AS LEVEL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC)

H074
For first teaching in 2015

H074/02 Summer 2019 series
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Contents

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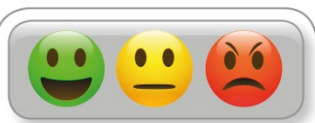
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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 2 series overview

This paper provides the opportunity for candidates to integrate their study of both literary and linguistic methods while engaging with two different genres: prose and poetry. The two sections require candidates to closely analyse a given extract from a novel, or to undertake a comparative exploration of two previously studied pomes. Candidates have an opportunity to select aspects of particular interest and then methodically explain and interpret specific features which illuminate meaning. The material printed on the paper for both Sections A and B provides opportunities for candidates to make a judicious selection of the literary and linguistic techniques they have studied in their Centres, as well as allowing them to demonstrate a range of relevant interpretations and approaches.

Candidates demonstrated a generally secure knowledge of key narrative aspects. Most candidates made reasonable attempts at using an integrated analytical approach, however there were still many instances of misapplied terminology. Responses were seen across the mark range to the different questions and texts demonstrating a consistent level of engagement and accessibility.

Stronger responses included evaluative critical perspectives and relevant supporting context. High level responses supported a clear overarching line of argument with a perceptive selection of short embedded evidence. Many candidates were able to demonstrate original thought and flair in their approaches to textual detail. More able candidates were able to explore structural aspects successfully, linking these closely to meaning and the writer's craft. Well-reasoned responses explored the fine detail of their chosen texts drawing out multiple interpretations suggested by the writer's lexical and structural choices.

Section A overview

In this section candidates are required to 'write about the ways in which an author tells the story in this extract'.

Candidates were generally able to select the most appropriate aspects of narrative to use as a lens for their close analysis. Key narrative aspects explored included: character, time, setting, point of view, voice, imagery and symbolism. Better responses demonstrated a wide and secure knowledge of more advanced literary and linguistic techniques which they used to explain language effects. Less successful responses adopted a feature spotting approach but did not link these to the ways in which the author told the story. Higher ability candidates made links across the extract and included relevant details from the wider novel. Responses that adopted a line by line approach struggled to present a coherent argument at times. Most candidates demonstrated an apt awareness of context and genre, generally weaving their knowledge into their line of argument. Most candidates recognised the importance of literary contexts, only incorporating socio-historic contextual aspects where these amplified meaning. There were still some responses that 'bolted on' contextual material without explaining its relevance to the extract. Many candidates successfully enhanced their response by including quotations from the wider novel which were relevant and pertinent to their overarching argument.

Question 2

2   **F Scott Fitzgerald:** *The Great Gatsby*

     Write about the ways in which F Scott Fitzgerald tells the story in this extract.

     In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in the extract

- consider the extract in the context of the novel as a whole and its genre.   **[25]**

Successful responses made good links to the wider context of the novel linking the extract to the description of Daisy and Jordan in the first chapter and how the story has developed to this point of crisis. Candidates made good links to the reference to a cold drink suggesting prohibition and Tom's telephone call reminding the reader of the Wilsons and, in particular, Mr Wilson's desperate attempt to make money to keep his wife happy. Most responses identified the contrasts with the different world of Nick, Gatsby and Tom/Daisy and linked this to the genre of the jazz age novel dealing with a rich, indulgent class living decadent lives of pleasure. Most candidates considered Nick as narrator, his personal bias, and his ambiguous moral position as although he defends Tom's call as genuine, he is nevertheless privy to Daisy's affair with Gatsby. The significance of the heat in this chapter was well discussed, with consideration of how this represented both the social and sexual tension that was reaching its climax at this point in the novel.

Exemplar 1

On the other hand, the lexical field used around the description of Tom consists of "annoyance", "flung", "blocked out" and "thick". Thes words completely juxtapose the image that Fitzgerald created for Daisy, and furthermore portrays how Tom and Daisy are complete opposites for eachother and shouldn't be together, however as we learn that Daisy has the capability to do horrible things, this idea is irradicated.

A good consideration of how language choices are used to present character, and contrasts. 18 marks.

