thought the 'swinging' lantern betrayed his nervousness and lack of authority and a few, more fancifully, conflated him with the beast and saw him as in league with the dark forces which undermine the house.

Finally some candidates set the nightmarish and unstable elements of the experience in contrast to the relatively secure and regular structure of the three stanzas, although they found that the lack of rhyme and the use of enjambment and, at times, extended sentences running over a series of lines, suggested a degree of instability and fluidity. There were interesting overall interpretations of why this experience might have been formative for the poet, and what it showed about the family's precarious existence or the vulnerability of human life when dependent on the caprice of the sea. Some questioned whether the sea is the true aggressor. One very strong answer saw the poem as an allegory about climate change and concluded by saying, 'this also suggests that it is now too late to make a change as global warming has gone too far. The indifference to nature from human society is irreversible'.

Question 2

Most candidates understood this extract from the opening of the novel *Tar Baby* by Toni Morrison and were able to write meaningful comments about it. Stronger candidates often addressed how the writer uses characterisation, description, tension and lack of closure to hook readers in and develop their interest and emotional engagement in the opening section of a novel. Most candidates read the rubric carefully and understood the man's motives, and many saw him as a fugitive from injustice or racism, making links to contemporary concerns about refugees and asylum seekers. Many commented that what made his experience so poignant was that he was so alone, dependent on the fickle tide for support. It is good to see the prose response becoming a more popular option but candidates need to avoid a purely narrative focus, and must address the writer's purpose and methods with the same kind of critical attention as in the poetry question. There were certainly many opportunities to comment on language and imagery, as well as structural contrasts, in this text. Good answers tended to focus on the transition of the sea from a calming influence into a volatile force.

Nearly every candidate wrote about the first sentence: 'He believed he was safe.' This was an effective way into the text as the analysis of 'believed' and 'safe' created immediate opportunities to analyse the situation the man was in, and the expectations the phrase develops in the reader, who retrospectively sees a potential for irony here. There was much analysis of why his heart is pounding in 'sweet expectation'. Most concluded that this is building up both his and the reader's hopes that a better life awaits him in Queen of France. Some felt that he is more nervous than he likes to pretend, and that his tension is revealed when he 'sucked in great gasps of air'. The personification of his destination led to some interesting readings: she appears to be luring him with the promise of a better life, almost flirting with him. According to one candidate she is 'something beautiful and untouchable...like the presence of a stunning and beautiful queen that cannot be reached'. Good responses developed the significance of feminine imagery to describe both the town and the rip tide which sucks him away from it. Some saw this as a battle between two women for the man, wondering if this revealed something about the anonymous character's past life or future desires. Arguably, it reveals how he sees the world, as the narrative voice is more 'close third person' than omnipotent – we largely see and think what the character sees and thinks. In this way, descriptions of the port, the sea and the sunset reflect his own feelings. Not only is the town flirtatious but the cruisers are 'girlish', contributing to what at first seems a notably unthreatening atmosphere for an illegal migrant.

The bullet point considering how the man behaved before he got in the water led to analysis of 'carefully casual', the list of 'no things to gather' and the shoes knotted through his pants. This, together with his 'hesitation' enabled candidates to consider the effect of how the writer had presented the man and his situation. He seems mentally well-prepared but lonely and desperate, and with doubts beneath his surface confidence. He is clearly keen not to be caught, and he has no attachment to the ship or to people, so is able to 'simply' step away. There were many examples of close language analysis of descriptive language with terminology used appropriately, making this bullet accessible to all candidates.

The description of the sea also led to much detailed and effective analysis. At first the water is 'soft and warm' and appears to be welcoming him in its embrace. Some found a maternal or even erotic charge here, which they were able to develop further later in the passage, when it takes a darker turn. Many noted another effective short sentence 'He swam well' which appears to communicate confidence but may have an underlying irony given how quickly that confidence is undermined. Quite a few perceptively noticed that the man, whose identity remains a mystery, noticed his 'skin blended well with the dark waters' and that he welcomes the camouflage (perhaps hinting at the reason why he is a migrant) without noticing the more ominous implications. His care 'not to lift his arm too high' was observed to reveal his fear of being discovered.

