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## Examiners' Report January 2011

### GCE English Literature 6ET03 01

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## Introduction

### Section A: Unseen Prose and Poetry

For the unseen question a significant preference of the candidates was to write about the poem although the discrepancy was rather less marked than in the two previous sittings of the paper. We were able to differentiate a wide range of achievement from the responses received to both unseens although examiners felt that there was a tendency for less able candidates to opt for the poem.

For all questions, an individual mark for each of the assessment objectives is awarded. For the unseens AOs 1 (out of 10) and 2 (out of 30) are being assessed.

For AO1 we look for a literary approach to the topic with appropriate use of literary terminology. Literary points may be made quite acceptably without employing the precise literary term. The other facet of this AO is the requirement to write accurately and coherently. Although examiners are tolerant of minor slips in accuracy inevitable under examination conditions, we observe that even answers that score highly, demonstrate inaccurate spelling and grammar.

For AO2 we are looking for the candidates' ability to tackle this AO's focus on structure, form and language. Many candidates do not find an equal balance between each of these three threads of the AO. Nevertheless a detailed engagement with language in particular is essential to exploring what the writer is actually saying. The best answers manage to balance a knowledge of how the writer operates without losing sight of meaning.

### Section B: Paired Texts

For the texts, by far the largest number of responses came from the *Relationships* section (with a very large number of answers to the (a) question). The other popular choice was for the *War* section with a similar preference for the (a) question. Very few answers were received on the *Identifying Self* and *Journeys* sections.

We were pleased to observe evidence of sound knowledge of the texts in many of the answers when a complex novel (and as often as not two) had been assimilated in quite a short teaching time. It is desirable that three texts have been studied although it is possible to achieve at the highest level with a discussion on only two. The important differentiator is the range of knowledge demonstrated within a text as well as between them. Some examiners felt that some low achieving candidates provided evidence of knowledge and understanding of a very limited number of poems from the anthologies or collections as well as rather generalised, non-specific or limited knowledge of the novel or novels discussed. No candidates failed to meet the requirement to have studied a post-1990 text.

As with the Unseen section of the paper, an individual mark was awarded for each assessment objective. In addition to AO1 and AO2 (marked out of 10), AO3 and AO4 are also assessed (out of 20).

For AO3 it is essential to make links between texts. Low achieving candidates may show sound knowledge of individual texts but demonstrate limited links between them. In order to satisfy the requirements of the second thread of this AO, a well-argued personal response may enable a candidate to score as highly as those who name critics or critical movements to support their own argument.

For AO4, the context of the modern reader is to be taken as the candidate's own informed personal response, (so there is a clear link to AO3) or that of other critics. The cultural worlds and the attitudes they presented at the time of writing are often invaluable in supporting responses to the older texts or the more modern ones that deal with the historical past.

### Question 1

The poem, Lorna Goodison's *Tightrope Walker* was the more popular of the unseen.

The ability to engage with the informal and colloquial voice of the narrator with its witty word play on 'balance' and 'shortfall' in the opening section, was likely to suggest an informed approach to the many literary features to be found in the poem, and which are used to build up an ambiguous and complex picture of the narrator and her chosen profession.

Some tendency to take the poem totally literally limited a number of candidates but the examples of unpleasant consequences of the job were often undervalued at the expense of the richness and exotic nature of the costumes. The disturbing consequences of tight-rope walking such as the 'multiple miscarriages' were often ignored at the expense of noting the use of alliteration. A few candidates thought that the narrator was male and some had odd views on the low life associations of 'fishnet tights'.

Lower band answers sometimes limited themselves to chronological accounts of the action of the poem. Higher band answers would be more likely to deal with the poem's narrative structure and engage in more detail with language features.

Since the language is so rich in imagery and the voice is so distinctive, it was surprising and disappointing to record how many answers were concerned to highlight what is not there like a regular metre or rhyme scheme and to over react to the significance of possible sonnet-like features of the first and last sections of the poem.

Examiners noted out the tendency to identify features such as alliteration or assonance without commenting on the effect they have on the reader.

