



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1997 HSC

EXAMINATION REPORT

English

2/3 Unit (Common)

Including:

- **Marking criteria**
- **Sample responses**
- **Examiners' comments**

Acknowledgement

Extract: 'Journal of the Parts of the House',
Barbara Brooks, © 1990, in *My Look's Caress*,
ed Beth Yahp et al, Sydney, Local Consumption.
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1997 HSC Enhanced Examination Report

English 2/3 Unit (Common)

Introduction

Candidature

The 1997 HSC English 2/3 Unit (Common) candidature was approximately 8500, of whom 1655 were 3 Unit candidates. These candidates tend to be a very able group.

The Common Questions

In 1997 the Board of Studies required the English Higher School Certificate Examination Committee to provide common questions in the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) examination papers. Common questions were written for Paper 1: Writing Task and Paper 2: Section I – Poetry, Fiction, Drama.

The purpose of the common questions was to ascertain the relative performances of candidates in the two courses. Information on the relative performances is used in the reporting of English at the Higher School Certificate.

HSC Marking Procedures

All scripts in the 2 Unit English courses are marked by at least two independent markers from different groups at different stages of the marking operation.

Marking of scripts begins after a pilot marking phase, during which markers are briefed on the standards established by senior markers after an initial reading of a wide sample of scripts. Once marking is underway, a sample script considered typical of a particular range is sent around at regular intervals to check that all markers are adhering to the marking centre standards.

Markers are given the advice below to assist them in the marking process:

1. This is a ranking procedure. Use the entire range of marks.
2. Forget school and personal standards. Forget your memories of past papers and questions. Adhere to the marking centre standards.
3. The Reading Task contains a number of questions or parts. Within each answer there will be a range of responses.
4. Mark positively – reward what is there rather than penalise what is missing.
5. Aim for accuracy, not speed.
6. Don't 'agonise' over a script. Talk to other members of your group or to your Senior Marker.
7. In general, candidate responses are those of an eighteen-year-old completing an answer under exam conditions in forty minutes.

HSC Marking Procedures for the Common Question in 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) Poetry, Fiction, Drama

The question for Poetry, Fiction and Drama for candidates in the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) course was exactly the same. However, the texts in most cases were different for each course.

Examiners marked either 2 Unit (General) scripts or 2/3 Unit (Common) scripts but not both. Marker reliability was ensured through the creation of an Audit Team. The Audit Team selected the pilot scripts from both sets of candidatures and also selected both 'Sample' and 'Example' scripts, which were distributed to markers at regular intervals.

The Audit Team also check-marked scripts from both the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) group to ensure that the common scale of marking was being adhered to. This ensured that a script worth a 10, for example, for 2 Unit (General) was the equivalent of a 10 for the 2/3 Unit (Common) course.

HSC Marking Procedures for the Common Question in 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) Writing

This question was marked using the same procedures as for all other sections of the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) course. Senior Markers selected pilot samples from both sets of candidatures and the Common Scale was applied in relation to the marking guidelines.

An Audit Team was not necessary as there were no texts to identify candidates in a particular course.

Clerical Procedures in the Marking Operations

1. All scripts from an examination centre are divided into bundles of approximately twenty. Bundles from the one examination centre are distributed to many different markers. Schools are identified by an examination centre number only. These numbers are not available to markers.
2. Each bundle has an accompanying mark sheet. Marks are recorded on the mark sheet. No annotation is made on the scripts. There is a second mark sheet for the recording of marks during the second marking. Both the first and second markings are completed independently.
3. Procedures are in place to ensure that markers do not mark scripts from their own schools or in the school of their Senior Marker. In addition, markers do not mark scripts belonging to close relatives sitting for their HSC.
4. The confidential nature of the marking operation is stressed at all times and markers do not have access to marks awarded by other markers.

The Marker Reliability Operation

The marker reliability operation has two important roles.

It assists Supervisors of Marking (SOMs) and Senior Markers (SMs) in establishing an appropriate marking scheme for each question during the pilot marking operation.

Once the marking scheme is finalised and the actual marking operation begins, the statistical reports enable the SOMs and SMs to check that the distribution of marks established during the pilot marking operation is being maintained. To ensure that the marking scale for each question is being applied consistently, feedback is provided to SOMs and SMs on the marking patterns of each marker.

How it Works

1. When a marker allocates a mark to a script, they put a tally mark on the tally card alongside that mark.
2. The tally cards are processed and reports are generated. The reports will typically contain information such as the overall distribution of marks, the mean (average) mark and the standard deviation (spread of marks) for each question.
3. Copies of the various reports are given to the Supervisor of Marking and are used to monitor trends in marking.

Resolving Discrepancies in Marking

A pair of marks is considered discrepant if the mark awarded during the first marking differs by a set amount determined by the Board. Three or more marks are considered discrepant if the scripts are marked out of 10, for example. The discrepancy is resolved by a third marker, usually a Senior Marker, who provides a third mark without knowing the marks awarded previously. If the third marking does not resolve the discrepancy, the script is passed on to a fourth marker and so on until the discrepancy is resolved. A relatively small number of scripts is discrepant, and very few scripts require reading by a fourth marker.

Paper 1—Resources and Uses of English

SECTION I

Question 1. Reading Task (15 marks)

A The Question

‘What techniques does the writer use to engage the reader and to create the sense of place?’

Passage: ‘Journal of the Parts of the House’ by Barbara Brooks.

The format of the question was a single passage with one question to be answered. Value: 15 marks; Time allowed: 30 minutes.

i) *The Passage*

THE KITCHEN

The door opens, you close it behind you and come down the dark hallway. The house is cool and empty. It opens out for you, your presence spills down the hall like water and the small adjustments start.

At the doorway to the kitchen the light changes, it’s brighter, but still cool and greenish, it filters through the jasmine around the window, through opaque glass and white paper lampshades. It slides down the walls like condensation.

The fridge motor starts. There’s a small random noise in the bathroom as half a cupful of lost water drops out of the shower. The muffled silences of the house are like breath, like the clouds that rise from old carpet and cushions, the draughts in the cracks between boards. This is the quiet breath of dust, the self-absorption of an empty room. It’s the breath of plaster in bubbles under the paint, and the mumbling of water in the pipes.

It’s the sound of the gas being lit, and the kettle hissing, of pasta boiling in water, vegetables frying in oil. It’s a memory of voices around the table in the half-dark, of someone laughing, telling a story, lighting a cigarette and watching the smoke curl into the air.

The light in the kitchen is the colour of small new plants and vegetables, a light of celery hearts and green olive oil.

The phone rings. You sit in a cane chair by the phone talking, drinking tea. You write down where to go for dinner on Friday night, the date and time of meetings, parties, messages to yourself. The cat comes in, with an interrogatory noise, looking to be stroked or fed. She jumps into your lap. Someone knocks at the door, a plane goes over, there are voices in the backyard next door, and a dog barks.

AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

At the back of the house the sun comes in through the window in the afternoons and moves across the floor. You are always walking into this room from the kitchen, towards the window.

The window is open in the morning. You put your head out. You can see the washing in the next yard, and the houses on the hill. The leaves fall off the crepe myrtle in the autumn and lie under it like yellow light. The needles of the sheoak hold small drops of water after rain. The red flowering gum leans into the fence. On the path the ginger tomcat, caught offguard, stops, its eyes like traffic lights, then turns and disappears.

You walk into this room in the mornings, toast in one hand, paper in the other, hearing the sound of water poured into the teapot. The books and papers spread in a circle around your feet. The radio plays quietly in another room.

You walk into this room in the afternoons with your friends, carrying glasses of white wine and soda. Or you're alone, and the room is full of your thoughts and music and the sound of pages turning. The room fills with yellow light in the afternoons and you lie on the sofa reading and dreaming until it gets dark.

Someone in the kitchen is talking to you quietly and making coffee, or opening a bottle of wine. Someone comes to the door and you go out. The house waits for you.

The ceiling of your house is full of half-formed thoughts and abstractions; they make noises in the roof at night, like possums.

Outside the street seems endless, like something you catch a glimpse of in the rear vision mirror. The house is small, like a snail shell, and contains significant turns and adjustments. In the middle of the night sometimes it empties out and you're hardly there. There is always room. You are careful to keep the house clear of friction. The house seems vast, it opens out for you every day.

- a) The passage set for the examination, 'Journal of the Parts of the House' by Barbara Brooks, was a richly textured passage which allowed 2/3 Unit (Common) candidates an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of the sophistication of the writing. It was a very accessible passage for these candidates, and it elicited a very positive approach to the task. A sense of pleasure was evident among the candidates in writing about this passage, and among the better responses a sophisticated appreciation of the subtleties within the writing. Better candidates thoughtfully explored the symbols/images of water, the adjustments, the 'snail' house and the cat, for example, and demonstrated considerable insight into the way the writer used techniques of language to engage the reader and create the sense of place. The use of voice was considered very interesting and original by the examiners, and more able candidates demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the effects of this use of voice on the reader and the sense of place.
- b) One concern expressed by examiners was that the passage may have been a little too richly textured for candidates to effectively engage with, when their time was limited to just 30 minutes. However, many of the better candidates impressed the examiners with their ability to communicate a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft as well as the writer's insights within the severe restrictions of examination conditions and first draft writing on an unseen passage.

ii) ***The Question***

- a) Examiners commented that the question did allow a broad range of candidates in the 2/3 Unit (Common) course to write competently and with some understanding about features of the passage, while at the same time allowing more able candidates to explore, through a more original and perceptive response, the subtleties of the passage and the way the writer used her craft in a sophisticated way. Those candidates with a more rudimentary knowledge of language features and their operation could at least identify some and feel that they had addressed aspects of the question and the passage.
- b) The question, 'What techniques does the writer use to engage the reader and to create the sense of place', placed some restrictions upon the candidates as a whole. Some candidates confined their response to such a degree that it prevented them from fully demonstrating their understanding of the subtleties and insights in the writing. The question seemed to 'over-direct' some of the candidates, with a focus on the term 'techniques' at the expense of the rest of the question. This led some candidates to present a 'shopping list' of techniques, or a detailed analysis of a few techniques, without addressing the complete question before them. For some candidates the richness of the passage was put aside as they focused upon locating, identifying and explaining the various language techniques employed by the writer. The fact that some consciously 'put aside' the subtleties of the passage in their sincere endeavour to 'cover' all the techniques of language they could locate was evident in the tendency to begin addressing the most subtle intentions of the writer (as regards engaging the reader and creating the sense of place) in the last paragraph or two of their responses, but more as a conclusion, or an additional point, after 'dealing' (to varying degrees of competency) with the techniques employed. These candidates often presented quite thoughtful responses to the passage, but clearly had chosen to focus principally on the techniques because of the phrasing of the question.
- c) Some responses were overlong in their attempt to locate and explain all the language/literary techniques they could, and while the question did discriminate across the full range of marks to be awarded, some candidates did not achieve the higher marks because of their self-imposed restriction to a limited discussion of techniques employed. Some of these candidates also presented a 'shopping list' approach to the question.
- d) Examiners did overwhelmingly endorse the use of a single question in the Reading Task, as this allowed 2/3 Unit (Common) candidates to demonstrate their ability to communicate their ideas effectively in an extended form. This ability to express and explore ideas effectively and holistically was a distinguishing feature among the candidates' responses to the question.
- e) Although some candidates incorrectly identified the techniques employed in the passage by the writer, or the voice employed in the passage, the great majority of the candidates did discuss specific features of the passage, and with considerable sensitivity. The subtleties of the passage were reflected in responsive insights from a number of candidates, earning them the higher range of marks, while a reasonable analysis of the techniques employed by the writer earned a C-range mark.

- f) It was pleasing to the examiners to see many 2/3 Unit (Common) candidates endeavouring to extend their level of control over language, using the question as a springboard for a confident exploration of language in the passage, and their exploration of the insights the passage offered to them in its creation of a sense of place and its engagement of the reader.
- g) Most candidates were able to effectively identify a wide range of techniques employed by the writer, and many commented upon the use of such language techniques as similes, metaphors, figurative language, sentence structure, narrative voice, register, imagery and the structure of the passage in their exploration of the techniques employed by the writer. Most candidates were also able to competently cite examples and quote extracts to illustrate their understanding of the techniques employed. These extracts were generally quite effectively presented in a format to distinguish the extract from the candidate's own commentary. Some candidates fell into the trap of quoting too extensively from the passage in their response.
- h) The better candidates not only located and explained the techniques employed by the writer, but also applied that knowledge to the second part of the question, where they were asked to explain how these techniques are used to engage the reader and create the sense of place. Here the candidates were able to define these phrases, and demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the way language techniques are used to achieve these intentions in the writing.
- i) In the 1995 report on this question it was noted: 'Technical language in itself is of no value – candidates who can show the effect of language fare much better.' This statement still holds true in many of the responses to the 1997 Reading Question. Too many candidates were content with listing and examining the techniques employed by the writer, but failed to analyse the application of these techniques to the twin purposes focused upon in the question itself.
- j) In many cases candidates resorted to the use of a rubric or an acronym in their endeavour to analyse the language techniques employed, and then applied this rubric so strictly they neglected to address the key elements of the question itself. Some candidates wrote the rubric on the blank page opposite their response and allowed this rubric to determine the structure of their response, instead of structuring their response upon the key elements of the question itself in a personal response to the question. Many candidates, it appears, possibly believed they had answered the question quite well by going on a 'technical hunt' and locating every example of a language technique they could find and present. This led many candidates to extremes – where a 'treasure hunt' mentality offered up spurious or trivial examples of language techniques without reference to their effect or their purpose (ie how they were used to 'engage the reader' and 'create the sense of place').

iii) Candidates' responses

- a) As noted in the 1996 report on the Reading Question, in 1997 the examiners also commented on the very high level of literacy for work done as first draft writing under examination conditions. There were few serious errors in vocabulary, spelling or punctuation, and candidates generally showed a very high level of control of language. The examiners were particularly impressed in 1997 as the passage used in the question was a richly textured passage with a very sophisticated level of language employed by the writer. The literacy level of 2/3 Unit (Common) candidates is very high indeed, and is extremely commendable.
- b) The examiners reported that the average length of candidate response was generally quite satisfactory, and certainly adequate for the amount of time and marks allocated to this question in the examination. Very few candidates presented very brief responses (and those few generally because they had answered other questions first and had run out of time), and only a small number presented inordinately lengthy responses to the question.
- c) Candidates' handwriting also presented no difficulties, and was quite legible – again, giving consideration for the examination conditions and HSC pressure that is brought to bear on candidates' responses, this fact is very commendable indeed. The examiners were pleased that most candidates used a dark-coloured ink for their responses – this is certainly much more legible than pastel or light-coloured ink.

Candidate's Response

Example

In Barbara Brooks 'Journal of the Parts of the House', the interior environment of a small home takes on a subtle and many-layered significance. The writer uses the described environment to weave an impression of an individual's life, drawing the reader in and generating empathy.

The piece is written in the second person, immediately placing the reader within the scene. A sense of interaction between person and environment is immediately created with the words 'The door opens'. Here, and throughout the piece, it is the inanimate object which is the subject of the verb, giving the reader the impression of being actively approached by the house, and gathered into a communication.

This sensation is more fully realised in the words, 'It opens out for you'. This established a proprietorial status in the reader, which is the basis of the feelings of intimacy and belonging which the passage engenders.

The house is subtly personified, firstly through the repeated use of the unusual verb structure, and more explicitly with imagery of the house breathing and 'mumbling' in a 'muffled silence'. The writer emphasises the house as an independent entity by giving the impression that the house has a consciousness, allowing it to experience 'self-absorption' and 'wait for you'. The reader is given the sensation of being drawn into the activity of the house at the house's will, being soothed, 'reading and dreaming', by the house's calm presence.

The preponderance of verbs throughout the passage, many with personifying overtones such as 'leaves' and 'hold', add to the sensation of environment interacting with person. Indeed, the reader is the only human presence alluded to in any depth. Other humans seem to drift in and out of the house, unable to leave a permanent individual impression, blending into a series of 'voices around the table in the half-dark'. Light is used as a catalyst for personal association. The green light of the kitchen is a reminder of cooking. The yellow afternoon light 'at the back of the house' brings images of white wine and book pages, and links the interior of the house with the immediate exterior by the 'yellow light' of leaves spread under a tree.

The house's human qualities are emphasised in the title. 'Journal' is a word associated with the record of human events, and carries the impression of intimacy. The subdivision of the house into parts, described in honorific capital letters, demonstrates the importance the inhabitant places on the house.

A strong sense of place is created in this piece, evoking an environment which is linked inextricably to the small memories which make up an individual psyche, of lit cigarettes and toast in the mornings. Its preciousness is increased by its finite nature, compared to the barren, impersonal street which 'seems endless'. The individual's interaction with the space is demonstrated through the various impressions of the house which, though contradictory, seem equally real. In a single paragraph the writer can describe the house as 'small, like a snail shell' and 'vast', the house's mood making 'adjustments' to suit that of the inhabitant.

This piece immediately engages the reader and holds one in a series of dazzling sensual impressions each blending coherently into the last to produce the sense of an organic whole, allowing the 'old carpets and cushions', the cool marine light, the 'muffled silences' to effortlessly contain the essence of an individual life.

Examiners' Comments

This is a superior script. It exhibits an extremely sophisticated understanding of the links, patterns and subtleties within the passage, and shows a very highly developed integration of these aspects in response to the question.

It is a persuasive, confident and very well-directed response, and demonstrates a very sophisticated level of expression. This response demonstrates a level of insight and sensitivity to the passage which places it at the top of the excellent range.

English 2/3 Unit (Common) Reading Question Marking Guidelines

| | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| Sophisticated and extensive knowledge of the links/patterns/subtleties/ integration in the writing | + | 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • script exhibits sophisticated and extensive knowledge of how techniques relate to question • integrated, confident, persuasive, well-directed • sophisticated vocabulary, fluid writing style • sophisticated understanding of concept of place |
| | A | 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informed, in depth, responds to subtleties – explores links/patterns • originality and insight |
| | – | 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows extensive or sophisticated knowledge of techniques re question • shows precision and control/sensitivity/insight (not as refined as 14 or 15) |
| Substantial knowledge of the links/patterns and some of the subtleties, but lacking the integration of A level scripts | + | 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balanced/effective response to question • effective analysis of a range of techniques |
| | B | 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of relationships involving place, author and reader • clear and coherent communication of argument • consistent evidence of insight |
| | – | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • argument may be implied but not fully developed or explained |
| A tendency towards listing/ describing the techniques used in the writing, with some recognition of the links/patterns evident. Includes more formulaic responses | + | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lists techniques with satisfactory analysis and examples • less effective treatment of the question • shows language competence |
| | C | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literal treatment – focuses on realism of the place • literate/fluid response – lacking depth • occasional elements of insight • structure limited to lists of techniques/merely following sequence of text |
| | – | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lists techniques with description/some analysis • less effective treatment of the passage/question (omits sections) |

| | | | |
|---|---|-----|--|
| Limits itself to listing and describing features of the writing; demonstrates a limited appreciation of the links/patterns. Includes underdeveloped arguments | + | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • largely descriptive/paraphrasing response – ‘walks’ through house, but little connection to question • pedestrian language • very little appreciation of writer’s craft • underdeveloped response |
| | D | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listing of techniques – with little analysis |
| | – | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unbalanced response to question/passage • rudimentary structure/shallow formulaic response – little engagement with task |
| Very limited responses – at best undeveloped arguments, limited language control, rudimentary awareness of the craft or intent of the writing | + | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only descriptive and paraphrasing (not analytical) • little or no understanding of the question/passage |
| | E | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undeveloped response • poor language use |
| | – | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be introduction/simple plan only |
| | | 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illiterate response/nonsensical response |
| | | n/a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-attempt |

Question 2. Writing Task (20 marks)

DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

The road has provided our common language with many familiar phrases, images, and metaphors.

Road closed

Round the bend...

There's a track winding back...

**WRONG WAY!
GO BACK**

On the Road...

Proceed With Caution

eyes on the road...

The road not taken

end of the line

Use ONE of the phrases in the stimulus material above as the basis for a piece of writing, and use it as your title.

Write in any form you wish, and from any point(s) of view.

Examiners' Comments

Part A: How the Question Performed

The 1997 Writing Task catered to the wide range of candidates presenting at 2UG and 2/3U (Common) levels, with the choice of form and variety of topics providing scope for candidates to write at different levels. On average, responses were longer and well developed, and this was interpreted to be a consequence of candidates feeling comfortable with the questions as well as the lack of any suggested word length.