Nearly every candidate wrote about the metaphor of the 'bracelet of water', rightly seeing it as the turning point of the passage. It is followed by violent verbs such as 'scissored', 'yanked', 'tossed' and 'swallowed'. This led to very many interpretations of how this was an image of entrapment – it was an image that candidates could address from the lower levels upwards. Stronger candidates linked the imagery together (recognising the cohesion in the text) so focusing on the personification and feminine imagery used in the text overall: the bracelet was seen as a stereotypical feminine item, the sea has a wet throat and the water is 'soft and warm' all linking with the flirtatious but possible deceptive feminine images in the first stanza. For example, one candidate wrote that 'the metaphor is extended making Mother Nature not only appear powerful but a relentless boundary the man would never be able to cross'. Candidates in the higher levels wrote about the way the 'Queen of France' was personified to represent the man's attraction to the town and then contrasted this with the personification of the sea's entrapment of him and linked this with the simile 'like the hand of an insistent woman' or the dubious attentions of the 'water lady' who has him at her mercy later in the passage. Some candidates did veer into stereotypical assumptions when writing about feminine

imagery, while others wondered if the stereotypes were in the man's own imagination. Whirling in a 'vortex', he loses control and many saw how this is dramatised in the repetition of 'down, down' into the 'wide, empty tunnel' only to be cancelled out by the way he finds himself 'riding its top' at the end of the paragraph, to suggest a (temporary) triumph.

The final two paragraphs are especially rich in suggestion, so it was important for candidates to pace themselves and leave enough time for them. Prose responses need a more selective approach than poetry, and more synthesis of observations. The man's mastery of the situation is short-lived as he feels a 'gentle but firm' pressure on his whole body, developing again the imagery of seduction. However, this time it is the sea which is luring him, not the town. A few became confused here and did not see that he is being forced 'away from the shore'. The interest of the ending is that it is ambiguous – we do not know if the man will be rescued or not (he is) – but there certainly is no happy ending in sight yet. The image of 'blood tinted' water was explored effectively by many. It describes the sun setting but many saw it in terms of foreshadowing the man's death, especially as the sun is described a 'like a fresh heart' almost offered up for sacrifice. Some made the connection with the imagery of a predatory female.

Tension is sustained in the final paragraph through short sentences which some saw as mimicking the man's breathlessness. A few commented on unpleasant and potentially toxic 'ammonia-scented air' while others considered the continued use of sensual language linking this to the seduction of some kind of poisonous siren. Growing darkness was seen as figurative as well as literal, although only a few realised the reference to 'never known twilight' describes a tropical latitude where the sun sets fast. Hopes for the man seemed to be setting quickly too for most readers. The final images of light and dark were explored in terms of contrast between hope and despair linked to 'teardrops' and 'weeping'. There were strong responses to the highly poetic images of a 'sky pierced to weeping by the blade tip of an early star' – conveying both the emotions and the violence of this passage – and the persistent attentions of the 'water-lady'. While a few wanted to see this as a providential rescue, most realised he is simply being pushed ever further out by the tide, which appears to be driving him away from his intended destination, for reasons we can only speculate about.

Just as in response to **Question 1**, candidates wrote about the text using a range of terminology and showed confidence with writing about the devices used to create effects in narrative prose. Precise comments about effect and linking ideas in the text were the features of higher-level answers rather than line-by-line analysis. For example, one candidate wrote: 'The way in which the Queen of France is said to have 'blushed' evokes a sense of its attraction to the man which of course stems from his attraction to it. His 'gaze' is a powerful description as well because it allows us to picture this man staring at freedom something he has clearly desired for a long time and essentially being in awe of its beauty'. Those who were then able to contrast the lure of freedom and the capriciousness of fate battling for control of this man were able to construct especially strong responses.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/43 Unseen

Key messages

- Most candidates address AO1 and AO2 very successfully by selecting brief quotation to show knowledge of texts and most moved beyond surface meaning to explore ideas and attitudes.
- AO3 is best addressed through developed analysis of how the writer achieves effects.
- Less successful candidates list devices, or use technical terminology without exploring effects, or make very generalised comment.
- Personal engagement with some interesting, insightful interpretations (AO4) was evident across the ability levels.
- Candidates should practise writing focused introductory overviews of the text and conclusions that do not simply repeat points already made.

