

Examiners' Report  
June 2019

GCE Language and Literature 9EL0 01

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# Introduction

9EL01 is a written examination of 2 hours and 30 minutes duration. This component has an explicit focus on the concept of 'voice' and how spoken voices are formed, and written voices created, in literary, non-literary and digital texts. 9EL01 has two 'set' texts: the Pearson Anthology of non-literary and digital texts and a drama text selected by centres for study. The paper comprises two sections. Each section is equally weighted with a total of 25 marks available for each component.

## **Section A: Voices in 20th and 21st century Texts**

This question assesses AO1, 2, 3 and 4. Candidates are presented with one comparative essay question on one unseen extract selected from 20th or 21st century sources and one text from the Pearson Anthology

The unseen extract is taken from a broad genre which has been studied in the Anthology and will be linked in some way to the Anthology text, with which it is partnered, to afford the comparison that is central to the assessment of AO4.

## **Section B: Drama Texts**

Candidates are presented with an extract-based essay question on their chosen drama text. This is an 'open book' examination – a clean copy of the prescribed drama text can be taken into the exam.

The questions set for Section B use the extract provided as a starting point for analysis and as a springboard for linked investigation and discussion across the play as a whole.

## Question 1

Question 1 (Section A) of this paper was presented to the full cohort.

Candidates were presented with two texts, linked, thematically, by boxing and its personal, physical and social impact on the lives of those connected with the sport. The first (unseen) text was an edited extract of an article written by the Telegraph's senior reporter, Patrick Sawyer, shortly after the death of American World Champion boxer and social/political activist, Muhammad Ali. The second, drawn from the Pearson Anthology, was an extract from the review of Anna Whitwham's inaugural novel 'Boxer Handsome' which was written by Flemmish Webb.

The Sawyer article was accessible and the main contrasts to Webb's review were relatively easy to define. The subject of the unseen text, namely Muhammad Ali, engaged the majority of candidates although not all recognised the obituary nature of the celebration of, and reflection on, his life. It was possible to draw comparison between the two texts on different levels from straightforward to sophisticated. Those that had studied the Webb review in advance could make more targeted comparisons with the unseen article as they were generally better able to comment on the differences in content, tone and form. Several examiners commented on the fact that some candidates struggled with the Anthology text and produced responses that seemed to indicate that they had not previously read it. Given the nature of the question, which will always pair one of the Anthology extracts with the (linked) unseen text, centres are advised to use the Anthology, the texts it contains and the wider generic forms they represent, as a starting point for preparation for Q1.

The question provided a focus on the "effect [of boxing] on the lives of those involved" but some candidates seem to have ignored this prompt and just approached the task as a general comparison. It's helpful to read this part of the question first before reading the passages, as it would have helped candidates begin to find material for their comparison.

Organisation of the response proved to be a significant discriminator in that those candidates who adopted a 'feature spotting' approach to comparison of the two texts often lead to mechanistic and superficial investigation as this approach rarely allows for analysis to arise out of an exploration of audience, purpose and meaning.

Successful responses explored a range of language features in both extracts. Exemplification was consistent and appropriate and the responses offered considered comment on the link between form and function. Terminology was fairly wide ranging and applied accurately at word, sentence and whole text level. The better answers noticed the register shifts and used this to comment on the subtler aspects of voice as a result. Successful responses offered developed comment on the context of both extracts with consideration of the factors that influenced the production and reception of each. Contextual knowledge was more in evidence this series and comments in successful responses was better integrated and linked to the central issues of the task. At best, comparisons and connections were integrated with fluency throughout the response, picking up on the more subtle opportunities to do so.

At the upper levels of achievement, responses covered all the AOs in their exploration of both texts; with more effective responses differentiated by their ability to produce an integrated analysis and their careful selection of evidence.

Less successful responses picked upon some general language features, often making vague references to 'lexical choices' but offering limited comment on specific techniques or extension to sentence-level or whole-text exploration. In some less successful answers, exemplification was inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate. In these responses, candidates often confused basic labels such as verb/noun or adjective/adverb and there was tendency to label any questions as

'rhetorical'. There were still some feature-spotting approaches, and in mid-lower levels of achievement, some responses peppered grammatical labels (especially "adjective") across their answers seemingly at random. It is better to apply a few accurate, analytical terms where they really further the analysis, than to sprinkle them throughout in hope that some will land correctly. Less successful responses also frequently resorted to non-specific comment at sentence level such as 'short, snappy sentences'. Levels of specific analysis and links between form and function were limited and/or undeveloped. Most candidates commented on the literary devices employed though they couldn't always say what functions they served. In mid-lower level responses, some of the argument/analysis was unconvincing. Many answers offered very general and obvious interpretation rather than specific analysis. Many made minimal links to function such as 'this feature makes it entertaining' or 'makes the reader read on'. Analysis tended to be non-specific with vague phrases such as 'incorrect grammar'. Many such responses also included bold claims about contextual factors, particularly the audience. Less successful responses tended to treat texts separately, offering only the most straightforward points of comparison and contrast between them.

Often mnemonics or prepared templates hindered a candidate's ability to explore, particularly the unseen text, in greater detail as they were looking for devices to fit a checklist rather than exploring the text for its worth. More confident candidates were able to weave the aspects of form into comments about their analysis of devices within the texts rather than making stand-alone points just concerning form or genre. Candidates should be encouraged to demonstrate a spread of terminology across each text focusing on structural elements of the pieces rather than simply identifying individual word-level devices.

The following extracts are taken from a successful response to Q1 which was awarded a mark of 23, which places it in mid-Level 5.

Responses at this level are expected to demonstrate the following AO characteristics:

- Presents critical application of concepts and methods with sustained examples. Uses sophisticated structure and expression with appropriate register and style, including use of appropriate terminology.
- Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays sophisticated understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.
- Critically examines context by looking at subtleties and nuances. Examines multi layered nature of texts and how they are produced and received.
- Evaluates connections across texts. Exhibits a sophisticated connective approach with exemplification.

Given the placement of the overall response in the middle of the level, some AOs may have been addressed more successfully than others.

The cause of Ali's Parkinson's disease is explained by Sauer as the result of his fighting techniques, which ~~although~~ led him to temporary success but later on negatively affected his health and life. The writer focuses on Ali's fighting techniques as he describes them as 'brutal encounters', explaining that Ali 'absorbed his opponent's blow' in order to win. The phrase 'brutal encounters' effectively emphasises the negative effects of boxing as the pre-modifying adjective 'brutal' connotes the idea of the harsh reality of boxing associated with pain. Use of the lexis associated with this sport help the audience, who are probably Ali's or boxing fans, to picture the pain he had to go through in order to win. Furthermore, the verb 'absorbed' suggests Ali's physical strength to deal with the pain and works as a



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Examiner Comments

There is close and analytical exploration of the extract.

Here, there is a clear sense of the author at work through the linking of the field of boxing to Ali's 'battle' with Parkinson's.

Evidence has been carefully chosen by the candidate to support this point and the language from which this evidence has been constructed has been analysed accurately with clearly developed and appropriate links made between form and function.



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Examiner Tip

Exemplify consistently.

Explore the language from which your evidence is comprised fully but with focus on the task and the point that you are making.

Exploration of the techniques used by the writers incorporates both literary and linguistic frameworks and terminology.

These comments are used to afford meaningful points of comparison between the two texts.

metaphor by comparing him to a sponge, which connotes a great capacity to 'absorb' a great number of opponent's punches, suggesting Ali's physical strength. The noun 'blow' suggests a multiple, strong punches, therefore Ali's ability to 'absorb' them ~~so~~ illustrates his ability to almost be unable to hurt which is ironic because over time boxing damages his life, therefore his ability to 'absorb' the 'brutal encounters' was only temporary with dramatic after effects. Sawyer purposefully uses a passionate, excited voice in his article to emphasise Ali's

by the alliteration 'flurry' of fists' which echoes the noise of punching 'created in the air, suggesting a great power of those punches. Furthermore, the noun 'flurry' connotes the idea of anger and brutality, similar to the descriptions of Ali's fights but here the 'amateur boxers' are throwing those punches whereas Ali is receiving them. When comparing those two



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Examiner Comments

This integration of comparison, here based on literary approaches, in which the texts are interrogated side-by-side, is very effective.