Chosen question number:

Question 1 Question 2 PLAN

1st impressions: Graphology/aesthetic - 3x fairly even stanzas, no rhyme/

\* Begins in rhyme - some rhyme sounds medicinal almost accidental, hanging

\* CIRCULAR - lines reflect words

Narration - 1st person, ambiguous

Truncated ← Colloquial/exotic juxtaposed

sentence Sarcasm/dark humour/self-

\* Hesitant/ depreciation

uncomfortable Exposing reality - harsh realism

IRONY - Whilst talking about

real life not realised she has used a romantic <sup>extended</sup> metaphor

Involves reader - AMBIGUITY.

Last stanza - gushing repetition

Language - Allusive reference to prostitution

Chiclé

Grotesque/sensual imagery

Setting - Circus (extended metaphor)

"here" and "there" ambiguous

Talks of past/present/future -

structure of stanzas

ESSAY

My first impressions of Homer Goodison's poem were that despite there being no regular rhyme or rhythmic schemes, the stanzas are fairly regular in length, creating a familiar and neat graphology. Perhaps this ordered aesthetic reflects the way the narrator seems to be able to view "my life" in stages or periods within the poem. The first line, "And I have been a tightrope walker" begins in medias res, whilst the ending, which feels as though it is coming to a satisfactory close in the phrase "our show closes down", is cyclical in its reference to the show starting over again "at some other circus ground". Structurally, the poet has used some very short lines, for example "in the air", & this example the placement of the three words perfectly reflects their meaning, as they feel as if they are hanging in space, isolated and suspended.

The first person narration of the poem is interesting in its ambiguity, with references to an unknown "he" and "you".

These combine with the hallucinatory imagery of the poem, such as can be seen in the exotic descriptions of "kingfisher blue", "marabou and plump feathers" and "discreet spangles", along with the sense of movement <sup>from</sup> ~~in~~ words like "shortfall", "here to there" and "from the ground" to constantly keep the reader involved. However, there is a juxtaposition within the poem between these almost magical descriptions and the more realistic colloquial language. There is a harsh reality in the words "occupation", "fraudulent" and "safety nets", used to expose the falsity of the circus. The tone is on the whole hesitant and uncomfortable, as in the line "and incl toward you".

The reader, who becomes involved in the narrator's story from words like "you", feels as though they are gaining access to the narrator's diary. For example through the truncated short-hand sentence "couldn't balance the ledger though" and several self-

depreciating self-statements, such as "I've worked at... being a paid smart-arse". In the last stanza repetition of the word "and" in one long sentence sounds almost gushing as if the narrator is rushing towards the revelation that "the entire act is really a rehearsal". The narrator is trying to tell us that the show staged by the circus is not an authentic one, but one helped by the use of "your receiver" who "steadied you" and "safety nets". Life, she says, is "the finest performance", one over which only she has control; "it's my life". Ironically, however, the circus becomes a somewhat romantic extended metaphor for life as it "repeats" endlessly. Whilst insisting that real life is not rehearsed she has paradoxically suggested its repetitiveness.

Throughout the poem, contributing to its sinister undertone, there are ambiguously allusive references to



prostitution and being taken advantage of sexually. The line which talks of "last night's sandblast to buffer the wild in our talk" holds connotations of sex and being out of control, whilst the reference to "risk net tight" holds modern implications of prostitution. Most disturbing, perhaps, is the line, "your receiver copping what from the ground looks like an innocent fell", in which the insinuation is unashamedly casual in its darkness. There are sharply contrasting sections of the poem, in which grotesque imagery of harm is sensual and intimate. The line "But I broke both my arms and the side of my head once" is uncomfortable and for the reader, not least because of the casual way in which the matter-of-fact statement is reported to them, devoid of emotion. There are some clichés in the writing, though these are delivered with so criticism and irony, for example "all my life" and "falling flat on my back".

The setting of the poem is ambiguous, as the reader is aware by the last stanza that the circus may be ~~only~~ an extended metaphor for life itself. Although ~~words~~ <sup>phrases</sup> such as "here", "there", "once or twice a week" and "this empty tent" seem to establish both setting and routine, the narrator is always vague and never, though she claims to be, "firm on the ground". The poem seems to transcend the past, present and future, with each stanza orderly assigned a period of the narrator's life. Whilst the first stanza sees her reminiscing that "Once I tried my hand at cashing" and the second talks of how "I'm on the ground most days now", the final stanza looks towards the future and "some other circus ground".