General comments

This was a successful session for this optional paper, which remains a popular alternative to poetry or an additional Drama text. The large number of outstanding scripts seen by examiners confirmed that candidates' ability to read closely and to respond personally to Literature texts which offer quite a high level of demand have not been adversely affected by the disruptions of the last two years. Clearly candidates remain well taught, and appreciate this paper as a final opportunity to bring together all the skills involved in the study of Literature as it tests all the Assessment Objectives for the subject, but has no pre-learnt content, so demands flexibility and an individual approach. Most candidates were able to express a thoughtful individual personal response, with varying levels of critical engagement, and the paper is a good discriminator of students' ability to respond to literary language.

Most candidates confidently approach supporting their understanding of the meaning of a text by selecting supporting evidence (AO1). Quotation is best kept short and both preceded and followed by commentary. Effective word-level analysis enabled candidates to demonstrate knowledge and explore the connotations or possible meanings of individual words in order to demonstrate understanding of deeper meaning. This leads to precise analysis which was lacking in middle band responses. Where there were significant misunderstandings, this was usually because candidates had not read the introductory rubric carefully enough, as this explains any necessary context.

Deeper understanding of ideas and attitudes (AO2) can be achieved through more appreciation of the overall structure and cohesion of a text, looking more at linked images, the development of an idea or narrative structure and contrast. The 'building blocks' that a writer uses create meaning and are not just devices to log. Hence stronger candidates do not just work through texts line by line or paragraph by paragraph, but move backwards and forwards to comment on the connection and development of ideas. Less confident candidates are helped by the advisory bullet points, but should observe that these do not simply work through the text chronologically but also encourage the development of ideas about the writing and the reader's personal response to it.

Appreciation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects (AO3) remains central to success in this paper. However, it is not the only Assessment Objective, and the full wording given here points out the role of language in making meaning (AO2) and shaping a personal response (AO4). Many candidates showed an impressive knowledge of wide-ranging subject specific vocabulary, especially for poetry. It was also encouraging to see greater numbers overall choosing to write about prose and demonstrating they had good tools for analysing narrative viewpoint and description. However, middle-range scripts often prioritised quantity of technical analysis over quality and depth, spotting devices and listing techniques but sometimes stopping with identification instead of exploring effects. Others

made very generalised comments, such as 'it makes the reader excited'. Comment on language is more successful when linked to clear understanding of deeper meaning, through the influence on mood and tone.

There were some adventurous and ambitious personal interpretations of texts (AO4). However, some strong scripts did not reach the top levels due to the 'over-thinking' of their interpretation of 'big ideas' in the texts such as environmentalism, or humans and the natural world. Some made tenuous links between the text and these ideas and, as a result, moved away from close textual analysis. Responses need to be rooted firmly in the critical analysis of the text and the way the writer achieves effects, with interpretation coming out of close analysis of language, imagery, sound effects and narrative structure. All the Assessment Objectives are assessed but they need to be closely linked.

Finally, candidates would benefit from more advice on good introductions and conclusions and practising these skills when doing past papers. Good introductions are short and show an overview of the writer's probable purpose and the overall structure of the text. Dividing the text into three sections and giving an overview of the development of meaning and the reader's response over those three sections would be a good start. Weak introductions simply repeat the terms of the question and bullet points. While this can help some candidates to focus, there is nothing for examiners to reward here. Another popular but unsuccessful tactic is simply to list all the literary devices that may (or may not) be present in the text. There is no reward for simply identifying devices without comment on effects. A strong conclusion draws together observations in a personal response to the text as a whole, appreciating how language and structure have shaped the reader's thoughts and feelings. It links all the Assessment Objectives by making direct connections between language, form, meaning and effect on the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Approximately half the candidates chose to answer **Question 1** on the poem '*Girl in the Blue Pool*' by Helen Dunmore in which the poet, or speaker, thinks back to when her daughter was young having a swimming lesson. While this is quite a challenging text in a number of respects, the majority of candidates successfully responded to how the poet vividly depicts the moment. Strong answers were alive to the sense of immediacy in the description, almost as if the event were happening in the present, while also registering the fact that this was a long time ago and that memory and recollection are at the heart of the poem and its concerns.

Strong answers showed a clear understanding (AO2) of the sharp, sensory sensations the poet remembers experiencing as she sat watching in the swimming pool. Many grasped the sense that while the scene in many ways is a chaotic, uncomfortable and perhaps even dangerous one, the daughter appears focused, fluently adept and controlled in her movements as she looks to complete her allotted distance under the strict supervision of her instructor. She shows skill, poise and what appears to be a learnt rigour in her swimming as well as an energetic vitality.

