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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE English Language and Literature 6EL03 01

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Introduction

This unit comprises the examined component of A2 Language and Literature. Students are expected to apply their skills and knowledge of literary and linguistic concepts gained in the AS units, as well as wider reading, to explore varieties of language and literature. They need to synthesise their learning and make observations about how language works across a spectrum of written and spoken production. They choose one of four topic areas and answer two corresponding questions: one on an unseen extract in Section A and one on two prepared texts in Section B.

SECTION A involves the analysis of one unseen extract. Candidates are expected to present a continuous commentary on the writer's or speaker's choice of structure, form and language and draw conclusions on attitudes, values and ideas conveyed in the text.

SECTION B assesses candidates' knowledge of the contribution made by contextual factors to the understanding of either two chosen drama texts or two chosen poetry texts. Students are expected to compare writers' use of linguistic and literary devices.

Overall, the quality of responses was strong. Candidates were well prepared for both sections of the paper with the best demonstrating an integrated approach which helped them to tackle the unseen with understanding and confidence and explore interesting and original concepts in relation to their set texts. Less assured candidates tended to be either focused on the literature OR language element and adhered to a more regimented structure dealing with each feature of each text separately. Candidates often tended to veer more towards linguistic terminology in Question 1 and more towards literary terminology in Section B.

From a practical point of view, candidates must remember to answer both questions relating to their choice of topic (e.g. Family Relationships): some students answered on one topic in Section A and a different topic in Section B, others attempted to answer a particular Section B question with texts from a different topic, and there were a few who ignored the question completely and wrote about their topic regardless of the frame of the question. The paper is designed to help students to prepare themselves efficiently: they will have been studying a variety of texts relating to a chosen topic and this encourages them to focus on a range of relevant features, contexts and ideas; they should also save time and unnecessary stress by going straight to the relevant unseen passage at the beginning of the examination instead of reading through all four passages.

Section A

This question required candidates to write an extended critical analysis of an unseen extract corresponding to their choice of topic (A Sense of Place, The Individual in Society, Love and Loss or Family Relationships). A maximum of 10 marks at AO1 and 30 marks at AO2 were available. Family Relationships proved to be the most popular topic choice (probably because of the drama texts available in Section B), whilst A Sense of Place was the least popular.

All four extracts allowed for good differentiation and candidates managed to identify and discuss a wide range of features. In general, students had obviously been well taught and had a good understanding of the two AOs. Most candidates produced at least competent analyses of their chosen piece of unseen prose and high-scoring students offered some outstanding insight into the subtleties of their chosen text, teasing out the less obvious attitudes and values, and relating the text to their expectations of its genre.

Candidates seemed to enjoy responding to the Joan Wyncham and Nellie Weeton passages in particular. These two texts gave students the opportunity to engage with the language in some depth and the attitudes and values seemed to be most accessible to them. Whilst some responses to the Derby Day extract showed an appreciation of cultural contrasts there were many answers that did not fully grasp its perspective. Surprisingly, the same was the case with Pankhurst's speech: the features of the speech were generally analysed but the attitudes and values were often dealt with in a superficial way; very few answers gave consideration to the American setting of the speech.

Inevitably there were purely descriptive answers which showed general understanding of the content but did not examine the writer's style or technique in any great depth. A proportion of students could apply both linguistic and literary terminology quite sensibly but made very little attempt to comment on the effects created by the techniques. They tended to describe rather than analyse details: for example, the simile of the pomegranates in Love and Loss, which was often noted but only occasionally explored for what it showed about Joan's feelings for Rupert. As well as identifying features of the text and giving an example, students need to comment on what that example or feature conveys to a reader. Sometimes candidates would produce a list of linguistic terms without explaining their particular significance to the text. On occasions there was too much importance placed on historical context (catered for in Section B of course), resulting in rather fruitless paraphrase. Candidates are advised to focus on genre, purpose and audience for this question.

Section B

Students found the combination of the three AOs challenging and few could meet all three at a similar level. Surprisingly for a Language and Literature exam, it was the linguistic aspect of AO1 that was most often minimally treated, except for Betrayal and A Doll's House. A significant minority of candidates are producing literature-style answers, or answers which are sometimes quite sophisticated in their knowledge of plots and characters but display little evidence of the linguistic features that underpin those elements. Candidates need to ensure that they present fluent and relevant responses to the questions, addressing key terms as fully as possible and exploring a wide range of ideas and features in a flexible manner. Some centres seemed to have insisted on very regimented structures to the responses and these hampered the candidates with less flair. They religiously included all the points they had been 'instructed' to include, some of which did not directly relate to the question. Introductory paragraphs need attention: many were brief, mainly rehearsing the words of the question, with no clear sense of direction or intention

presented for the examiner. About one third of the responses to 'critically compare' were structured as a series of paragraphs examining each writer alternately, with just a comparative connecting word (e.g. 'similarly', 'conversely', 'also', 'however'), without taking this comparative link any further. Some lower band answers chose to examine the two texts separately and then conclude with a paragraph of comparative points.

A significant number of drama answers lost marks for AO2 because they discussed characters but neglected to analyse other genre features (such as staging) and therefore limited their exploration of values and attitudes. They tended to look at the texts from a purely 'mechanical' standpoint and failed to display any engagement, let alone enjoyment. Many poetry responses tended to focus on meaning and content, rather than form and style. A few answers looked only at two poems, thus failing to examine the ideas in a broad way or consider readers' experiences and expectations.

The contextual element of AO3 was less often tagged on at the start or end of the response. However, it was also often treated briefly in passing, and frequently the majority of the references were to the writer's biography, rather than to the period/literary/performance contexts. The reception of texts was often just referred to as a passing comment: for example, a brief personal response or some assertion about 21st century audiences (e.g. 'nowadays people don't mind taboo language'); or a general point about contemporary audiences for the selected writers ('in those days people were more religious', 'in those days women had no rights') with little precise illustrative information. There were some particularly strong answers on *Translations* and *Stuff Happens* from candidates who were very engaged with the rich contexts of each play. Similarly, *A Doll's House* and *All My Sons* elicited plenty of thoughtful and thorough comparisons of these two plays' various contextual factors. Those answers which integrated the context into the discussion of language, form and effect produced very fluent, readable answers. There were some thoughtful discussions of production history and how this has influenced our view of the plays: for example, the chronology of *Betrayal* was originally seen by some as gimmicky; it is now seen as a strength. Overall, comparison was the element that was most often absent or minimal: candidates often "compared" simply by a short link as they moved between texts: for example, "This poet does something different in his/her poems.....", or "In contrast," This led to many quite competent answers (in terms of accounts of the text) being marked lower in AO3 than in the other two AOs. This was a particular problem with the poetry texts.