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Examiner Comments

The whole essay is included to demonstrate the candidate's confident use of literary terminology, attention to details in the language as well as a discussion of the poem's ambiguities. There is enough of an overview of the poem to justify the marks in Band 3 for A01 and Band 5 for A02

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Examiner Tip

Use terminology to show how it enhances the meaning. Acknowledge ambiguities in the poem. Attend to detail. Provide an overview. This is a brief extract from a low achieving candidate.

An example of a high achieving answer.

Chosen question number:

Question 1

Question 2

Lorna Goodison uses structure, form and language to shape meaning in her poem, 'Tightrope Walker'.

In the first stanza, there are several commas used, 'I've worked at poetry, making pictures, or being a paid smart-arse', this allows the poem to flow and a sense of continuation is created. The commas also slow the poem down when reading it, so the reader can take all the information in, which creates a more real picture. With the commas included, ~~it is~~ <sup>it is</sup> like a list has been made; it is like the speaker is just reading a list of all of things they have done, this emphasises how unsteady this ~~person's~~ speaker's work life has been. The fact that the speaker has

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Examiner Comments

This candidate starts with a rather obvious comment deriving from the question and then spends too much time on the use of commas and struggling to achieve focus and concision.

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Examiner Tip

It is not a good idea to spend too much time on one point. The point being made should enhance the literary nature of the discussion.

## Question 2

Examiners saw a wide range of answers on the extract from the Oscar Wilde novel even though it was a less popular choice than the poem.

Many candidates were confident in dealing with the narrative voice's focus on Dorian Gray's obsessive nature and his search for opium depicting one character's perceptions of his surroundings. The gothic nature of the writing was commented on by many candidates. The sense imagery such as the many visual details and sounds provided thoughtful discussion on what they might signify. External details such as the night time setting, the crowds of people, rain, contrasted with clouds and the moon were often perceived to be contrasted with Dorian Gray through whose consciousness the third person narrative is filtered. There was quite a lot of speculation about the presentation of events and characters outside the passage which not all candidates realised would be clarified by a reading of the rest of the novel. Similarly the literary effect of the ellipsis between 'gallop' and 'Suddenly' is less a deliberate device than an indication that something has been omitted.

Some less able candidates tended to paraphrase what they had read and to make comments on drug addiction and its effects on individuals and society.

Examiners felt that in general more able candidates were tending to choose the prose passage although there was a range of good answers on both unseen texts.

An example of a well focussed candidate who scored in Band 3 for AO1 and low in Band 5 for AO2.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 ~~Plan: Tone: dark / gothic, underworld~~~~Alliteration - 'sodid shame', 'hideous hunger'~~~~Images of hell - 'burned', 'tongues of fire'~~~~Use of ellipsis: creating suspense~~~~Rhetorical questions: questioning~~~~Claustrophobic images~~

'The Picture of Dorian Gray' by Oscar Wilde. Comment on and analyse how the writer's choices of structure, form and language shape meaning.

The extract from 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' is very dark, giving a glimpse of a murky underworld and it's full of suspense. There is a gothic atmosphere and this lasts from the beginning to the end.

It is written in the past tense with third person narration and although this would seem, at first, to create distance between the reader and the narrator, we get the chance to see the thoughts running through this man's mind. "he was determined to forget, to stamp the thing out, to crush it ~~as one would~~ and

~~The setting also creates a murky~~ are things the man regrets and this idea of secrecy adds an air of suspense and intrigue.

The use of rhetorical questions not only allows ~~to~~ the reader to see some of thought processes in this man's mind but they also suggest that he is trying to cover up something, to quiet his own worries in some way. "What could alone for that?" and "...what right had Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? Who had made him a judge over others?" This implies that this man has done something wrong, that he cannot get forgiveness.



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### Examiner Comments

This answer makes a number of literary points concisely. This is good example of how a literary feature is illustrated from the passage and then followed up by an analytical comment on its effect.



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### Examiner Tip

When referring to language features, illustrate and comment on what effect they have on the reader.



Part of an answer that scored in Band 2 for AO1 and in Band 3 for AO2

Within the second paragraph of the extract there is much use of assonance with words such as "sordid", "secret", "sow" and "sins". ~~Plus~~ The repetition of the "s" sound ~~on~~ highlights all of these words to the reader and so extra attention is given to them. This makes the reader question the meaning of these words and why they have been used. The words "sow" and "sins", which are repeated in the paragraph, have connotations to selling your soul to the devil, which is a sin and would also be a secret.