Strong responses manifested a critical exploration of the language used to describe the swimming pool (AO3) and its vivid appeal to the various senses as in such lines as 'Chlorine, urine, raucous / Cuff of voices on broken surface'. There was much excellent analysis of the syntactical density and brevity of sense images such as these and the unpleasant, unsettling, almost hostile connotations of much of the diction ('Cuff', 'rowdily teeters', 'splinters', 'shattered' and so on). Most candidates were able to discuss, to a greater or lesser extent, how the repetition or modulation of such words and images through the poem has a vivid underscoring effect. Strong answers foregrounded here the literal and metaphorical use of 'echoes' in the poem, at once suggesting the cacophony of the pool, the intensive use of repetition in the poem and also how memories of the scene appear to reverberate in the poet's head, insistently replaying themselves even years later. There was much intelligent observation about how the intensive use of enjambment in the poem adds to the poem's effects, whether that be the placed emphasis on certain words or the intensification of a sense of disorientation, the feeling of speed and energetic movement or the slippage back and forth between past and present. The use of the present tense to heighten immediacy and the creation of contrast - whether in colour ('blue'/'pink') or in mood - were also common features of strong answers. Mid-range responses showed an ability to comment on the effects and connotations of other word choices such as 'broken', 'pulse', 'vanish', 'churn', 'swallowed', 'topples' and so on in creating a sense of vividness for the reader.

As has been pointed out many times in previous reports, a key element of the analysis of the writing and its effects (AO3) should be an attempt by candidates to establish the tone or tones present in the writing. This can be central to clarifying both meaning and understanding (AO2), accessing what might be perceived to be an underlying authorial intention or intentions, as well as in the candidate successfully developing an interpretative response to the text (AO4). Dunmore's poem was, in fact, strikingly successful in eliciting from candidates a range of interpretative responses. These were generally advanced in a stimulating, lively, personally engaged and, for the most part, convincing manner. There was more of a divergence than perhaps was expected in terms of how candidates read the nature of the mother's thoughts and feelings and the tone in which these are expressed. Many candidates did recognise an implicit sense of the mother seeing beauty in her daughter and a strong, fond sense of love and admiration - not just for her appearance and skills in the water but also for her determination, discipline, and also perhaps for a strong-minded and even defiant streak to her character with the wearing of the pink bikini. A significant number of candidates, on the other hand, discerned a much more critical, clipped and disappointed tone, essentially taking the words - one might presume - of the instructor as wholly that of the mother: 'You should not be wearing a bikini / And you were slow on the turn'.

Such differences naturally fed through into how candidates responded to the close of the poem and how the poet's feelings here might be read. Most tended towards registering feelings of nostalgia or wistfulness and an attempt to revisit memories of the pool. Strong responses tended to discern a sense of sadness, loss and distance, with some identifying an elegiac mood in the third stanza. Some high level responses, while recognising the enduring vividness of the memories, felt that the recollections were maybe being supplemented by the poet's imagination, as suggested perhaps by the repeated use of the ambiguous 'suppose'. There was an attempt to unpick the imagery and sense of lines such as 'The silver stream where you swim / Has long ago been swallowed.' For some candidates this simply indicated the closure of the pool, while for others the image was seen in terms of the poem as emblematic of parental feelings towards children and childhood in general and how these are re-framed as time moves on. Others again read the experience in the pool as a metaphor for life, its precariousness and unseen dangers. Such broad readings gain significantly in power and conviction when rooted in a close working with the text, of course. Following the oft-given advice to candidates to give weighted focus to the close of texts, a number of candidates chose to give attention to the final lines 'If that boy topples / You too will go down' and the darkly cautionary, ominous note struck.

Question 2

Approximately half of the candidature chose to answer **Question 2** on the extract from the memoir *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* by Alexandra Fuller. In this passage, the writer, then a girl of thirteen, has been invited into the home of a neighbouring family for the first time. The question required candidates to explore how the writer memorably conveys the awkwardness of the situation.