Question 1

General observations on responses to each topic area:

A Sense of Place

The Hippolyte Taine passage proved to be a challenge to a number of candidates. Many candidates were able to identify the main generic features but were not clear about whether the piece had been intended for an English speaking audience in France or whether it was a translation. Most answers focused on the treatment of the poor, with a number of answers distinguishing between the observational nature of the writing and the attitudes and values beneath the surface. However, few candidates analysed the descriptiveness of the passage in any depth. Lower band answers managed to identify techniques used by the writer but were less able to understand the values within the text. On the other hand, high-scoring answers analysed the structuring of the piece, contrasting the rural setting of the event with the nature of the crowd and tracing the writer's changing attitudes. Most candidates were able to discover a wide range of literary and linguistic features but only the higher band responses related them to the writer's attitudes and values.

The Individual in Society

The extract from Emmeline Pankhurst's speech to an audience of American women gave candidates an opportunity to explore the effects created by traditional speech-making strategies. High-scoring students brought a wide range of their own reading to bear on the attitudes in the speech, as well as displaying confidence with the genre features. Most answers focused on repetition, the term "militant", sentence lengths, and the use of "we". A large number noted the two metaphors of the babies and the omelette but few chose to analyse these in any depth. Most answers ignored the American context.

Love and Loss

Most students seem to have enjoyed this passage and found plenty to say about values and attitudes. Many had some grasp of the context of the Second World War and were able to use this to help them notice details (e.g. on rationing). The passage lent itself to a good variety of analysis, with plenty of appropriate terminology being applied, especially with regard to register and lexis. Quite a few answers explored the characterisation of Rupert: they were split between those who found him "manipulative" and unfair to Joan, and those who felt that the attraction was mutual and he was merely a cheerful lad about her age, whose remarks were typical of an affectionate relationship. This depended on how they read the "voice" and tone of the direct speech. A key point about terminology was the frequent reference to Rupert's conversation as "reported speech"; well-informed students noted that Joan quotes direct speech for Rupert, while reporting her own in summary, and observed that this showed her desire to capture the moment and remember everything he had said to her. Many answers were quite mature (and some rather censorious) in their view of Joan's infatuation. Discerning students discussed the ideas implied by the juxtaposition of "transcendent and satisfying" with "this bloody awful life". The best answers were able to discuss Wyndham's idiolect with a clear-sighted view of the attitudes to love and sex during the war. A number speculated on the possible audiences for the diary and the extent to which there were several potential readerships. Candidates had some difficulty with class distinctions: the use of colloquialisms such as "damn well" led some to label Rupert as "lower class", and only a few recognised that an eighteen year-old girl with a share in

an art studio was almost certainly middle to upper class in background. Only a few candidates really saw the humour in the passage. Because this piece was under the heading of Love and Loss, some candidates managed to find something to say about loss: the loss of Joan's aspirations to be an artist, her loss of freedom and the loss of Rupert for a week.

Family Relationships

This was the most popular topic. Responses ranged from straightforward description of the story to highly perceptive accounts of how Nellie Weeton had "coded" her message, given what was unsaid between herself and the addressee, whom she clearly knew very well and who would probably be able to read between the lines. Higher band answers explored the tone and register of the text and made interesting links with expectations associated with social class. Candidates were able to label features with appropriate technical terms but many made little attempt to deduce the underlying values and attitudes, beyond the obvious ones that Nellie appears pleased with the situation, and with Mrs Pedder in particular. Students sometimes focused for too long on the lengths and order of paragraphs but neglected to analyse the effects of structure in any depth. There was also a tendency to spend some time listing what wasn't there: for example, a lack of address to Nellie's friend and a lack of signature. By taking note of the blurb at the top of the page ("an extract from a letter") students would have saved themselves valuable time and space. Many candidates referred to the 'archaic' language used and then cited examples such as 'seldom' and 'amiable' and many other words that are not archaic.

At AO1 successful responses were fluently-written and used embedded quotations to good effect. They confidently identified a wide range of linguistic and literary features, and were able to show how writers had used them to convey attitudes, values and ideas. Lower band answers identified linguistic or literary features but did not often apply them to an analysis of the writer's technique.

At AO2 successful responses explored a wide range of linguistic, literary and structural features. Higher band students discussed writers' attitudes and values confidently and supported observations with appropriate exemplification. They showed evidence of independent thinking by offering perceptive insights. The most effective answers were written in a fluent, concise style and quotations were usually short, focused and smoothly embedded in the commentary. Lower band answers managed to identify a limited range of relevant attitudes and values but tended to work through the passages chronologically. This approach often resulted in a descriptive discussion of the content.

This is an extract from a letter written by Nellie Weeton to her friend, describing her first evening as a governess at the home of Mr and Mrs Pedder. Sh. The writer is in first person, we can see this from the pronouns she/he has used 'I am treated with so much deference'. Although it's a letter it does not start with 'dear', or something similar, however we know it's a letter because it has his/her name and surname underneath.

It's a letter because it has his/her name and surname underneath.
 It's a very formal letter, we can see from the language Heloise used. 'I have...' doesn't shorten it to: 'I've', as we intend to use in informal language.

It is written in 1209, and sometimes we can understand this because there are some archaic language, for example 'livery', which we do not use living in the now day language. The use of present and past tense, has ~~to~~ takes the reader back to her experience, and present thoughts of her. 'I now feel much more at home.' Showing her feelings after the experience. 'I have had some insurance...' The modal verb 'had', shows past, and we can see things then. The modal verb

Walter Term of reference to 'Mr and Mrs Peabody' is very formal, showing her class and showing the high status of Mr and Mrs Peabody. & this also shows respect in between.

Here is an answer that was awarded a Band 1 score for A01.