Personification is used to describe the night in the third paragraph. "The moon hung low in the sky like a yellow skull." From time to time a huge misshapen cloud stretched a long arm across and hid it". This effectively sets the scene for the reader, but it ~~also~~ could also be the way that Dorian Gray is seeing the landscape due to the "ef



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Examiner Comments

There are some valid points on language here but the use of terminology is not always correct and the effects could be more precisely analysed.



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Examiner Tip

Use correct terminology. Be precise in describing and analysing the effects language has on the reader.

### Question 3 (a)

This was by far the most popular question on the paper. The most popular texts were *Tess* and *Gatsby*, *Rapture* and the Metaphysicals. There was some appreciation from examiners of the ways in which those who had studied Duffy and the Metaphysicals were able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the crafting of these poems offering pertinent and sensitive interpretations.

The most popular approach was to grapple effectively with the concepts of happiness or the reverse with plenty of textual evidence provided to show how difficult it is to achieve happiness. *Tess* and her parents, Angel and Alec, the permutations of *Gatsby*, Daisy, Tom, Myrtle and Wilson provided much scope for unhappiness in relationships in the most popular of the novels. Pelagia and Mandras provided evidence of the potential for the happiness/failure opposition. Carlo and his feelings for Corelli and the narrative techniques used to present this were often a fruitful line of inquiry; Pelagia and Corelli's relationship provided quite a lot of debate on exactly how happy it was. Donne, Marvell and the seventeenth century attitudes to women and sexual relationships often provided interesting contrasts with the novels but also with what might be going on in the *Rapture* poems.

There were some often perceptive comments on the ways in which Donne depicted his relationships at both ends of the spectrum contrasting the witty and erotic in 'The Flea' or 'The Sun Rising' for example with the violent religious imagery as in 'Batter My Heart' and the grief of 'A Nocturnal Upon St Lucy's Day' There was some impressive knowledge of his private life and religious apostasy to rival that of Duffy's sexuality and religious and educational backgrounds.

On the whole comparisons between the texts was well managed although potentially good answers did underplay the links between the texts despite good knowledge of individual texts. It is important that the links should be literary ones so it is gratifying to observe the ways in which candidates show how the various narratives work or the ways in which poems and novels can find much common ground in their use of language for example. The use of other responses to texts is seen at its best when they are incorporated effectively into the argument, not overdone and complement or lead into the point that comes from the candidate.

Candidates seem to be coming to terms with the need to incorporate contextual awareness and knowledge into their answers. Even though there is a more limited set of contexts for the modern texts, there is often impressive knowledge of the contexts surrounding the writing and reception of Corelli and *Rapture* as well as *Tess*, *Gatsby* and the Metaphysical poets.

An effective link between a critic's view and context.

love) will come along. As Jeannette Winterson wrote in 'The Times', "Rapture is a map of real love in all its charming complexity." For Duffy herself, "poetry can't lie" and she feels that we turn to it at the next intense moment in our life. Duffy's preoccupation with memory is interestingly because she knows it can have the power to both uplift and betray. This paradox is reflected in the last line



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Examiner Comments

The critic's comment and that of the author herself balance each other well.



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Examiner Tip

This is one way of dealing with the context within which the text was written supported by the view of another reader.

An extract from a script that starts very well and which also makes some effective links between texts from the same essay.

Chosen question number: **Question 3(a)**  **Question 3(b)**   
**Question 4(a)**  **Question 4(b)**   
**Question 5(a)**  **Question 5(b)**   
**Question 6(a)**  **Question 6(b)**

In 'The Great Gatsby' written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925 and Carol Ann Duffy's collection of poems 'Rapture' written in 2005, despite the fact of these texts being written almost a century apart we see a comparable representation of relationships that contrast the reader with strong emotion and bring across issues such as the difficulty of 'achieving happiness' in relationships, and we must, as the reader, decide whether it is this grapple with the possible failing of happiness that is the most memorable facet of these texts.