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Examiner Tip

Try to group points of comparison together and integrate them into the body of the response, rather than dealing with the texts one after the other.

participating in boxing because of its negative effects.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the antithesis between the two hyperbolic phrases 'tragic end' and 'majestic life' portrays Mi as a tragic hero who is now suffering. The adjective 'tragic' evokes a feeling of sympathy as the audience realises that Mi's great fame is now over and he is left helpless with a disease which he can't fight. Using emotional, hyperbolic voice helps to create sympathy within the audience, who are possibly Mi's fans and who admire him. ~~For~~ Additionally, using the past perfect tense 'had been' communicates that Mi's 'majestic life' is now over and it is impossible to reverse it as the negative effects of boxing are too destructive.

Flemming Heltb in his review of a boxing novel also focuses on the negative after effect of boxing on boxer's life, however those drawbacks to a certain extent are not as damaging as ~~for~~ Mi's Parkinson's disease. He uses a triadic list 'a sad alcoholic, a broken shell of a man with none of the respect that his fists once commanded' to focus on the mental health impact of boxing. The metaphor 'a broken shell of a man' suggests physical damage to the body but also connotes the negative impact on boxer's mental health as he is not able to cope with his emotions. The triadic list emphasises the complexity of negative effects of boxing however



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Examiner Comments

Terminology is wide-ranging and applied at word and sentence level with accuracy and sustained focus on the task.

There is an overarching sense of both writers and their authorial crafting and intent in terms of audience response.

Again, a judicious link - here the negative effects of boxing - is used to balance contrast and connection between the two texts and the voices and techniques of the writers that produced them.





Never lose sight of the author; the language choices they make in developing their text and the reasons behind these choices in terms of their effect.

To conclude his article, Sawyer uses a pulled quote 'Well, boxing is a risk and life is a gamble, and I got to take both.' Quoting *hi* is appropriate for the article because it creates a sense of truth and helps to connect the audience with the boxer himself, allowing them to be able to understand him more clearly. Using a full quote <sup>helps</sup> ~~acts~~ to persuade the readers because Sawyer purposefully chose a quote which supports his point that although boxing has very strong, negative impacts, it should be expected as it is a feature of this brutal sport. The discourse marker 'well' suggests that *hi* isn't surprised by the negative effects of the boxing and at this point in his life he's given up, therefore he accepts the disease without fighting against it. The metaphor 'life is a gamble' effectively reflects the risk which comes with boxing and *hi*'s acceptance of it, showing that he was aware that there will be consequences, yet he still wanted to do it. Using a full quote from the boxer himself is



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Examiner Comments

There is a clear sense of generic form and convention which addresses the contextual AO (in part) well. This is wholly relevant and is not, as is often the case in less successful responses, 'bolted on'. It links to specific language and generic techniques used (here) by Sawyer with clear appreciation of their effect.



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Examiner Tip

Always consider generic form. Look for examples of convention and comment on how - and why - they are used.

Webb similarly to Sauer uses a full quote but instead of quoting a boxer, he quotes the novel, appropriate for a review because his purpose is to promote the novel rather than a particular boxer. The quotation 'Them [he] cracked the bridge of his nose wide open. Skin split. Blood spat. Connor stumbled about headless' again emphasises the hyperbolic idea of boxing being brutal. The short <sup>minor</sup> ~~simple~~ sentences 'Skin split. Blood spat.' reflect the dynamic nature of boxing. Using a full quote from the novel he is able to engage the reader and successfully promote it. Unlike Sauer, Webb uses a more persuasive and hyperbolic voice because his review was written to give his opinion on the novel. His voice suggests he is very interested by the novel therefore he uses exaggerated voice to promote it.



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Examiner Comments

The framework of comparison is systematically applied throughout the response. Here, the incorporation of quotation by both writers into their texts is used to both connect and differentiate between them and to afford interesting points on context and form.

The response from which the following extracts were drawn was awarded a mark of 12, which places it in mid/lower Level 3. This mark suggests that there may be an imbalance in performance across AOs, with some aspects securely into Level 3 but others, less successful and better fitted to Level 2 and the 'general understanding' that characterises responses at this lower level. When assessing responses, examiners will balance the performance across all AOs before placing a response within a level and then continue this process to allocate a mark within that level.

Responses in Level 3 are expected to be 'clear' and 'relevant' and present the following characteristics when responding to Question 1:

- Applies relevant concepts and methods of analysis to texts with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology.
- Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.
- Explains clear significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes relevant links to how texts are produced and received.
- Identifies relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated connective approach.

- 1 Compare the ways in which the writers create a sense of voice as they reflect on boxing and its effect on the lives of those involved with the sport.

In your answer you must consider linguistic and literary features, drawing on your knowledge of genre conventions and context.

(25)

In Patrick Sawyer's article, 'His longest round: Muhammad Ali's fight with Parkinson's disease', we see him adopt a complimentary tone of voice whilst succinctly exploring the life of boxer Muhammad Ali. His adoption of this tone of voice is ~~appropriately~~ used appropriate for the subject matter, ~~and~~ and thus aids the reader in understanding the life and death of the renowned fighter - a clear objective of Patrick's article.

~~Similarly, Anna Whitwham's review of the novel 'Boxer Handsome'~~

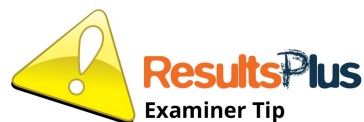
Similarly, Flemmich Webb's review of Anna Whitwham's novel, 'Boxer Handsome', shares the analytical tone of Patrick in the beginning of the review, and subsequently becomes opinionated as to fulfill the goal of Flemmich's review.



The response opens with a worthy attempt to compare and contrast the texts (via sequential paragraphs).

There is a sense of tone, but the candidate struggles to define/compare this beyond general modification: 'complimentary'/'analytical'. There is also a relatively clear, if straightforward definition of purpose, linked, again straightforwardly, to genre and context.

What evidence there is, is not explored specifically/analytically.



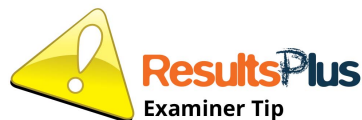
Always provide specific evidence from the texts to support the point you make.

Always analyse this evidence to comment on the language choices made by the writer.

Patrick begins his article with a hook, 'It was his longest bout, and so that ultimately he could not win'. Patrick writes this hook to grip the reader immediately. The sense of irony is immediately presented as someone with the ~~inf~~ inference of the subject of ~~his~~ both Muhammad Ali's death whilst simultaneously using the 'longest bout' analogy to link back to ~~the~~ Muhammad's career as a boxer.



There is more success in the way the candidate embeds some generic features ('Hook') into their exploration of the introductory section of Sawyer's article. There is some apt and analytical comment on the use of 'analogy' to link the disease to Ali's boxing career, but this is not as precise or developed as it might be.



When referring to writers/authors, use their surname, not their first name - here 'Sawyer' instead of 'Patrick'.

Unlike Patrick's introduction, Flemmich goes to begin the review with a short preface to the book, followed by a brief opinion. This does, however, fulfill a common tenet of reviews as a genre. In addition, the introduction sets the analytical and opinionated tone found throughout the remainder of the review.



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Examiner Comments

Linking the introductions of each text, the candidate draws a comparison (through reference to the preface) between them and also shows some understanding of generic convention thereby hitting the contextual AO. Comments are not fully exemplified or developed, however.



Patrick Sawyer uses a chronological structure to his article; the events of Muhammad's life are ordered. This choice of structure bolsters Patrick's evocative choices of language, such as 'It was a tragic end to what had been a ~~very~~ ~~very~~ majestic life.' The use of the strong adjectives 'tragic' and 'majestic', coupled with the structure, makes it feel like we are a part of the journey, following each step. This combination ~~bolsters~~ <sup>strengthens</sup> the reader's investment in the article.



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Examiner Comments

There is awareness of overall structure/sequence and an undeveloped, but nonetheless worthy, attempt to explain Sawyer's decision and its effect on the reader (through the comparison to a journey). Key adjectives ('tragic' and 'majestic') are identified as deliberate choices, made with their emotional effect on the reader in mind, although the crucial contrast and its specific link to the stages in Ali's life are not recognised.

Whitwham uses appropriate and relevant language when giving their opinion on Anna Whitwham's novel, for example: 'Whitwham's writing is as steep as a one-two combination' and 'short punchy sentences'. The link to boxing in Flemmich's opinion adds character to what could have just been a simple personal opinion. Instead,



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Examiner Comments

The use of the field of boxing is used to connect the two texts. Whitwham's use of analogy and metaphor is recognised, but not specifically identified as such. Their use by the reviewer as a comment on the technical style of the author similarly receives no specific comment.

There is clear potential here - but lack of development significantly restricts potential for reward.