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Examiner Comments

This answer shows an awareness of linguistic features but tends to be descriptive, rather than analytical. The candidate writes with clarity but there are lapses in expression.



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Examiner Tip

Having identified a linguistic or literary feature, explain why a writer might have used it.

Within this diary extract, the young female reports on an intimate level the events of her day, emphasizing her forward attitudes and value of sex and passion as well as a consolation for her underlying hardships during wartime. Her affectionate attitude towards Rupert is explored through her use of descriptive language, whilst the form and structure suggest her values of humour and sexual pleasure. There is perhaps also an underlying idea presented through the subtleties of her linguistic and grammatical choices that there is a sense of dissatisfaction in her relationship and her life in general.

The intimate and unrestrained nature of this writing, due to the personal nature of a diary not intended for wider reading beyond that of the writer herself, reflects Joanie's underlying sexual urges and attitude towards passion. Structurally paralleling its content, this extract builds up into a 'climax', which can be likened to that of her sexual experiences throughout the day. The text begins her declarative sentences referencing her 'passion over the absent Rupert', and picks up pace throughout the text, for example with the expletive listing detailing Rupert: "He was all brown and glowing, his twin cheeks flushed like pomegranates, talking about..." This also shows her admiration of Rupert as she is keen to detail him in her diary and the simile of pomegranates suggests she is attracted to him as she may experience the 'edible' qualities of him and wishes to 'devour him', as she would a tasty pomegranate. The exclamations of the single paragraph 'Boy, what a steak! And what onions!', show her heightened emotions at this point in the chronology, anticipating

the sexual relations, this excitement and overwhelming joy may mirror the sexual arousal she was feeling, again underlining her positive and perhaps central attitudes towards sex.

The writer's affection and ultimately valuing of Rupert is clear throughout, expressed through her use of affectionate lexis. We first encounter Rupert with the phrase "and there was old R. lurching down the street with a cheery smile on his face, completely ignoring the guns." The fronted conjunction implies resolution; at last she has found what she has been longing for "all morning". The adjective "old" is an affectionate description, suggesting she values their friendship and feels somewhat protective of him. Given the abbreviated or perhaps code name 'R.' again suggest his familiarity and her adoration of him, and *also* is a typical feature of this genre of diary writing. The verb 'lurching' has a somewhat humorous effect, particularly given the surrounding of the German bombings which he is apparently nonchalant to. Perhaps the writer sees this as bravery, and admires him for his bold masculinity, but there is also a sense of concern as the scene is tainted by the war, which she later ~~was~~ blames resentfully for her not having "time for art anymore" and may have contributed to her "bloody awful life". Although she values and admires Rupert, her attitude towards the war is resentful.

This answer was awarded full marks for A02.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate analyses attitudes and values in a fluent, sophisticated manner. S/he recognises elements of humour. Appropriate quotations are embedded in an integrated discussion of language and structure.



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Examiner Tip

Consider the tone of the passage and use that as an opportunity for analysing literary and linguistic techniques, as well as attitudes and values.

To achieve these purposes Pankhurst uses various techniques to include the audience. She begins by directly addressing the audience using the 2nd person possessive adjective "you" and continues to address them ~~with the~~ ^{through the} use of the 2nd person pronoun "you". Pankhurst is aware of the ~~difference~~ different nationality she is addressing and ensures she explains fully the motives and background to the British women's struggle for equality, so that ~~the~~ American audience will understand ~~the~~ ^{British} ~~difference~~ in culture ~~of~~ Britain: "In Great Britain it is a custom (...) to ask questions of ~~a~~ ^{candidates} of parliament (...)".

Pankhurst presents her belief that the women involved in the movement are innocent, stating ^{clearly} that ~~what~~ ~~the~~ their acts "were not militant at all"; ^{emphasising} ~~rephrasing~~ this idea by ^{later} rephrasing the sentence: "they were not doing anything militant". This inclusion of the 3rd person pronoun

as the subject of the clause stresses her belief ^{that she must} ~~of~~ ^{protecting} the women. In addition, ~~she~~ ^{and} she uses emotive lexis ~~such as~~ ^{adverbial phrases} such as "brutally ill-used" to show the women's unfair treatment ^{which in turn aims to} ~~and~~ to persuade the audience of their innocent, ^{non-violent} role in the situation.

Pankhurst's speech conforms to the conventions of the genre of speeches which aids in how effective it is in drawing in the audience and keeping them engaged and in

agreement. In addition to directly addressing the audience throughout each paragraph, she reinforces her beliefs, values ^{about} and attitudes towards the subject through the use of syntactic ^{parallelism} when they felt they couldn't wait any longer, ~~repetition~~: "when they laid all the arguments (...), when they (...)" to stress that the ~~men~~ ^{USA's} forefathers ~~are~~ ^{completely} fought for independence was in fact a ~~great~~ final solution. She ~~also uses repetition of the modal "you have to"~~ and this use of the modal ^{imperatives and} ~~construction~~ "you have to" stresses the ^{in politics} ~~women~~ of the audience's duty to speak up ^{for women's rights}. Another ^{more} effective characteristic of speeches is the balance of ^{complex} ~~big~~ and ^{simple} ~~short~~ sentences. The contrast of sandwiching the simple, short ^{declarative} ~~sentence~~ "No man was ever put out of a public meeting for asking a question" between two complex sentences brings the attention ^{to} ~~of~~ the injustice of the inequality between men and women ^{of the audience}. Very short straight to the point ^{declaratives} ~~sentences~~ such as "It has always been so" ^{reflects} ~~demonstrates~~

Parkhurst's belief that what she is informing the audience of is true fact.

For added interest and development or support of her argument, Parkhurst uses metaphors and imagery:

"You have two babies". This extended metaphor ^{representing} ~~representing~~ ^{politically} ~~politically~~ ^{contextually} ~~contextually~~ ^{in politics} ~~in politics~~ but broadly speaking as well, includes the audience through the use of the 2nd person pronoun "You" and the imagery ^{including} ~~based on~~ babies, a families

concept to women, stereotypically speaking. In addition to being able to relate to babies, Parkhurst uses a common saying "you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs" which would be familiar to her audience and creates imagery in the audience's mind whilst achieving its aim of meaning that ^{it is necessary for} some people to suffer during the course of seeking improvement i.e. people will suffer during women's fight for freedom.