Strong answers showed a clear understanding (AO2) of the feelings of the writer at the time, particularly those of social awkwardness, as well as how these feelings are described with a palpable sense of immediacy but are also presented from the retrospective perspective of the writer as an adult. The feelings of the writer are focused initially through her description of and response to the young girl and the physical strain she witnesses her enduring as she conscientiously continues to hold the heavy bowl of water for her, as well as the hesitancy, shyness and deference she seems to show to her. There was a wide and inter-connected range of feelings felt in turn by the writer at this point and throughout the passage for candidates to analyse: awkwardness, yes, but also nervousness, uncertainty, embarrassment, self-consciousness, guilt and so on. Strong responses were adept at exploring these feelings with sensitivity and, at times, with real empathy, perception and insight. Many focused on the newness of the experience for the writer and her efforts to identify the etiquette of the situation and the social expectations she felt were being placed upon her. Strong responses showed a clear understanding that for both the writer and the family this event is a significant one. Of course, the divide in culture and experience which many candidates explored to great effect is a two-way thing. The writer's feelings of awkwardness are accentuated and paralleled in turn by the family's feelings of awkwardness and the tension between, for instance, the impulses of an unfailingly fastidious but warm courtesy, generosity and dignity and an almost unbearable, desperate sense of hunger. While the writer is similarly intent on reciprocating the courtesy and generosity of spirit shown to her, such an impulse is also strained and in tension with a physical and emotional discomfort at work on a number of levels. Almost all candidates, for instance, were able to trace the writer's acute sense of her every movement being minutely observed and how she is not at all looking forward to eating the unfamiliar food but that she must ('I have a long meal ahead of me').

A key discriminator, naturally, was the extent to which candidates were able to express and to develop such understanding through a close examination of the writing and the effects created (AO3). As has been stated in these reports many times, an excellent place to start when beginning to analyse a piece of writing, and a piece of narrative in particular, is to identify the perspective or point of view from which we, as readers, see events. Here, of course, we have a first person narrative where we might have direct access to the thoughts, feelings, observations and so on of the narrator - her inner world, as it were. While this is true to a degree here, there is still much that has to be inferred by the reader and, again, candidates need to be sensitive to tone and nuance, and the manner in which events are presented to us. It is true, though, that this is even more the case with the family members whose thoughts, feelings and motivations are to be gauged 'externally', as it were, by their actions, gestures, expressions and words. These latter are few in nature, of course, and strong responses explored to good effect the constraints imposed by the presumed language barrier and by a reticence and constraint exhibited by the father, the one English-speaking member of the family, it would appear. There was some excellent analysis of the abbreviated and unbalanced nature of the dialogue and how this contributes to markedly stilted and limited conversations and to the consequent pervasive sense of mutual awkwardness. Close attention was also given at times to the brevity of many of the sentences themselves, sometimes allied to the use of repetition as in 'I smile again', to intensify the sense of impasse and nervous tension and embarrassment. Some of the very best scripts revealed a telling eye for the revealing moment or detail as when the writer describes the ladling of the food onto her plate. A close, forensic analysis of such phrases as 'a gesture of sufficiency', 'half-ducking', 'Her large spoon hovers', 'The mother glances at her husband', 'He nods, barely' can disclose a wealth of insights into the implicit dynamic at work and the complex web of relationship, status and motivation. Most candidates discussed the portrayal of the young girl: 'tottering under the weight of the sloshing basin', 'straining', 'thin, knobbly arms jumping under the pressure' and so on and many were able to suggest how such descriptions convey a sense of unease in the writer. Some candidates, though, perhaps spent too long on the first bullet at the expense of closer attention to the rest of the passage. There was generally, however, much solid work on language choice and effect as in: 'He sounds desperate', 'a frenzy of hunger', 'groaning', 'breath-catching effort', 'sharp and oily' and so forth. Many candidates commented on the use of simile ('like a small goat'), metaphor ('a grey sea') and personification ('stares balefully') to help memorably convey the nature of the experience to the reader. In relation to the latter example and the depiction of the fish, some scripts were alive to the ruefully humorous and ironic tone struck here.

Candidates manifested a clear sense of empathic engagement with the situation and with the feelings of awkwardness, self-consciousness and nervousness of the writer, in particular. This made for much genuinely engaged, thoughtful and, at times, sensitive personal response (AO4). Some especially good work was done, for example, in exploring the writer's implicit sense of guilt: for putting the young daughter through such an ordeal, for depriving the malnourished family of their precious food and for her uncomfortable but unavoidable feelings of distaste for the dish put in front of her. A number of candidates recognised that the sense of mutual awkwardness is driven in no small measure by the social, cultural and economic divide separating the privileged writer and the desperately poor family. Some especially sophisticated responses identified a parallel imbalance at work in the narrative perspective of the text, in which the family's feelings, attitudes and life experiences are mediated through an outsider's eyes and so can only be inferred at a distance, as it were, by the reader.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/05 Coursework

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- focus explicitly on a carefully worded task
- embed relevant, concise references to support analysis
- analyse in detail and sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have only a basic knowledge of texts
- write at excessive length and lose focus on the task
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- list techniques without close exploration of the precise ways in which writers achieve their effects
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses.