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Examiner Tip

When providing evidence, analyse it as fully as you can and with clear links back to the points this evidence is supporting.

As his article draws to a close, the somber  
tone re-emerges, describing Ali as a 'shadow  
of his former self'. ~~Patrick~~ Patrick uses this to  
show juxtaposition to Ali's introduction when he  
describes Ali as a 'superstar'. Such a juxtaposition  
symbolises the ~~the~~ cruel decline that is  
designed to be suffered by sufferers of Parkinson's disease.  
This comparison makes Ali's decline even clearer  
to the reader.



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Examiner Comments

This paragraph scores relatively highly in that it selects material from across the text as a whole to evidence the juxtaposition and contrast employed by Sawyer to 'symbolise' the decline of Ali from superstar to shadow. There is much potential for development however, and this is not fully realised. A limiting characteristic of the response as a whole.

The following extracts are drawn from a response that was awarded 8 marks. This places it into the middle of Level 2 and the 'general understanding' that is characteristic of this. As indicated by the AO descriptors for this Level, the response:

- Recalls concepts and methods of analysis that show general understanding
- Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology.
- Describes general contextual factors.
- Makes general links between the significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
- Gives obvious similarities and/or differences. Makes general links between the texts.

Text A follows a time line with the words 'In 1996' or 'In October last year' indicating that we, as readers, are following the life of Ali in chronological order. This allows the reader to grasp a 'first person-like' perspective on the events that happened as if we were really there. However, Text B does not follow this same



There is a reasonably solid start, in that the candidate considers the overall sequence and structure of Text A, identifying its chronological sequence and picking out (but not labelling) the temporal nature of the discourse markers deployed. There is lack of security when dealing with the effect on the reader, however.

really there. However, Text B does not follow this same format. There is no timeline but rather an overview of the novel. It does hold the same ~~starts~~ story-like beginning when it says 'the story opens' this explains how the novel begins and gives some background information for those who have never read it before, albeit, its genre as a review is seen when the writing style of the author is addressed 'Whitwham's writing is as sharp as a one-two combination?'



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Examiner Comments

There is some very generalised attempt to compare the texts (via form), but this is undeveloped. The essentially descriptive comments on generic convention do accrue some reward at AO3 (context), but lack of detail/development restricts this to Level 2.

The final lines recognise something of Sawyer's technique and the link between the boxing simile and Whitwham's writing style, but this link is not explored in any detail.

The writers of both text A and B use language effectively to create an image in the readers mind. Text A uses rather strong describing words to convey the extent of Ali's condition, phrases such as 'a shadow of his former self' and 'debilitating effect' or '... arms shook violently' all help to bring some understanding of how serious this condition was and how greatly it impacted Ali's life. The writer ~~creates a sym~~ <sup>is aiming to create</sup> a sense of sympathy with this language as it is very personal. In Text B, the use of



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When attempting comment on language features and their effect, there is a general understanding of authorial intent. Although the examples chosen are relevant, there is a struggle with the specific labels that attend analysis and a reliance on the generalised (e.g. 'describing words').



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Examiner Tip

Try to apply specific terminology when exploring the evidence you present from the extracts.

In terms of the layout and structure of Text A and B, they are very similar. Both start with ~~their~~ the ~~at~~ writers name and the date ~~into~~ but differ as Text A has a bold title naming the artist article while Text B has the name of the book being reviewed. Both texts separate their content through the use of paragraphs to make the text a lot clearer and easier to read.



The comments on layout and structure illustrate the generalised, and essentially descriptive, nature of the response as a whole and mark it out as a Level 2 response.

## Question 2

### Section B:

Responses to Section B covered the full range of achievement across all questions this summer.

Successful answers explored the given extract in detail and with focus on the task. They exemplified consistently to support their comments/assertions and applied an analytical lens to the evidence they provided, thereby linking form to function. Analytical frameworks were applied at word, sentence and whole-text level. They selected contextual information judiciously to link to the specifics of the task and the best integrated this information fluidly into the body of their response.

High level answers never lost sight of the text, its characters and plot, as dramatic constructs. These paired exploration of dialogue and dynamic with the dramatic conventions of a performance piece such as staging, delivery and movement. They also used what they had learned about the features of spoken language to explore the construction of voice, thereby regarding characters and the words they spoke as devices.

Successful responses ranged with facility across the broader play, selecting material that linked to the task and which enabled analysis of method and effect through judicious exemplification.

Less successful were answers that offered limited focus on the question. This year, there was a noticeable increase in responses that moved quickly into what seemed like a pre-prepared investigation of a theme/issue that afforded only limited links to the actual question set.

A significant minority appeared to be reworking questions from earlier series to an agenda that simply did not fit.

Mid to low level achievement was also marked by inconsistent exemplification, restricted/insecure analysis and little sense of the generic and dramatic conventions that shape a play. In many of these responses, contextual information was simply bolted on with limited evidence of selecting/shaping this information to the task.

### Question 2: 'All My Sons'

'All My Sons' proved a popular choice for centres this series and responses presented across the full range of achievement. Most demonstrated a good understanding of the play and the significance of the scene from which the extract was drawn. The best applied the same focus when extending their comments across the broader play, sustained focus on the task which proved to be a key discriminator for this question with many responses moving away from the specific issue i.e. Jim and Sue and their conflict between family responsibilities and wider moral values, preferring to focus on the Kellers with minimal further reference to the Bayliss relationship as a device.

Successful responses explored the conflicts in the marriage as presented both in the passage and across the play, with Jim's warnings to Kate and his lines on money being productive sources. Even better were those that explored the passage to start their response with the tension between Ann and Sue providing an excellent way into the theme and showcasing the sophistication of Miller's skills as a dramatist, which some candidates enjoyed analysing through both literary and linguistic lenses.

Less successful responses often failed to precisely address the question, often presenting a more generic and wide-ranging answer rather than using the extract as a starting point for referencing other key parts of the text. A significant minority barely mentioned Sue and Jim beyond a cursory



start and simply launched into applying the theme to the Kellers. Some responses focused on 'idealism v. pragmatism', perhaps prompted by the reference to Jim's desire to pursue research. This was not the wording of the question, although obviously relevant, and often limited the focus of the broader response.

Those that moved on quickly from the extract into their broader consideration of the play lost a valuable resource on which they could frame/develop their overall response. There was much to explore in the extract in terms of dramatic device and convention as well as the dialogue itself. The best could offer considered comment on the dramatic conventions/conflicts contained within the extract such as the rising tension between Sue and Ann, and the reasons behind this, emphasised by stage direction and positioning. Successful answers offered close comment on the construction of the voices contained in the extract, linking form to function and applying terms with accuracy and in good range.

Less successful responses tended to the descriptive, presenting narrative summaries as opposed to consideration of Miller's dramatic intentions.

Many responses dealt with the contextual implications of the play which were well linked to this particular extract. Again, the difference between stronger and weaker candidates was the ability to embed these contextual ideas to authorial decisions rather than simply describing issues at the time. Those that considered the text as a performance piece, exploring dramatic conventions and techniques were rewarded against the contextual AO.

The following excerpts are drawn from a successful response to Question 2. It was awarded a mark of 22 which places it mid-lower Level 5.

As is characteristic of responses in Level 5, it demonstrates critical and evaluative levels of investigation and analysis. Of particular note is the exceptional handling of context and the integrated nature of analysis. The mark of 22 indicates it fully meets the AO descriptors for Level 4 and the discrimination and control expected here but that, on significant, but not all, occasions it presents critical/evaluative comment worthy of the highest Level (5):

- Presents critical application of concepts and methods with sustained examples. Uses sophisticated structure and expression with appropriate register and style, including use of appropriate terminology.
- Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays sophisticated understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.
- Critically examines context by looking at subtleties and nuances.
- Examines multi-layered nature of texts and how they are produced and received.

In Miller's domestic realist tragedy, *All My Sons* (1947), the characters of Jim and Sue are used to represent the complete emotional unfulfillment caused by family responsibility in a capitalist culture, and the moral sacrifice.

required to succeed financially in post-war America. The extract significantly takes place before George's impending visit, and after the reveal of Ann and Chris' planned marriage, as Sue asserts her dominance as a <sup>housewife</sup> ~~housewife~~ and in this society. Highly inspired by the work of Greek Tragedy, Miller uses Chorus characters (such as Jim and Sue) to represent the moralistic views of wider society and its citizens.



The strong opening suggests the quality that is to follow.

Comments here show absolute security, placing the extract into its proper context, both within the play and as a symbolic reflection on wider societal attitudes and values. As such it demonstrates clear understanding of authorial intent and the dramatic influences that have shaped Miller's text and his characters as device (here, obviously, the Chorus).