The open-ended nature of the question allowed candidates to respond creatively, and better candidates exercised considerable imaginative scope and flair in their writing. A large number of candidates, however, interpreted titles literally and responded in a clichéd form. Many of the weaker scripts had a negative tone, exploring topics such as teenage suicide, death, road accidents, alcohol and drugs. Some candidates chose to link the stimulus to texts studied during the year, in particular, Frost, and many of the resulting scripts were predictable and lacked creativity.

Some candidates tried to relate all the titles to their writing, and these pieces were generally unsuccessful and poorly planned. Because of the wide range of choices available to candidates in terms of form and content, very few scripts were totally unrelated to the stimulus. However, in weaker scripts, there was evidence of some plagiarism from books and films. It was noted by some markers, however, that an otherwise well-presented script could have gained a very poor ranking if it was not linked to the topic.

The guidelines for marking the Writing Task discriminated across the range of candidates from A to E level responses.

Part B: How the Candidates Performed

Overall, most candidates completed the task competently, demonstrating an ability to communicate their ideas satisfactorily.

Candidates generally showed an awareness of the need for a clear purpose. The better candidates ensured that purpose was the controlling factor in terms of the choices that they made. These included:

- Clearly delineated choice of form, with narrative being the most common choice. Better candidates were able to manipulate the form subtly with flair and originality. These candidates often adopted personae, used time shifts, or combinations of forms, while maintaining appropriate control of structures. While other forms were less often chosen, candidates did make use of forms such as diary entries, personal letters, letters to the editor, newspaper articles, play scripts, editorials, speeches, internal monologues, and combinations of the above. Weaker candidates were not able to maintain their choice of form and this hindered reader engagement. A number of candidates attempted poetry but on the whole their scripts highlighted the difficulty of writing well in this form when under time pressure.
- Originality when selecting ideas. Better candidates avoided commonplace ideas which led, in weaker candidates, to clichéd and predictable writing, such as simple ideas relating to doing the HSC, driving scenarios, arguments with parents or adolescent traumas. Better candidates displayed an ability to deal metaphorically with the stimulus material, which often increased reader engagement.

- Use of a wide and appropriate vocabulary. Better candidates displayed an ability to use vocabulary to develop a freshness of imagery that enhanced the achievement of selection of purpose and form. Less able candidates' use of language was more stereotypical and, therefore, predictable and tedious.
- Technical competency. While many candidates displayed an adequate technical competency, better candidates showed an ability to manipulate the technical aspects to enhance their purpose. For example, these candidates were able to control sentence length and construction, and to set out, punctuate and develop dialogue to better serve the intended purpose. Weaker candidates had difficulty paragraphing and punctuating, which mitigated against the reader gaining a clear understanding. Spelling, especially of words that sound similar, was still a problem in many scripts and again hindered the reader's ability to engage fully with the script. Weaker candidates' scripts also generally showed poor planning, which sometimes led to overly long and rambling writing.

Part C: Comments on the Marking Process

Markers were generally positive about the marking operation. The balance between conferencing and preliminary discussion, and the absence of pressure, were well received at briefing stage. All markers found that the pilot marking process was sound enough to provide the confidence to start marking. The range of sample scripts and the range of styles of writing was appreciated, particularly by inexperienced markers. Generally, markers felt confident that they had arrived at a centre standard by the conclusion of the briefing period, and some commented on new teaching approaches gained.

Marking Criteria

Markers will encounter a large variety of purposes, forms, voices and subject matter during the course of marking.

It should be noted that no one purpose is inherently more valuable, or worth more marks, than another; no one form or style more valuable than another. Each script is to be considered in the context of how it fulfils the guidelines in its own right, in terms of what it sets out to achieve (ie its purpose).

The guidelines are not to be used as a checklist; they are used to assist the impression marking of the question.

The different ranges may be characterised by the following:

A Range (15, 14, 13)

- Achieves its purpose through:
 - structural unity/completeness
 - clearly delineated choice of form and execution of that form
 - sustained engagement of audience
- Use of language/expression to enhance purpose and form
- Characterised by flair/originality/subtlety
- Makes a link between title and content which informs all the above elements
- Fulfils all the above elements, but is not necessarily perfect.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

- Achieves purpose
- Maintains direction/organised/controlled
- Makes appropriate use of form
- Engagement of audience is present but not necessarily sustained
- Uses language appropriate to purpose
- Does not fulfil all elements but still achieves purpose
- May contain flair/originality/subtlety in language and/or ideas
- Makes a link between title and content which offers scope for development of all the above elements
- May have minor flaws in grammar/expression.

C Range (9, 8, 7)

- May be complete, but pedestrian
- Has purpose, but is not sustained/developed
- Addresses the scope of the question
- Uses an appropriate form but not well executed
- Uses a form inappropriate to purpose
- Moves across forms to detriment of purpose or engagement
- Engagement of audience inconsistent
- Makes reasonable use of language
- Makes predictable/simplistic link between title and content.

D Range (6, 5, 4)

- Purpose very simple or unclear
- Lacks unity
- Lacks direction/disjointed, eg short/undeveloped or long/rambling
- Little or no engagement of the audience
- Fragmented use of form
- Could be literate; alternatively, could contain problems in expression
- Makes a tenuous link between title/content.

E Range (3, 2, 1, 0)

- Little or no purpose
- Lacks any development
- Mostly or nearly all irrelevant
- May be incomplete but literate
- Very poor control of language
- Off task; no link between title and content.

Candidate's Response – Well Above Average

The End of the Line

*I am lying in a white hospital bed, the white lights are glaring down at me. There are superfluous coloured tubes absurdly embedded in my nose. I see a man in a coat, an embodiment of the hospital – white and clean, he is talking to someone ... whispering and glancing at me.*¹

*I see an ocean. I am in a boat, only for an instance. I am back in the bed. His words drift into my ears 'Not much longer ... could be ... the end of the line'.*²

The boat is dark, tenuous and wooden, a mermaid bares her slender throat at the prow. The ocean is lunging and swooping about me.

The doctor has edged over to my bed, he looks politely concerned ... clinically intrigued.

There is a crimson sunset, expressionless and eternal, it drips down and reflects on the waves. Water licks and nibbles at my lifeless, cold feet at the bottom of the boat. Streams of emotion converge between my shoulder blades. The emerald waves reach out to hold me but are pulled back by the envious ocean.

Before me a surface looms, within the smooth jade, blues and greens swell beside the red reflections.

*Tears channel down my marble face and fall into a sea of tears ... tears cried by all those who floated on these seas before they now lie at the bottom, the pain and fear engraved in their expressions long having been eroded by the seawater, the nibbling fish. Vacant giant pupils house stagnant sea water.*³

*There is a distant, mechanical beeping, urgent and sharp – but my attention cannot be diverted, I am being mesmerised by the hypnotic growth of the omnipotent wave, small frothy white hands appear at the tip. They are ready to plunge down and grapple for my broken heart. The two pieces thud into the cage of my ribs like frightened birds.*⁴

*I cry out but I make no sound. The hiss of the straining wave whispers in my ear. I look into the base where I see my face reflecting contorted and alien. Steel rods are my bones, concrete is my skin. Panic despair and unbelief twist and writhe like thick worms inside my stomach. A ripple slaps against the side of the boat, leaps up and spits into my face. I wonder whether to wipe it off – a pang of thought – but then it is drowned again in the confusion.*⁵

The doctor stood there, a serene presence in his immaculate coat.

*His arm was placed around the old woman.*⁶

'If it's any consolation Mrs Perry ... he died peacefully, he just drifted off in his sleep.'

*Mournful, yet placated she stifled the tears with a dirty handkerchief and bravely smiled.*⁷

¹ The interaction effectively establishes the hospital setting.

² The line is established with title and the symbolic world of the patient's fading consciousness is introduced.

³ Using the qualities of the ocean and symbols of death (sunset etc) the script vividly describes the emotion of the dying man.

⁴ The ocean is presented as an antithetical force at once cajoling and attacking the man in his fight to postpone death.

⁵ The moment of death is reached as the waves rise in a tide of panic and despair – the imagery mirrors this in a sophisticated way.

⁶ The logical impossibility of the first person narrator finishing the story is successfully avoided by the doctor concluding the narrative.

⁷ The doctor's last comment provides a satisfying resolution by contrasting ironically with the struggle with the forces of death in the patient's last moments.

Examiners' Comments

A clever, imaginative script that engages the audience, interweaves the clinical atmosphere of the emergency ward and the aloofness of the doctor with the turmoil going on in the consciousness of the dying man. The contrasting worlds are sustained through skilful use of language and imagery, which serves to enhance the purpose and form.

Candidate's Response – Above Average

Eyes on the Road

*The young boy named Colin paused before opening the door. He studied it with care, taking in every small detail: the perfectly round knob, it's fake gold sheen coming off in flakes, the grainy swirls of the wood, the badly attached top hinge. In his infant mind he saw the door as the final barrier, the last protection from the outside world. His mother had told him often enough that this world was fraught with danger. This world was evil personified, eager to consume his soul and crush his young bones.*¹

*He closed his eyes, took a deep steadying breath, and stilled himself for what was to come. But he was prevented from opening the door by his mother.*²

Before she could say another word he yanked the door open. He slammed it on her fearful yet accusing eyes. He tried to ignore her muffled warning that was struggling to come from behind the heavy wood. 'Be careful ...'

He hurried down the path that led to the front gate, opened it, and walked onto the pavement. He was in the 'big, bad'³ outside world now, and he would not know sanctuary until four o'clock that afternoon, when he was again able to shut the door against the outside world.

*As he walked hurriedly to school, he kept his eyes downward cast. He could not bear to see the frightful sights of the city, the loud colours, the flashing signs, the scary people. And most of all, the cars. So he blocked out all the sights and the sounds, and he concentrated on the pavement, its greyness, its beaten look.*⁴

He finally arrived at school, but this offered no sanctuary, only a new set of frightful experiences. He remained seated in his chair at the table all day. He did not join in the gleeful cries of the other children as the lunch bell rang. He just sat and waited for the clock to strike four.

*It did so, eventually, after what to Colin seemed a lifetime. He jumped out of his seat and hurried home to his mother and to sanctuary.*⁵ *Unbeknownst to him, his concerned teacher was watching his hasty progress home from the window of the classroom, discussing him with an official-looking man who held a clipboard.*

'The poor boy, ' the man commiserated. 'Why does he walk so, with his face downcast, his eyes on the road – It's as though he's frightened to live.'

*'He is, ' replied the concerned teacher. 'His father was killed in a car crash a few years back. His mother is frightened the same thing will happen to her son, so she protects him from the world, and in doing so, prevents him from living ...'*⁶

¹ The narrative begins well with the creation of the child's world. The attention to detail on the door is particularly effective in establishing the idea of the 'sanctuary'.

² The boy's feelings and resolve are well created in this paragraph.

³ There is a lapse in the narration and an inconsistency in the style.

4 Once again the focus on the boy is well controlled through the impressionistic use of language.

5 The step back into straight narration creates a loss of impetus and becomes simplistic.

6 The conclusion is well controlled but reduces the impact of the story because of its simplicity of ideas. It's a convenient resolution which detracts from the very promising beginning.

Examiners' Comments

This script is characterised by a clear sense of purpose, maintaining its direction and control reasonably well throughout. The opening strongly establishes a sense of time and place. Any weakness lies in the lack of development and the falling away in the resolution. The simplicity of narration keeps it in the B range.

Candidate's Response – Average

Proceed with Caution

'Always son, Proceed with Caution' father said, was a familiar statement to me. He felt that if he was to leave me with something, that this would be it. For all of my endeavours he would state it. Yet I tried to ignore it, by just blissfully walking out the door before anyone namely my father could finish the statement. ¹

My story begins here, A Friday afternoon the sun was lowering and Col had arrived to pick me up. 'Knock, Knock, Knock!'

The rattle on the door made me shutter. ² I tried to hide like a snail in his shell. Colin being the arrogant, obnoxious type he opened the door and began to walk around when he found me hiding behind the kitchen bench.

'What are you doing, ' he jiggled

'I'm just tying my shoelaces up, ' A poor lie which he probably saw through from the start. 'We better go or we'll be late', he yelled as he rushed out the door to his father's MGB roadster.

I slowly followed knowing that my life was now in his hands, yet I felt like my life was in god's hands. ³

I could see my coffin being carried out by my family and my gravestone,

Born: 1 piece of body

Died: Many smaller pieces of body. ⁴

To my better judgement, I started to enjoy the ride. The cool wind blowing against my face like an overpowered fan at work.

The time had arrived, the wind had stopped blowing and the ignition was turned off. We jumped out of the car, as stylishly as we could, both of us wearing old British racing hats which we found in the glove compartment. The Boys rushed over to see the car, we parraded in front of it like Peacocks waving their feathers. My mood had changed suddenly and I felt better than life itself, and once I had a few beers in me, I was ready to take on the world. ⁵

Through our stupidity or perhaps our drunkenness we decided to 'have a little fun'.

Up the road from where we were there was a paddock of luscious green grass and the old style paling fence which was slowly decaying over the years. The wood was extremely splinterly and also covered with muck. ⁶

There it was, what we were all looking for, in the far back corner 'a bull'. Not just any bull, but the biggest bull I had ever seen. It was our bet that Col and I could run right across the paddock and back without getting touched by the bull.

Money wasn't just on the line, but our pride and respect from our friends. We climbed the fence cautiously. My fathers statement stuck in my mind 'Proceed with Caution'.

I followed these orders, while Col said 'bugger it, Ahhhhhhhh' and bolted across the middle of the paddock. He had made the other side of the fence before I had even left the starting blocks. The Bull raised his head. His beady eyes fixed directly on the moving target. I proceeded slowly, trying to follow the tree line, ducking behind trees when even I had the chance.

By now the Bull was active and on the prowl, he started to move after Col as he darted back to the starting point.⁷

I couldn't believe it my father's advice was working. The Bull hadn't even noticed me yet. The Bull was gaining on Col, It was going to be close.

I couldn't bare to look, Yet I couldn't turn away. He made it, dived over the fence without even touching it. The bull looked angry. Still I stuck to the tree line. 'SNAP' I broke a branch with my foot, The head slowly turned and the beady red eyes of the bull were fixed firmly on my backside.⁸

I was in a fix, the statement still fixed firmly in my brain.

The bull turned and started to move as fast as a formula one car.⁹ I had no choice, too far from the fence and too close to the bull, I scaled a tree until I was safe 'Phew.' I huffed.

The fellas laughed especially Col and here I would stay for safe keeping.¹⁰

From this moment on, I would realise that 'Proceed with caution' was not my rite of passage. I also realised that under certain conditions a slow, steady start was not the answer, but a 'bullheaded' approach should be appropriate.¹¹

1 Simple introduction. Spelling and grammatical errors.

2 Flaws in expression.

3 Inability to develop atmosphere and to focus on purpose and storyline.

4 Attempt at humour. There is a lack of continuity between the 'joke' and the following text.

5 Text is disjointed and irrelevant to eventual story.

6 Lacks unity and direction. At this point the writer finally starts to tell the story.

7 Predictable and unvaried sentence structure fails to create interest or atmosphere.

8 Does not sustain any degree of tension.

9 Use of simile.

10 Poor sentence structure.

11 Weak resolution but does manage to re-establish link with title.

Examiners' Comments

A predictable, pedestrian response that addresses the scope of the question. Simplistic purpose is achieved through the autobiographical style but the response is lacking in any real depth, atmosphere or development. Audience engagement is sporadic and the attempts at humour are ineffective.

There is, however, a reasonable control of language evident in this average script.

SECTION II—SHAKESPEARE

Question 3. Hamlet (25 marks)

Use a separate Writing Booklet. Allow about 50 minutes for this question.

Examine Shakespeare's dramatic use of reason and madness in *Hamlet*.

Introduction

The 1997 question saw a shift of emphasis from previous years in that candidates were asked to examine Shakespeare's dramatic use of a theme/concept. In previous years they have been asked to discuss a theme/idea/concept/character and incorporate implicitly or explicitly discussion of how that theme/idea/concept/character is dramatically presented. The shift in emphasis challenged the majority of candidates. Only the very best tackled the question directly through the 'dramatic use' focus; most opted for a discussion of reason and madness and how they were presented in dramatic form by Shakespeare. In the middle range dramatic use was often interpreted as manifestations of dramatic tension, conflict, suspense, character insight or as a means of furthering the plot. More competent candidates demonstrated an understanding of dramatic irony in relation to the question.

Unexpectedly, there was a further difficulty in that a number of candidates really had only a vague understanding of the concept of 'reason' and did not necessarily treat or consider 'reason and madness' as a paired antithesis. Many candidates shifted their definition of reason as the essay progressed. This difficulty with the concept of 'reason' produced a hierarchy of definitions, with some candidates being unable to do more than define reason as 'the reason things happened' or reason as motivation.

Clearly the question demanded that candidates apply their knowledge of the play in a way which they had not hitherto been asked. In the middle ranges, the multifaceted nature of the question meant candidates found it difficult to develop a clear and definite thesis from the outset. Introductions to essays often reflected this confusion and frustration leading to unpredictable or tenuous arguments that relied upon aspects of the play with which candidates felt familiar rather than aspects more relevant to the question. They often reworked the question as: 'How does Shakespeare make his discussion of reason and madness dramatic?'

Many candidates found it difficult to establish and maintain a thesis to link their knowledge of the play to the question. This resulted in some strongly plot-driven responses and some obvious theme-driven responses where the theme discussed was a theme other than reason and madness.

The 'A' Range

The 'A' range responses were, as the guidelines state, usually very fluent, very well expressed (for a first draft response), demonstrated a very thorough knowledge of the text and usually displayed insight into the complexities of the text. They were typified by a strong central thesis, which was consistently pursued without extraneous material intruding to weaken or muddy the thesis. This year, they were sometimes marked by an intelligent selectivity in the material they presented and hence were succinct. They were able to synthesise their discussion of philosophy and dramaturgy, reflecting the key elements of the question. They clearly understood 'reason

and madness' as a paired antithesis and tackled the question through the focus on Shakespeare's dramatic use, rather than through the approach of discussing 'reason and madness' as a theme which was rendered in dramatic form. They were able to use quotation most appropriately and usually integrated it deftly into their own syntax. A clear and firm introduction made their thesis evident from the outset and enabled them to pursue their argument in the body of the essay. 'A' range scripts were able to sustain their thesis throughout with the conclusion matching or mirroring their introduction. The script below is a good example of the 'A' range. Note that the introduction clearly states how and to what extent Shakespeare uses reason and madness in creating his play.

Example 1

Shakespeare used reason and madness in 'Hamlet' to create tension and conflict. Hamlet's feigned madness creates often comical verbal conflict between Hamlet and Claudius, and Hamlet and Polonius. His madness also allows him to show outward conflict with Claudius under the mask of insanity. Similarly conflict and dramatic tension and plot devices are created when Hamlet occasionally lapses into true madness. Shakespeare also uses Hamlet and Claudius reasoning with themselves to create inner conflict. This conflict has vast dramatic implications and is used to complicate the conflict between Claudius and Hamlet.

Hamlet's 'antic disposition' portrays a visual conflict with his rival Claudius. He can verbally abuse Claudius with 'wild and whirling' words under this deceptive device. In the same scene where he suspects Claudius to be spying on him and using Ophelia as bait, he says of those that are married – 'all but one shall live', we assume directed at Claudius. This creates tension between Claudius and Hamlet since Claudius is unsure whether Hamlet is purely mad or simply pretending — yet he knows to be wary saying, 'madness in great ones should not unwatch'd go'.

Hamlet deliberately tries to agitate and unease Claudius. He talks of a king going 'progress through the guts of a beggar' after death; and calls Claudius his 'loving mother', for husband and wife are 'one'. Claudius comments that Hamlet is like a 'Hectic' which 'rages' in his blood.

Hamlet also uses his madness on Polonius calling him 'Jephthah', who unknowingly sacrificed his daughter. He calls him a 'fish monger' and mocks his sycophantic nature by describing an imaginary cloud which he claims is in the shape of a 'camel', then 'weasle' and finally 'whale'. To each of these suggestions Polonius ridiculously agrees. Through this conflict we see the faults of Polonius and the corruption of the court which add to the drama of 'Hamlet'.