Here is an answer that scored full marks for A01.



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Examiner Comments

This answer discusses the text in a controlled, confident and fluent manner. The candidate has adopted an integrated approach and has employed a wide range of appropriate terminology. Linguistic features have been linked to attitudes and values in a sophisticated way.



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Examiner Tip

Try to examine a variety of linguistic and literary features in your discussion. Use integrated quotations to support observations.

We also see the way the ^{writer} considers himself above the English upper class by his use of the modifier "coarse" when describing the emotion of one such person, and his referral to them as "the creature", both the ~~modifier~~ adjective "coarse" and the noun "creature" having ~~greater~~ connotations of bestial and unrefined behaviour.

"they have come to amuse themselves in a noisy fashion". In this quote we see the way the writer distances himself from the rest of the audience by the plural pronoun "they", the

implicature being that he has come to amuse himself in quite a different fashion. The use of "they" also shows his disrespect for the people as he has not given them a name or a title.

The juxtaposition of the writer's description of the "feast" that some of the audience bring with his description of the poor gives the latter a greater impact as the reader has a greater sense of the contrast between rich and poor "they endeavour to sell you penny dolls... to induce you to play at Aunt Sally." The reiteration of "endeavour" through the synonym "induce" also emphasises their desperation, ~~and~~ whilst the simile "Nearly all of them resemble mangy, wretched, hungry, beaten, mangy dogs, waiting for a bone, without hope of finding much on it." and the asyndetic listing contained within it, show both the writer's pity for and ~~the~~ repulsion for the poor.

This response falls into the mid-range of achievement for AO2.



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Examiner Comments

This is an inconsistent response because the candidate shows moments of insight but not all points are developed in sufficient depth. The discussion lacks control in places but this answer should be rewarded for showing some appreciation of the writer's attitudes and values.



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Examiner Tip

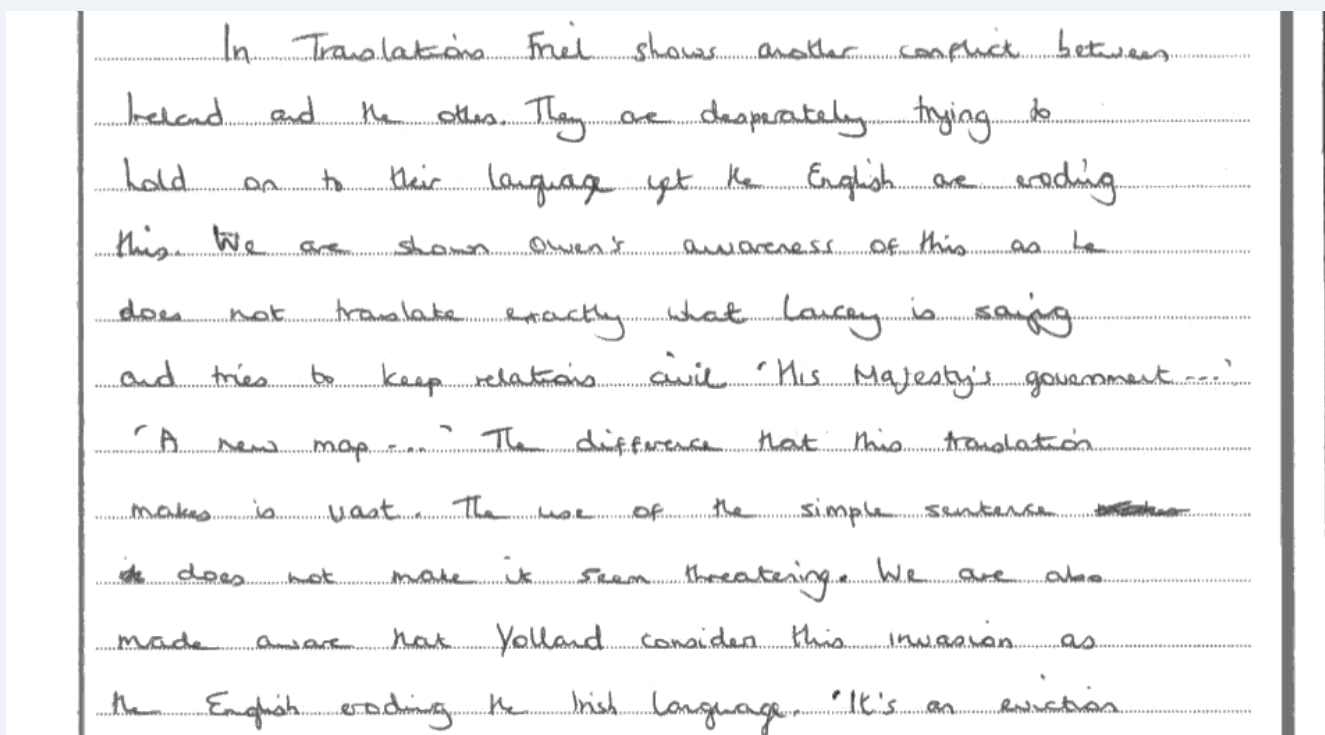
Use planning time to note the ways in which writers display a variety of attitudes values and ideas.

Question 2

A Sense of Place

This was the least popular topic. In general, the contextual knowledge of these texts was secure but the analysis of form and techniques varied. Only a few answered on the poetry texts: responses tended to focus on a description of the sense of place, although there were some very cogent discussions of Betjeman's views of the modern world and how a sense of place was being eroded by progress; comments on Hardy tended to ignore the variety of ways in which his poems presented images of the world.

A number of candidates didn't explore the idea of 'places' in conflict with the rest of the world, rather they looked at characters or voices. Several answers simply ignored the question and discussed the two plays in terms of presentation of place with no reference to conflict. Some drama answers were able to find excellent parallels between Friel and Hare in terms of character function, although very few discussed the euphemistic nature of political speech in either play. Candidates seemed more confident in answering on Translations and were able to identify literary and linguistic techniques. However, a considerable number had difficulty applying their knowledge of context to the question, choosing to discuss the historical conflict between Ireland and England at the expense of considering Baile Beag in relation to the wider world. Whilst the majority of answers showed a detailed knowledge of the staging of Translations, The Stuff Happens responses were generally less secure with some confusion about the theatricality of the text; a number of candidates referred to it as being real. However, higher band answers did consider the effect of the staging and demonstrated secure knowledge of political and historical contexts. Some candidates padded their answers with quotations from critics that were not especially relevant and did not help them to answer the question.