Try to link contextual points to the influences on production and reception that have shaped it and influenced the language choices of the playwright. Putting the extract into the broader context of the play is often a good starting point.

Always explore characters as dramatic constructs/devices.

Firstly, the extract discusses the ~~various~~ restraints of family responsibility in materialistic post-war America, and the influence of gender roles in society. She uses the metaphorical abstract noun 'Jim thinks he's in jail all the time', emphasising the societal constraints of post-war life, as she is ~~not~~ responsible for the income of the family; a complete reversal of family values in this society. The ~~metaphor~~ determines 'all' further suggest that Jim is in a state of constant restriction from his own dreams and aspirations, unable to fully self-actualise and achieve his ~~visions~~ <sup>goals</sup> since he is ~~greatly~~ forced to conform to society's idea of family responsibility. Similarly, ~~in the~~ Jim expresses



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Examiner Comments

The response frames much of its investigation through a contextual lens - it produces work that is very securely at Level 5 with regards to AO3, throughout.

There is a slight slip in the labelling of 'jail' as an abstract noun, but the significance of the metaphor is fully grasped by the candidate and the exploration offers otherwise accurate analysis.

In Act three, page 74, Jim uses the metaphorical noun phrase 'star of one's honesty' to describe the death of his own dreams and idealistic morality. As Jim temporarily escaped his family responsibility, when he returned, he claims his star <sup>47</sup> 'went out', representing the death of individuality and hope in modern American society. The symbolism of the metaphorical 'star' represents Jim's true aspiration and his true self, which must be ~~compromised~~ compromised in order to ~~fulfill~~ conform to his familial role of breadwinner and husband. Yet, Jim expresses his nihilistic view on ~~the~~ personal freedom and inspiration, claiming that the 'private revolutions always die', using the adverb of frequency 'always' to express the futility of trying to escape the prison-like restraints of family responsibility. Therefore, Miller



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Examiners' Comments

The response ranges with facility and focus across the play and back to the specifics of the extract and the metaphorical reference to 'jail' used by Sue.

The exploration of the construction of Jim and his metaphorical reflections regarding his personal and familial conflicts is sophisticated and wholly appropriate. Analysis is discriminating, accurate and framed, as is characteristic of this response, by valid and thoughtful contextual comment.



If it is possible to link a point within the extract with another from the play as a whole, make it! This integration will mark out your response as worthy of consideration at the higher levels of achievement.

wider community. The use of the biblical ~~reference~~ proper nouns 'Holy Family', in comparison to the common noun 'bum', <sup>us / sue compares</sup> is ~~comparing~~ <sup>crafting</sup> herself to the Kellens, ~~represents~~ <sup>crafting</sup> ~~connotations~~ <sup>inferiority</sup> of jealousy and ~~inferiority~~, presenting Sue's dissatisfaction toward her ~~less~~ <sup>inferior</sup> ~~position~~ <sup>position</sup> social position to the Kellens. Similarly, the use of the noun 'bum' is highly hyperbolic, presenting the toxic expectations to be financially successful in a middle-class setting. <sup>Suggesting</sup> she is viewed as homeless ~~emphasises~~ <sup>pressures</sup> the financial and social ~~pressures~~ Sue's family goals, which leads them to ~~of~~ <sup>compromise</sup> her morals to have ~~significance~~ <sup>significance</sup> in the community. In act one, page



Exploration of Sue's referencing here is well focussed and valid. Analysis of the 'Holy Family' metaphor could have been more finely tuned, but the contrast with the self reference 'bum' is well drawn, and the reasons behind it developed with insight and placed with precision into broader context.

Sue's bitterness towards the Keller family <sup>highlights</sup> suggests her opposition toward Jim for not doing the same, presenting how family responsibility requires a ~~total~~ compromise of morality in order to achieve the social status a family would be proud of. Furthermore, the fact that Sue goes to the Keller's to play cards suggests her myopic perspective towards the crimes of Keller, as she ignores his lack of morality to become involved in the community. This goes further highlights Sue's lack of morality, as she is willing to ignore his crimes just to have so her family remain engaged in the community. This portrays the familial responsibility



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Examiner Comments

The issues of morality (both personal and social) are investigated with insight here through Sue's attitude towards the crimes of Keller. Context points continue to score highly, but this section of the response lacks evidence drawn directly from the extract to support the assertions here and thus misses opportunities for analysis (and marks for AO1 and AO2).



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Always provide direct evidence from the text to support the points you make.

## Question 3

### Question 3: 'A Streetcar Named Desire'.

'A Streetcar Named Desire' continues to be the most popular text studied by centres for 9EL0\_01 and engagement with the play was very evident.

The passage itself provides a rich and useful source for exploration and a way into the question – it is really surprising how students make any more than a cursory use of the passage in Section B and centres are encouraged to use it as a springboard and focus for investigation across the broader play. Those who explored the significance of stage directions, such as Williams's deliberate incorporation of adverbs to shape attitude/delivery, such as "leisurely" or "slowly and emphatically" (with the repetition that is so telling for Stella's relationship with Blanche) were able to demonstrate their understanding of convention/device and hit AOs simultaneously.

Candidates seemed well prepared to discuss violence and masculinity in the play, especially in regards to Stella and Stanley. Some candidates appeared to answer the question they hoped to be asked, rather than the actual question on the paper. Less successful responses had more difficulty with cultural differences between the sisters. Nearly all saw the need to discuss the Old South v. the New South, and the general contrast in the sisters' histories, but it was surprising that relatively few candidates were able to explore this in any depth. Many saw the sisters as polarised representatives of Old/New South attitudes and values with surprisingly few candidates, for example, acknowledging that Blanche's attitudes to violence and desire are complex and ambivalent, and that her history belies her fastidious and gentle façade. Those that grasped this often went on to comment with great success on the triggering incident of the violent death of her gentle husband.

Successful answers looked at the changing attitudes across the play as a whole. For example, Mitch and the poker players were legitimate subjects, given the phrasing of the question, and some candidates pointed out that these characters cast doubt on the notion that Stanley's approach is the only one available in New Orleans – although obviously Steve and Eunice back this up to some extent. These also frequently explored the stage effects, including the blue piano and hot trumpet, not just the ubiquitous locomotive.

The best analysed language with some insight and precision applying frameworks and terms in good range. These also considered the staging of the scene and drew interesting conclusions about actions and delivery that conceded fully to the dramatic form.

Less successful were those that deviated quickly from the extract thereby denying themselves the many opportunities it provided. As with other questions in Section B, there were significant numbers that moved quickly into what appeared a different and 'rehearsed' agenda which seemed to be based on a different question – in some instances from an earlier series - thereby not addressing the specifics of the task. Less successful responses tended to describe rather than analyse and offered little sense that the characters were dramatic constructs.

Again, contextual ideas had been extensively taught to candidates but centres should be cautious with the notion of placing too much emphasis on biographical context at the expense of contextual implications of form and genre. Less successful responses had little meaningful to discuss beyond some vague references to Old/New South. Often, contextual comments were inaccurate and candidates clearly did not understand anything about the points they were making. For example, many comment on the impact of the Civil War on Belle Reve and life in the South – but the impression is that these are recent events, rather than something that happened 80 years earlier.

On the other hand, in less successful responses, there often minimal discussion of the impact of World War II.

The following excerpts are drawn from a successful response to Question 3. It was awarded a mark of 22 which places it mid-lower Level 5.

As is characteristic of responses in Level 5, it demonstrates critical and evaluative levels of investigation and analysis. The mark of 22 indicates it fully meets the AO descriptors for Level 4 and the discrimination and control expected here but that, on significant, but not all, occasions it presents critical/evaluative comment worthy of the highest Level (5):

- Presents critical application of concepts and methods with sustained examples.
- Uses sophisticated structure and expression with appropriate register and style.
- Use of appropriate terminology.
- Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays sophisticated understanding of the writer's/speaker's craft
- Critically examines context by looking at subtleties and nuances.
- Examines multi-layered nature of texts and how they are produced and received.

In a Streetcar named Desire, the characters Blanche and Stella have entirely juxtaposing attitudes regarding Stanley's violence. Stella is Williams' representative of former members of the 'Old South' who have adapted to and enjoy the 'New South' represented by Stanley. Blanche on the other hand is Williams' representation of former members of the 'Old South' that cannot adapt and adjust to the ways of the 'New South' (Stanley) and cling to the 'Old South', symbolised by Belle Reve, despite the fact that it's lost. Williams illustrates





The response opens with a valid comparison of Stella and Blanche as representative of the old order and the struggles they face when confronted with the changed realities of the 'New South'. The key issue of Stella's willingness to adapt is recognised here. The stance is a worthy one and is made clear from the start.