Question 5

5   Ian McEwan: *Atonement*

Write about the ways in which Ian McEwan tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in the extract

- consider the extract in the context of the novel as a whole and its genre.   **[25]**

Successful responses recognised the importance of this passage as a retrospective exploration by Briony where she establishes her character as a writer and storyteller who is misunderstood and underestimated. Candidates recognised the irony in the comment that 'she did not have it in her to be cruel' demonstrating that her desire for atonement may not be entirely sincere. There was generally consideration given to her secret life and the fact that her family were unaware of both Briony's inner life as no-one knew about 'the squirrel's skull under the bed' – this was seen to foreshadow her later secrecy particularly the symbolic use of 'lockable diaries' and 'hidden drawers'. Contextually there were good discussions around aspects of genre with recognition of features of metanarrative, post-modernism, social satire, family saga and the centrality of the Tallis' house. Better responses considered the significance of Briony's presentation as an able actress adding appropriate voices and actions to her storytelling, thus foreshadowing her believable story when she later condemns Robbie.

Exemplar 2

McEwan later describes her struggle to be a good writer as a "foolish affair, imitative", which gives us a preview of how Briony thinks of herself. This is foreshadowed at the begining of part 1, as she struggles to captivate the reader, which she later gets critisised for in the rejection letter. This is self-critisism from McEwan, as he did similar mistakes when he first began writing.

A good awareness of the function of metanarrative in the novel, with some consideration of possible autobiographical elements. 17 marks.

Section B overview

This section requires candidates to draw out similarities and differences between the two poems printed on the paper. Successful responses explored both key themes and narrative aspects within the poems. Stronger responses explored connections both through the perspective of the poet's message/ideas and poetic devices employed to convey meaning. Less successful responses explored one poem in greater details than the other. Most candidates amplified their discussion of connections between the poems by making explicit links to relevant contextual aspects. Candidates are expected to consider poems within the wider collection, for example in relation to poetic tradition, historical or religious context, or significance of place and time. This was generally done well, however where dates were misidentified this led to some misplaced analysis. More successful responses made explicit and relevant links to other poems in the collection, with the inclusion of pertinent quotations.

Responses generally adopted an integrated comparison, however, weaker responses read as to separate essays. Structural elements were generally well identified but these were not always linked to meaning or the writer's craft. Better responses included pertinent quotations to support the comparative argument while some candidates made unsupported generalised assertions. There were reasonable attempts across the cohort to employ relevant terminology, but poetic devices were sometimes misidentified.

Question 7

7　William Blake

Compare the ways Blake uses language and poetic techniques in 'Nurse's Song' (*Experience*) and 'The Clod and the Pebble' (*Experience*).

Support your answer with reference to relevant contextual factors.　　　　　　　**[25]**

Successful responses considered the contextual aspects of Blake's own views on childhood as well as the representations of childhood and relationships in Rousseau and Wollstonecraft. Some candidates drew parallels with the hymns of Isaac Watts and included some discussion on the contrasts between the different sections in 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' and their links to romanticism. There were good discussions around the use of natural imagery, more generic references in 'Nurse's Song' and specific language choices in 'The Clod and the Pebble'. Better responses explored the use of symbolism – 'the green' and 'the sun going down' in 'Nurse's Song' identified as conceptual metaphors for youth and age with the contrasts in 'The Clod and the Pebble' between the softness of 'the Clod of Clay' and the hardness of 'a Pebble of the brook'. Structurally, candidates identified the use of regular rhyming patterns in quatrains in both poems, the contrast between the first person of 'Nurse's Song' and third person in 'The Clod and the Pebble', as well as referring to the use of direct speech in 'The Clod and the Pebble'. The significance of these structural choices to meaning and message were not always fully explored, however.

Exemplar 3

> Blake employs natural imagery in 'Nurse's Song'
> through the phrase "on the green" and "dale" which create
> a lexical field of nature. The colour imagery of "green"
> may symbolise the greenery of nature and the
> countryside, in which Blake believed that children
> should be surrounded by, in contrast to the harsh,
> cruel nature of the city life. The natural imagery links
> to Blake's beliefs about how children should possess their
> right to play and be connected with God and nature
> rather than be forced into child labour in the city life
> which Blake culminated immense hatred for. This
> natural imagery is also possibly hinted at through

A good awareness of the function of metanarrative in the novel, with some consideration of possible autobiographical elements. 25 marks.

Question 9

9 **Seamus Heaney**

Compare the ways Heaney uses language and poetic techniques in 'Anahorish' and 'The Toome Road'.