The language used in both 'Haur' and the passage from Gatsby is very similar, as a lexical field of wealth appears in both, in Duffy "coin" "rich" "midas" "millionaires" In 'haur' these words are used to imply that when alone with a lover you don't need wealth, because you feel spiritually wealthy. In Gatsby

We hear words like "silver" "luxury" "value"  
 Although similar imagery suggest that the  
~~gated of the~~ achievement of happiness  
 in a relationship is universal, we see that  
 in 'Gatsby' Gatsby does not, as Duffy does,  
 discard material wealth in favour of spiritual  
 wealth - it seems he perceives Daisy as  
 an example of material wealth, he describes  
 her ~~is~~ as 'silver', he is overly aware of  
 of the difference in their social status. ~~rather~~



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### Examiner Comments

This introduction finds a clear focus on the topic and makes some valid links between texts and suggests some contextual awareness. The links made here suggest a clear detailed knowledge of the texts being discussed. There is good use of terminology and effective illustration.



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### Examiner Tip

Find a clear focus in your introduction suggesting some of the things you intend to do later in your essay. Show your textual knowledge to support your point and use appropriate terminology.

### **Question 3 (b)**

Although this was considerably less popular than Q3a there were plenty of responses at all levels of achievement. There was plenty of opportunity to engage with what might be meant by ‘universal’ and to explore other facets of the ‘time, place, gender’ aspects of the chosen texts.

The range of poetry, from both the Metaphysicals and Duffy was similar to that for Q3a. The universality of the situations that lovers find themselves in encouraged some fascinating links across time, genre and location.

Some interesting contextual points were made about Duffy’s use and adaptation of traditional forms such as the sonnet, Darwin’s influence on Hardy, religious belief in the sixteenth century and the challenges to it in the nineteenth and twentieth. The focuses on sexual relationships and sexuality and how they would have been received in the period in which text is set, such as *Tess* and *Corelli* and the time of writing and now, was a challenge met fully only by high achieving candidates. However most made some attempt to come to terms with these quite complex issues.

### **Question 4 (a)**

We saw very few answers to Q4a and Q4b but the three novels all found perceptive and informed readers exploring the ambiguous treatment of Pip, Pi and Ruby and the narrative strategies employed to tell their stories which may determine the ways in which readers respond to them. There were a very few answers that referred to Grace Nichols’ poems.

### **Question 5 (a)**

The few answers on Q5a and Q5b tended almost exclusively to deal with ‘Small Island’ and ‘The Final Passage’ and found interesting links and differences in the ways in which their authors deal with not dissimilar situations. There were a very small number of references to the poetry of Imtiaz Dharker.

### **Question 6 (a)**

There was a good range of answers on the war texts although a lot fewer than for Relationships. Some examiners felt that answers were disjointed or dealt with only one text in detail. When only a small number of poems is dealt with there is a suspicion of limited preparation which has prevented the candidate achieving highly in AO3. Nevertheless there was evidence of high achievement when candidates did focus on the authors’ intentions and the literary devices they employed. There was some rewarding material when candidates discussed the diversity of language styles across the texts enabling them to make thoughtful comparisons which did score highly in AO3. It was interesting to see connections between the fictionalised versions of Owen and Sassoon in ‘The Ghost Road’ and their real selves as revealed in their poetry. Similarly, the horrors of war as depicted across a huge variety of cultures and styles led to much profitable comparisons (for AO3, as well as for AO1 and AO2).

There was evidence of a following for each of the novels and poetry anthologies although the choice of poems is not very wide ranging, and there were not many answers on ‘Legion’.

A high achieving essay

Chosen question number: **Question 3(a)**  **Question 3(b)**   
**Question 4(a)**  **Question 4(b)**   
**Question 5(a)**  **Question 5(b)**   
**Question 6(a)**  **Question 6(b)**

~~The general aim of war literature is to confront the uncomfortable~~

From classical writers such as Chaucer to modern day writers like Pat Barker, the general aim of war literature is to create awareness of the uncomfortable truths of war. Barker in 'The Ghost' challenges the reality of war which is death, which is often overlooked, whilst 'Mosses' in 'The Kite Runner' focuses on the effect these uncomfortable truths can cause on civilians.