Occasionally Hamlet lapses into true madness, when he becomes 'passion's slave'. It is in these scenes that the highest points of tension occur. When he kills Polonius, in a 'rash and bloody deed' he claims that it was due to his madness, saying 'madness is poor Hamlet's enemy' to Laertes. Similarly he falls victim to a mad passion at Ophelia's funeral. He completely forgets he has murdered Polonius and subsequently caused Ophelia's death, asking Laertes why he 'wrongs' him. His dramatic speech where he claims to have 'loved Ophelia' with more love than 'forty thousand brothers' could be the climax of the play. He speaks of eating 'crocodiles' and dying with Ophelia to prove his love. Shakespeare uses this scene as a final point of tension in Hamlet's own being: from here on he is decided and determined in his ways.

Shakespeare also uses reason to create conflict. Hamlet's procrastination is partly due to his tendency to think 'too precisely' on the 'event'. He claims that 'the native hue of resolution/ is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'. It is through Hamlet's reasoning that Shakespeare shows his inner turmoil and moral dilemmas. Hamlet reveals that there is a kind of 'fighting'

in his 'heart' and we see him battling with the questions, 'To be or not to be' and whether it is nobler to revenge or 'in the mind to suffer'. It is these fundamental questions which create most of the drama in 'Hamlet'.

Through Hamlet's inner turmoil his conflict with Claudius becomes more complex. His soliloquies reveal the reasons for his procrastination which creates much of the suspense in 'Hamlet'.

In his soliloquies we see that not only is Hamlet fighting with himself (calling himself a 'coward', a 'rogue and peasant slave') but also with the world. He becomes an outsider, disgusted in everything. Denmark is a 'prison': the world is a 'pestilent congregation of vapours' and man is a 'beast, no more'. It is this utter contempt, revealed through Hamlet's reasoning for himself which Shakespeare uses to create scenes of violent speech, rash actions – and to make Hamlet the tragic figure he is.

Shakespeare also uses Claudius' reasoning for dramatic purposes. Through Claudius' soliloquies Shakespeare reveals a remorseful and regretful nature in this 'remorseless' 'adulterous beast' as Hamlet calls him. The tension in Claudius' own heart adds to the dramatic tension of the play. He is a suffering man with great and tragic inner conflict. He admits his 'offence is rank/ it smells to heaven' but can not be forgiven since he cannot give up his 'crown', 'queen' and 'ambition'. This adds to his character, as the rival to Hamlet. He is not the traditional 'villain' who is a personification of evil, but a multi-dimensional character, which makes him harder to avenge.

Shakespeare uses the two contrasting elements of reason and madness most notably to highlight the conflict between Claudius and Hamlet. Much of the drama in 'Hamlet' is created by the conflict of reason and madness in Hamlet's own mind. Madness is used to create dramatic tension of the physical sort: while reason is often used to show the tension of a complicated issue through the minds of Claudius and Hamlet. Shakespeare's use of madness and reason ensures that the tragedy 'Hamlet' is truly a great tragedy of drama and complexities.

The 'B' Range

'B' range scripts were often lengthy, thoroughly argued scripts that were literate, had flashes of insight or flashes of sophistication in thought and expression although usually not consistently clever throughout. 'B' range scripts had a discernible thesis, which they worked their way through but often had digressions that eventually were linked back to their central thesis. For the most part, they discussed drama, dramatic technique or stagecraft quite directly but did not approach the question from the focus of 'dramatic use'. They usually approached the question from a thorough and perceptive discussion of reason and madness as a central theme/idea and in doing so discussed how this theme was dramatically presented. Their knowledge of the text was comprehensive and, at the upper end of the range, usually selectively used. Scripts at the lower end of the range were a little more discursive and inclined to rework material to fit their thesis.

The essay below has as its thesis that Shakespeare uses reason and madness to explore the 'heart and mind' of the major characters and hence the essay maintains its coherence by moving from character to character discussing reason and madness in each. This line is a vehicle which is sufficient to sustain an argument.

Example 1

Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' is a study of the delicate and intricate workings of the human heart and mind. For this reason it encompasses many themes relevant to humanity. One such theme explored by Shakespeare is that of reason and madness. The dramatic use of this theme is integral to the tragedy of 'Hamlet' and indeed is intrinsically linked to the protagonist himself.

Shakespeare, when allowing his hero to 'put an antic disposition on' was introducing the audience to the theme of reason and madness. Shakespeare uses both these concepts throughout the play to explore the workings of the human heart and mind. At times he extends beyond simply the workings, to explore and question the other major themes, morality, revenge, death and appearances. Intrinsically linked to all these themes is Hamlet the Dane, thereby linking the theme of madness to all other issues in the play.

Perhaps one reason why many actors fail to completely portray Hamlet on stage is because of Shakespeare's dramatic use of reason and madness. The prince is so scholarly, intelligent and passionate that the idea of him going completely mad is quite hard to come to terms with. Indeed many people in the play struggle to come to terms with Hamlet being insane. For example, Polonius: 'Though this be madness, yet there's method in it.'

However, although Hamlet is acting under his 'antic disposition', Shakespeare's dramatic use of this madness is so well employed that even Hamlet's (former) lover is forced to exclaim: 'O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!'

His mother even is at a point of distress over her 'too much changed son.'

It is apparent though that comments of Hamlet's such as, 'Are you a fishmonger?' are simply spoken under a feigned madness.

And so in regard to the protagonist Hamlet, it would seem that Shakespeare has included the use of madness to add depth to his character and to some extent, piquance to his dilemma.

Shakespeare dramatically uses madness in 'Hamlet' to demonstrate the effects of corruption. The disease pervading Denmark reaches even the most innocent of characters — Ophelia. She is thrust into the 'rank and gross' nature of the court and ultimately pays with her sanity and life. Here Shakespeare has explored and condemned the corruption of humanity.

In addition Shakespeare has employed the dramatic use of madness to uncover the true feelings and thoughts of the innocent Ophelia. Under the influence of insanity, Shakespeare reveals the sexual and sensual side of Ophelia, previously thought pure and good. Hence another aspect of Ophelia's character is revealed under the guise of madness.

Shakespeare also uses Ophelia's insanity to add depth to other characters. The sight of a mad Ophelia leaves her brother Laertes distraught, and even evokes gentle emotion from the Machiavellian Claudius. Ironically Claudius recognises that, 'It is the poison that springs, From her father's death,' that has caused Ophelia to go mad. However, he fails to recognise that it was he who was ultimately responsible for Polonius' death, and that the 'poison' is indeed paralleled by the poison infecting Denmark.

The dramatic use of reason is best displayed by Hamlet, Claudius and Horatio. Horatio is the only person not affected by the corruption of the state, and is thus elevated by Shakespeare as the epitome of reason. He is intelligent, rational and loyal, even to the point of taking his own life for Hamlet: 'There's yet some liquor left'

He is the one person entrusted by Hamlet – ‘thou livest’ to reveal the true story of Claudius.

Shakespeare uses Horatio to provide an antithesis for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He is also one of two people in whom Hamlet confided his plan to ‘put an antic disposition on.’ Hence Shakespeare used Horatio and his reason to provide a stable element throughout the play, dramatically providing a balance of characters.

Hamlet too provides an example of reason in his soliloquies, and also when he talks to characters such as Horatio and the gravediggers. Shakespeare has employed dramatic reason to balance the character of Hamlet. At times he is seen to be calm, rational and collected. Upon returning from England, and the pirates, Hamlet is seen to have cast off his feigned madness in favour of a calm acceptance: ‘There’s a divinity which shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will.’

Claudius, however evil, is seen to be reasonable, primarily for the fact that he has a conscience. In his soliloquy he is revealed to be a villain capable of evoking sympathy. The audience cannot help feeling sympathetic when we are aware of Claudius’ desire for purification, to be washed ‘as white as snow’ Similarly his gentle affection for Gertrude and concern for Ophelia add reason to an otherwise evil man. However, Claudius’ reason is quite often at the expense of others. He cannot be forgiven when he ‘is still possessed

Of those effects for which I did murder – My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.’

Therefore Shakespeare’s dramatic use of reason and madness is primarily associated with his exploration of the human heart and mind. It is a significant theme used in Hamlet to add depth to characters and reinforce the themes. It is explored through many characters in the play but none more so than the complex, analysing hero himself – Hamlet the Dane.

The ‘C’ Range

‘C’ range scripts displayed a sound knowledge of the play and had a thesis that enabled them to discuss the concept or concepts of reason and madness. They did not, however, discuss Shakespeare’s dramatic use of reason and madness. They made mention of dramatic technique either explicitly or implicitly, discussing dramatic tension, conflict, suspense, character insight or plot development, although some made generalised reference to dramatic technique not specifically related to the presentation of reason and madness. Many had no real understanding of ‘reason’ as a concept and shifted their definition of reason during the essay because they were apparently not confident that they had it right. ‘C’ range scripts were able to discuss the various manifestations of madness and make sensible comments on Shakespeare’s presentation of it, although many at times confused Shakespeare’s use of madness with Hamlet’s use of madness.

C range candidates, although knowing the play well, usually found it hard to find a way to approach the question. Many candidates were obviously reshaping other material to form a thesis. This approach limited their ability to coherently answer the question. The material they were reworking was not inappropriate necessarily, but prevented a direct and consistent approach to the question. Some candidates tended to speculate on character motivation and action as a way of coming to terms with ‘reason’ and ‘madness’ at the expense of more relevant discussion. Many seemed to be at a loss for a way to link together their material. The most prominent linking devices used were: retracing a good deal of the plot; discussing the

soliloquies, discussing the theme of corruption; discussing revenge tragedy; comparing and contrasting Laertes/Fortinbras/Hamlet; writing a series of character analyses. C range responses usually remained true to their thesis but often took digressions, which they tried with varying degrees of success to relate back to the question. The example below demonstrates the introduction of a candidate who wishes to tackle the question through the theme of revenge and who also demonstrates a weak understanding of 'reason'.

Shakespeare makes excellent dramatic use of reason and madness in Hamlet. Revenge is the central theme of the play and it is Hamlet, Prince of Denmark who is the agent of Providence. The reason for Hamlet's quest for revenge is the appearance of his father's ghost.

The sample below is a typical 'C' range script. The candidate equates 'reason' with 'reasoning'. It is plot driven and makes a number of points about dramatic technique in general. From the outset the candidate makes it clear he/she is discussing how reason and madness are employed as dramatic devices.

Example 1

In Shakespeare's play 'Hamlet', reason and madness are employed as dramatic devices. Hamlet spends a lot of his time during the play reasoning with himself and considering the moral aspects of his revenge. Reason causes delay of Hamlet's action but at the same time it is what eventually leads him to carry out revenge at the cost of his own life.

Madness is also considered a dramatic device it allows the character of Hamlet to mask his true intentions of avenging the death of his father – or so Hamlet believes. The issue of madness in the play is also important in that it allows a contrast to be made between true madness, such as that of Ophelia, and feigned madness of Hamlet.

From when Hamlet learns of his father's murder, through the ghost of his father, he vows to avenge his father's death. He tells Horatio, his confidant, that he will 'put an antic disposition on'. In this way he hopes to divert attention from his plans of revenge. Although his 'strange' behaviour fools some, that is Polonius, Ophelia and the Queen, it is the only obstacle that Claudius is left to conquer having already succeeded in killing the king, marrying his wife and gaining the throne. This suspicion of Hamlet's 'madness' is first aroused after Claudius and Polonius organise a meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia to determine the nature of his madness. Polonius is convinced that Hamlet is mad out of love for Ophelia – she having rejected Hamlet at the will of her father – yet Claudius believes Hamlet has ulterior motives and wishes to send him to England.

Hamlet seems to have just cause to have gone mad; the murder of a father and a 'stain'd mother'. However the pretence isn't enough to leave Hamlet free of suspicion in the perceptive eyes of Claudius. Hamlet in fact attracts attention to himself and delays his course of action.

Madness does in some respects give Hamlet more time to plan his revenge. It is this delayed action which supplies the audience with dramatic tension. The audience wishes Hamlet to 'sweep to his revenge' and his procrastination intensifies this feeling.

Ophelia, whose character parallels Hamlet's in that they have both had a father murdered, actually does turn mad. It's not clear if her madness stems from her father's death alone or whether Hamlet's rejection of her in the nunnery scene is to blame. Her madness contrasts with Hamlet's feigned madness.

Throughout the play, Hamlet is caught up in a moral dilemma. It's through Hamlet's words that reason can be seen as an element in the play with dramatic effect.

The ghost is a very important dramatic device in that it spurs Hamlet's thirst for revenge and provides Hamlet with a question of morality. Hamlet feels that his revenge must also be just. Thus because he seeks justice he must consider moral aspects of his plans.

To kill a King was a serious crime against god as the King was in fact thought of as god's representative on earth. Killing a king is an act of treason and a deed which is not to be taken lightly.

It could be said that his moralising delays his actions yet without doing so he might not have succeeded in avenging his father's murder. He recognises his procrastination and inaction in his soliloquies. For instance after he hears the player perform an emotional and passionate speech he reproaches himself for his own lack of passion. He is bewildered by the fact that the player can become so emotional about a fictitious character and questions his own inaction 'What would he do had he the motivation and the cue for passion that I do'. Instead of acting on impulse as a true avenger would Hamlet can only 'unpack his heart with words and fall a-cursing like a very drab'.

This again is shown in a soliloquy later in the play following the news Hamlet hears about Fortinbras. Fortinbras is yet another character who is there to parallel and contrast Hamlet. Hamlet realises that he must take action after learning that a man similar to himself but with less cause could go to such trouble for a small piece of useless land which he wishes to reclaim; 'from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody or nothing worth'.

Reasoning with himself is a way Hamlet achieves justice. He is given the perfect opportunity to carry out revenge when he finds Claudius praying but considers the implications of such a rash act and refrains from killing Claudius: 'and so he goes to heaven; and so am I revenged'. He doesn't consider it to be true revenge or justice because Claudius is in the middle of purging his soul and would thus go to heaven. He wants Claudius to suffer the way his father did as he wasn't given that opportunity to purge before death.

However soon after this scene when Hamlet is in his mother's chamber all his deliberation is put aside as he acts impulsively and accidentally murders Polonius,

The character of Laertes also acts as a contrast to Hamlet's evasive nature. When Laertes returns from France to find his father murdered and his sister gone mad he immediately wants to avenge both of them. Claudius asks him what he would be prepared to do to achieve this and he replies 'to cut his throat in the church', ironically the very thing Hamlet was unable to do.

Ultimately Hamlet carries out his revenge in a manner he considers just.

Madness and reason are both used as effective dramatic devices in the play Hamlet. They are important issues raised through the character of Hamlet and aid the dramatic tension and engagement of the audience.

The 'D' Range

'D' range scripts usually had trouble developing a thesis that they could sustain throughout the essay. Expression was usually sound although syntax, vocabulary and structure were often simple. The knowledge of the text was clear though sometimes rather superficial. Many avoided a definition of reason or avoided discussing reason at all, preferring to stick to the comparative safety of a discussion of madness and Hamlet's use of it rather than Shakespeare's dramatic use. Candidates often interpreted reason as 'reasonable/unreasonable' or shifted their definition of reason as the essay progressed. Vague, superficial comments on dramatic technique were often made. 'D' range scripts were often plot-driven or theme-based in an effort to link the ideas together. Many were inconsistent in approach and execution.

The script below is a typical 'D' range response. It lacks coherence and demonstrates little insight into the complexities of the text. Note the poor integration of quotation and the often short, unconnected paragraphs.

Example 1

'Hamlet', written by the brilliant Shakespeare, undeniably contains much reasoning, not only in Hamlet but also in the other characters. The madness, whether it be played on, or serious is also an integral part of 'Hamlet'.

The reasoning of Hamlet and his Christian values will be discussed, as well as his reasoning with Gertrude, the Players, Ophelia and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Horatio is the man of reason and logic.

The madness that I will be discussing is not only a serious madness, but also a madness that Hamlet endures. Ophelia is also a character subdued by Hamlet's misguided madness.

Throughout 'Hamlet', Hamlet has a moral battle within himself to whether or not his father's ghost is real or the devil tempting wrong doing. This is part of the reasoning that Hamlet has to overcome before he can avenge his fathers death. This reasoning of Hamlet's is shown through his soliloquies 'This too, too sallied flesh would melt' is one of the soliloquies that outlines the battle Hamlet is having with himself. He is trying to reason with himself so that he can truthfully believe the ghost and proceed with his task. Another soliloquy that adequately shows this is 'To be, or not to be'. The first line of this, shows the deep desperation that Hamlet is enduring.

'To be, or not to be, that is the question'.

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortunes,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles'.

The first section of this soliloquy shows the reasoning, the development of both circumstances. Is it more noble to suffer and not avenge his fathers death? 'Slings' and 'arrows' signify the battle that Hamlet is having within himself over his indecision. The 'sea of troubles' shows how large Hamlet feels his problem is.

All of Hamlet's soliloquies in some way show the battle or the reasoning Hamlet has to overcome to avenge his fathers death.

Although the majority of the reasoning is done by Hamlet on himself, he also reasons with Gertrude, his own mother. He tries to reason with her by blaming her for a hasty marriage to a villain who killed her husband.

'O, villain, villain, smiling damned villain'.

The players are an integral part in the development of Hamlet. Hamlet reasons with the players in a secondary sense, making them perform a play, a re-enactment of the death of King Hamlet. This is the way that Hamlet finally finds out the truth of his fathers death.

*'The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the
conscience of the King'.*

The players allow Hamlet to reason with himself.

Finally, Horatio is a man of reason and logic. He is one of the only characters at the beginning of the play and he is the only one left at the end of the play to tell of Hamlet's story.

Horatio is the person that is composed and controlled throughout the play. This is evident when the appearance of the ghost is controlled by Horatio.

The madness that is evident throughout the play, can be traced from almost start to end with Hamlet, or half way through with Ophelia. Hamlet's madness, although it may be played on or is not real in the true sense of madness, is still a vital part for the advancement of the play.

'To put on an antic disposition', Shakespeare deals with Hamlet's madness by 'disheveling his clothes' and depriving his one true love of his own love.

I believe Shakespeare uses the acted madness of Hamlet and the serious madness of Ophelia to contrast the two to make the other more real.

I also believe that when Ophelia died, that Hamlet was on the verge of serious madness.

Ophelia's madness becomes evident when Hamlet rejects her of his love.

'Get thee to a nunnery'.

However, whether the madness be serious or played upon, Shakespeare adequately proves that both are vital to the advancement of the play.

Both reason and madness are integral parts of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. Without these the play would not advance and there would be no indecision. Therefore Shakespeare has effectively shown the reason of Hamlet within himself, reasoning of the players and reasoning of his christian values.

Shakespeare has also shown the serious madness of Ophelia and the acted madness of Hamlet to be an integral part of the play.

The 'E' Range

'E' range scripts were few in number and were usually short, poorly expressed and lacking in any real understanding of the demands of the question or the text. Some were clearly from candidates who had misjudged their examination timing. There were a few 'unusual' answers which seemed to be the efforts of candidates who were literate and perceptive but found the question to be difficult or not what they had expected.

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General Comments

The question has challenged candidates and many have found it difficult to develop a thesis which allows them to produce a strongly focused essay with integrity and consistency of argument.

Some candidates have apparently not seen ‘reason and madness’ as a paired dichotomy and whilst ‘madness’ has not presented problems, ‘reason’ has been defined in a variety of ways. There seems to be a hierarchy of definitions developing, ranging from ‘the reason (why) things happened or people did things’, to a ‘reason vs passion’ conceptualisation.

Some candidates redefine reason or demonstrate ‘definition shift’ in the course of the essay. Some candidates avoid ‘reason’ and focus strongly on ‘madness’.

‘Dramatic use’ has also been a difficulty for many. Again, a hierarchy of approaches has developed. The most confident essays argue Shakespeare’s dramatic use of reason and madness as their central thesis, others discuss ‘madness and reason’ in the play and say how they are dramatically presented, some pay lip service to dramatic technique in the context of ‘reason and madness’ and the weaker responses may avoid ‘drama’ altogether or offer generalised comments on Shakespeare’s stagecraft that have only tangential relation to the question at best.

Theses vary from directly addressing the question, to using a discussion of the characters, revenge tragedy, the soliloquies, corruption or some other theme as a vehicle to structure a response.

‘A’ Range – Well Above Average (15, 14, 13)

‘A’ range responses are usually fluent, very well expressed, demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the text, tackle the question directly through the ‘dramatic use’ focus rather than the ‘reason and madness’ focus. They may be typified by an intelligent selectivity in what they present to support their argument and hence produce a succinct essay. They usually have a good understanding of ‘reason and madness’ as an antithetical pairing. They are most usually identifiable by a strong and clearly argued thesis which they are able to sustain throughout. ‘A+15’ scripts need not be superscripts, they may have blemishes.