Try to state your case in terms of argument and direction from the very start of your response.

him smashing lightbulbs, Williams describes him exclusively with violent, animalistic verbs "snatched", "pushed", "smashed"; to build the image of his violence in order to ~~set~~ set up the ~~pr~~ juxtaposition between Blanche and Stella's attitudes towards it. Williams illustrates clearly Blanche's distress upon learning this as she responds ~~to~~ with ~~a question~~ "He did-what?", to show her as disbelieving as she already knows the answer, <sup>and</sup> the fragmentary nature of the sentence created by the parenthetical dashes and italics further generates the image of distress in Blanche as she can't articulate sentences properly. Stella contrastingly is presented



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Examiner Comments

There is a sense of authorial crafting as the candidate explores Williams' use of Stella's description of Stanley's actions on his wedding night to 'set up the juxtaposition' or contrast between the attitudes of Blanche and Stella. The violent nature of the verb choices is explored with some precision, although their definition as 'animalistic' is something of a stretch.

The exploration of Blanche's utterance in response to this 'anecdote' considers both content and delivery, demonstrating both an awareness of dramatic convention and spoken language features.



Never lose sight of the text as a performance piece. Pay attention to the utterances of the characters and how they are constructed. Be sure to comment on any prompts to delivery.

properly. Stella contrastingly is presented by Williams as being entirely ~~calm~~ calm and relaxed regarding Stanley's violence, loving him even more for it. He demonstrates by making Stella respond to Blanche's ~~question~~ question in an exclamatory sentence, repeating ~~the~~ <sup>other</sup> syntax, ~~this~~ followed by the paralinguistic feature connotative of happiness and pleasure, "He smacked all the light-bulbs with the heel of my slipper! (She laughs)." This incredibly strong



Stella's attitude is evidenced both linguistically and paralinguistically, again showing an awareness of character as construct and the play as a performance piece. More could have been made of this, however.

Secondly, Williams uses irony<sup>110</sup> to present this ~~difference~~ cultural difference between Stella and Blanche and its effects. Blanche describes Stella's love for Stanley after returning to him after he hit her at the poker night, as a "Fix", ~~as a~~ <sup>through</sup> Blanche has an ~~alcohol~~ alcohol addiction and then dares that she's going to "Make myself [her] a new life!", this exclamatory sentence is ironic because Stella, is pregnant and <sup>literally</sup> has made a new life by adapting to

Stanley and his violence & (the 'New South') whereas Blanche is too old for marriage in contemporary America and therefore has lost!



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Examiner Comments

The response extends beyond the straightforward polarisation of Blanche and Stella which characterises many less successful answers. Here, it picks up on the complexity of Blanche and the facade she constructs and presents. The irony recognised here is evidenced effectively.

In this presentation of their cultural difference, Williams' portrayal of Blanche as she descends into madness, shown by the motifs of non-diegetic sounds such as "the cries of the jungle", and "the polka music", (key aspects of plastic theatre, which Williams pioneered) until she is raped and taken to a mental asylum, meanwhile Stella has just given birth. This symbolises the destruction of the 'Old South' and eventual death of those who refuse to adapt to the turbulence and violence of the 'New South' (Stanley) and the continuation



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Examiner Comments

There is continued awareness of the dramatic conventions deployed by Williams through reference to sound effects and Plastic Theatre. The symbolic significance of these are linked to the downfall of Blanche and the 'Old South' she represents. More significantly, her refusal to adapt is highlighted as an overriding factor and point of contrast with Stella, thus sustaining the initial standpoint of the candidate.

Williams's social commentary may be because ~~of~~ the conflict between old and progressive values and industry was a ~~very~~ relevant subject to the contemporary audiences. However, from a psychoanalytical perspective, aspects of his life, especially his childhood perhaps provide an answer. His mother was an archetypal Southern belle, reminiscent of the female Blanche tries to create whereas his father was a rough, working class travelling salesman, reminiscent of Stanley. Williams was also raised by his grandparents a lot who were very old South in their values, and consequently, so was Williams. His views and accent were not popular in ~~the~~ his school in the North and so he was bullied. Therefore, the cultural difference <sup>arises in the</sup> ~~between~~ <sup>conflict</sup> between Stella and Blanche ~~regarding~~ Stanley's violence may be a sublimation of his <sup>own</sup> internal ~~issues~~.

On conflicting views which resulted from his childhood influences from both the 'Old' and 'New South' in a historical period of dramatic cultural change, a period from <sup>which</sup> the violent 'New South' prevailed, as did Stanley and Stella in the play.



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Examiner Comments

The biographical detail that concludes the response is not particularly well integrated and, as such, is not as successful as other aspects of the response. The focus on cultural differences and conflict is valid, however.

## Question 4

### Question 4: 'Elmina's Kitchen'

There were relatively few responses to 'Elmina's Kitchen' this series. However, those that studied this text appear to have fully engaged with it and with the focus of the task. There was much evidence of good teaching here, especially relating to context. There were insightful, often personal references to Hackney's so-called 'murder mile' and to well-researched primary and secondary data that illuminated the discussion of relationships in Black British society. It was encouraging to read about the insight afforded by the playwright in the personal interviews conducted by some of the candidates, but in mid-lower levels of achievement the anecdotes tended to dominate the response at the expense of focus on the specific requirements of the task. More successful candidates tailored this information to the task with considerable precision.

The question encourages movement beyond the extract to an exploration of the presentation of male/female relationships in the play. There is much opportunity for this, such as Deli's relationship with women which is based on Elmina: single-parented and mother-oriented; his relationship with Anastasia which promises much stability but is judged by the male characters so very harshly; the objectification of women throughout the play; Clifton's attitude towards Elmina and his son, his infidelities and his seduction of Anastasia. Successful candidates chose carefully and supported their assertions with appropriate evidence which was then interrogated analytically to evidence authorial craft and dramatic agenda.

The best explored the extract closely and offered analytical comment on the construction of voice and offered comment on characteristics such as the integration of patois and shifts between the vernacular and Standard English to develop the contrast between father and son and the attitudes they present. Some were able to offer careful consideration of the concept of black masculinity. The best were able to comment on the crafting of the contrasts between father and son through their differing attitudes to the male/female family dynamic and to develop the parallels that Digger perceives between his relationship and that of Deli and Anastasia.



## Question 5

### Question 5: 'Equus'

The question proved to be a good stimulus for students to discuss the key ideas of the play and the extract was accessible and provided a good opportunity for students to apply linguistic frameworks. Successful responses applied a linguistic lens to their investigation.

The given extract afforded much opportunity to explore the developing dynamic between Alan and Jill and the changing attitudes they represent. Most were able to explore the dynamic of the conversation and the spoken language feature employed by both, although some struggled to link form to function. Many failed to pick up on the contrasting voices constructed by Shaffer to comment on the very different background and life experiences of Alan and Jill. Many candidates were aware of Jill as representative of changing social and sexual attitudes and the best evidenced this through exploration of Shaffer's construction of her voice and her flirtatious tone and conversational 'dominance' countered by Alan's discomfort and the reasons behind this.

Successful responses placed Jill, and her ability to talk openly about the human body, as representative of the changing social norms of the 1960s and 1970s, when discussing sex and sexuality became less taboo. They also discussed the fact that she clearly takes the lead in the relationship. But there were many, less successful responses on the broad theme of sex and relationships, without specific reference to Alan and Jill or to changing attitudes towards relationships in the 1970s. These also tended to present only vague knowledge of social change in the 20th century, especially relating to gender roles.

Very few were aware of the role of Dysart as pivotal to Shaffer's dramatic manipulation of set, timeframe and flashback or Alan's direct address of Dysart as a link between past and present action. They missed valuable points on dramatic convention and context as a result. Only the best commented effectively on dramatic convention such as stage directions to convey mood and action, in particular to highlight Alan's growing anxiety and discomfort.

Successful responses explored the extract analytically. They differentiated the voices from which it is comprised by exploring the factors, contextual and dramatic, that shaped them. These applied literary and linguistic frameworks and terms accurately and in good range, to comment both on the dynamic between Jill and Alan and on the role of Dysart and the professional methods he uses to elicit responses from his subject. Contextual factors were applied with relevance to illustrate, for example, the Freudian approach of Dysart, or the nature of Alan's family dynamic against that of Jill. They also showed awareness of the dramatic techniques and conventions that characterise the scene and evidence Shaffer's craft.