In Translations Friel shows another conflict between Ireland and the other. They are desperately trying to hold on to their language yet the English are eroding this. We are shown Owen's awareness of this as he does not translate exactly what Laurence is saying and tries to keep relations civil 'His Majesty's government...' 'A new map...' The difference that this translation makes is vast. The use of the simple sentence ~~the~~ does not make it seem threatening. We are also made aware that Yolland considers this invasion as the English eroding the Irish language. 'It's an eviction

of sorts' this simple sentence expresses Yolland's views on the matter. 'Something is being eroded' this declarative is brushed off by Owen. We are given the impression that Owen is trying to reassure himself that this is not betrayal. Sarah is a character used to represent Ireland throughout the play. She starts off being able to speak 'My name is...'. The elopées represent how fragile this is however as it shows Sarah's hesitation. The green dress she wears to the dance is also symbolic of this as it is her country's colours. Sarah

is used metaphorically as by the end of the play she can no longer speak. Lacey uses the interrogative 'Who are you?' and then the imperative 'Name!' and Sarah cannot reply. The exclamation shows Lacey's commanding tone. Her uselessness by the end of the play represents the erosion of the Irish language.

In *Stuff Happens* there is a similar theme as the superpower US conflicts with the rest of the world and also leaves Iraq voiceless. This is shown by the ~~soliloquy~~ soliloquy at the end. The two rhetorical questions used 'How many Iraqis...?' show that Iraq doesn't matter and that it is left voiceless and powerless. The metaphor 'Iraq has been concipied' shows the Iraqi exile's view on the injustice.

The conflict in *Translations* against Ireland and the rest of the world is also shown to us through the Donnelly twins. They are at the centre of the conflict and ready to fight back. The declarative 'The Donnelly twins know how' shows us that Doalby has faith in them and knows they will not let the English erode the Irish. We are also aware of the part the Donnelly twins have already played. 'What's this about...?' The interrogative shows Owen's knowledge of their involvement. The paralinguistics 'begins whistling...' also show Doalby's knowledge of their involvement.

There is a maximum of 10 marks available for A02 and successful responses were able to show a good appreciation of possibilities offered by dramatic and poetic forms, make sophisticated comments about structure, and analyse language effectively. This extract is from a middle band answer for A02.



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Examiner Comments

This answer demonstrates secure knowledge of the plays but is too descriptive. There is some acknowledgement of the dramatic nature of these texts. Attitudes and values are alluded to, rather than analysed.



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Examiner Tip

Analyse ways in which playwrights use dramatic devices to explore key ideas.

on the same page Lancelotti again foreshadows the invasion over Ireland in the following quote, 'we are here - here - in this place - you understand? -

to make a map - a map - a map and -' the pause at the end of the sentence foreshadows that they are not just here to draw up the Ordnance Survey map but also to 'invade their country.

As Lancelotti has been shown to create conflict with the rest of the world in *Translations* by Brian Friel, David Hare has also used a character, to show he is shown to create conflict with the rest of the world, whom is George Bush, ^{now} the former president of America. He is shown to be creating the war with Iraq over the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to capture Osama Bin Laden.

Similar to Lancelotti in *Translations* Bush's character is shown to be arrogant. He won't let everything his way. The following quote, 'I think regime change sounds a lot more civil, doesn't it?' ^{on page 44,} shows Bush being euphemistic, he will do what he wants.

Lower band answers demonstrated knowledge and understanding of texts but neglected to provide a detailed study. The following extract is taken from an answer which was placed in the bottom band for all three AOs.

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Examiner Comments

Despite acknowledging the key terms of the question, the student has only provided a descriptive account of the characters. There is no linguistic analysis of the texts and there is limited reference to context.

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Examiner Tip

Move beyond characters to discuss other relevant generic features.

Question 3

The Individual and Society

Drama was also more popular than poetry for this topic. The frame of the question provided candidates with a great deal of scope and choice in the individuals which they selected to write about, and there was pleasing engagement with the texts, demonstrating appreciation and informed understanding. There tended to be better treatment of the Shakespeare than the Shaffer in most cases: candidates offered interesting readings of Othello's own desire to conform to social norms, being unable to achieve this and forced into rebelling; others examined ways in which Iago and Desdemona challenge social expectations; there were also a number of really engaged readings of Dysart's situation in *Equus*, which offered an opportunity to explore the play's psychological context. Although most of these responses were significantly more focused on the key terms than in Question 2, there was limited awareness of the dramatists' crafting, especially in relation to *Equus*, where golden opportunities were lost (for example, Alan's horseback charge against the materialistic products of the 70s). In relation to *Othello*, there were few references to genre, with iambic pentameter and soliloquy given a nodding acquaintance but with limited analysis of either.

The best poetry answers considered Eliot, Gunn and Hughes as challenging the poetic/literary norms of the previous/current generation: for example, some considered Prufrock's lack of courage as a failed attempt at challenging society; verse form and techniques were seen as a challenge in style and mode; some looked at the whole of *The Waste Land* as a cultural challenge; Gunn's homosexuality was often cited but it was the 'motorcyclist' poems that gave the richest potential for exploration of the question; Hughes was least well applied to the question - there were very few references to *Jaguar*, for example, and even where a suggestion that *Wind* could be seen as Hughes presenting nature as a challenge to society, the student found it hard to formulate a clear argument; however, one potentially effective response looked at *The Horses* as a challenge to orthodox Christian views of the world.

Despite the plays "Othello" and "Equus" being set over 300 years apart they both include the main protagonists desire to challenge the established order of society. Shakespeare presents Othello as the Moor general in the Venetian army and Shaffer presents Alan Strang - the troubled teenager who has committed a horrific crime.