‘B’ Range – Above Average (12, 11, 10)

‘B’ range responses can be lengthy, thoroughly argued essays that are literate, have flashes of insight or well-expressed observations without being consistently sophisticated in either line of argument or expression. They have a discernible thesis that they work their way through, although they may have patches whose relevance is difficult to see. They may take lengthy detours or digressions which are tied back into their thesis in the conclusion or at the end of the digression. They either address ‘dramatic use’ thoughtfully or directly discuss Shakespeare’s dramatic technique in presenting ‘reason and madness’.

‘C’ Range – Average (9, 8, 7)

‘C’ range responses know the text well, are soundly expressed and have a thesis that serves to allow them to discuss ‘reason and madness’, though not Shakespeare’s ‘dramatic use’ of it.

They make reference to dramatic technique explicitly or implicitly. They may have a weak understanding of 'reason' or undergo definition shift. They usually discuss 'madness' (feigned madness, real madness, reason in madness etc) in a meaningful way and make sensible points about how Shakespeare presents that madness. They are frequently identifiable as using some linking mechanism to discuss 'reason and madness' which is not inappropriate but limiting in scope, eg *Madness and reason is a major theme in the play which we can see through the theme of corruption/Hamlet's soliloquies/Hamlet contrasted to Laertes/these 4 characters etc*. They usually remain true to their stated thesis but may make long digressions, which are eventually linked back to their thesis with varying degrees of credibility.

'D' Range – Below Average (6, 5, 4)

'D' range responses have difficulty developing a thesis that they can sustain throughout the essay. They are usually soundly expressed though simple in vocabulary and syntax. They know the text but do not demonstrate insight into its complexities. They may avoid the concept of 'reason' or define it as a rationale or cause of events, and focus on 'madness'. They may pay bare lip service to dramatic technique or ignore it altogether. They often appear to be using a poor vehicle for their discussion and take diversions or detours which seem to have no relevance to the question or their own stated thesis.

'E' Range – Well Below Average (3, 2, 1, 0)

'E' range responses are often short, badly expressed and have no real thesis. They may display a faulty knowledge of the text. They may have experienced difficulty in finding a structure or a vehicle to allow them to discuss the question and may instead have discussed the play, or madness in the play, in a shallow and unconvincing way.

Paper 2

Section I — Common Question for 2/3 Unit (Common) and 2 Unit (General) Candidates

Question 1: Poetry

2/3 Unit (Common) Question

‘The most effective poems vividly convey the poet’s ideas and feelings.’

How do they do this?

The poems you can write about in your answer have already been selected and listed below.

Write about TWO poems, ONE from each poet you have studied from the list below.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----|---|
| Geoffrey Chaucer | ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’ | OR | its prologue. |
| John Donne | ‘The Apparition’ | OR | ‘O my blacke Soule! now thou art summoned’. |
| John Keats | ‘To Autumn’ | OR | ‘Bright Star’. |
| Robert Browning | ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ | OR | ‘Andrea del Sarto’. |
| Gerard Manley Hopkins | ‘Binsey Poplars’ | OR | ‘No worst, there is none ...’ |
| Seamus Heaney | ‘Funeral Rites’ | OR | ‘Exposure’. |
| Les Murray | ‘Driving through Sawmill Towns’ | OR | ‘An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow’. |
| Gwen Harwood | ‘At the Water’s Edge’ | OR | ‘Hospital Evening’. |
| Robert Gray | ‘Flames and Dangling Wire’ | OR | ‘Watching by the Harbour’. |
| Jennifer Maiden | ‘The Patient’ | OR | ‘Tiananmen Square’. |

Note: You must write on TWO poets in this question.

2 Unit (General) Question

‘The most effective poems vividly convey the poet’s ideas and feelings.’

How do they do this?

The poems you can write about in your answer have already been selected and listed below.

Write about TWO poems, ONE from each poet you have studied from the list below.

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| Joanne Burns | ‘australian crawl’ | OR | ‘echo’. |
| Bruce Dawe | ‘Drifters’ | OR | ‘Homo Suburbiensis’. |
| Robert Gray | ‘Old House’ | OR | ‘Going Back, on a Hot Night’. |
| Mark O’Connor | ‘To Kill an Olive’ | OR | ‘Pozières Cemetery’. |
| Kenneth Slessor | ‘Wild Grapes’ | OR | ‘North Country’. |
| Judith Wright | ‘Remittance Man’ | OR | ‘Eve to her Daughters’. |

Note: You must write on TWO poets in this question.

Examiners' Comments

The poetry common question was sufficiently open to allow each candidate to explore and discuss the poems set for each poet. The question required a comprehensive study of all prescribed poems.

Candidates who assumed that set poems would not be specified, discussed the question in a very generalised way. A mere listing of techniques without consideration of effect is of little value. The more able candidates communicated well the integration of ideas, feelings and techniques when discussing the poems. Less able candidates found it difficult to deal with 'the technique' aspect of the question.

The words 'the poet's ideas and feelings' led to a variety of responses that generally focused on the poet's ideas and thematic concerns. Candidates interpreted 'feelings' as the poet's, the persona's, the characters within the poems or their own feelings.

The poetry question itself focused on the basic elements of poetry and this gave candidates much to discuss if they were prepared. This allowed for discrimination between responses.

The common question does not necessitate a comparative response. Although some candidates attempted an integrated response, the majority of candidates wrote an essay that dealt with the two poems separately. Some of the better candidates used linking statements or paragraphs to give structure to their response.

Questions of this nature demand a thorough knowledge of the poems supported by carefully selected and well-integrated quotations. Lengthy irrelevant quotations do little to advance the discussion and argument in the context of the question.

Candidates' Responses – General Comments

Candidates who were well prepared had no difficulty in dealing with the requirements of the question.

Despite clear instructions, however, some candidates chose to write on poems other than the ones set.

Dawe, Slessor and Wright were the most popular poets in 2 Unit (General), with an increasing number of candidates responding to the Gray poems in both General and Related. In the 2/3 Unit (Common) paper Keats, Donne and Browning commanded the most responses, with increasing numbers of candidates attempting the Harwood option.

Above average responses – A and B range

Above average responses were characterised by a sustained and detailed discussion of the individual poems specified, with candidates showing the ability to effectively deal with ideas, feelings and poetic techniques.

Above average responses were characterised by excellence in essay technique, style, structure, flair, expression and sophisticated vocabulary.

Judicious selection of quotations was also a feature of the A and B range responses.

Example of Well Above Average Response

To create an effective poem, poets must be able to convey their ideas and feelings vividly and passionately. There are many poetical devices used by poets to express their emotions and thoughts. Two such poems where this is effectively accomplished are John Keats 'To Autumn' and Seamus Heaney's 'Funeral Rites'.

Keats' poems all have a passionate intensity in the expression of his thoughts and feelings, especially in 'To Autumn'. The techniques he uses to convey this are the form, structure and language. The sensual imagery however is one of the most effective devices used to create the vivid portrayal of his feelings of acceptance for the passing of the beauty of Autumn because he knows it will come again.

The form of the poem as an ode is very important in conveying Keats' ideas. It signifies that Autumn is worthy of praise and reverence thereby stressing Keats' love for the beauty of Autumn. It is also extremely subjective form of poetry that requires the poet's feelings and emotions.

The structure of the poem is another aspect which reveals the poets ideas. The poem is arranged into three sections representing the development of the season of Autumn, a person's life or the three senses of feeling, seeing and hearing. Each is symbolic of a part of Keats' thoughts, either the cyclical aspect of nature or his love and admiration for the senses. Also each stanza of the ode has an extra line, symbolic of Keats' ideas on the overwhelming abundance and fertility of Autumn.

Another literary technique is the language of the poem. The diction is all about nature, such as 'fruit', 'sun', 'vines' reflecting Keats' romantic love of the beauty and inspiration in nature. The poem is also written in the present tense which is important because it adds more life and immediacy to the poem. This emphasises Keats' love of Autumn for its life and fecundity and its regeneration. There are also no personal references or allusions to humans because Keats is so vividly focused on the beauty and life in Autumn.

The overwhelming sensual imagery extensively used throughout the poem is extremely important in vividly conveying the poet's emotions. The tactile imagery of the first stanza, 'Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is emphasised by the sibilance and alliteration of 'm' sounds which makes it even more powerful for the reader. The visual images in the second stanza such as, 'Thy hair soft lifted by the winnowing-wind' makes Autumn seem more real and vivid to the reader. The apostrophe of Autumn and personification further emphasises Keats' love for the abundance of life in Autumn. The final stanza is filled with aural imagery such as, 'in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn'. So by appealing to many of the senses Keats is capturing the reader's mind and able to express his ideas more effectively and vividly.

Finally the rhythm and rhyme of the poem created through the cumulation of ideas, and extensive use of alliteration and assonance such as, 'Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours' allows Keats to emphasise certain feelings and ideas. All the poetical devices of the ode, structure, language and imagery are used to create a near perfect poem reflecting Keats love of the perfect beauty and regeneration he sees in Autumn.

Similarly in 'Funeral Rites' Heaney uses a range of literary techniques to vividly express his ideas and feelings. The language of the poem, the structure, the sensual images and references linking the past and present all are used to create a poem reflecting his ideas on the cycle of violence and death and his personal experiences.

The language Heaney uses in 'Funeral Rites' is an effective technique that conveys his ideas with a vivid intensity. There are relatively small numbers of words used which creates more simplistic expressions for the reader. However there are layers of meaning within the diction which adds depth and opens the reader to the different levels of Heaney's thinking. For example 'shackled in rosary beads' could be symbolic of Catholicism but also a criticism of the power and influence of religion on people's lives. The perspective of this poem is also very significant in reflecting the poet's ideas. It begins with the first person, 'I shouldered a kind of manhood' representing the personal intimate thoughts of the poet. Then it moves to the collective, inclusive perspective of 'we will' which emphasises the unity and wholeness Heaney desires for the Irish. The tenses are also significant in that they reflect the progression of Heaney's ideas. It starts in the past, moves to the present, 'Now as news comes in', then to the future. This emphasises Heaney's ideas on the cycles of history and violence but also the importance of the past on the future.

The structure of the poem similarly reflects the poet's development of ideas. The three sections trace the progression from the personal experience, to that of the nation, 'the whole country' and finally to the more universal, common experiences found in reference to the ancient nordic myth of 'Gnmar'.

The imagery created throughout the poem adds vivid intensity to the portrayal of Heaney's ideas and feelings. The detailed, delicate descriptions in stanza I such as 'their eyelids glistening, their dough white hands shackled in rosary beads' creates a childlike perspective but also makes the scene more real for the reader. By creating detailed visual images the poet can convey his ideas more powerfully to the reader. This is continued in this poem with more sensual imagery, 'burning family cars nose into line, the whole country tunes to the muffled drumming of ten thousand engines'.

The kinetic and aural and visual imagery emphasises the unity the poet so desires with more intensity and realism.

Finally by linking the present day Irish troubles to those of the Ancient North, Heaney is expressing his desire for 'the aid of memory allayed for once', in order to unite all to stop the cycle of violence and revenge. This idea and passionate hope for the future is vividly portrayed to the reader through the language, structure and imagery.

In all poetry the poets ideas and feelings must be expressed with a vivid passionate intensity through a range of poetical devices as seen in 'To Autumn' and 'Funeral Rites'.

Examiners' Comments

Although occasionally laboured, this detailed script knows the poems well. It is a superior, sustained discussion of the poems in the context of the question, well supported by apt quotation. Lacks flair in writing style but displays a comprehensive understanding.

Dealt with common issues (eg 'time') in the poems well. An above average 'A' range script.

Example of Above Average Response

Australian poets Bruce Dawe and Judith Wright vividly convey their ideas and feelings through their poetry. Dawe's Homo Suburbiensis is a vivid portrayal of a man in his garden in the evening, which is portrayed through effective imagery. Remittance Man by Wright, likewise, vividly conveys her thoughts and feelings of the Australian outback in comparison to the greener English countryside.

'One constant in a world of variables' is how Bruce Dawe describes a man alone 'in the evening in his patch of vegetables'. This is a prosaic image, which is easy to imagine. The man's retreat into the garden, as indicated by 'all the things he takes down with him there' likely has a ritualistic quality. Dawe's vivid imagery is conveyed as the air smells of 'tomato vines' and how 'the hoarse rasping tendrils' of the pumpkins 'flourish clumsy whips' and are 'poised rampant' upon the palings. The fact that they are rampant suggests movement out of control, full of life, while 'poised' indicates that the movement is frozen, about to continue. This image is thus clearly vivid and it is also emphasised by the 'rasping tendrils' being 'sprawled' over the 'compost box', 'sprawled' being an effective description which helps us visualise the scene.

Homo Suburbensis stands there 'lost in a green confusion'. Despite the superficially negative associations of this line, Dawe is in fact describing a state of bliss as the man is being disconnected from the tedious, mundane affairs of life and is immersed in a 'green' retreat in his garden. 'Green' suggests fertility and hope, which is the colour of the plants in the garden. Dawe, thus through his vivid imagery is pronouncing the 'vegetable patch' a sanctuary.

Homo Suburbensis, although temporarily separated from the normal outside world is not utterly removed from it, for he still hears 'a far whisper of traffic' and 'the clatter of a dish in a sink that could be his'. He smells someone's rubbish 'burning'.

These two are commonplace images vividly portrayed by Dawe. The man is in his vegetable patch, tending to his vegetables thus taking an anthropological journey back to that action which began with man. He 'offers up instead ... time, pain, love, hate, age, war, death, laughter, fever', which is as much as any man can offer and which highlights, and vividly conveys Dawe's feelings for Homo Suburbensis.

Wright's Remittance Man, telling of a 'spendthrift, disinherited and graceless' also portrays vividly her ideas by use of vivid imagery, that of the Australian landscape. The first impression given of this environment is 'tramping the backtracks in the summer haze', indicating the strong hot climate of Australia.

She uses the device of onomatopoeia to describe the country – 'blue blowing smoke' and 'red blowing dust', making her writing more effective and her descriptions more vivid.

Wright emphasises the raw harshness of the Australian landscape by comparing it to England, from where the remittance man had been exiled, 'sparse swinging shadow of trees no longer foreign silted the memory of a greener climate and 'past the sallow circle of the plain's horizon faded the rainy elms seen through the nursery window'. She thus vividly highlights the stark difference. 'Sparse, swinging shadow' is the use of alliteration, providing a more vivid description. Wright sympathises for 'the freak also could never settle' as 'nowhere suited his book' but also indicates how he was also somewhat satisfied with his new life – 'that pale stalk of a wench sank back forgotten in Black Mary's eyes', vividly conveying that the 'pale', wasted out girl produced by England could not compare to the raw richness of Australia with its Aboriginal girls, 'black mary'. The remittance man dies here in 'the country of the scape goat' in its 'magnificence', where back in England the 'squire his brother let a vague pity blur the formal roses', signifying again the differences in the countries and the people they produce.

Judith Wright and Bruce Dawe, therefore through their poems, Remittance Man and Homo Suburbensis vividly convey their thoughts, ideas and feelings through their use of imagery and descriptions presented in their poems, making them effective pieces of work.

Examiners' Comments

Sound on both poems. Engages question. A little rushed at the conclusion. Discussion is well supported by evidence from the poems. Typical 'B' range script. Under the common guidelines applied to 2UR and 2UG, this is clearly a 'B' script.

Average Responses

This range was characterised by an adequate understanding of the poems set and a reasonable attempt to answer the question. Whether discussing ideas, feelings or technique, these candidates tended to provide a coherent but limited answer in regard to the question.

Some candidates had a knowledge of technique but were unable to explore and connect with these in any detailed fashion.

At the top of the 'C' range the candidates demonstrated a more insightful understanding of techniques and how these contributed to the ideas and feelings of the poet.

Weaker scripts in the average range tended to retell and just list poetic techniques rather than discuss their impact in relation to the 'ideas and feelings' of the poet. A feature of the 'C' range was that candidates generally engaged with most aspects of the question.

Example of Average Response

In John Donne's 'The Apparition' and Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover', the poet vividly conveys his ideas and feelings of love and faithfulness, while creating vivid images in the reader's minds through use of imagery.

Both these poems are about love and the poet's idea of what love should be. This is shown by the way each poet deals with faithfulness and devotion in their poems. For 'The Apparition', the poet reacts to the unfaithfulness of his lover by establishing the conceit that by her unfaithfulness, she has 'killed' him. This is shown by his bitter and angry tone and his description of her as his 'murderess'. This conjures up a vivid image of a cruel woman who has no regard for her lover. In comparison, Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' had a much less bitter and angry tone; more wistful and passionate. The lover wants Porphyria to be his alone, but she cannot 'her vainer lies dissever'. He solves this by strangling her when 'She was mine'. The language in this poem is much less harsh and so doesn't invoke an image of violence as 'The Apparition' does, more a softer image, as if in slow motion. Both these images are vivid in the readers mind, although they are created differently.

Both lovers want to affect their partners in some way so that the authors feel contented and resolved. In 'The Apparition', the poet wishes his lover to lie 'bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat ... a verier ghost than I.' By this he will exact revenge for her unfaithfulness. Again, this vivid and sinking image is conjured up using violent and sinister imagery; the 'quicksilver' sweat and her being as a 'ghost'. This is in contrast to Browning's lover who, after strangling Porphyria, acts as if nothing happened. In his mind she is 'pure', although the line 'And God has not yet said a word' seems to indicate divine approval for his actions. This is a much softer image which is invoked by the poet's description of her 'laughing' eyes and her 'golden' hair. Again, the two images are vivid to the reader, although they are created differently.

Therefore, both John Donne's 'The Apparition' and Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' vividly convey the respective poets ideas and feelings through use of striking imagery which, even though created differently, is still very effective.

Examiners' Comments

This response demonstrates an understanding of the ideas and feelings of the poems with limited discussion. There is mention made of tone and ideas of love – fidelity and devotion. Discussion of conceit is undeveloped. Some inaccuracy but generally satisfactory.

Below Average Responses – D and E range

This range was characterised by a generalised and limited understanding of the poems. Most candidates did not address the 'how' side of the question – with those attempting to do so presenting a weak analysis.

Poor expression and misinterpretation was a feature of the range.

Special note on E – (1) and E – – (0) responses

A number of candidates had not prepared all of the poems set for study for each poet and were therefore put in an unfortunate position by the question.

Some candidates had prepared answers on two poems other than those set in the question, which they chose to write about despite the requirements of the question. Such responses only moved out of the E– – range if they could furnish some general, relevant comments within the framework of the question. (For example, *Pozières Cemetery* by Mark O'Connor deals with the horrific destruction of soldiers during war.)

Other candidates made vague comments about the generalised features of poetry – often at length – without referring to the prescribed poems. Such responses fell into the E– E– – ranges.

Still other candidates wrote short, spurious responses of no merit, possibly reflecting poor allocation of time.

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that all poems set for study should be prepared for the examination.

1997 HSC – Poetry Guidelines – Common Question

Answers may be characterised by some or all of these:

A Range – Well above average (15, 14, 13)

- Well above average but not necessarily perfect
- Answer strongly focused on ideas and feelings, demonstrating how these are conveyed
- Generally a sophisticated style and structure
- Often superior discussion/analysis of effects of language/imagery
- Deals effectively with two poems – one may be stronger than the other/not necessarily perfect
- Sustained discussion of the poems in answer to the question
- Often displays flair, fluency and originality
- May be succinct
- Effective use of quotations

- May be an integrated approach making a coherent link between discussion of two poems to illustrate points made
- Interpretation of poetry displays insight and engagement
- May be comprehensive though not inspirational.

B Range – Above Average (12, 11, 10)

- Above average response that may have some flaws which restrict it to the 'B' range
- Engages with the question, demonstrating *how* ideas and feelings are conveyed
- More sophisticated style and structure than the average range
- Proficient discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- May be stronger on one poem than the other
- Sustained response
- Interpretation is supported by evidence drawn from the poems
- Detailed understanding of the ideas in the poems
- Appropriate choice and constructive use of quotation
- Good expression in a more structured approach
- May be very detailed answer with mundane expression
- Deals with more than simply content.

C Range – Average (9, 8, 7)

- Reasonable understanding of the poems
- A reasonable attempt to answer the question
- Competent if pedestrian approach; repetitive; regurgitating poem with some comments; persistent; laboured expression; some language problems
- Some discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- Demonstrates an understanding of the ideas in the poems but may demonstrate a superficial understanding
- May be stronger on one poem than the other
- Competent retelling
- May refer to poetic devices but with little understanding as to effect
- At the top of the range may have an understanding of the poems and some understanding of how the impact is conveyed
- Weaker 'C' may tend to tell story but shows knowledge of the poems with some appropriate evidence
- May communicate ideas clearly but have flawed expression
- Some discussion of ideas and feelings without discussion of technique.