~~Barker in 'The Ghost Road' focuses on the psychological and physical impact the war has on civilians."~~

Barker in 'The Ghost Road' confronts the uncomfortable truth of the great suffering of those who fought in the war. She achieves this by focusing on the psychological and physical impact of soldiers who fought in "the bloodiest century in history" according to writer Lynda Prescott. ~~the~~ ~~or~~ This is exemplified in her portrayal of Wansbeck, a soldier who believes he can smell rotten flesh, "I know there isn't one. It's just I can still smell."



it". This shows the mental trauma suffered by the soldiers and shows that the war has damaged them to such an extent that they can't escape it whilst dreaming. This is supported by anti-war poet and 'Ghost Road' character Wilfred Owen in his World War One poem, "Dulce et Decorum est" where he uses language to convey the psychological damage of war in the form of nightmares, "I saw him drowning. In all my dreams before my helpless sight". The fact that soldiers must still face the uncomfortable truth whilst even when asleep shows the damage it has had. Furthermore, the use of "in ~~some~~ some smothering dreams" suggests that the soldiers are consumed by these truths.

Barber also challenges the modern reader's attitude to death, citing that the public have become desensitised to the idea of death and are not fully ~~confronting~~ confronting the uncomfortable truths. This is achieved by the casually written death of

Longstake, "Longstake sliding back into the trench with a red hole in his forehead and an expression of mild surprise on his face", this ~~was~~ casually written death would challenge the reader, as they would have to read carefully in order not to miss this death. The attitude that the public and those who promote war without knowledge of its reality is shared by anti war poet S.T Coleridge in 'From Tears in Solitude', where ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> uses punctuation in the form of exclamation marks to convey his anger, "We send our mandates for the certain death of thousands and ten thousands!" and "We join no feeling and attach no form! As if the soldier died without a wound". Anti War poet Wilfred Owen too shares this anger by using sarcasm to convey his anti war message in 'Dulce et Decorum Est', the use of <sup>the</sup> latin phrase sarcastically, 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' contrasts the uncomfortable truths of war which pro war propaganda and pro war poet Jessie Pope <sup>in her poem 'For the Game?'</sup> tried to disguise by ~~citing~~ advertising the war as a game and citing that if you did not fight you were unpatriotic. Owen's use of sarcasm tried to challenge the immense social pressure mainly from women for young men to join the war, however in 1916 when conscription was ~~not~~ introduced, Owen continued to convey the war as 'evil'. However, as a modern reader with the benefit of hindsight would realise that this social pressure

There is also the suggestion in 'The Ghost Road' that the only way to escape the uncomfortable truths and their effect is only escapable through death. Barker conveys the feeling of hopelessness in his portrayal of Hallett where he pleads to Rivers, 'Shut your eyes' meaning 'it's not worth it' showing to the modern reader with the aim to shock them that soldiers were willing to die than live with their injuries. Also, Mottet's suicide attempt, "blood oozing from the wrist" conveys how desperate the soldiers were to escape the uncomfortable truths of war and their effects, as well as the use of "oozing blood oozing" creates a visual image of the injury to the reader, the effect being to show them the physical impact. Similarly to in 'The Kike Runner' Ford refers to the dead as, "sometimes the dead are luckier" entering the idea to the reader that the only way to escape these truths and their effect is death. This idea that the uncomfortable truths of war are only escapable by death is exemplified in Edward Thomas, 'In Memoriam' where he

There is also the suggestion in 'The Ghost Road' and 'Kike Runner' that these uncomfortable truths and their effect is only escapable through death. Barker conveys the feeling of hopelessness in his portrayal of Hallett where he pleads to Rivers, 'Shut your eyes' meaning 'it's not worth it' showing to the modern reader with the aim to shock them that soldiers were willing to die than live with their injuries. Also, Mottet's suicide attempt, "blood oozing from the wrist" conveys how desperate the soldiers were to escape the uncomfortable truths of war and their effects, as well as the use of "oozing blood oozing" creates a visual image of the injury to the reader, the effect being to show them the physical impact. Similarly to in 'The Kike Runner' Ford refers to the dead as, "sometimes the dead are luckier" entering the idea to the reader that the only way to escape these truths and their effect is death. This idea that the uncomfortable truths of war are only escapable by death is exemplified in Edward Thomas, 'In Memoriam' where he

breaks the traditional AB rhyme scheme, with the use of ~~conventional~~ unconventional syntax, ~~evident as~~, the effect being to show the effect the loss of life has on the family of loved ones, "their sweethearts should have gathered them and will do never again" instead of 'will never do again'. Furthermore, the poem is written in a compressed quatrain which could reflect the brevity of the soldiers lives as the uncomfortable truth of war is that many ~~men~~ <sup>soldiers</sup> died, with Prior in 'The Ghost Road' citing 'that a generation last six months'. ~~The overall~~ Ultimately, Barber has concentrated ~~satire~~ on the uncomfortable truth of war and that is the massive loss of life, which in World War One was considered to be fifteen millions.