Less successful responses treated the extract chronologically and simply summarised it. Analysis was thin and undeveloped and there was limited extension beyond word level comment. As such, there was limited differentiation of voice. Some did not look at the extract in any real depth, moving quickly to a generalised discussion of Alan's relationship with Jill or with his parents. Some did not reference the text as a play and thus missed opportunities for contextual comment other than received psychological /psychoanalytical 'wisdoms'.

The question encouraged an exploration of the relationship between Alan and Jill across the play as a whole with a specific focus on the role of Jill as representative of changing sexual and social attitudes. There were many opportunities for this such as the revelations at the cinema (and the fact that Jill is the only female present); Jill's seduction of Alan and his confusion of spiritual and sexual 'ecstasy'; Alan's failed attempt at a sexual relationship with Jill.

The following extracts were drawn from a relatively successful response to Question 5 that was awarded a mark of 19. This places it in mid-upper Level 4 in that it largely demonstrates the discrimination and control characteristic of this Level. The mark suggests there may be slight imbalance in terms of the address of the AOs but that it will mostly meet these in that it:

- Applies controlled discussion of concepts and methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully-chosen language and use of terminology.
- Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses the nuances and subtleties of writer's/ speaker's craft.
- Provides discriminating awareness of links between the text and contextual factors. Consistently makes inferences about how texts are produced and received.

In the extract, we are presented with the ~~first~~ second scene where Jill and Alan interact, which symbolises a turning point of the plot towards the climax. ~~Although, Jill is a relatively minor character, she serves a significant role in Alan's downfall and the plot progress progression.~~ Their relationship, although lacking in terms of the amount of scenes with them together, underpins the whole narrative and serves as the main driver for Alan's downfall, reflecting the changing attitudes towards relationships in the 1970s. The extract opens with Jill



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Examiner Comments

The response opens with the placement of the extract into its context within the play as a whole, thus demonstrating a breadth of understanding of the text. There is also focus on the central issue of the task from the outset.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Identifying where the extract fits into the play as a whole is a sensible starting point.

as conservative and protective by that fact that Jill  
"can't ever bring anyone ~~to~~ <sup>back</sup> home", which is  
a ~~euphemism~~ <sup>euphemism</sup> for ~~bringing over a boy for sex~~, that  
this euphemism for ~~bringing~~ <sup>bringing</sup> home a boy for  
sex ~~suggests~~ is framed as a complaint ~~suggesting~~  
referencing the ~~cont~~ changing attitudes towards  
sex in the 1970s; <sup>this is</sup> accentuated by Jill's "secret  
dates", framing sex as a priority for young people.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

There is clear recognition of Jill as a device and symbol. The comments on the developing generational differences is linked to the 1970s context effectively.

Furthermore, in the extracts sets up Jill and Alan's relationship ~~evident to the~~ with her flirting. This is indicated by the stage directions "She sits next to him" reinforced by the collocation "You've got super eyes". In the format of a theatrical production it visually presents Jill's ~~desire~~ <sup>attraction</sup> to Alan ~~as a romantic partner~~ to the audience. Additionally, the collocation "super eyes"



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Examiner Comments

There is recognition of dramatic device and convention through exploration of stage directions. This aspect could have been improved if the language from which these directions are composed was analysed more fully. The link between these directions and Jill's utterance and how it combines in terms of performance and its effect on the audience is worthy, however.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Always consider the play as a performance piece and think about issues of staging.

creepy. 'In this instance, it serves' as a symbol for sexual and romantic desire. This is reinforced by Jill's comment on Alan "staring into Nugget's eyes," which adheres to this desire, catching Alan off guard. This ~~sub~~ subversion of the motif reflects the sexual and romantic desire prevalent with 1970s sexual liberation, which is evident with the fact that Jill "was always looking." The visual verb "looking" and temporal adverb "~~looking~~" "always" exemplify this notion ~~as~~ of searching for ~~love~~ a romantic partner that was growing in the younger generation. This links with how the media has adapted to ~~also~~ capitalise as well as reinforce this change in attitudes reflected by "The article in the paper" that Jill mentions which ~~says~~ says "what parents about boys fascinate girls."



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Examiner Comments

This section of the response explores the motif of eyes and acknowledges Shaffer's use of Jill to initially unsettle Alan through her clear association of eyes with sexual attraction and desire. There is a missed opportunity to relate this to Alan's growing awareness and confusion leading, ultimately to his blinding of the horses. Wider contextual comments based on gender, generational differences and the influence of the media are all well made and score well against AO3. Analysis is relatively straightforward, but is applied accurately to the evidence provided.



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Examiner Tip

Always look for opportunities to link points in the extract to the broader play.

Alan and Jill relationship really starts to form after their encounter with Frank in the cinema. Alan expresses ~~his~~ sympathy for his father for the first time after seeing him at a pornographic film. "Poor old sed!" the colloquial evokes his sense of ~~relationship with his father's sexual~~ and pity for his father as he is able to relate ~~to~~ to his repressed sexual feelings. This ~~is interpreted by Jill~~. The binomial fixed ~~expression~~ "Ladies and Gentlemen" is used to describe what Alan's mother likes, which suggests traditional values far removed from sexual desires, ~~the~~ as "she doesn't give him anything", a euphemism for sex. This serves



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Examiner Comments

The relationship is used to comment on Alan's changing attitudes to his parents and to develop contrasts across the generations in terms of attitudes to sex. The issue of repressed sexual feelings is recognised here as a link between father and son and shows secure understanding of the play as a whole.

The motif of eyes return in 'this instance, Alan refers to ~~Jill as~~ "Her eyes. She's the one with eyes." reinforcing his new found sexual desire for her, which she reciprocates "I love your eyes". This is then followed by their attempt at sex, which ~~was~~ ~~was~~ a He first date. ~~This is~~ The stage directions frame this encounter as rather uncomfortable, ~~as~~ because of the horses watching. "He edges nervously past" He adverb expressing Alan's fear to be seen with her in

Gouss' temple. "Them!" The minor exclamatory sentences replaces this fear, which serves as a ~~minor~~ obstacle to their intercourse. The motif of eyes return once again but framed in a judging ~~rather~~ dangerous manner "I see you" from Gouss. This symbolises the judging eyes of ~~many people towards~~ many people towards sex in spite of the sexual liberation. Sex was still considered a



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Examiner Comments

The response continues to explore Shaffer's motif of eyes and its significance to both symbol and action as the relationship between Alan and Jill moves towards the failed attempt at sexual intercourse. There is a clear sense of staging and convention and the focus on motif affords some interesting comments and analysis.



## Question 6

### Question 6: 'The History Boys'

The extract provided much opportunity to explore Bennett's use of the shared lesson on the Second World War and the Holocaust to highlight the different perspectives and approaches of the teachers to the teaching of History. He also uses the students to develop this contrast further.

The best applied an analytical lens to Bennett's dialogue and how the voices here are shaped. They offered comment, for example, on the repeated interrogatives through which Hector questions the teachings of Irwin and the language (assimilated by the boys) through which this is expressed. They also offered comment on Irwin's response to these questions, such as his reformulation of 'statesman' to 'politician' and how this reflects on his perspective. These responses also explored the contrasting and changing allegiances of the boys and how these are developed through Bennett's construction of their voices. The best presented a deep grasp of the educational and cultural issues and a real understanding of Bennett's dramatic methods in exploring these through his constructed characters, obviously with Irwin and Hector, as the question directed, but also through Posner in particular.

Less successful responses to the extract could have shown greater knowledge of spoken language and performance features in the extract itself. Many were essentially narrative/descriptive paying limited regard to the language used by Bennett to develop character and plot. They offered limited acknowledgment of the text as a play or of the characters as dramatic constructs. Analysis of method was thin and often inaccurate and links between form and function undeveloped. Others made wildly broad assertions about the role of education based on thin understanding of the socio-political context that frames the play.