D Range – Below average (6, 5, 4)

- Below average response
- Limited attempt to answer the question
- Overreliance on recounting content, storytelling, paraphrasing with no attempt to select salient points
- Weak discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- Unsupported generalisations
- Limited understanding
- Ideas but poor expression
- Repetitive
- Simplistic ideas with little substantiation
- Misinterpretation
- May not be completed
- May be articulate but not enough content
- Problems with expression
- Discernible padding.

E Range – Well below average (3, 2, 1)

- Well below average response
- Doesn't engage with the question
- Discussion not substantiated, unsupported generalisations
- Irrelevant discussion
- Serious misunderstanding or lack of understanding of poems
- Problems with and/or poor expression
- Inadequate treatment of two poem(s)
- Ideas often simplistic
- May be very short or incomplete.

'0' mark says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the question or provides an incomprehensible answer.

N/A is awarded for a Non Attempt – a blank page or the words 'Not Attempted' may appear on the script.

It is anticipated that a candidate who answers using only one poet will score no higher than the 'C' range but may reach C8.

Paper 2

Section I — Common Question for 2/3 Unit (Common) and 2 Unit (General) Candidates

Question 2: Fiction

2/3 Unit (Common) Question

‘The most effective endings lead us to think again about what we have finished reading.’

Discuss the endings of TWO of the novels you have studied, commenting on their effectiveness.

Jane Austen, *Emma*.

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*.

George Eliot, *Adam Bede*.

Henry James, *Washington Square*.

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

Henry Lawson, *Short Stories*. (Refer to ONE of the Joe Wilson stories in your answer.)

Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock*.

Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*.

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*.

Patrick White, *The Tree of Man*.

David Malouf, *The Great World*.

Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*.

Gillian Mears, *Fineflour*.

2 Unit (General) Question

‘The most effective endings lead us to think again about what we have finished reading.’

Discuss the endings of TWO of the novels you have studied, commenting on their effectiveness.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*.

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.

Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*.

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*.

Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*.

Marele Day, *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*.

General Comments

This was a question that allowed for clear discrimination across the whole range of responses. The question gave the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their detailed knowledge and understanding of both texts; however, the phrase ‘lead us to think again’ prompted personal subjective responses which focused on plot development.

The question facilitated a wide range of approaches; some discussed the themes, characterisation, structure, plot development or narrative technique.

Many candidates laboured under the misapprehension that the quote was the question and consequently focused on what ‘they were led to think again’ about rather than the effectiveness of the endings. Candidates who opted to write on the short story collection (Lawson) and unconventional fiction narratives (*In the Skin of a Lion*, *Fineflour* and to a lesser degree *Lives of Girls and Women*) were challenged. Lawson responses were challenged mostly because of the requirement of a Joe Wilson story.

General Candidate Responses

Most candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of both texts and were able to use quotes effectively. Unfortunately some simply retreated into the naive statement that the end finishes off the novel. The candidates fell into the inevitable plot summary where the ending was mentioned in only one or two simple sentences. Candidates had difficulty in grasping the concept of what constituted the ending, some referring to the last page, chapter or section of the book. Many candidates did not understand the function of the ending and were therefore unable to comment on its effectiveness.

Markers noted that the majority of candidates demonstrated reasonable literacy skills and wrote structured essays. Most candidates successfully handled the common question requirement of writing on two texts in one essay.

1997 (Common) Question Criteria Guidelines – Fiction

The guidelines are not a checklist, but rather a guide for making an objective holistic assessment. There are many valid and acceptable ways of answering this question and therefore the approach selected should not be viewed as a discriminating aspect in itself.

A Responses (15, 14, 13)

- Demonstrate a perceptive, analytical and comprehensive knowledge of the texts in relation to the question. Express ideas clearly and fluently.
- Provide specific and relevant supporting detail and where quotes are used they are effectively integrated into the discussion.
- May present a sophisticated and well-articulated exploration of the ending and its relevance to the novel as a whole.
- Offer perceptive insights and understanding of the purpose and effectiveness of the ending in both texts.

B Responses (12, 11, 10)

- Demonstrate a sound and detailed knowledge of both texts in relation to the ending.
- Offer a sustained and often perceptive response to the question.
- Include supporting detail which is likely to be both appropriate and effectively used.
- Comment on the effectiveness of the ending and understand the way a reader may be led to think again and re-evaluate the novel in light of the ending.
- Although generally quite fluent, may be plodding in their thoroughness.

C Responses (9, 8, 7)

- Show evidence of an attempt to offer interpretative insight into the effectiveness of the ending.
- Demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of both texts but may include some inaccuracies of interpretation. Text knowledge may be more descriptive than insightful and may present a limited view of the effectiveness of the ending. May be preoccupied with listing themes and describing plot with limited analysis.
- May have a storytelling approach as a personal response while still attempting to focus on the question.
- The approach, while generally balanced, may be stronger on one text.
- The attempt to explain the effectiveness of the ending may be simplistic.
- May be pedestrian and/or repetitive with occasional lapses into irrelevancy.

D Responses (6, 5, 4)

Will be limited response to the question with some of the following characteristics:

- Scripts in this range often depend upon a storytelling approach to answering the question.
- The views offered are often simplistic. Some responses may be comparatively brief while others may be quite long and wordy.
- They are likely to contain inaccuracies or misunderstandings and are usually only loosely linked to the question.
- Responses may be confused about what constitutes an ending and may ignore or only offer a weak comment on why it is effective. May not understand the intention of ending.
- The understanding expressed is likely to be vague, poorly supported and may be stronger on one text.
- The imbalance factor may be more pronounced in this range.

E Responses (3, 2, 1)

- These scripts may appear to be discussing the question but do not necessarily link the discussion to the texts. The response most likely reflects a poor understanding of the question or the text(s).
- Brevity of response may be a characteristic. Supporting detail is likely to be inappropriate or miss the point. Responses tend to be unstructured.

E– – Responses (0) completely irrelevant, inaccurate comments on one or both texts. Will provide no link to the question.

Less capable candidates who attempted integration by alternating discussion on texts often disadvantaged themselves by not being able to develop a sustained argument.

Above Average – A and B Range

These responses were characterised by a sustained discussion of two texts with detailed reference as to what made the endings effective. They were more sophisticated in style and structure, were fluent in expression and showed a superior analysis of texts. For example, the following introduction:

James' Washington Square and Austen's Emma are two novels whose endings instigate further contemplation, yet the effectiveness of these two endings are of a very different nature. While Emma concludes in a satisfying 'happy ending', Washington Square's effectiveness originates from its ambivalence, ambiguity and the sense of inexorability which is manifest in the destiny of its heroine.

The best responses chose appropriate quotations accompanied by perceptive analysis. Their interpretation was supported by argument and carefully selected evidence.

... Similarly, Goldsworthy uses Vienna as a symbol of Paul's step into adulthood, and a greater understanding of Keller. However it is important to note that the final revelation comes in Darwin. Paul has, in effect, come full circle.

... it is important to note however that it is a different Darwin:

'I walked out of the hospice into an unfamiliar Darwin.'

Goldsworthy is showing the reader that Paul has essentially changed, and developed as a character, in comparison to the young Paul.

Average – C Range

Candidates in this range displayed good knowledge of the texts but often encountered difficulties in analysing the function of the endings. They tended to focus on the quote and 'lead us to think again' as an invitation to recount their particular prepared knowledge of the text eg plot, themes and language.

All C range responses attempted, however tenuously, to answer the question. For example, this candidate raises the issues of theme, character, learning, reader learning, to think again but fails to develop and sustain a line of argument that answers the question.

'Frankenstein' raises many themes including blind ambition and effects that corruption and immorality have on people when it comes to nature. Victor is morally corrupt and irresponsible for what he has created. His obsession with learning and obsession with a desire to make discovery has led him to destruction. But he has not learnt from his mistakes as he says of himself, 'I have come a long way, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein, but far more will I achieve.' This effectively engaged the readers by teaching them about morals and the effects of corruption and in turn leads the reader to think again about the novel and how some of these effects affected the reader and involved the reader into the plot of the novel.

Many candidates had prepared the 1996 question and attempted to adapt it to the 1997 question.

Below Average – D Range

The typical D range script was characterised by the use of unsupported generalisations. These responses showed a limited understanding of the texts and talked about ideas without giving any detail, relying instead on recounting events and/or storytelling. They tended not to engage with the question and were characterised by their brevity.

Austen is totally different. You want to read the book again because you liked it not because you couldn't understand it.

Paper 2

Section I — Common Question for 2/3 Unit (Common) and 2 Unit (General) Candidates

Question 3: Drama

2/3 Unit (Common) Question

In the TWO plays you have studied from the list below, choose what you see as an important moment in each, such as a scene, an exchange, or a soliloquy.

What techniques do you think the playwrights have used to achieve the dramatic impact of these moments?

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Dylan Thomas, *Under Milkwood*

Dorothy Hewett, *The Man from Mukinupin*

Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*

Louis Nowra, *Cosi*

Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*

2 Unit (General) Question

In the TWO plays you have studied from the list below, choose what you see as an important moment in each, such as a scene, an exchange, or a soliloquy.

What techniques do you think the playwrights have used to achieve the dramatic impact of these moments?

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Ray Lawler, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*

Hyllus Maris and Sonia Borg, *Women of the Sun* (Maydina)

Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce, *Strictly Ballroom*

Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*.

Overview

This was a difficult question, challenging especially to the 2 Unit (General) candidates. Inevitably, some of the texts were better suited to the question than others.

Most of the candidates picked a scene and tried to argue its context in the play as a whole. Often this led into a general discussion of the entire play without focus on a particular 'moment'. The better answers were able to sustain an argument based on a specific moment or scene. They may have extended to another part of the play but only in direct connection with the 'moment' chosen.

The markers accepted a broad definition of dramatic techniques (see the guidelines) and this allowed for a discussion of a variety of aspects of the text. Dramatic technique could include character, thematic relevance of the moment, language as well as specific theatricalities such as blocking, lighting etc. Similarly, the 'impact' of the 'moment' could be seen through a discussion of any aspect of the play including theme and character – for example, while those referring to *Measure for Measure* dealt with movement, symbol or staging.

Texts Studied

As in 1996, Common Drama in 2 Unit (Related) was the least popular choice, with just over 850 candidates statewide. In 2 Unit (General) the percentage was very close to one-third.

2 Unit (Related) – Over half of the candidates studied the mix of *Cosi* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. Two-thirds used one of these two with another text. Least popular were *Measure for Measure* and *Diving for Pearls*.

NOTE: Ironically, while few did *The Man from Mukinupin* or *School for Scandal*, the question suited both these texts as candidates chose the opening scene of 'Man' and the screen scene in 'School', which both offered a range and scope of dramatic devices. Some candidates doing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* found it difficult to define or identify a moment or scene.

2 Unit (General) – The most popular texts were *Death of a Salesman*, *Macbeth* and *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, with *Strictly Ballroom* not far behind. Fewer candidates wrote on the other three texts – *Diving for Pearls*, *Pygmalion* or *Women of the Sun*.

In each of the four most popular texts, candidates found a scene relatively easy to define – for example, many used the restaurant scene in *Death of a Salesman*. Of the four, the greatest struggle was with *Macbeth* as candidates seemed less able to find a specific scene – many used the witches opening scene.

Overall

Vocabulary – candidates should be advised that while an extensive, accurate vocabulary is of great benefit, to simply use words randomly adds little to the essay. Better candidates showed a working specific knowledge and use of dramatic terms while others simply threw the words in.

Marking Guidelines – Common Drama Question

A Range – 15, 14, 13

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Sophisticated language
- Excellent understanding of texts
- Answers question
- Balance
- Integrates discussion – moment, techniques, dramatic impact – with clear understanding of dramatic purpose
- Sense of audience
- May be succinct
- May move from scene/movement/soliloquy into wider discussion of whole text
- Fluent, relevant, coherent style
- Focus on impact/technique/moment

B Range – 12, 11, 10

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Articulate and competent in use of language
- Very good understanding of the text
- Adheres to question
- May make some point implicitly
- Relates techniques to themes and issues
- Confident control of argument
- Focus on discussion
- Selective in choice of support material
- May move from scene/moment/soliloquy into wider discussion of whole text
- May be laboured

C Range – 9, 8, 7

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Competent expression (conveys their message)
- Some structure evident
- Addresses the question – not merely storytelling
- Often simplistic in argument
- May lack selectivity even if lengthy
- Problems with integrating moment/technique/impact

- Focus may drift
- May show sense of audience
- May rely on plot retell as a way of getting into the importance of the scene
- May lack balance
- Could be mechanical
- Broad definition of moment
- May have taken climax as their moment although they don't focus on it

D Range – 6, 5, 4

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Language could be simplistic/mechanical
- Superficial/awkward/tortured
- Very limited response
- May attempt question initially but gets lost along the way
- Storytelling
- Text inaccuracy or limited understanding of the text
- May reconstruct own question and not answer question set
- Limited understanding of dramatic technique
- Tenuous link between moment and dramatic technique
- May list
- Could be unbalanced

E Range – 3, 2, 1, 0

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Poorly expressed
- Outpouring rather than observation
- Very tenuous link or no link to the question
- May deal with only one text – poorly
- No selectivity or focus
- May try to identify the moment but struggles to do so
- No understanding of dramatic techniques
- Poor or limited knowledge of the text

Some dramatic techniques mentioned by candidates:

- Characters
- Issues
- Conflict
- Suspense
- Movement
- Comedy/humour
- Audience
- Dialogue
- Play within a play
- Symbolism
- Imagery
- Structure
- Contrast
- Motifs
- Turning point
- Dramatic irony
- Language
- Lighting
- Fourth wall
- Conflict
- Climax
- Music
- Sound effects
- Imagery
- Film techniques
- Camera angles
- Lighting
- Colour
- Scenery
- Dance
- Costume
- Satire
- Gesture

Candidate's Response

Excellent Range

The plays 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead' by Tom Stoppard and 'Cosi' by Louis Nowra, both share some fundamental qualities of drama. They incorporate universal themes, so that the audience is able to relate to issues raised and also include the tragic-comedy element of drama. This element draws the audience to the verge of tears that are both sorrowful and amusing, and heightens realism as the real world is neither fully tragic nor fully comic. In 'Cosi' the 'blackout scene' is one which causes a dramatic impact on the audience, as does the 'coin-tossing' scene in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (R&G). Both Nowra and Stoppard use various techniques to enhance the dramatic impact of these scenes on the audience.

In 'Cosi', Louis Nowra has written a play about social issues, and he delves deep into characters so we can witness their struggles, development and triumphs. The blackout scene is manipulated by Nowra to have various effects on the audience, and on the progression of the play. This scene accelerates the action of the play, as it allows Lewis and Julie to become closer and kiss, in the safety of the dark. The audience has been waiting for this, and this theatrical device allows their 'getting together' to be an easier task. This darkness also allows us to view Ruth undergo self revelation, as she tells of her abused past in the comfort of the darkness. Cheryl is also able to display her actions when she is trying to find Lewis and get 'intimate' with him, but instead is horrified when the lights come back on and she is greeted by Lewis and Julie kissing.

This scene also provides humour for the audience as Nowra manipulates the element of 'black' humour, allowing us to laugh at Ruth 'slashing car tyres' and defend herself 'touch me again and I'll make you regret it'. We are humoured by her actions, but are also made aware of the underlying seriousness of her anxiety disorder, as she tells of how she was tied up in a cupboard by her boyfriend and is more concerned whether 'it was three knots, or four'.

Slap-stick humour is another technique used by Nowra in this scene to create audience involvement. Cherry 'bumping into a table' and Ruth punching Zac all provide physical amusement for the audience. Nowra also provides laughter for the audience, when Zac's inappropriateness is shown 'Let's have an orgy'. This also highlights his obsession with sex, which has previously been shown. This device also heightens the audience's interaction, by encouraging them to use other senses. As the lights are turned off, we are forced to concentrate more on our sense of hearing, and are still amused by what we can 'pick up' and imagine what is happening. It encourages us to use our imaginations as we really can't see what is occurring. Nowra has increased the audience's involvement with 'Cosi' due to the wonderfully created, diverse characters. He has also allowed us to relate to personalities shown and to question our own sanity through the exploration of the state of madness.

In 'R&G', Stoppard has elevated two of Shakespeare's minor characters and placed them in centre stage. He challenges the audience's values on issues raised through the use of comedy. The coin tossing is used by Stoppard as a means of moving the audience's focus around the stage. It also seems to enhance the idea of fate and R&G's belief that their control was like that of 'sailors on a boat'. They could move about the boat as much as they like, but the wind and current would draw them inexorably onward. In this situation, the coin tossing allows them to move around stage, but again, they have no control of the bigger picture. The coin-tossing is also manipulated to have a dramatic impact on the audience, by raising real and disturbing questions about humanity, 'who are we?'. It enhances the theme of direction, and how R&G have little or no direction from the palace, Stoppard, or in life. They are forced to say 'but we don't know what's going on, or what to do with ourselves'.

As the coins are tossed, and continually land on the heads side, the idea of probability is raised, and we are forced to agree with the idea that 'truth is only that which is taken to be true'.

Stoppard seems to stimulate the mind, but never permitting us to dwell for too long without realising the underlying irony and seriousness of our amusement.

*The dramatic impact of this scene causes audience interaction, but we are able to view that although R&G's situation is believable, and the questions they raise are relevant, they are merely the deliverers of the message, and so we feel less empathy for them than for the characters in *Cosi*. In *R&G* they are merely characters, and this emphasises the fact that they can't die, but in '*Cosi*' they are presented as real people.*

The use of isolating the two characters, R&G, on stage allows Stoppard to exaggerate their status as outsiders. We are able to explore the themes of the play more intensely as all our focus is on the two on stage. The direct reference to the audience by the characters allows us to become more involved and pathetically pass the time like R&G, constantly awaiting for structure to appear and it to cohere into meaning. The theme of Art is Life is heavily presented and the idea that we are 'Always in Character' and we are 'All actors on the stage of life' is presented.

Nowra has set his drama in a time of chaos and shambles, in the 'era of free love'. The idea of the stage as a metaphor is enhanced by the idea of the burnt out stage reflecting the world at large. By asking the audience to question the genuine autonomy of the human spirit, both playwrights ask us to consider to what degree are we all inmates of our own institutions, or minor characters in a greater play. The use of the minor characters, or 'little people' of the world allows the audience to better relate to the characters' confusions and problems, and therefore the play to have a more dramatic impact.

Examiners' Comments

This script shows a superior approach to all aspects of the question. Thorough knowledge of the moment in relation to techniques and the dramatic impact is displayed. A fluent, well-argued piece.

Above Average Range

One of the climaxes of Ray Lawler's 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' ('The Doll') occurs in the first scene when Roo asks Olive to marry him, resulting in Olive's final breakdown. The audience is visually stunned, as Olive screams and cries in response to Roo's calmly asked question.

The scene has been 'eye-opening' for Roo, Olive and Barney. Pearl has left, after trying to tell Olive the truth about the lay-off. 'You were blind to everything outside this house,' she says, but Olive denies this, preferring to remain in the dream of the past sixteen years. She has been hurt by Pearl's words however, saying 'It's having another woman ... knowing your insides and feeling sorry for you because she thinks you've never been within cooe of the real thing.' However, Olive refuses to accept the demise of the lay-off tradition. She even goes so far as to try to resurrect it again, telling Roo she could have fixed the dolls again, even wanting the men to leave so it would seem more like 'normal' again.

Pearl's leaving has also been a shock to Barney, who has come to the realisation that he is no longer the 'biggest prize in the packet.'

Roo has struggled with inner turmoils of his own, earnestly seeking a solution to the problems of this lay-off. Emma reveals to him that he is aged, and that no-one is to blame for the ending of the lay-offs. Roo's realisation occurs when he says 'I'm not old! Old is – what you are, and – Tony Moreno.'

So far, the scene has been rather quiet, rather subdued and melancholy, as all characters must reluctantly glimpse, even if they do not accept the truth about what is and has happened.

The room in which Roo proposes to Olive is a stark contrast to the room which it had been just the day before. All its decorations have been taken down, and, with the facade of dolls and birds and butterflies gone, the room is revealed as grimy, lonely and empty – showing its age and the wear of seventeen years. All the objects which represented the lay-off – the birds, dolls, corals, have crumbled to dust, like the lay-off seasons themselves. Nothing is left but the bare room.