Othello's race makes the high position he holds within the army very unusual for the time in which it was written during Elizabethan England. The dramatist takes a huge risk by challenging the stereotypical racist views held by society at the time. Othello's eloquent speech may surprise the audience at the time as they are expecting the "foul thief" who has "abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals" (1:2) that Brabantio conveys throughout the first scene. However Othello's polite address term to the senate "Most potent, grave and reverend signers" (1:3) far from this and evokes sympathy for the character of Othello whom is clearly being judged wrongly. The fact that

Othello appears much more graceful and honest in his speech than the Venetian senator challenges the established order of society*. On the other hand, the audience of the 1970's production of *Equus* are challenged when they are essentially asked if they feel sympathy for an "innocent" child who has shown an act of imaginable cruelty. Indeed, many did not understand that they were being challenged with, as one critic described the play as "pretentious claptrap". The fact that Alan is still only a child challenges the established order of society and the belief in 1970's England that children were innocent. Alan's taboo language towards the nurse in Act 1 Scene 5 "fuck off" challenges their view of children.

His incoherent language contrasts with that of Othello's eloquent romantic language - both of which challenge the order of society.

Alan's language in "Egus" portrays him as the troubled teenager that he is. His inability to communicate properly "Double your pleasure, Double your fun with doublemint doublemint doublemint gum" (1:3) ~~shows~~ ^{shows} Alan being shown as the 'conventional' teenager, he challenges this by taking it to the extremes with his violence and passion for his god.

Othello once again challenges the order of society by marrying Desdemona - a white girl who is considerably younger than him. This interracial marriage would have been extremely rare at the time. However the audience is once again challenged to examine their own views on the established order of society when their pure love for each other is clearly shown. "The heavens forbid but that our loves and conjurations should increase" (2:1) In some ways it could be argued that Othello creates his own order of society by defying all of the conventions put against him. The critic A.C Bradley quoted that Othello "does not belong to our world!" //

This answer was awarded a top band mark for A03.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate has adopted an integrated approach in analysing both texts, comparing them in a coherent manner and referring to a variety of contextual details.

A similar 'method' to break away from the boundaries of society, is portrayed in 'The Jayvor', after the first two stanzas being strictly about other animals conforming to society (being emphasized by anthropomorphism 'apes yawn' and 'parrots snick'), the rest of the poem shows that just desire can be 'strong' enough to break these boundaries. This is done by using innocence and childhood as a symbol. The poet suggests that a picture of the

Jayvor 'might be painted on a nursery wall', ~~stating~~ conveying his strong attitudes that children should be able to 'think for themselves' and not have to automatically conform to the rules of society. This is supported by 'as a child at a dream' - suggesting that children are able to imagine situations where anything is possible - and that everybody else in society should be able to too.

As if to criticise human behaviour in society, 'Thrushes' are compared by Hughes as being 'better' than humans. This again supports his technique of using animals to convey the freedom in society.

The syntactic parallelism 'no sudden procrastination... no sighs...' reinforces the speaker's view that human qualities in society are looked down upon because their actions are always being assessed by the order of society.

Gunn uses his own experiences in life to convey the ~~idea~~ desperation of breaking away from the order of society. In 'The Corridor', abstract nouns such as 'love' and 'pleasure' are used extensively to ~~symbolise~~ symbolise the importance of the topic being discussed to the speaker. 'The Corridor' expresses Gunn's views on homosexuality after his realisation that he is not heterosexual. The act of love he

'was too ugly for' suggests the views ~~that society have~~ ~~on this subject, and~~ and non-acceptance that society have on this subject. This is an example of metaphysical poetry - as it addresses situations in society that may be alienated by citizens in society. It is also questioning society at the end 'and go, one hand held out, to meet a friend?' and this is one of the typical features of metaphysical poetry. ~~and~~

This is an extract from an answer that was placed in the middle band for A01.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

There is an attempt to answer the question but the approach is inconsistent. The discussion is fluent but there is a lack of linguistic terms. Key points need to be developed fully.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Select textual references carefully in order to present a convincing discussion.

Question 4

Love and Loss

This was a popular choice of topic and there were many high-scoring answers here. All text choices drew quite heavily on contextual issues, higher band answers drawing well on changing genre conventions and expectations, whilst lower band candidates relied on descriptive biographical information. So long as students of the drama texts remembered to discuss the reverse chronology of *Betrayal*, and to explore the narrative framing of *The Glass Menagerie* through Tom and Williams's other stylistic stage devices, this was a gift of question. The contrasts between these two plays are clear in terms of staging and dialogue, as well as underlying values, however, there was a tendency to dwell on Jim/Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* at the expense of looking at the play as a whole. Also, the autobiographical element of this play tended to drown out the effect of the Depression in America which, when discussed, was helpful for examining the strain caused by economic hardship, and exploring the representation of Amanda's youth. The highest-scoring students chose to contrast the economic context of Williams's play with the middle class affluence of *Betrayal* - some pointed out how these relationships seemed to have suffered from a lack of value in the midst of the materialistic nature of society.

For those who had studied the poetry, Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* was a gift for this question. Others looked at Donne's *The Sun Rising* and/or *The Good Morrow* and/or *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*. For Plath, nearly every answer dwelt at length on *Daddy*: while some students wrote well on this, and it was useful for AO1, there was frequent really surprising vagueness about Plath's father and childhood. In addition, many accounts of this poem were rather weak and limited in coverage. Plath's poems about her children, especially *You're* and sometimes *Morning Song* were generally better explored, although again students seemed surprisingly to have only partial insights and knowledge rather than a thorough grounding in these texts. The rich imagery of these poems, for example, was often only minimally explored.