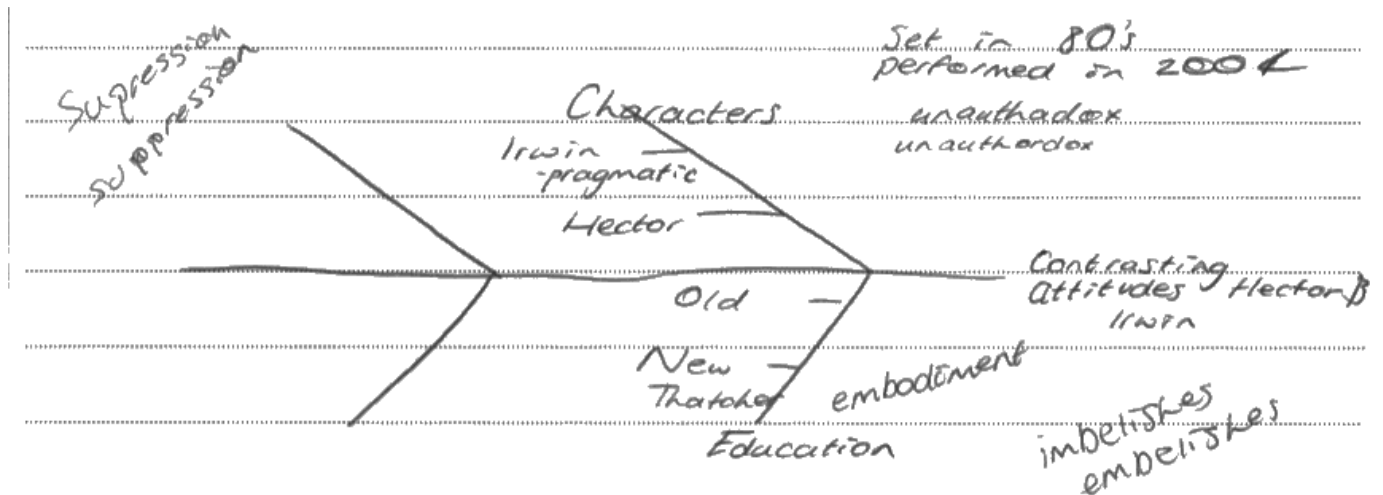
Many were able to place the extract into its broader context of the play, identifying it as a turning point, with Hector's realisation that he has no future in a system that places primary importance on Irwin's method of teaching because it produces knowledge of high performativity and profitability. The key here was to be able to relate the dialogue to the rest of the play, as it's through the shifting fortunes of these characters that Bennett makes his points and challenges the audience's preconceptions. Successful candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the text and its structure– as well as answering the question, of course. A successful few linked the extract to Irwin's problems with Posner's parents (and the Headmaster) over his handling of the Holocaust which, in turn, calls his approach into question. Having embraced Irwin's teaching, the students try to find a different perspective on the dominant interpretation of history for the sake of entrance examinations.

The following extracts are taken from a response that achieved a mark of 12 which places in towards the bottom of Level 3.

There are two restrictive issues here. The first is the fact that it does not address the specifics of the question (regarding the teaching of History) with consistency. Rather, it moves to a more generalised discussion of education and the examination system. The second is the lack of investigation of the extract given as the springboard to the wider play.

The placement within the level indicates that the response is not fully secure in coverage of all AOs, although the examiner considers the response to have presented all evidence for the 'general understanding' at Level 2 with some elements in Level 3. On balance, performance matches the descriptors for Level 3, but a mark just above the border with Level 2. At Level 3, a response will:

- Apply relevant concepts and methods of analysis to texts with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.
- Explain clear significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes relevant links to how texts are produced and received.



The teaching styles are presented in two ways, the outdated view point of beloved Hector and the controversial new uprising presented through youthful Irwin.

The extract is showing the shared eat classroom scene between the characters Hector and Irwin, within the extract we are shown the two contrasting styles to teaching which has been represented by each character. Hector the beloved teacher takes on 'old-fashioned' approach to the styles of teaching, this is evident when looking back to one of the independent classes Hector teaches - "I don't always understand poetry... Hector "Learn it now... and then you will have the anecdote ready". It is not at first evident that Hector has taken an unauthorodox path in terms of his teaching styles, after all



The response opens with a generalised focus on the task and the contrasts it involves. There are minor lapses in expression here, but these do not overly impede. This is to prove a factor at AO1 as the response progresses, however.

The reference to Hector's teaching style is relevant enough but the evidence is taken from the broader play and is characteristic of the response as a whole in that it tends to shy away from the extract and move to a more generalised discussion that sometimes seems pre-prepared. This lack of detail is a very restrictive factor and brings many elements of the response down to the 'general understanding' of Level 2.



Always explore the given extract in as much detail as you can. Use it as the springboard for the discussion of the broader play using its content as your focus.

When looking at the given extract the use of the stage directions "(Hector groans)" helps as an indication to the audience members how the character of Hector is feeling after an unloading of academic jargon has unsettled the 'language' work he has studied with the boys.



There is an acknowledgement of dramatic device and convention here, but investigation of function and effect is very straightforward/undeveloped.

In contrast to this, the pragmatic Irwin embellishes on the academic stand point within education, "Dull. Dull. Abysmally dull." – the use of both triadic structure and short declarative sentences help in conveying the structured pragmatic view point in which he holds. As the play is set in the 80's and Irwin is a new teacher he becomes the embodiment for Thatcher's education through his own academic success which he pushes onto the boys and his encouragement to be on the top of the league boards in terms of this academic <sup>process</sup> ~~success~~.



When commenting on Irwin, the evidence provided is again chosen from outside the extract. In itself, this evidence does not clearly support the rather grand claims regarding Irwin's 'structured pragmatic viewpoint'. This sometimes convoluted expression and application of subject specific terms that are not demonstrably grasped by the candidate, does not help them to construct and convey a meaningful argument.

There is an attempt to analyse the language from which the evidence is comprised, but assertions regarding triadic structures are not fully secure.

Contextual links to Thatcher are valid enough, but lack development here.

through tone shifts presented by the ~~character~~<sup>actor</sup>. Similarly, in this scene we see Irwin gain confidence through his tempered attacks on what Hector is stating "Education isn't something for when they're old and grey... it's for now", the lexical field - "old and grey" - creates the imagery of ~~the~~ uselessness, creating the importance on education for the boys. This will divide the audience as the members



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Examiner Comments

The tendency to work beyond the extract - and the focus it provides for broader exploration - is evidenced by the most successful element of the response which cites a discussion on the examination system between Hector and Irwin in Act One. The precise wording of the question refers to the teaching of History and so this evidence is not as directly relevant as it might be. However, there is some analysis of technique here which moves just beyond Level 2.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Answer the question! Refer to the specific wording - it will give you the focus needed to explore the extract and extend beyond it into the play as a whole.

## Question 7

### Question 7: 'Top Girls'

Relatively few centres chose to study 'Top Girls' this series. Responses did cover a reasonable range of achievement all the same.

The extract develops oppositions between Marlene and Jeanine based on their differing perspectives. Marlene's interview questions reveal much about Jeanine's values and her ultimate desire to marry and have children whilst making progress in her career. The interview establishes Marlene's intense professionalism, and lack of compassion for women like Jeanine, who are trying to balance having both a career and a family life.

Successful responses explored Churchill's use of language and dramatic technique to craft the voices of Jeanine and Marlene and develop the contrast between them, such as the interrogatives used by Marlene to elicit information about Jeanine's values and how these are structured and sequenced. Other responses explored how Jeanine's responses incrementally affected the type of jobs Marlene offers and what this reveals about Marlene. They applied terms with accuracy and linked form to function and with specific focus on the central issues of the task.

The voices contrast significantly and there was scope for the best to analyse their construction in developing this contrast. Successful responses recognised how the voices were shaped by their personal and professional experiences and were able to use this as a basis for comment on their construction which enabled successful integration of contextual factors.

References to Thatcher generated some interesting comment, but focus on the task sometimes varied. Again, the difference between stronger and weaker candidates was the ability to embed these contextual ideas to authorial decisions rather than simply describing issues of gender and/or politics at the time. Those that considered the text as a performance piece, considering dramatic conventions and techniques, were rewarded against the contextual AO.

Candidates are encouraged to explore attitudes to work and family in other parts of the play. There are, of course, many opportunities to do this such as Churchill's presentation of the overriding contradiction that was Margaret Thatcher; the depiction of Marlene, Nell, and Win as professionally successful and economically independent women in what would usually be viewed as a masculine field; the 'sacrifices' they have made in order to secure and maintain these positions; Joyce as antithesis to Marlene through the domestic role that defines and confines her; Angie as symbol and 'price'.

## Question 8

### Question 8: 'Translations'

The extract provides opportunities to discuss cultural differences in the play and how these impact on the characters and the relationships they develop.