And then Roo asks Olive to marry him. The reactions of Olive are wild and dramatic, a shock after the quiet scene. Visually, verbally, Olive's outburst is sharp and memorable. 'I'll kill you first' she screams at one stage. The sight of a thirty-nine year old woman screaming, falling to the ground in response to Roo's plea of love, his show of commitment to Olive, is astounding.

'I want what I had before. Give it back. Give me back what you've taken!' Roo's gift to Olive is flatly rejected. The audience sees Olive's revulsion at the thought of marriage, and comes to realise just how much she depended on the lay-off season for her stability. The audience witnesses her inability to change, and is almost repulsed by her pathetic figure on the ground, making sounds 'too animal-like to be classed as sobbing.'

Ray Lawler, in this climax of the scene relies on shock to achieve the dramatic impact – the shock of Olive's violent reactions as a contrast to the subdued lead up, the shock of realising Olive's dependence on the lay-off, and the shock of seeing a grown woman scream and cry.

As a contrast to this, Arthur Miller, in his 'Death of a Salesman' has the requiem as his final scene. The climax of the play has passed, the requiem is subdued and almost muffled in comparison.

Arthur Miller relies for the dramatic impact on the contrast between the climax of the play, and this solemn requiem. While Act Two finished with piercing music, shouting voices, the raving of a confused man and that inevitable car crash, the requiem is still silent. All voices are lowered. Sentences are brief and hushed. While many people seemed to speak at once in the scene before, here, voices speak alone, into the silence of Willy's death.

In requiem, a contrast is also drawn between the reality of Willy's funeral, and his perceptions of it. Only Charley, Biff, Happy and Linda are present, as opposed to the 'thousands' Willy thought would come. This, for the audience, further highlights the pathos in Willy's tragedy, his illusions and loneliness.' He's only a little boat, looking for a harbour' Linda said at one stage, and here the audience realises that Willy never found his harbour, but died looking and trying.

Some dramatic impact is also given by Biff and Happy. In requiem, Biff is seen to have progressed. In the previous scene, he said 'All I want is waiting for me if I just say I know who I am'. In the requiem he says 'I know who I am, ' Biff has come to realise that Willy 'had the wrong dreams. All, all wrong.' Happy has not, and the audience can feel a sense of apprehension and sympathy for Happy's blindness when he says that Willy 'didn't die in vain. His dream was a good dream.'

The final dramatic impact from the requiem comes from Linda. Her silence and inability to cry makes the scene even more sad, as it is the realisation that no one will be home when she gets there that causes her to cry. Linda's devotion to Willy has been seen throughout the play, and her silence is as if she is waiting, waiting for Willy.

Linda's cries of 'we're free, we're free' contains the final dramatic irony, as Willy has been finally released from his torments, and as they are free – free from the obligation of a mortgage. Biff too, is free from Willy's dream, but the audience can see that the characters are in fact caught in the sadness of Willy's death, and how unnecessary it might have been.

Examiners' Comment

The candidate displays an above average understanding of the texts and knowledge of two scenes. There is a pleasing sense of theatre and comprehension of dramatic impact. The candidate makes extensive use of quoting.

Average Range

Death of a Salesman and Summer of the Seventeenth Doll

In both 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' and 'Death of a Salesman', the playwrights of each play have incorporated many techniques including dialogue, stage directions, authorial intrusions, etc. to achieve the intended dramatic impact of important scenes or exchanges.

One scene from, 'The Doll' which is an important scene in the outcome of the play is act three scene one, a scene of conflict in which reality is finally sought and found, resulting in a change in pattern that will never be the same again. Act three scene one begins initially with the dispute between Olive and Pearl. Pearl stating that Olive's preferred style of living involving

the layoff period is 'not decent' and nothing that she had expected it to be as Olive had 'talked it up' too much. Olive is deeply hurt, with the conflict ending in Pearl's leaving. Ray Lawler, the play's creator, has included the new arrival Pearl, into this romantic quartet to give the reader some insight into an outsider's view of the entire situation, with that outsider expressing the views and beliefs common to that era, as living in modern society we do not see the 'layoff-set up' as anything too unusual, but in these times marriage was seen as the only 'proper' relationship with Olive's layoff set up not being, 'a decent way of living'.

Most important in this scene is the process of self-realisation on the behalf of Roo. It is in this scene, that for the first time he realises he is getting old. In this scene, Lawler has incorporated Emma as the messenger of reality, in her telling Roo, 'You're too old for it any more' to which he replies, 'I'm as good a man now as I ever was'. Before this scene Lawler has Roo stating that a fellow worker, Tony Moreno, was too old to continue working in his cane cutting team in Northern Queensland. In this scene Roo looks into the mirror and says, 'Old is what Tony Moreno is', realising as he gazes at his ageing features that he is in the same predicament as Moreno. Upon self realisation Roo proposes to Olive, with her refusing him, refusing to let go of the past. Roo's reaction is 'You're nothin' but a silly kid 'bout twelve years old' which reinforces Lawler's descriptions in his earlier stage directions, 'an eagerness that probably belongs to extreme youth'.

The restaurant scene in 'Death of a Salesman' is an important scene in the play's outcome in that it is the scene in which Arthur Miller allows the reader to see what the three major characters, Biff, Happy and Willy have developed into and their relationship with each other.

It is this scene that Miller allows to understand who these characters have become. We enter the scene with Happy telling a woman that he is a rich champagne salesman and that his brother Biff is a 'real football hero'. Through this opening we see that Happy is a compulsive liar, just like his father who upon losing his job tells his sons about his worry for his mother, 'the gist of it is that I don't have any stories left to tell her'. We can see that their father's influence has rubbed off on both his sons with Biff adopting his father's sense of false realisation and, 'living in a dream'. Biff says upon being totally refused and more to the point ignored 'He took one look at me and I realised what a terrible lie my whole life had been'.

More important to this scene is Miller's technical use of mixing subjective time past with objective time present to both portray the reasons why Willy believes Biff is spiting him, 'he thinks I've been spiting him and it's tearing him apart', and why Biff lost faith in his father and failed to succeed in life as a result of that loss of faith. The mixture of time-present and time-past also allows the viewer to understand Willy's poor mental state. We learn that Willy had been unfaithful to Linda while on business, with Biff catching him with another woman. The woman's laughter can be heard through this scene to illustrate Willy's self failure and pathos.' Young Biff' says to Willy 'You're a lousy little phony', a man he once respected and admired. Those techniques allow the reader to understand the reason for such ill feeling and conflict between the characters.

Examiners' Comments

The candidate displays sound knowledge of both texts, and relates the selected scenes to the broad themes and issues of the plays, especially with regard to character development. The candidate displays no particular insight and no strong sense of 'dramatic impact', thus keeping the script out of the B range.

Paper 2

Section II—Part A—Poetry (Unique)

Overview

Most candidates showed a pleasing understanding of the poetry studied. The examiners felt that the questions were fair, for the most part, even in their degree of difficulty. The exception was the John Donne question, where to discuss ‘doubt’ proved difficult for some candidates and the question of ‘dramatic impulse’ was very challenging.

Poetry Marking Guidelines

A Range (15, 14, 13)

- Well above average but not necessarily perfect
- Answer displays a clear understanding of the requirements of the question
- Generally a sophisticated style and structure
- Often displays flair, fluency and originality
- Sustained discussion of the poems which demonstrates insight
- Deals effectively with two poems – one may be stronger than the other
- The poems chosen should be appropriate to the question
- Effective discussion of relevant features of language should be evident
- Effective use of quotations, well integrated
- Very detailed and thorough discussion of the poems, although perhaps without the flair of some responses.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

- Proficient
- Above average response that may have some flaws
- Engages with the question
- More sophisticated style and structure than the average range
- Sustained response
- Interpretation is supported by argument and judiciously selected evidence drawn from the poems
- Appropriate use of quotation, well integrated
- Detailed understanding of the ideas in the poems
- Some reference to the effectiveness of language
- May be stronger on one poem

C Range (9, 8, 7)

- Competent
- Reasonable understanding of the poems discussed and a reasonable attempt to answer the question (may imply an understanding of the question rather than establishing a direct link)
- At the top of the range the candidate should have an understanding of the poems and may have an appreciation of their qualities and a deeper understanding of how the impact is conveyed
- Generally sound expression and logical structure – laboured expression/problems with expression may get to lower C range
- Weaker C may tend to tell the story but shows knowledge of the poems
- May refer to poetic devices but with little understanding as to effect
- May be stronger on one poem than another
- Candidate who only refers to one poem can score no higher than the C range

D Range (6, 5, 4)

Will be limited response to the question with some of the following characteristics:

- Unsupported generalisations
- Ideas but poor expression
- Repetitive
- Limited understanding of both poems
- Over-reliance on recounting content, storytelling, paraphrasing
- Simplistic ideas with little substantiation
- Misinterpretation of question/poem
- May not be completed
- May be articulate but not enough content

E Range (3, 2, 1)

Will be a poor response to the question with some of the following characteristics:

- Doesn't engage with question
- Problems with expression
- Discussion not substantiated, unsupported generalisations
- Irrelevant discussion
- Serious misunderstanding or lack of understanding of the poems
- Inadequate treatment of two poems
- Minimal knowledge
- Ideas often simplistic
- No concept of poems as wholes
- Incomplete

'0' says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the question or provides an incomprehensible answer.

Question 4. Geoffrey Chaucer

Discuss Chaucer's use of humour and disgust in *The Pardoner's Tale* (including its prologue)

Above Average Responses

Candidates in this range not only noted the appropriate examples of humour and disgust, but could relate those examples to Chaucer's wider social commentary. The Pardoner was clearly an unpleasant character, but challenging in his very frank admissions of reprehensibility. Candidates here could discuss the way language evoked feelings of humour and disgust.

Average Responses

Candidates in this range tended to list appropriate examples of humour and disgust, rather than appreciate the living poetic nature of the Pardoner. There was more description than analysis. Such candidates were also less aware of the evocative power of Chaucer's language.

Below Average Responses

Candidates in this range tended to simply retell the story. There were generally fewer candidates in this range than there were for other questions. This perhaps reflects the nature of the candidature, for which this poet is most suitable.

Question 5. John Donne

'It is doubt that provides the dramatic impulse of much of Donne's poetry.'

Discuss this statement with references to TWO of the poems set for study, ONE religious and ONE secular.

Above Average Responses

There were a few very fine candidates who explored doubt as the dramatic impulse that drove Donne's secular and religious poetry. There were also those who felt Donne was certain in his secular poetry, but wracked by doubt in his religious sonnets. And some took a different line again ...

In regards to Donne's poems 'Death be not proud' and 'The Sunne Rising' it is not doubt that provides the dramatic impulse of Donne's poetry. Donne does not allow doubt, rather he asserts his opinion through passion and use of vituperative sentences. This certainty of thought gives his final views more validity. He allows no rebuttal, but simply states the facts. It is his passion for the subjects he writes about that provides the dramatic impulse.

Regardless of the line taken, all candidates in this grouping displayed a genuine feeling for the poetry, and did more than simply 'list' the characteristics of the poems.

Average Responses

As the following will show, these candidates listed the characteristics of Donne and mentioned the question of doubt, but failed to come to real grips with either. They often twisted their argument in an attempt to explore the question of doubt.

The secular poem, 'The Flea', is basically refuting a woman's inconsequential fears about losing her virginity to him. The woman is in serious doubt as to whether or not his sentiments are of reputable intent, and yet Donne tries to transform this doubt dramatically into a fearless leap into his waiting arms. He begins by trivialising the act of sex ...

Below Average Responses

Responses in this range lacked consistent argument. They were unable to focus on 'doubt' or 'dramatic impulse' and often just paraphrased the poems or listed the techniques.

Question 6. John Keats

'Keats is driven by anxiety about mortality.'

How in his poetry does Keats come to terms with mortality? Answer with reference to TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

The better candidates addressed all aspects of the question, which involved a response to both the quotation – 'Keats is driven by anxiety about mortality' – and how he came to terms with it. They had a clear sense of the poems being a movement towards acceptance of mortality. They also noted the sense of development within the poems chosen ...

The sextet opens with a strong prohibition – 'no', firm in its rejection of the star's unsatisfactory performance. Keats now understands in the gently sexual imagery he presents that to be mortal and enjoy one's life is better than to be immortal and steadfast, but 'lone'. He wishes to live for love, and to use his mortality to good effect.

Average Responses

Candidates have understood the question, and discussed two of Keats' poems in some detail, but there was insufficient treatment of the language. There was tendency to retell the poetry, rather than explore poetic techniques.

Below Average Responses

Candidates here either simply paraphrased the poems, or chose a poor selection of poems to discuss. There were better choices to be made than 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer'. Some candidates confused biographical detail with poetic discussion, and some misread 'mortality' for 'morality', twisting their argument mightily in the process. An example of a weaker response where the candidate has only a naive understanding of Keats' concerns:

Keats loves the idea of eternal life and releases the anxiety through his poetry.

Question 7. Robert Browning

'Browning's art of the dramatic monologue is not just in the speaking voice revealing an absorbing situation, but in the felt presence of a listener.'

Consider TWO of the poems set for study in the light of this statement.

Above Average Responses

Candidates here could demonstrate, through a close examination of the language, the ‘felt presence of a listener’. There was also a clear understanding of irony.

His conversational, nostalgic tone offers an insight into Andrea’s mind. He knows of his wife’s actions, he knows that ‘perhaps’ she has prevented him from becoming a great artist like ‘Raphael’ or ‘Leonardo’ but he ‘still’ has Lucrezia – as I choose. Browning has used this dramatic break to highlight the enormity of this remark.

Average Responses

Here candidates tended to link quotations with some commentary, but the commentary was too often general in nature. While there was an awareness that the speakers were ‘deranged’ or ‘psychotic’, there was little exploration of how this feeling was created through Browning’s language.

The Bishop describes a magnificent tomb he wishes his illegitimate sons to build for him. The listener realises the obsession and materialism of the Bishop.

‘... peach blossom, marble all, the rare, the ripe as fresh poured wine of a almighty pulse –.’ The reader becomes involved in the Bishop’s pleas, and perhaps feels a resentment for him.

Below Average Responses

Candidates here tended to simply retell the story of the poetry. Though most responses revealed an understanding of the meaning of the poems, poorer candidates exhibited poor spelling and shortened word forms.

Question 8. Gerard Manley Hopkins

‘In Hopkins’ poetry we find an intense combination of the emotional and the devotional.’

In what ways do you think this intensity is conveyed? In your answer refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

Candidates here explored the question through a close examination of the language. They did more than mention technical terms – ‘instress’ and ‘inscape’ – but could, for example, discuss the imperative, explosive nature of ‘here/Buckle!’, and the sense of dramatic cumulation in ‘Gall, gall ... and gash gold – vermilion’.

Average Responses

Candidates often had an implied, rather than specific answer to the ‘ways’ in which the intensity is conveyed. They could discuss the effective nature of some words and word-forms, but often lacked a real rapport with the poetry itself.

Below Average Responses

Responses in the range were focused on Hopkins being a priest, and described the poetry as ‘strange’ and ‘difficult’. There was no understanding of the language as an evocative tool.

Question 9. Seamus Heaney

In what ways does Heaney's poetry explore the relation between inner conflict and the outer world?

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

Better candidates fully understood and addressed the 'relation between inner conflict and outer world', and were able to integrate Heaney's poetic techniques into their discussion. They were also able to choose poems that were appropriate to the question, ie poems that touched on universal as well as personal issues.

Example of an effective linking of technique and ideas:

'Punishment' conveys a sense of urgency as we are immediately plunged into the sensual experience between the victim (bog girl) and Heaney. Heaney allows us to feel physically and mentally the death of the girl, through sensuous and vivid images that dominate the atmosphere. Heaney effectively exposes his inner conflict with the past by inserting it into our present consciousness. As Heaney feels the 'tug of the halter' around the 'nape of her neck', the image reverberates to the audience the pain and shame that he feels towards this sectarian 'violence'.

Average Responses

Candidates in this range discussed 'inner conflict' and 'outer world', but often failed to link the two, or if they did it was in a superficial way (eg in the conclusion of their essay).

Literal view of the conflict/situation in Northern Ireland:

In the poem 'Funeral Rites', Heaney divided it into three sections. The first section dealt with a funeral from Heaney's childhood as he remembers it. The poem begins: 'I shouldered a kind of manhood ... of dead relations'. Heaney sets the scene of a funeral and explains how he was part of the procession – he helped carry the coffin. Heaney is also explaining how he feels hurt and is affected by the deaths; taking all these emotions on his shoulders.

Below Average Responses

In this category there was usually an inability to link content of the poems to the question.

Question 10. Les Murray

'The appeal of Les Murray's work lies in his poetic treatment of the commonplace.'

What do you think? Give your reasons. In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

These candidates tended to extend the question, seeing the appeal of Murray's poetry in more than just his poetic treatment of the commonplace. The unity of the poems, and the way the commonplace is made extraordinary, the way a particularly Australian perspective is nevertheless universalised, were ideas these candidates explored.

Yet when cobwebs are personified with their quivering, the shed seems to come to life.

Average Responses

Candidates here made some attempts to talk about Murray's poetic techniques, but more often concentrated on the specific Australian flavour of the poetry at the expense of the way Murray actually gets his language to work. While the question certainly allowed candidates to refer to more than two poems, those who did so often sacrificed the depth of discussion that a focus on fewer poems allows.

Below Average Responses

These candidates tended to simply retell the story, and often got the detail wrong – 'allusions to St Francis Xavier are also seen ...' They noted Murray used 'word choice, symbolism and poetic devices', but did nothing more.

Question 11. Gwen Harwood

'In her poems Gwen Harwood tries to give shape to the apparent haphazardness of living.'

Discuss this statement with reference to at least TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

Better candidates considered the ways in which Harwood 'gave shape to ... living'. As well as ideas, they discussed techniques such as structure, imagery, etc. They considered metaphorical levels within the poems, and showed a genuine understanding of Harwood's concerns.

Example of a better candidate's detailed analysis:

'The Violets' is also a poem that comments on the power of human consciousness, of memory. Harwood however, presents this theme in a light that challenges the haphazardness of life. She examines the discontinuities dictated by 'death's disorienting scale', but emphasises the power of human memory to promote unity and cohesiveness to living.

Average Responses

Candidates attempted to address the question, but often resorted to a general discussion of the poems, dealing superficially with the haphazard nature of life. There was an imbalance in the treatment of the selected poems.

Below Average Responses

Candidates had difficulty dealing with the term 'haphazard': responses were often distorted and confused.

Question 12. Robert Gray

‘Gray’s poetic achievement is most clearly seen in his appreciation of life’s simplicities.’

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the poems set for study.

Above Average Responses

Candidates addressed all aspects of the question and selected poems that were appropriate. Most agreed with this proposition, and discussed Gray’s concerns and poetic techniques in the light of this statement.

Example of a better candidate’s detailed analysis:

Gray uses the mundane phenomenon of sunlight reflected through the train window to convey the transcendent power of nature. It is initially simply sunlight ‘rotating off the drab carpet’. As the country outside grows more spectacular, the sunlight bursts into the compartment, filling it with ‘flakes of light’. The ecstatic joy of nature this produces is reflected on the poet: ‘I’ll leave my hair ruffled a bit this way’ ... ‘Journey: The North Coast’ shows vividly Gray’s skill at revealing life’s simplicities.

Average Responses

Responses here showed a reasonable attempt to come to terms with the question, but tended to be descriptive rather than analytical. Some argued that there is complexity rather than simplicity in his poetry, and some saw both. While these viewpoints were valid, often candidates were unable to sustain their arguments.

Below Average Responses

These responses failed to engage or engaged minimally with the question. Some included extraneous material and/or misreading of the poems.

Question 13. Jennifer Maiden

‘Jennifer Maiden’s poems are concerned with themes of love and violence.’

Discuss her treatment of these themes with reference to at least TWO of the poems set for study.

Comment: Very few candidates answered this question. The question was straightforward, and allowed candidates to display the knowledge they possessed.

Above Average Responses

Candidates addressed all aspects of the question – both ‘love’ and ‘violence’ – though the examiners were hoping some would go beyond these concerns. Nevertheless, candidates showed a clear understanding of the most important concerns that drive Maiden’s poetry.

Average Responses

Candidates here thoroughly discussed the poems, but didn’t focus clearly enough on the specific themes mentioned in the question.