Within the Metaphysical poems especially, time is referred to as being positive, and this is most clearly shown through the poem called 'The Relic' by John Donne, in which he discusses the prospects of life after death. As in most of the Metaphysical poems, Donne shows particular use of rhyming couplets within this poem and by doing so exaggerates further the idea that the couple will remain together even after death and so suggests that time will not have a negative effect upon their relationship. This is heightened further as Donne uses religious based lines in order to reflexively describe themselves. 'Relic' from the title of the poem ~~was~~ doesn't seem to have

a positive connotation in terms of present day thoughts and ideas, however at the time it was written, relics themselves were of high importance and so by using this connotative style, Donne has ranked himself highly compared to how he was truly remembered. John Donne was also known to be highly religious again strengthening the reason for using such highly religious lexis. Although Plath ~~is~~ herself was not highly religious, it seems that time has helped her to create a strong bond with

her father highlighted through the poem 'Full Fathom Five'. In this she describes her father as being inside a kingdom which she cannot reach, but also describes scenes which connote water to the wider audience. Due to the context of Plath's father dying while she was still very young, this poem could be clearly linked to her failed suicide attempt through drowning. 'Waves crest and trough' represents a clear example for this as Plath uses her father's beard as a metaphor for a fishing net in an attempt to catch fish. This in itself seems to reflect the ongoing motif of Plath's writing where life is juxtaposed with death and in this case the catching of the fish. By doing this it can be implied that Plath's mental health is clearly ~~also~~ partly due to the death of her father, even though it ~~clearly~~ seems in this poem she has ^{partially} come to terms with his loss.

In direct contrast it can also be shown that time can have a negative influence on certain people and

more importantly, their relationships with others. 'Edge' is known to be one of Plath's last poems before her suicide, and through the use of structure the audience is able to envisage the proleptical scenario set within this poem. The opening line of this poem reads: 'The woman is perfected.'

This answer was placed in the bottom band for all three AOs.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Meaning is not always expressed clearly. Basic contextual references are made they do not illuminate the texts in any way. Not all comments are relevant to the theme of love and loss.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Check that key points are expressed clearly.

One fairly obvious aspect of the influence of time on relationships is that of brief and temporary physical love which has no/little lasting essence. ~~which is~~ Although sex is important in relationships, if the relationship is only concerned with that aspect of love, it has little meaning and therefore has a transient nature. This is present in the 'Elegy: To his Mistress going to bed' by John Donne (1572 - 1631) on Page 29, line 9 of 'Metaphysical poetry' in which John Donne is clearly ~~interested~~ interested in purely physical and fleeting love that doesn't last in time. 'Unlace Yourself: for that harmonious chime// Tells me from you that now 'tis your bed-time' ~~is highly used~~ has techniques that could connote brief, physical love. The imperative 'Unlace yourself' creates an authoritative tone which could signify John Donne's objectification of women that should only be used for carnal pleasures. This is supported by the Sibilance used via the repeated

's' sounds in 'unlace yourself' which has extremely sexual suggestions.
The contraction of 'tis' was arguably done just to keep up

the regular meter of ten syllables per line, thus creating an iambic pentameter - a technique synonymous with love due to its ~~sym~~ similarity with a heart beat. A heroic couplet is also apparent when comparing the last ~~word~~ phrase of the two sentences which are the noun 'chime' and the abstract noun 'time'. The assonance present in both nouns creates an 'i' sound which could possibly convey a sense that John Donne is egocentric and narcissistic. This is also supported by the fact John Donne posed for his own funeral monument before his death. Also the title includes the vocative 'mistress' implying his wife wasn't enough to satisfy his ravenous sexual urges so he had to have a mistress to quench his sexual thirst. The presumption is that, judging by the line 'tis your bed-time', John Donne wishes to have sex with his mistress because if he does not, he'll have to wait till the morning before he has a chance to because she is departing to go to sleep. And so John Donne presents a demanding, sexual one in his relationship for temporary, physical love, thus making the influence of time ~~very~~ integral to Donne's need for purely transient love that doesn't last the test of time.

This is different to the writings of Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) in 'Selected Poems' in the poem 'Spinster' on page 4, line 28 in which Plath participates the notion that the influence of time on her relationship with men in general has led her to the rather bitter conclusion that she doesn't wish to get married in order to protect herself from heartbreak.

'As no mere insurgent man could hope to break // With curse,
fist, threat' is rife with angst and anger towards men that
is arguably spawned from the character's years of experience,
thus the influence of time comes into play. The title 'Spinster'
is a derogatory vocative used for women that are not married
beyond the years when you women usually get married. This hatred
for men and the understanding for the poem's protagonist is
perhaps apparent in the extract 'hope to break'. The Molossus
combined with the plosives of 'p', 't', 'b' and 'k' constructs
short, punchy outbursts; ergo mimicking this harsh, bark-like sound.
This is then followed by 'curse, fist, threat' which also uses
Molossus but instead with sibilance via the two 's' sounds in
the nouns 'curse' and 'fist' which both have negative connotations
of black magic and fighting. The hiss-like sounds in the 2nd
set of phrases could be mimicking that of the hissing of a cat.
This is an interesting suggestion as the 1st set that uses the
infinitive verb phrase 'to break' uses plosives that give it a sound
~~that~~ reminiscent of the barking of a dog. The dog, perhaps
could be representing men and the cat of women, thus the clashing
of the plosives and sibilance could arguably be symbolising
plath's or at least the protagonist's hatred of men and misanthropic
views. What is also intriguing is that 1956 is the same
year Spinster was composed which is also the same year that
Sylvia Plath got married. This does raise questions as to
what were her internal feelings and views of marriage at the time.

The suggestion of this poem is that, for Plath, the influence of time on the protagonist's relationship with men is decay and the disintegration of love, hence the overly aggressive techniques used throughout.

This is an extract from an answer placed in the top band for all three AOs.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The candidate has produced an articulate, confident and integrated answer, employing a wide range of sophisticated terminology. This answer takes an incisive and evaluative approach, recognising the poetic aspects of the texts. A wide range of contextual factors are analysed and evaluated in an effective and convincing manner.

Question 5

Family Relationships

This was the most popular topic option and the majority of answers were on the drama texts. The best drew excellent contextual and structural parallels between the plays, although some lost sight of the question by embarking on unassimilated discussions of Greek tragedy. There was also a tendency to discuss the characters as real people; candidates were clearly engaged by the issues in the plays but were not always able to keep a critical distance. Some answers only discussed conflict in relationships with no reference to appearance and reality. Those that did engage with the specifics of the question were able to discuss staging and characterisation in a holistic fashion. The best answers recognised the homage that Miller had paid to Ibsen in *All My Sons*, addressing literary context as a result and concluding that Ibsen was the master out of the two. Some suggested that Miller's play is more time-limited and culture-specific than *A Doll's House*, which deals with more universal issues of male-female relations or, more widely, the power dynamics of most human relationships. The main cause for concern with many answers was the focus on character-based discussions and the thinness of context for many. However, where candidates looked at the use of setting, the structures and other dramatic devices, there was much to say. Some candidates drew interesting links between the use of props (e.g. trees) in both plays, whilst others explored the skilful employment of the single set as a means of establishing the contrast between appearance and reality. Language in Ibsen was tackled effectively, especially Torvald's pet names for Nora. However, there was a tendency to simplify *All My Sons*: the complexity of the play, especially the treatment of the Chris-Joe Keller relationship and significance of Chris's experiences in the battlefield, was often missed.