The extract is taken from one of the play's most important 'bilingual' scenes: the device of having two languages on stage although only one (English) is spoken. Yolland and Maire have been drawn to each other for very different reasons, that neither, because of lack of access to the other's language, can understand. As the extract progresses the differing perspectives – cultural and personal - become increasingly apparent, as does the danger of crossing cultural boundaries. Following this scene, the play becomes darker, reflecting the historical reality of the events which followed (and of which the play was speaking metaphorically in the present) in which resolution becomes impossible. This moment is the pivot on which the drama turns.

There was clear engagement with the extract with the majority able to evidence the points of misunderstanding between the characters and link these to the broader difficulties (cultural, linguistic and contextual) that face them as they attempt to develop their relationship. The best were able to explore Friel's meticulous construction of the scene and commented on the stage directions and the generic conventions they employ; here the 'choreographed' movement between characters is especially significant. They also offered comment on the use of place names to construct adjacency through repetition and latch-on. Only the very best recognised the sequentially diminishing syllable count synched to the movement of the characters and the distance between them. Successful responses also drew out the contextual points it contains, recognising, for example, the significance of Maire's focus on Yolland's 'gentlemanly' appearance and how it represents potential escape.

Those that analysed the extract closely were able to comment specifically on the initial linguistic separation (and how this is constructed/conveyed) and the seeming convergence of understanding via the shared reference to 'trembling'. Many picked up on the significance of the repeated reference to the adverb 'always' and linked this, with some precision, to Friel's revelation of the diametrically opposite aspirations of the characters through lexical substitution of 'here' for 'anywhere' in their syntactically parallel utterances.

The question encourages an exploration of attitudes towards cross-cultural relationships particularly against the backdrop of colonisation which is central to the play. There are many opportunities beyond the Yolland/Maire liaison, such as the professional relationship between Yolland and Owen; the concept of 'tribe' as debated by Manus and Jimmy Jack; the metaphor of Jimmy's imagined relationship with Athene; the constant yet ephemeral presence of the Donnelly twins; Yolland's romanticised and ultimately fatal perspective.

Extracts here are drawn from a very successful response to Question 8. It was awarded a mark of 23 which places it in the middle of Level 5. The response has its minor flaws; the exploration of the extract is possibly not as detailed as it might be as some of the specific evidence of misunderstanding and contrasting cultural and personal perspectives is not analysed fully, but the links to the rest of the play evidence a sophisticated, broad understanding and a firm grasp of the issues - contextual, linguistic and cultural - that shape it.

The placement within the level indicates that the examiner considered the answer to mostly match the AO descriptors and the critical and evaluative comments that characterise this top level of achievement, in that it:

- Presents critical application of concepts and methods with sustained examples.
- Uses sophisticated register and style, including use of appropriate terminology.
- Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays sophisticated understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.
- Critically examines context by looking at subtleties and nuances.
- Examines multi-layered nature of texts and how they are produced and received.

Communication. As shown in the extract both are alienated from each other in their <sup>own</sup> language 'I would tell you how beautiful you are' 'your arms so long and thin', both characters are expressing terms of ~~endearment~~ endearment, yet cannot understand one another. The auxiliary verb 'would' is repeated by Yolland 'I would tell you', 'I would so like to', the use of anaphora with the verb connotes Yolland's desperation, he ~~can~~ communicate, presenting how this is a difficulty to them both.



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Examiner Comments

There is focus on the extract from the outset and a clear grasp of the central issues of the task.

Evidence of Yolland's difficulty and frustration is explored with some analytical precision, especially through consideration of Friel's verb forms.





Using the extract as your starting point will give focus to your whole response as it has been chosen with the question in mind.

been able to read the play. This on one date underlining factor of both the humour evoked from Yolland and Maire's troubled troubled communication, as the audience laughs in understanding both parties, & it symbolises the destined erosion of Gaelic, a destiny, doom, all most character in the play.



There is a clear grasp of the overriding contextual and linguistic irony of the play.

The minor lapses in expression here can be attributed to the candidate's editing/correction.

both doomed. In *George Bernard Shaw's* 'Yolland as escape 'take me away with you, George' the verb 'take' connects with stereotypes in ~~the~~ marriage and their views on women. Despite Maire representing the modern Irish woman, ~~the~~ shown through her declarative language 'I want to speak English'. The verb 'want' is highly demanding, ~~and~~ and authoritative, attributes not typically given to a ~~woman~~ woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition the controversial topic of learning 'English' in the rural town of Donegal, in a hedge-school, a place dedicated to learning Gaelic; all show Maire as a strong-willed woman. Yet ~~her~~ with her attraction to Yolland symbolises her desperate need for escape, and the



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Examiner Comments

Exploration of Maire and the reasons for her attraction to Yolland are placed in their socio-historical context with some confidence. Assertion is supported with evidence from the extract and linked to additional evidence from the wider play. This integration shows both focus and a breadth of understanding.

gets himself killed. Although he is depicted with Maire, to Yolland his true love affair is with the country itself. 'Your countryside, ~~is very~~ I have fallen in love with it already' he adverbs 'already' foreshadows Yolland's devotion to Ireland and the preservation of Gaelic, despite his ~~role as~~ a soldier's role of a soldier. Friel presents the dichotomy faced between Yolland's relationship with Ireland through Yolland's oblivious, naivety to himself being a target. His romanticisation of Ireland is reflected in Owen States 'you think it's Eden', he references

to biblical paradise 'Eden' <sup>successfully</sup> ~~intentionally~~ conveys the fact that Yolland has through the biblical parallel, and he presents the state where Ireland has one Yolland, he worships it. Friel hints at a darker tone, Eve gave into temptation and ruined Eden, the same way Yolland's love of Ireland makes him a crucial target to the downfall of his own paradise. Friel convincingly



There is considerable subtlety in the exploration of Yolland; the brave assertion that his love affair is actually with Ireland and the professional and personal conflicts that arise as a result. The exploration of Owen's Edenic reference is both interesting and pertinent.

Colonialist attitudes. The IRA were mainly active between 1968-98, and Yolland's death symbolises the future relationship between Britain and Ireland. For audiences, Yolland's naive trust and love in Ireland 'so my feet wouldn't get wet with dew' adds tension, as audiences are aware of the acts of the IRA, such as the ~~prisoners~~ prisoners who starved themselves, and know this is simply a hint at the violence and bloodshed yet to come.



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Examiner Comments

There are many examples of sound understanding of the wider political and historical contexts that shape the play. There is also some subtlety to the appreciation of Friel's manipulation of time frame and how this influences the reception of the play by the audience, who bring the lens of historical hindsight to their viewing. Evidence is sound here, but would have benefitted from closer linguistic analysis.



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Examiner Tip

Always incorporate specific analysis of evidence into your response.

This is further shown to through the relationship between Lacey and the tribe. His introduction presents a patronising, belittling character towards the tribe 'you may have seen me - seen me - working?' The constant repetition and emphasise on pronunciation presents an incompatible introduction for Lacey,



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Examiner Comments

The response moves across the place with facility and focus, examining a range of 'relationships' that try to bridge cultural barriers. Here, the introduction of Lacey and his awkward attempt to address the community in English reveals much about the issue and the attitude and language used by the Captain to the 'tribe'.

Analysis is appropriate here.

However his relationship with dead dead languages, Greek and Latin, symbolises by his love for Athena, goddess only isolates him more into the past. Jimmy symbolises the older generation <sup>of Ireland,</sup> who are reluctant and refusing to move forward into the modern world. After the introduction of national schools in 1831 and penal laws, Gaelic was wiped out into ~~only~~ only rural areas such as Donegal. Jimmy symbolises the inhabitants who were isolated in silence, and this presents the <sup>difficulties of relationships</sup> ~~problem~~ involving two cultures - it dooms Jimmy Jack to a life of isolation. It isolates him from survival and life in the modern world.



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Examiner Comments

The concluding investigation of Jimmy and his 'love affair' with a Greek goddess, conducted in a 'dead' language draws sophisticated conclusions about the symbolic significance of the character, both dramatically and contextually.

# Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

## Section A

- Aim for a balanced coverage of the anthology and the unseen text
- Always provide evidence from the data to support your comments
- Explore the language from which this evidence is comprised to comment on the writer's/speaker's craft
- Avoid a checklist of features as the framework for comparison
- Explore aspects of 'voice' and how this is constructed and presented

## Section B

- Explore and analyse the extract as fully as you can. It has been chosen with the focus of the question in mind
- Exemplify consistently and analyse the language from which this evidence is comprised
- Always consider the play as a performance text and explore the dramatic devices and conventions it applies
- Make sure that your exploration of the broader play maintains its focus on the question
- Try to integrate contextual comment into the body of your response and only include details that are relevant to the task



## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