Paper 2

Section II – Part B – Fiction (Unique)

Examiners observed that some questions and terms within questions were more difficult for some candidates than others. For example, the *Emma* question with the word ‘bleak’ or the term ‘devious’ in *Lives of Girls and Women*. All the questions successfully incorporated a discussion of two aspects of the text and gave candidates the opportunity to discuss notions of values and the impact of various narrative techniques on how the novels were presented.

Texts such as *Adam Bede*, *Brighton Rock* and *Tree of Man* were attempted by so few candidates as to not warrant an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in this report.

Question 14. Jane Austen, *Emma*

‘In *Emma*, is Austen’s view more bleak than optimistic, or the other way around? Argue your point of view.’

Above average responses recognised the broader social implications in the question and made clear the distinction between ‘Austen’s view’ and Emma’s, arguing that Austen manipulates her heroine as a device for conveying ideas and making judgements about society.

Average responses focused on character analysis and concentrated on a few major themes and episodes. ‘Austen’s view’ was presented as a judgement of the characters’ actions with ‘bleak’ equating with Emma’s character flaws and ‘optimism’ with happiness.

Weaker responses had difficulty equating the issues to the key words ‘bleak’ and ‘optimistic’ and instead tended to link them to the characters in the novel and to a ‘happy ever after’ ending. Many wrote a prepared answer on Emma’s growth and development and made no reference to ‘Austen’s view’.

Question 15. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

‘In *Great Expectations*, do you think hope is overwhelmed by the novel’s dark view of humanity, or not? Give your reasons.’

The discriminating aspect of this question was Dickens’ world as well as looking at characters.

Above average responses understood and could argue Dickens’ ‘dark view of humanity’ and the struggle of the individual to overcome an inherently evil society. Responses in this range were distinguished by their detailed, diverse and explicit knowledge of the text through example and quotation.

Average responses tended to divide the text into ‘goodies’ and ‘baddies’, adopting a chronological approach, focusing on ‘dark’ rather than ‘hope’. They had a less sophisticated understanding of Dickens’ purpose but dealt with the main character well.

Weaker responses did not understand ‘dark view’. Most tried to show the hope of characters, especially Pip, rather than the humanity of the times. There was a tendency to retell the story.

Question 17. Henry James, *Washington Square*

‘In *Washington Square*, we don’t have to believe in the story; we just appreciate what James does with it.’

Discuss James' handling of narrative technique in *Washington Square*.

An excellent question that most candidates were relatively successful at – the 'narrative technique' was a good discriminating factor.

Above average responses revealed a sophisticated understanding of James' purpose, techniques and the way the story is shaped and manipulated. Candidates showed insight into the way the story reveals aspects of society and supported their views using extensive and detailed analysis of the text.

Average responses presented a limited discussion of narrative techniques and struggled to discuss how the story is to be appreciated. At this level candidates evidently knew the story but laboured to answer the question. Below average responses were confined to a commentary of themes and character.

Question 18. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

'Angel Clare is just as dangerous as Alec d'Urberville.'

Do you agree? Give your reasons.

Examiners considered this question a good discriminator, which allowed for a range of answers. An awareness of the effect that society has on the way a character behaves highlighted the difference between a good and an average answer. Candidates had detailed knowledge of the text. Most candidates made a good comparison of Alec and Angel.

Better responses were able to deal more thoroughly with symbolism, themes and the nature of society. Well above average responses were sophisticated in their understanding of 'dangerous' and were aware of the author's purpose. They were able to present a complex, well-argued thesis which successfully integrated a discussion of society and characters.

Average responses tended to be restricted to an analysis of character. Candidates who discussed Hardy's purpose did not do so convincingly. Textual references were good but a little limited.

Below average responses relied on a discussion of character's actions rather than underlying social themes or issues. Candidates made reference to a few major scenes and used a series of familiar quotes. Weaker responses indicated a superficial understanding of 'dangerous'.

Question 19. Henry Lawson, *Short Stories*

'Loneliness, loss and struggle shape the destiny of Lawson's figures.' Discuss this statement with reference to at least TWO of the short stories.

A reasonably straightforward question. Better scripts read more eloquently and clearly indicated their understanding of 'destiny' and the context of Lawson's world.

The more competent candidates looked at 'destiny', 'loneliness', 'loss' and how the 'struggle shapes' the lives of the characters. A perceptive analysis which integrated a discussion of thematic concerns was a feature of this range.

Average responses were literal in their approach, understood 'loneliness', 'loss', 'struggle' but were weak on applying knowledge of these aspects to 'destiny'. The two stories selected required further discussion and insight.

Below average responses relied on storytelling, concentrating on examples of 'loneliness' and 'loss'; no understanding of 'destiny' was evident.

Question 21. Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*

‘In Jubilee there is much that is devious; and yet ultimately what we find is a curious honesty.’

Discuss.

Very few responses were done well due to candidates focusing on Del rather than Jubilee. The word ‘devious’ caused problems. Many read it as deviant. Often answers were simply a character development of Del.

Above average responses were sophisticated in their understanding of the scope of the question, especially ‘devious’ and ‘curious honesty’. They successfully integrated their reading of the text with the demands of the question. They selected from a wide variety of incidents, characters, quotes and examples in their sustained discussion of the society of Jubilee.

Average responses struggled to answer the question. Candidates focused on Del’s development, equating ‘devious’ with deviate and ‘curious honesty’ with curious and honest. An awareness of Munro’s questioning of Jubilee’s morality was not in evidence.

Weaker responses focused on Del and expressed limited perceptions of other characters and made simplistic value judgements about them.

Question 22. Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*

‘Discuss how Ondaatje uses imagery to connect the different threads of his narrative.’

Answers ranged from brilliant to poor depending on their understanding of ‘imagery’ and its links to the narrative. It proved to be a question about which candidates had a lot to say. It was the type of question that allowed for very good answers.

Above average answers achieved a synthesised understanding of how imagery and characters connect through the text. Candidates demonstrated a vast knowledge of the text through integrated quotation and example.

Average responses recognised the use of imagery and its function, though they sometimes confused imagery with narrative technique and/or thematic development with character development.

Weaker responses revealed a limited understanding of imagery and tended to retell the plot in a simplistic way.

Question 24. David Malouf, *The Great World*

‘How do you see the relationship between the past and the present in *The Great World*?’

Above average responses presented a very thorough examination of the question and the text. Candidates exhibited understanding of the dimensions of *The Great World*, how the past shapes the present and how it influences characters’ lives. A clear understanding of the author’s purpose and narrative technique was a feature of this range. Treatment of characters extended beyond a discussion of the two main characters.

Average responses offered a discussion that was restricted to the two main characters and an explanation of their lives. The author’s purpose and use of narrative techniques was not clearly understood, eg recognised flashbacks but were unable to see the connection between the present and the past.

Below average responses wrote about Vic and Digger's character and experiences and presented limited understanding of 'past and present'.

Question 25. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

'What *Maestro* shows us is that failure can be success.'

What do you think? Give your reasons.

This question posed difficulties for many candidates as they took a simplistic approach to their answers. However, many candidates showed good insight. The question was not considered by examiners to be a good discriminator as there was less scope available for candidates. Too often Paul was the only focus, with too little attention on Keller.

Well above average responses established a thesis demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of 'failure and success' and argued it consistently. The complexities of Paul and Keller were handled well. Candidates were confident in expressing their personal opinion of the text.

Above average responses dealt well with Paul and Keller but did not present a strong argument for their views. A sound knowledge of the text was evident.

Average responses had a very limited notion of 'success' and 'failure', tending to focus on Paul's learning experience as an example of 'success'. There was a tendency to consider 'success' and 'failure' separately and to list examples of them. Below average answers were simplistic and tended to rely on learned themes and character development.

Question 26. Gillian Mears, *Fineflour*

'Gillian Mears has enlivened the image of Australian rural life with some startling new perceptions.'

How do you assess her treatment of rural life in *Fineflour*?

Examiners considered this a fair question. Most candidates did not make any reference to the quote. Candidates referred to three or four stories and better responses discussed imagery and symbolism.

Above average responses were sophisticated in their understanding of the text and the term 'treatment'. Responses were detailed and indicated a clear understanding of the function of symbolism and its relevance to Mears' perception of rural life. They exhibited understanding of how Mears' characters revealed aspects of society.

Average responses revealed a sound knowledge of the text but limited their discussion to an explanatory description of the characters and place. There was little understanding of the overall purpose of the symbolic and interconnecting nature of each story.

Below average responses did not really come to terms with the question and revealed no understanding of 'assess'. Discussion limited to one or two stories.

Section II – 2/3 Unit (Common) Fiction (Unique) Marking Guidelines

A Range (15, 14, 13)

- Demonstrates a perceptive, analytical and comprehensive knowledge of the text in relation to the context of the question; often an original approach.
- Ideas are clearly and fluently expressed.
- Argument is supported by specific and detailed textual references that are integrated well.
- Demonstrates an excellent use of language; real flair.
- Aware of and explores writer's techniques in treatment of subject.
- All aspects of the question are addressed.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

- Sound and detailed knowledge of the text.
- Sustained and often perceptive response to the question.
- Argument well supported with appropriate textual examples.
- Quite fluent, but may lack the flair and sophistication of the 'A' range. Some scripts may be methodical in their thoroughness.
- While the overall treatment of the question is proficient, one aspect may not be treated in depth.

C Range (9, 8, 7)

- Demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the text; there may be some inaccuracies in interpretation; the knowledge of the text may be more descriptive than insightful.
- Supporting evidence may be more general but still appropriate.
- Examples chosen to support discussion are limited and obvious.
- Simplistic analysis, laboured discussion.
- An aspect of the question ignored.
- Some sections of the discussion are likely to rely on storytelling.

D Range (6, 5, 4)

- Storytelling becomes the content of the answer. The views presented tend to be simplistic and limited.
- Brevity, misunderstandings and inaccuracies are often a characteristic.
- While not necessarily prepared answers, some may attempt to answer their own question and fail to come to terms with the question.
- General and unsupported statements are used. Observations tend to be repeated.

E Range (3, 2, 1)

- Generally poorly expressed and confused, reflecting a poor understanding of the text and/or the question.
- There is no engagement with the question.
- Essays may be incomplete, brief and include inappropriate supporting textual references.

Question 14. *Emma*

Excellent Responses

Candidates presented an interpretation of ‘Jane Austen’s view’ not just an analysis of Emma’s character. They could see that Austen manipulates her heroine as a device for conveying ideas and making judgements about society. They understood the complexities of, and dealt equally with, ‘bleak’ and ‘optimistic’.

In ‘Emma’, Jane Austen’s view alternates between what could be termed ‘bleak’ and what may be taken to be ‘optimistic’. Indeed, there are times when the author adopts a pessimistic and bleak outlook, but by the end of the novel, her optimism predominates overall.

There are indeed a number of bleak aspects of this novel which require attention. Throughout the course of the novel, Jane Austen hints at a class society, but never allows the idea to develop. Primarily this undeveloped concept is conveyed through the heroine herself whose snobbery is the main reflector.

Above Average Responses

Candidates presented a narrower interpretation of Jane Austen’s view and concentrated on Emma’s growth to self-awareness. The interpretation of ‘bleak’ and ‘optimistic’ was more literal with a tendency to ‘list’ positive and negative attributes of characters.

It must not be forgotten that Emma is a comedy – a comedy of errors. However, there is a serious message prevailing; that one cannot change society (as Emma tries to). This message seems bleak, but we must remember that the novel ends happily with heroine content – by trying to change society, Emma has realised her faults to a certain extent and is now on the way to a promising future. The question may be posed – how can a novel that ends so delightfully contain a message that seems so bleak? Or is it just common sense?

Emma follows the life of the ‘clever, handsome and rich ...’ Emma Woodhouse. With such admirable qualities outlined in the first few lines one can’t help but feel the novel must contain optimistic morals. However we are soon shown her ‘real evils’ as described in the novel.

Average Responses

The emphasis seems to be on character analysis concentrating on a few major themes and episodes. Jane Austen’s view is seen as a judgement of the character’s actions. ‘Bleak’ equates with Emma’s character flaws while ‘optimism’ equates with happiness.

Jane Austen’s view is a very objective one. She discusses issues relevant to her time and uses authorial intrusion effectively to convey the truth. However she also holds an optimistic view and this is evident in her treatment of Emma’s character.

Authorial intrusion is the easiest way to determine Jane Austen’s view. In the early introductions of characters she does not offer a bleak or overly praising description. She tells it as it is. Emma has a ‘tendency to think a little too highly of herself’ and Mr Woodhouse is an old ‘valetudinarian’. While Mr Knightly is ‘a very sensible’ man. These observations become apparent as these characters are developed throughout the novel and thus Jane Austen’s approach is objective.

Question 15. *Great Expectations*

Excellent Responses

Understands and is prepared to argue Dickens' 'dark view of humanity' and the struggle of the individual to overcome an inherently evil society. Demonstrates detailed, dense, diverse and explicit knowledge of the text through example and quotation.

Great Expectations most certainly highlights a dark view of humanity. Dickens presents a bizarre world of reversed morals from the moment Pip is turned upside down by Magwitch, so that 'the church jumped over its own weathercock'. Yet more importantly, Dickens leaves the reader with a sense of hope. Some aspects of this hope are present throughout the novel, particularly in the characters of Joe and Biddy. Most exponents of Dickens' hope are revealed in the last stages of the novel however.

Above Average Responses

Understand that Dickens is criticising society but demonstrate a more limited knowledge of the text and a less sophisticated interpretation of the question.

Though in some parts of the book, Dickens' dark outlook on humanity is counteracted by hope, and love, there are examples of injustice that overwhelm the sense of hope. This gives the novel an overall message, that with the love of others, like Pip had, hope can shine through and outweigh the immorality of life, yet in Magwitch, Dickens shows that a person, unloved and unwanted, can only be treated with the dark view of humanity. Hope is, to some extent, overwhelmed by inhumanity, but it is through love, Dickens is saying, that hope can shine on through.

Average Responses

Tend to divide the text into 'goodies' and 'baddies', adopting a chronological approach focusing on 'dark' rather than 'hope'. Have a less sophisticated understanding of Dickens' purpose but deal with main characters well.

Hope in the novel is not overwhelmed by the dark view of humanity. Although many of the characters are evil and sinister, there are also good, altruistic people such as Joe, Biddy and Herbert Pocket that keeps hope alive.

Question 17. *Washington Square*

Excellent Responses

Sophisticated understanding of James' purpose, techniques and the way the story is shaped and manipulated. Show insight into the way the story reveals aspects of society. Extensive and detailed quotation and analysis of text.

By ending the novel again within the confines of Washington Square he stresses the emotional impact the events of the novel have had on Catherine. We are shown that she was 'deeply and incurably wounded' by the 'facts of her career' – 'that Morris Townsend had trifled with her affection and her father had broken its spring'. By focusing on this James has shown the effect of everything that has happened so far on Catherine. This in turn brings our attention to how the story and impressions we have received have been controlled tightly by the narrator, and thus by James through this literary device and also the construction of the novel itself.

Thus the novel 'Washington Square' concentrates less on whether we 'believe in the story' than if we can 'appreciate what James does with it'.

Average Responses

Have a limited response to 'narrative technique' and struggle to discuss how the story is to be appreciated. Know the story but labour to answer the question.

James does this in order to make his point clear. His novel, or story is not simply a story of Catherine and Morris who fail to marry due to her father's disapproval nor her aunts meddling. Nor is it simply about Catherine's development, and growth and strength of character. James has deliberately used the narrator as a guide to this story. The guide wants to point to his reader the broader generalisations of the story, whether we believe it or not. The stress is upon the morals, the story merely encases these.

Question 18. Tess

Excellent Responses

Demonstrate a sophisticated interpretation of 'dangerous'. Understand the author's purpose, integrating a discussion of society and characters. They are able to present a complex thesis and argue well.

In this, Hardy is making a strong social comment. He is saying that there are two types of people who abuse the innocent – the inherently evil (ie Alec), and those too naive and corrupted by religion and society to know any better. In the novel Hardy is very critical of the teachings and morals of Victorian society (he called the Bible an 'intoxication'), and by making a religious man – the son of a minister – so dangerous to the innocent, he is showing how the innocent are exploited by such people not for any reason but because it seems right. Such strong moral and social commentary is made in the novel, as Angel Clare is just as dangerous as Alec d'Urberville.

Above Average Responses

These candidates were able to discuss Hardy's purpose but the argument was not as strong. They presented a balanced discussion of both characters. Textual references were good but a little limited.

Both men displayed persistence in their pursuing Tess. This clearly is demonstrated in Angel's case by his repeated questioning of Tess in proposal of marriage. In Alec's case, aside from the initial lust at Trantridge Cross, he abandoned his new found calling, as a preacher, to follow Tess. Angel similarly chases after Tess, after his return from Brazil, finding first Joan Durbeyfield before being redirected to Sandbourne.

Alec's contribution to Tess' downfall is accentuated by the Victorian social laws: Tess had 'been made to break an accepted social law, though no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself an anomaly' – she had intercourse out of wedlock. Alec therefore represents the social customs of the time and their unfairness to women.

On the other hand, Angel represented these social constraints to a certain extent, in recognising his wife's 'wrong' doing. However, he has only to say that she is forgiven and all would be resolved.

Average Responses

Candidates in this range revealed a limited understanding of Hardy's world and relied on a discussion of characters' actions rather than underlying social themes or issues. They refer to a few major scenes and a series of familiar quotations.

Tess Durbeyfield, 'a pure woman' is seduced by her 'cousin' Alec in the Trantridge woods. This incident was not her fault, but her fate, the novelist claims. It can be argued though that it was more of her mother's mistake than any other character's for not warning her 'innocent' daughter of such acts of indecency. This event which Tess' later lover finds out, turns him into the villain that he was not. Hardy here displays the double standard to the audience. How irrational a person Angel Clare proves to be. Hardy is conveying the message that 'woman pays and man goes free' for the same fault. Angel shows us that he is 'just as dangerous' as the sinister Alec not in the physical sense, but emotionally.

Question 19. Henry Lawson, *Short Stories*

Excellent Responses

Clearly understand 'destiny' and the context of Lawson's world. The more competent candidates look at 'destiny', 'loneliness', 'loss' and how 'struggle shapes' the lives of the characters. Perceptive analysis, integrating thematic concerns.

Hardship, in its plethora of form, is the predominant factor in Lawson's bush setting. This hardship is, in turn, the sum of the loneliness, the loss, and the struggle experienced by his characters. Destiny is, subsequently, a factor which seems to touch the lives of the figures of Joe Wilson's courtship, hinted at through lines such as 'I didn't know anything about women, yet', the forboding nature of yet requiring great emphasis, and Brighten's sister-in-law, where the foretelling nature of lines such as 'I wish it was over for good' (Joe referring to the conclusions experienced sporadically by his son, Jim) clearly suggests destiny grasping Lawson's character's lives. The aforementioned loneliness, loss and struggle can be quite reasonably seen, as factors of hardship, as playing the chief roles in the moulding of the figures of the stories destinies.

Average Responses

Literal in their approach, understood 'loneliness', 'loss', 'struggle' but were weak on applying knowledge of these aspects to 'destiny'. The two stories selected required further discussion and insight.

Henry Lawson provides us with characters who have felt the harsh reality of life. The majority of these characters are set in the Australian bush. A place where, at the time when Lawson wrote about it, was mainly a lonely, isolated place for many people.

'The Bush Undertaker' is no different. This story shows a man whose Christmas improves on discovery of another dead body and a nearly full bottle of rum – 'me luck's in this Christmas an' no mistake'.

His loneliness is reduced by his constant companion Five Bob and his struggle is best shown in the fact that he can't afford a new shirt, even though the one he is wearing was bought 'two days 'afore Five Bob was pupped'.

Question 21. *Lives of Girls and Women*

Excellent Responses

Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the scope of the question, especially ‘devious’ and ‘curious honesty’. Able to integrate their reading of the text with the demands of the question. Choose from a wide variety of incidents, characters, quotes and examples. Focus on society rather than on Del.

In the Jubilee society there is much that is devious, yet Del takes this society and strips away its layers to reveal to the audience the curiously honest core therein. Jubilee itself is a parochial society. It is unable to accept individuals. This is why Del, Ada, Fern and even Miss Farns are forced to confront such deviousness. There are hidden circles and dark relationships Del finds. But because of her natural ability as an observer and author, she breaks down the layers to reveal the honesty that is in each facet of deviousness. This comes to fruition in the Epilogue. Thus, since the reader had Del to narrate and peel away the layers of Jubilee, they, the reader, can then see the curious honesty which is at the heart of Jubilee.