As with a number of poetry answers for the other topic options, there was a tendency to launch into a response without looking in detail at the demands of the question and, again, not always

offering a sense of the whole of the work in which an analytical, evaluative response could be placed. Candidates obviously responded to the Wife of Bath's voice and attitudes, and enjoyed the different voices in Harrison's poems, but needed to draw upon the poetic features in order to demonstrate a critical evaluation. Lower band answers avoided examination of contexts in Chaucer's text but recognised Harrison's references to class issues. A few responses - which should have gained higher marks because of their analytical arguments - focused on the conflict between appearance and reality in a variety of situations (e.g. old age, education, the class system) but skirted round the actual focus of the question and the umbrella topic of Family Relationships.

Miller also presents the strong impact of society and how their appearance doesn't measure up with reality. In desperate struggle to achieve the "American Dream" for the Keller family, and to provide an equally successful image for his sons, Joe Keller allowed cracked cylinder heads to be sent to war, killing 21 men. This sends a strong message about the value of material possessions and the desperation to create an image of success. Miller also comments on the impacts of war, and how war affected businessmen as well as soldiers. "It was a madhouse... they were whippin' w with the telephone", here the metaphor "madhouse" connotes the intensity of the pressure Joe felt, and verb "whippin'" expresses his fear to not provide the necessary equipment. Miller also uses Joe to give the message about the impossibility of "bringing boys into the world without a trigger finger", and in the denouement, "Half the goddamn country is gotta go if I go!" This shows how Joe Keller feels war impacted society as a whole and that he should not be blamed; ~~the~~ and contrasts Chris' moral responsibilities from the war.

This social comment would have made many American families think about the impact of war on their

own lives, their personal pressures, and if the "American Dream" is worth making sacrifices to achieve. Similarly, Ibsen

sent an important social message about the superficiality of marriage, and the conflict between this image and the reality that many women are trapped within their roles. Torvald describes Nora's duty to her family as "sacred", which implies she should be grateful for her role. Ibsen uses Nora to controversially state that "hundreds of thousands of women" are forced to "sacrifice their honour" for marriage; this idea of women's lives being "sacrificial" was extremely controversial and forced women to question their own happiness.

Minor characters within both plays act as catalysts for drama. The main characters all aim to protect their appearance, therefore without disturbance, reality wouldn't be revealed. In "All My Sons", George and Ann disturb the Kellers' facade and ultimately reveal the secret. Ann's power is held within the letter, which contains the truth about Larry. George enters wearing his father's hat; this is symbolic of his pride for his father, and a show also of his conflict with the Kellers. It is this conflict which disturbs the Kellers' "happiness" and forces reality to the surface.

Similarly, minor characters Mrs. Linde and Krogstad reveal Nora's dishonesty within "A Doll's House." Her dishonesty is

hinted from the exposition, with the macaroons symbolising her potential for deceit. This initial rebellion hints that Nora

isn't as innocent and honest as her husband assumes. Mrs Linde then acts as a confidante to Nora, as she confesses her dishonesty. Mrs Linde also functions as a voice of society, "a wife can't borrow without her husband's consent", here the auxiliary verb "can't" expresses her absolute certainty, mirroring societies disgust towards a dishonest wife.

This answer achieved a top band score in all three AOs.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

A fluent and sophisticated response, which has a very strong sense of genre. Linguistic, literary and contextual features are effortlessly combined. A wide range of contexts are identified and evaluated in support of a convincing argument.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

In order to gain maximum marks for AO3, make sure all key contextual observations are developed fully.

The main conflict between appearance and reality in Miller's *All My Sons* is that of Joe Keller. He appears to be a businessman, strongly devoted to his family and neighbors. Miller has portrayed this image of Keller in the opening scenes of the play, in which Keller is seen reading the paper and having a conversation with his neighbors in his backyard. This presents the image of ~~Miller~~ Keller, as being an average-Joe, suburban man. He appears to be well liked amongst the community, even playing policemen with the local children.

However, the truth behind Joe Keller is that he knowingly shipped out damaged cylinder heads to the U.S Army, causing many planes to crash. Keller let his business partner, Steve Deever take the blame.

Whilst the audience don't definitely learn

this until the end of Act Two, when Kate lets slip that Keller has never taken a day off sick, Miller has used animals of other characters, especially Steve Deever's children, Ann and George, to constantly hint at the truth, through foreshadowing. For example, Keller becomes extremely paranoid when Ann arrives at the Keller household, worrying that she is there to seek the truth and justice for her father, fears he confesses to Chris on page 37, "She don't hold nothing against me, does she?"

Miller has also used the Kellers' neighbours to present the conflict between conflict and reality, as both Sue and Jim admit to knowing that Joe was guilty. This may have been used by Miller to criticise American society, in which no one speaks up against something they know is wrong.

This answer scored highly in A02 and A03 but was placed in the middle band for A01.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is a fluent answer which has the key concerns of the question firmly in mind. A strong appreciation of context supports a confident discussion. Unfortunately, marks have been lost for A01 because of an absence of appropriate linguistic and literary terminology.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Make sure that a wide variety of appropriate linguistic and literary terminology is employed.

To avoid unnecessary stress and time-wasting, candidates should stick to the same topic choice for both sections.

Candidates need to avoid feature spotting by adopting a more integrated approach - linking terminology to attitudes, values and ideas.

Candidates should organise their discussions around key aspects of the unseen texts, rather than present a chronological commentary.

Candidates need to analyse aspects of genre in greater detail, develop detailed knowledge of a wide range of contextual factors, give equal weight to both of their chosen texts and explore and analyse a variety of relationships between texts.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	a*	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	100	84	74	64	54	44	35	26	0
Uniform boundary mark	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	0

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