However, Hosseini in 'The Kite Runner' is different to Barber as he focuses on the effect the uncomfortable truths have on civilians. Hosseini uses Afghanistan, which has been a state of continuous war since the 1970s as a location to ~~exemplify~~ exemplify the great impact. ~~Also, reference to the Taliban~~ The impact on civilians due to ~~these uncomfortable truths of war~~ the Taliban who from the 1990s to 2001, ruled Afghanistan with strict adherence to Islamic law, the Sharia, made the uncomfortable truths of war such as war profiteering, genocide, pillage and famine, reality. This is exemplified

When Assef speaks of the genocide of the Hazaras, "Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazaras? All in the name of Islam?". Also, when Assef says, "Ethnic cleansing - I like it. I like the sound of it" This conveys to the reader the impact the Taliban has had on Afghanistan as new people are persecuted due to their ethnicity, exemplified by Hazaras. This impact the Taliban has had on the Afghan community is similar to the impact war can have on the community in Edwin Muir's post World War Two and future poem, 'The Nurses'. Muir's use of personification, "that old bad world that swallowed its children quick" strongly emphasises to the reader by referring to the war torn community as the 'bad world' shows the effect the uncomfortable truths of war can have. Also, the use of personification allows for the reader to immerse themselves into the poem's theme and content, allowing for further emphasis on the impact war can have on communities. Also, Muir's use of onomatopoeia, "At one great gulp" allows for the reader to have a auditory understanding of events as ~~the~~ war ends ~~and~~ its uncomfortable truths can change the world overnight. Furthermore, the impact on civilians due to the uncomfortable truths of war

is evident in 'The Kite Runner' shown by the Soviet invasion which lasted nine years and resulted in the ~~estimation of A.~~ region of six hundred thousand and two million deaths of Afghans, mainly civilians. This is evident when the Russian soldier demands half an hour with the Afghan women in the truck, citing, "He says this is war. There is no shame in war". This shows the impact and loss of innocence as innocent civilians are subjected due to this inhumane treatment which is falsely justified by ~~the war~~ ~~the~~ ~~concept~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~perpetrators~~ ~~of~~ ~~aggressive~~ ~~war~~. This impact and loss of innocence is highlighted in Philip Larkin's use of repetition in World War One poem 'MCMXIV' where, "never such innocence again" is stressed repeatedly, emphasising to the reader, the ~~to~~ long lasting effect of war ~~is~~ which are provoked by the uncomfortable truths of war. This is too supported in ~~Isaac~~ Isaac Rosenberg's 'August 1914' where his use of metaphors provides the reader with a visual image of the impact it has on the community, "A burnt space through ripe fields. A fair month's broken truth".

Mosseini's use of the episodic structure of the novel, allows for him to contrast Amir's uncomfortable truths, those ~~being being~~ being that he did not assist Hassan during the rape.

The episodic structure allows for ~~the~~ Mosseini to convey to the reader how Amir has grown throughout the course of the novel, as he is now granted redemption for "his past of unatoned sins" and with Rahim Khan's promise "that there is a way to be good again"; ~~Mosseini Mosseini contrasts Amir's uncomfortable truths head first, by~~

~~To conclude, the writers of war literature all aim to speak of the uncomfortable truths. These vary from interpretation,~~

To conclude, the writers of war literature all aim to speak of the uncomfortable truths. War literature has allowed them the platform to publically express their ideas, thoughts and interpretations of the war. "Barber's being that the issue and impact of death has been overlooked and become desensitised, whilst Mosseini focuses on how these uncomfortable truths have provoked ~~over~~ the cruel realities, 'communities of war

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Comments**

This writer achieves a subtle way of introducing the texts being discussed. The writer went on to develop this in the rest of a very well-managed discussion. (Top band in all AOs). The candidate then develops links between the character of Wilfred Owen in 'The Ghost Road' and the actual writer of 'Dulce et Decorum Est', whilst using another critic to support a point. AO1, AO2 and AO3 are being hit at a high level here. This candidate demonstrates excellent textual knowledge and consistently finds links between the texts to develop and support the discussion. The next paragraph introduces an interesting contextual point. There are later valuable points about the context in which Owen wrote 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and later on some valid points about 'The Kite Runner'.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Tip**

Use your introduction to help find the focus for the discussion that will follow. Integrate quotations, the comments of other writers into an ongoing discussion. Try to integrate contextual points consistently into the argument or discussion.