General comments

There was much evidence of coursework of a high standard this session, where candidates showed a personal and evaluative engagement with texts. Candidates grasped the opportunities afforded them by coursework: close study of their texts, purposeful drafting of their critical analysis and careful presentation of the final drafts of their assignments.

The syllabus requires that assignments refer to the whole text or at least two poems or short stories, in the case of assignments based on poetry or short stories. There were fewer instances of syllabus infringements, for example, where candidates entered assignments dealing with only one poem or short story or with only a discrete extract from a prose or drama text.

The most successful assignments sustained a clear focus on a carefully worded task designed to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the highest levels. It is important that tasks direct candidates to consider the ways in which writers achieve their effects. Tasks beginning with command words such as 'Describe' or 'Explain' have the effect of constraining candidates' performance.

Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text, sometimes at exhaustive length, but lacked a clear focus on the task. This was an unproductive approach taken in many poetry assignments where candidates worked through the poem offering a line-by-line commentary, with only intermittent focus. Centres should remind their students that an advantage of the Coursework component is that it encourages re-drafting skills. Candidates should be taught the skill of selecting material judiciously in a way that directly addresses the task set; every sentence should contribute to the unfolding argument.

As in previous sessions, the most convincing and persuasive essays sustained a critical engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects (Assessment Objective 3), relating their points to the task. By contrast, less successful assignments often commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to their use in the text. This may be a consequence of candidates following a rigid framework (such as PEE). There were many assignments where candidates merely logged features such as alliteration, caesura, enjambment and ABAB rhyme schemes in poetry essays. Candidates should be reminded that feature logging is not the same as critical analysis.

Several centres submitted empathic responses, with most providing the necessary information: the name of the character and the precise moment in the text that the interior monologue takes place. The most successful responses captured a convincingly authentic voice for the chosen character and moment. It should be remembered that significant characters from novels and plays (not short stories) lend themselves best to empathic tasks since candidates have more material from which to construct a recognisable voice.

Guidance for teachers

This guidance, which appeared in the June 2021 report, is still relevant for future coursework submissions.

Guidance on task-setting can be found in the Coursework Handbook, which stresses the importance of (a) wording tasks that direct candidates explicitly to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects and (b) avoiding insufficiently challenging command words such as 'Describe' and 'Explain'. Teachers within the centre should together discuss the appropriateness of proposed tasks before they are given to candidates. This enables any problems with proposed tasks to be resolved before it is too late.

There follows a reminder of what constitutes good practice in the presentation of coursework folders:

- Start each assignment with the full wording of the task. In the case of empathic responses, the chosen character and moment should be clearly stated. This is important since it allows the moderator to determine how successfully the candidate has addressed the task.
- Use focused ticking in the body of the text to indicate valid and thoughtful points, together with concise marginal and summative comments which relate to the wording of the level descriptors.
- Provide a brief explanation on the assignment or cover sheet in cases where marks are changed during internal moderation. Such purposeful annotation aids transparency and contributes to the robustness of the assessment as it allows a centre to justify its award of marks.

The following examples of unhelpful annotation should be avoided: excessive ticking (e.g. of every paragraph or every line); hyperbolic praise of work of indifferent quality; labelling by assessment objective. Simply putting the supposed relevant AOs in the margin is of very little benefit to any subsequent reader, as it does not reveal the *extent* to which a particular assessment objective has been addressed; instead, more specific reference should be made to the relevant level descriptors.

Most centres carried out administration efficiently. The cover sheet (or individual record card) should be secured by treasury tag or staple which allows easy access to candidate work. In well-administered centres care had been taken to:

- include all candidates on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form
- transcribe totals accurately across the various documents.

All centres are advised to include a clerical checking stage in their moderation procedures before submitting their paperwork to Cambridge. This check should be carried out by a different person from the one who completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets originally.