Average Responses

Attempt/struggle to answer the question but focus on Del’s growth and development. Equate ‘deviousness’ with deviate and ‘curious honesty’ with curious and honest. Do not understand that Munro is questioning Jubilee’s morality.

*Alice Munro’s *Lives of Girls and Women* is all about ‘deep caves found under kitchen linoleum’, which shows that although Jubilee is meant to be an honest place, where people are normal, underneath the surface there are devious characters. Through the novel Dell seeks for these ‘evils’ that she will explore when she writes her novel. Her mother Ada has deep caves which Dell wants to find out about as well as Miss Farris and Fern.*

Question 22. *In the Skin of a Lion*

Excellent Responses

Achieve a synthesised understanding of how imagery and characters connect through the text. Demonstrate a vast knowledge of the text through integrated quotation and example.

*‘Never again shall a single story be told as if it were the only one’ reads the prologue of Michael Ondaatje’s book *In the Skin of a Lion*. Michael Ondaatje, through his new techniques of writing a novel has created a ‘web’ of links to different people all through the life of the main protagonist Patrick Lewis. Ondaatje connects all these threads through reoccurring images in his novel *In the Skin of a Lion*.*

Average Responses

Begin to recognise the use of imagery and its functions. Sometimes confuse imagery with narrative technique, thematic development with character development. Demonstrate a wide range of examples and imagery.

**In the Skin of the Lion* has many different themes and sub themes, all interlinked and an integral part of the narrative. The central theme of mortality, the class conflict is made up of all these sub themes, such as identity and art. Ondaatje uses many different techniques both to develop the themes, and to link them in with the narrative. The use of poetic language, motifs and different narrators are all a part of Ondaatje’s weaving a story of infinite complexity and realism.*

Question 24. *The Great World*

Excellent Responses

Very thorough examination of the question and text. Understand the dimensions of *The Great World* and how it influences characters' lives. Clearly understand the author's purpose and narrative technique. Deal with more than just two main characters. Understand the cyclical nature of the novel and how past shapes present.

'The Great World' is a combination of various images and perceptions. In this novel, Malouf uses the saga technique to explore a broad spectrum of human emotions and characteristics. In 'The Great World' Malouf uses many flashbacks and flashbacks within flashbacks to help explore the past–present issue. These are transporters of the reader's focus. Malouf uses the past and present as a form of comparisons, between the two time periods, thus showing the reader the shaping of the characters. Malouf has in a way discarded the use of chronological time. What he has conjured is a combination of events in an order that is a representation of the characters feelings, and reflecting their thought patterns.

Average Responses

Discussion largely confined to two main characters and an explanation of their lives. Author's purpose not fully understood; techniques may be learnt but often not fully understood, eg recognise flashbacks but unable to see the relationship between the past and present.

The relation between the past and the present is a major factor throughout 'The Great World'. Malouf offers this link to us by giving us an understanding of the cyclical nature of things, hence the relation between the past and present. This relation is clearly portrayed throughout by the various relationships which add meaning to the character's lives. Much knowledge and strength was also drawn from these relationships. Experiences of the characters also highlight this ever present link between past and present. Malouf explicitly refers to the relation between past and present throughout his novel.

Question 25. *Maestro*

Excellent Responses

Establish a thesis demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of 'failure can be success' and argue it consistently. Deal well with the complexities of Keller and Paul. Interpretation offered can be supported by the whole text. Confident in expressing their personal opinion of the text.

'Maestro's' events are almost predestined. On the road to success (career-wise), Paul meets Keller who teaches Paul in such a way as to change Paul forever.

'In a sense Keller was possibly the worst teacher for me'. (pg 100) Paul says this because he believes Keller revealed perfection musically to him when Paul learnt he would only ever reach technical perfection. This was a failure point for Paul as more than anything he really wanted musical perfection. Or did he? Paul's character is ignorant, therefore for him to realize this fact is actually a success.

Above Average Responses

Attempt a thesis but do not argue as strongly for it. Deal well with both Paul and Keller. Demonstrate a very sound knowledge of the text but less confident in expressing a personal opinion.

Paul's learning and growth to maturity is seen as success in itself. Paul has great potential to learn successfully, and the audience see this. His failure in gaining perfection is a failure in itself, but also shows us amazing success in Paul's character development.

Paul fails in 'getting' Megan; this failure turns into a successful relationship being formed with Rosie.

At school I was falling in love

He mistakes his initial feelings towards Megan as love. When he does have a sexual experience with Megan he realises that he does not love Megan as a person, but rather 'loves' her only in a physical sense.

It was a disappointment, for me at least. She was too selfish, I later realised. Too used to being desired.

He also realises 'real' love when he finds himself in a successful relationship with Rosie. The reader too, see this as another step in his growth to maturity, his learning and see this as a success.

Average Responses

Limited idea of 'success' and 'failure', tending to focus on Paul's learning experience as an example of 'success'. Discuss a few major scenes and issues; tend to list examples of 'success' and 'failure' but do not link them. Unbalanced treatment of Paul and Keller.

Maestro does show that failure can be success because through Crabbe's failure he gained domestic bliss, self maturation and the ability to love. This was however taught to Paul by Keller who having succeeded himself was able to teach Paul about important things in life.

Question 26. *Fineflour*

Excellent Responses

Sophisticated understanding of text and detailed response to question. Clear understanding of symbolism and its relevance to Mears' perception of Australian rural life. Focus on the word 'treatment' rather than literal explanation of the community and people's lives. Understand how Mears' characters reveal aspects of society.

The whole spectrum of rural life is treated by Gillian Mears in 'Fineflour'. Through the presentation of sixteen chronologically ordered stories, Mears is able to convey both the joys and sorrows that make up Australian life. There are elements of bizarre humour, tragedy, the monotony that is often associated with rural life and many other aspects of country Australia are also addressed. A number of different perspectives are illuminated through Mears' utilisation of multi-narration throughout the stories, and so not only are we introduced to many different facets of rural life in 'Fineflour', but also a number of differing views of these issues.

Average Responses

Reveal a sound knowledge of the text but are limited to an explanatory description of characters and place. Little understanding of author's overall purpose or the symbolic and inter-connecting nature of each story.

Mears creates an overall impression of 'Fineflour' through her accumulation of detail. In the first story, 'The Burial ...', we learn of an uneducated population; 'embarrassing to have a butcher who can't spell'. In 'Fineflour' we learn of the town's racism as the principle locks the aboriginal children above the toilet block. We learn of the towns gossip nature as Mrs Riff talks with her neighbour 'I reckon there's a bun in Nadia Molloy's oven, the lightning speed of that engagement'. Finally in a bitter joy we learn of the town's dilapidated, dying feel with 'the dilapidated buildings'.

Part C—Drama (Unique) Marking Guidelines

A Range (13, 14, 15)

- Sophisticated interpretation of the question
- Demonstrates a strong insight into the play as a whole
- Well structured and sustained argument that thoroughly addresses the question
- Demonstrates effective control of language; shows originality and flair
- Argument well supported with relevant examples from text appropriately integrated

B Range (10, 11, 12)

- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the play
- Presents a clear line of argument and a sustained response to the question
- Supports answer with well-chosen examples from the play
- Articulate and competent
- May be proficient rather than sophisticated
- A sense of, or reference to, the play as a dramatic experience

C Range (7, 8, 9)

- Demonstrates a sound knowledge of the play
- May be simplistic in technique and approach
- Uses quotations or appropriate incidents, yet ideas lack development or explanation
- Addresses the question and establishes a case, but argues in a limited manner
- There will always be a variety of responses within this range

D Range (4, 5, 6)

- Demonstrates knowledge of the play but does not apply it appropriately/limited focus on question
- Could contain storytelling but hits on one or two aspects relevant to the question
- Range of responses from literate to awkward
- May contain inaccuracies
- May repeat wording of question in order to pad
- Irrelevant storytelling
- May lack coherence and development of thought
- Brief

E Range (0, 1, 2, 3)

- Demonstrates little knowledge of the play or understanding of the question
- Limited or no reference to the question
- Material irrelevant to the play/question
- May be quite literate yet uses inappropriate material for the question
- Incomplete, brief

General Comments

The majority of drama questions consisted of two parts, a quote followed by a question. Most of the candidates considered both parts of the question in their response. The need to discuss stagecraft was implicit in the questions, eg 'effect on audience', lively expression' 'liberating', 'dramatic', etc. Above average responses addressed the stagecraft and showed how it illuminated the main concerns of the play and the playwright's intention. Better answers placed much more emphasis on original thoughts, relied on quotes for supporting evidence and linked these quotes effectively to the text of the essay. Well above average responses displayed an awareness of audience and the impact of theatrical devices in shaping audience response.

Question 27. *Measure for Measure*

How does *Measure for Measure* comment on ideas of justice and mercy?

Above Average Responses

Above average responses presented the juxtaposition of scenes, parallel plots, events, characters in order to argue Shakespeare's notion of justice and mercy – that there was no perfect or absolute idea of either.

Angelo is contrasted with Isabella in his handling of the case of Claudio. Isabella, despite the revulsion her brother's crime causes her, none the less, pleads for Claudio. She reminds Angelo that none could expect redemption if God were to judge us as we are, without mercy. Angelo's rigid adherence to the law coupled with his own temptation and fall again highlights the importance of mercy in rulership, and also the fallibility of human administrators of the law. 'Measure for Measure' uses antithetical characters to explore justice and mercy.

Average Responses

Average responses were able to comment upon the idea of justice and mercy as developed in the play, while weaker responses failed to define concepts of justice and mercy or deal with 'how' it dealt with these themes. Responses tended to retell the story and did not identify Shakespeare's use of dramatic devices, characterisation and the contrast of the two worlds.

Angelo feels he must be harsh in order to bring the state back to harmony. He condemns Claudio for making Juliet conceive a child, even though they had taken their vows, just not through the eyes of the church. He then gives Claudio the death sentence, therefore taking away the privilege of the child to ever know his or her father. The idea of morality must be introduced here. Angelo is blind to everything but keeping the law to how he feels it must be set.

Question 28. *The School for Scandal*

'Sheridan's comedy is by design anti-sentimental, but its effect for the audience is just the opposite.'

What is your view of Sheridan's comedy?

Above Average Responses

Above average responses showed an understanding of the terms in the quote and were able to apply the terms 'sentimental' and 'anti-sentimental', to the question. These candidates also discussed the effect on the audience.

In the play, Joseph Surface is described by Lady Sneerwell as a 'sentimental knave', and this is an adequate summary of the main characteristics Sheridan has attributed him with. Joseph Surface is the representative man of sentiment in this comedy of manners, whom Sheridan uses in an attempt to denounce sentiment. Joseph is however one of the most fascinating and intriguing characters and the audience is naturally attracted to him. For this reason sentiment is not successfully castigated as the audience does not despair of Joseph but admires him for his ability to maintain his pretence of virtue, even admiring his constant hypocrisy. Coupled with this, is the fact that the character of Charles, apparently an 'extravagant libertine', is ultimately found to be virtuous.

Average Responses

Average responses showed a sound knowledge of the play and its concerns, but found difficulty with the terms of the question.

*In this play Sheridan has designed characters that act as mirrors to real life – they mimic those people who spent their time uttering 'false tales' and were 'coiners of scandal and clippers of reputation'. Despite being a comedy, it is true to say that *The School for Scandal* seems to have created an age in an entirely negative way. It is as if Sheridan despised every aspect of his society.*

Below Average Responses

Below average responses tended to retell the story and were superficial in their discussion of the question.

The audience is also sentimental for Charles as he is not all bad. He drinks a lot and is broke, but his brother gives him the bad name when Joseph is the bad one. This is why we sympathise with Charles.

Question 29. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

'In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard turns tragedy into farce.' Show how Stoppard uses humour to explore more serious concerns in the play.

This question was quite specific. Candidates examined a variety of issues in their responses: death, appearance vs reality, destiny, fate, self-awareness and awareness of the insignificance of man and a world without meaning. Various types of humour were analysed. Vaudeville, slapstick, pun, word play, confusion, cliché, irony, satire, black humour, absurdist humour, etc.

Well above average responses conveyed a perceptive insight into the tragic elements of the play and grasped the concept of tragedy turned into farce. Candidates were able to acknowledge the significance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as part of this.

Above Average Responses

Above average responses were able to articulate Stoppard's use of humour, word play, parody, slapstick, etc ... and demonstrate ways in which the more serious concerns of the play were explored.

Another serious aspect of the play is fate and the lack of control which Ros and Guil make continual reference to. There is constant repetition, of the phrase 'We have no control, and the Players comment, 'There is no choice involved', which adds to Stoppard's use of theatrical

alienation where the audience feels separated from the actors. This adds to the absurdity and humour of the play. To illustrate Ros' lack of control, Stoppard employs techniques of meta-theatre as when Ros screams out 'fire' to exercise his right to free speech but, aware of their role, the audience does not move, resulting in this comment upon them, that 'they should burn in their shoes'. This both illustrates the lack of control that Ros has as well as the use of humour to lighten the mood of the play.

Average Responses

Average responses tended to discuss examples of humour, discussion was primarily thematic. Average responses attempted to answer the question, arguments showed an understanding of the play although no real insight.

Stoppard also uses humour very effectively to present the theme of the nature of death. He uses humorous plays on the word, ie 'it's all heading to a dead stop', 'they were dead lucky'. Although these common expressions are rather humorous, they highlight underlying concerns such as the inevitability of death. The irony of 'the murdered us' is very funny but sharply true.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses made little or no attempt to answer the question. Links to the question were superficial, textual reference slight.

They are faced with a problem which no one else even has the answers to, yet these two foolish and dull characters are trying to find a solution to it. Their adventure leads them to many thoughts and relevant points. Guildenstern refers to death as 'the absence of presence', while Rosencrantz confesses to it in a more physical manner, that nails and teeth grow after death.

Question 30. Under Milkwood

Under Milkwood, a play for voices, was written for radio.

How does the play engage its audience?

Above Average Responses

Above average responses were literate, expressive and sophisticated. They showed an impressive ability to discuss a variety of techniques and were able to show how the play engaged the audience.

'Under Milkwood' by Dylan Thomas is a play for voices, written for radio. It presents a day in the life of a town, looking beneath the surface at human eccentricities and the themes of love, death and time.

The play engages its audience through the use of language, sound, song and voice. Thomas' love of language is evident in his use of language techniques such as personification, and the yoking of whimsical words together to reflect what he is describing. His unorthodox approach engages and delights the audience. The use of eccentric, humorous and unusual characters such as Captain Cat engage the audience and reinforce the themes of the play. The cyclical nature of the play, as it moves through the day also serves to engage the audience with its fluid, dynamic quality.

Average Responses

Average responses showed a good knowledge of the play but limited their discussion to characterisation.

Morning brings the town's residents to life, with Ocky Milkman the first to stir so he can begin the ritual milk run. One of the outstanding features and themes of the play is the overall nature of the town and the unique way in which it functions. For example, Willy Nilly the postman takes the liberty of reading all the letters he delivers. On this particular morning he tells Mr Edwards he opens his letters.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses did not look at the play as a whole. They presented simplistic views and an inadequate discussion of the way language is used to engage the attention and interest of the audience.

The Cherry Owens are very much in love and seem to enjoy themselves immensely. In this respect they too are celebrating life.

Characters such as Mr Pugh engage our interest for the way that he is and what he wishes to do to his wife 'And arsenic biscuits ... nice tea dear'.

Question 31. *The Man from Mukinupin*

'Unorthodox in theme and structure'

How far, in your view, does *The Man from Mukinupin* challenge convention?

Above Average Responses

Above average responses were able to discuss effectively the way Hewett's play challenges convention. They were able to refer to a range of dramatic devices while still examining the darker aspects. They were able to competently discuss both theme and structure.

However, the happiness, gaiety and comedy of the structure contrasts sharply with Hewett's strong often 'dark' thematic content, creating what could validly be called a challenge to convention through the juxtaposition of these two strongly contrasting elements of her play. She deals with such often disturbing issues and themes as genocide, aboriginal mistreatments, the irrelevance of English culture to the Australian identity and the discrepancy between image and reality (a type of dualism) which exists in human nature, clashing strongly with the informal joyous structure.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses were superficial in their reference to the play and made no reference to the quote in their answers. A typical feature of this range was the concentration on plot, rather than dramatic concerns.

The relation of the characters to figures in Hewett's early life can be subtly noticed and the males take on a role second to the woman. This improves the plot by turning convention upside down.

Question 32. *Top Girls*

How effective do you think *Top Girls* is as 'a lively expression of contemporary issues?'

Above Average Responses

Above average responses presented an argument in relation to how effective *Top Girls* is as a 'lively expression of contemporary issues' and were able to refer to the audience's responses to the dramatic presentation.

Well Above Average

Churchill uses the post modern technique of overlapping dialogue and uses typical conversational qualities such as interruptions, fades and several conversations running at once. This gives everything the women are saying a certain vitality. The stage is filled with noise and excitement.

Above Average

Characters from the modern world, different ages, different backgrounds and the younger generation are all brought together to suggest a universal problem. Their psychological development isn't as important as what they represent and what they have to say, Churchill uses this wide array of characters to shift perspective from one point of view to the other using a unique overlapping of dialogue to suggest surface naturalism.

Average Responses

Average responses were able to discuss the play in terms of the contemporary issues it raised.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses failed to address the 'lively' aspects which required reference to the dramatic techniques employed such as the contrast of historical figures, time shifts, overlapping of dialogue, structure and setting.

Question 33. *Cosi*

'Nowra's achievement in *Cosi* is in showing performance to be liberating.'

Discuss.

Above Average Responses

Above average responses were able to discuss the quotation fully and sustain a line of argument. They displayed an understanding of how Nowra showed performance to be liberating and explored the play fully, referring not only to the patients, but also the liberation of Lewis and the audience.

The patients are suffering from alienation and isolation. Each one is yearning for some kind of security or attachment, and they appear to find it through rehearsing a play together. 'Cosi Fan Tutte' thus becomes a symbol of security. Cherry especially illustrates this. The play to her is a means not only of escaping her ward, but it is a chance for her to reach out for the love to the young, naive director, Lewis. She becomes a nurturer and protector of Lewis which she demonstrates by constantly feeding him, and yet paradoxically this also brings out her violent side, as when the play is threatened she attacks Doug with a flick knife. The fire he lit has sabotaged her sense of security, 'I'm going to kill you for this'.

Average Responses

Average responses tended to discuss characters one by one, but did not reveal an understanding of how they could have been liberated. A number of the responses limited the idea of liberation to just the patients.

The achievement that Nowra's 'Cosi' gains for him is in showing performance to be liberating for the patients of the mental asylum. Through the performance of Cosi Fan Tutte, the patients of the mental asylum and those directly involved in the performance is also liberating as it allows particular patients, such as Henry, to come out of their shells and out of hiding from society. This may not have been the case if the performance did not go ahead.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses did not reveal a complete understanding of the play. Their discussion was slight, brief in length and lacking detailed reference.

Louis Nowra achieved many things in his play 'Cosi', showing performance to be liberating, tempting the audience to ask themselves questions and purely entertaining the audience.

Question 34. Diving for Pearls

In what ways does *Diving for Pearls* dramatise our times for us?

Above Average Responses

Above average responses demonstrated empathy with and a sensitive analysis of the characters. They showed a sense of audience and how issues of our times were dramatised by discussing theatrical devices such as symbolism, setting, sound, lighting, language and conflict.

Thomson, within 'Diving for Pearls', in the most dramatic manner, portrays our time. She develops rich characters which demonstrate the private face of the phenomenon of economic rationalism. The use of symbolism and conflict throughout 'Diving for Pearls' aid in accurately reflecting the anguish and monotony within the socio-economic society that the capitalists provide.

Average Responses

Average responses competently discussed characters and how the plot related to issues of our times, but did not give enough emphasis to the way in which the play dramatised these issues.

'Diving for Pearls' tells the real story of characters caught in a cycle beyond their control. It brings to life real issues and concerns faced by people every day. It portrays life, in a working steel city as it happens and the effects the closure of the steel works have upon those involved. Also, more broadly, 'Diving for Pearls' expresses and delivers more general issues confronted by all. The achievement and/or failure of dreams, goals and ambitions.

Below Average Responses

Below average responses retold the story and discussed issues in a simplified manner without addressing theatrical techniques.

The power of those who make decisions determines the outcomes of the working class. When Den loses his job, his dreams are lost with it. Barbara is still adamant to find happiness and fortune, although her qualifications have proved useless. Barbara's true qualities become evident when Den loses his job and Barbara abandons him.