An introduction to a fairly borderline candidate's essay. (Low Band 2 for AO1 and AO2, low Band 3 for AO3 and Band 2 for AO4).

Chosen question number: **Question 3(a)**  **Question 3(b)**   
**Question 4(a)**  **Question 4(b)**   
**Question 5(a)**  **Question 5(b)**   
**Question 6(a)**  **Question 6(b)**

'The Ghost Road' is a novel written by Pat Barker about the end of the first world war. ~~It~~ Barker uses fictional and non fictional characters in this to create the story. 'The Kite Runner' is a novel by Khaled Hosseini which is written from his personal experience on the war in Afghanistan. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' (Dulce) is a poem written by Wilfred Owen describing a gas attack in the first world war. 'American Football' is a poem about the Gulf ~~war~~ war written by Harold Pinter.



**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This introduction makes a straightforward attempt to focus on the texts being studied and to make some hints towards the contexts which address the situation being written about.



**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Tip

Find a focus for your writing but try to move beyond factual statements alone.

**Question 6 (b)**

This was the least popular of the War questions. Good higher band answers managed to find valid interpretations of the 'human condition'. Lower band answers were more likely to be superficial in their interpretation of what it means to be human, providing exemplification of how characters were responding in human way to the unexpected and unacceptable circumstances of war.

An example of a sound, well-focused introduction.

Hoeseini's and Frayn's novels, 'The Kite Runner' and 'Spies', are, respectively, essentially tales of redemption and bildungsroman, and a mystery and coming-of-age novel. The theme of war is more of a background on which the writers may explore their more personal, human tales. However, they do examine, both, ~~is~~ man's

genetic disposition to do harm against his fellow and the good-willed nature of man that allows for more peaceful environments. It is fair to say that war emphasises and exposes these human conditions, which is most likely why both Hoeseini and Frayn exploit their separate contexts of war and conflict being set during the occupation of ~~by~~ Afghanistan by Soviets and Taliban, and during WWII on the British home front.



**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This is a sound introduction because it has a clear focus on the topic, a good sense of genre, establishes from the outset valid links between the texts being discussed and sets out some basic contextual details about the worlds which the novels inhabit.



**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Tip

A good introduction will help you find a focus for your writing as well as help the examiner to see how your discussion might develop.

The writing when it achieves marks in the top bands for the AOs is often most impressive. This suggests both good preparation and genuine enthusiasm for writing about literature.

On the other hand, we are often disappointed when the answer seems to be based on a restricted amount of reading, especially when it seems evident that the number of poems the candidates can refer to is very small.

In general AO1 is achieved when the approach is consistently literary, but when narrative or descriptive writing predominates, as it can do in lower achieving candidates it is unlikely to score higher than Band 2 for this AO. We also look for the ability to achieve a sustained argument in order to achieve the top band in this AO. The level of accuracy is mostly acceptable and we are tolerant of slips made under exam conditions.

AO2 was generally also well managed by most candidates once they had realised that meaning is not conveyed through narrative or descriptive but with ongoing discussion of structure, form and language and generally finding a critical voice.

The examples illustrated in this report show that AO3 can be met in many different ways. If a candidate can only refer to a small range of material across the texts studied, then achievement in this AO is inevitably going to be limited.

AO4 is often achieved with remarkable skill as is evident from some of the examples in this report. Although it is not necessary to address all of the bullet points in the descriptors in the marking grids, it is important to hit them consistently and at a high level. Some candidates seem unable to address contexts at any but a superficial level.

Finally we would like to appreciate the level at which high achieving candidates achieve across the AOs, as they move towards and frequently attain the higher order skills such as analysis and synthesis.

## Grade Boundaries

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