Support your answer with reference to relevant contextual factors. **[25]**

Contextually, successful responses considered the more personal aspects of Heaney's poems – his own experiences as a child, his journey as a writer and his inclusion of aspects of Irish history, politics and language. Candidates considered the natural and agricultural imagery in both poems and contrasted this with the added military references in 'The Toome Road' and the Celtic folklore in 'Anahorish', together with the use of the Irish tradition of writing poems about places, 'dinnshenchas'. Responses considered the different structural choices for the poems, with the free verse quatrains of 'Anahorish' representing the sensual untamed beauty of a pastoral idyll with the shortened lines and lack of rhyming scheme reminding readers of the loss of the name 'Anahorish' when the ordnance survey maps were drawn up. In contrast, the more regular use of rhyming couplets in 'The Toome Road' was generally viewed to reflect the more desirable aspects of the pastoral scene being destroyed by the invasion of an orderly army. Higher ability candidates considered the underlying tension arising in both poems through the invasion of colonisers and the adoption of language by Heaney that reflects both the coloniser and the traditional Irish.

Exemplar 4

The equal stanza length in Anahorish presents the idea of talking a 'paced' stroll through a natural setting or even Heaney pacing himself through his own memories. Futhermore, the enjambent that runs throughout the first poem presents also conveys the idea of flowing 'clear water'. To oppose this point, the poem toome read uses one big stanza and is not paced by regular line or phrase length. This poem also uses enjambment but the purpose of it in this poem is to express how quickly violence can over take within society. He does this by breaking rhythmic conventions.

Explores how a structural technique can illuminate meaning, and link to context. 21 marks.

Question 11

11   Carol Ann Duffy

Compare the ways Duffy uses language and poetic techniques in 'Elegy' and 'Over'.

Support your answer with reference to relevant contextual factors.   **[25]**

Successful responses compared the treatment of death in the poems, tracing the progression of love from infatuation in 'Elegy' to the break-up of the relationship in 'Over'. Candidates considered the images of death as representing an ending of love in 'Over' while comparing these to the marriage ceremony. The image of the 'ring of grass' is remembered as symbolic of both earlier promises and its association with the sharing of marriage vows, forming a link with the 'death of love' as representative of 'till death us do part'. Contextually, responses linked this to the collection of poems in 'Rapture' charting a love affair from beginning to end, with discussions on this representing the relationship between Duffy and Jackie Kay. There were good points made on the use of the first person singular and references to 'you' which contribute to the ambiguity of the gender of the couple. Some responses viewed 'Elegy' as a poem imagining a possible end to the relationship with the break-up in 'Over' demonstrating hope using the epigraph from Browning. Many candidates explored the modified sonnet form used in both poems as a recognised form for love poetry: the volta in the final couplet of 'Elegy' shifting the focus from the loved one to the persona to emulate the sexual element of the relationship while the volta in 'Over' considers memory as a 'gift'.

Exemplar 5

> We can see that although Elegy has a dark tone, there's a contrasting erotic features displayed throughout such as a lexical field of anatomy – "skin", hair", "lips" – suggests that Duffy still holds fond memories of the bond that she and her loved one had shared. If the death of her lover in Elegy is not a metaphorical device then it could be related to the fact that Duffy was a homosexual in a religious household, implying that she may have had to let go of her lovers.

A competent blending of literary devices, language choices and context to inform response. 15 marks.

Question 12

12 Jacob Sam-La Rose

Compare the ways Sam-La Rose uses language and poetic techniques in 'An Undisclosed Fortune' and 'Speechless' Section V.

Support your answer with reference to relevant contextual factors.   **[25]**

Contextually, successful responses made links to the poet's own experiences: going into schools in his role as a writer in 'Speechless' Section V and the story told to him by his mother of reviving him as an infant in 'An Undisclosed Fortune'. Candidates considered how Sam-La Rose demonstrates his own enthusiasm for poetry as a tool for education and the transformative power of poetry in 'Speechless' Section V and his more pragmatic consideration of a possible future needing to care for loved ones in 'An Undisclosed Fortune'. There were good discussions of Sam-La Rose's use of the language of everyday experiences to represent the reality of day-to-day life in a school or hospital, with the use of unrhymed tercets creating a more intimate, conversational tone to both poems. Higher ability candidates considered the philosophical aspect of each day of life collecting, forming the poem's title of 'An Undisclosed Fortune'. This was contrasted with the personal insights based on experience that the children are able to transform into poetic language, thus gaining a voice which is contradictory to the title of 'Speechless'.

Exemplar 6

> Speechless V opens with a ~~refeson~~ metaphorical reference to the students who are 'on the pitch, or up in the clouds.' The persona then draws attention to the 'boy face down on the desk' ~~set throughout the~~ ~~poem we follow the persona~~ who is placed in stark contrast to the 'squealing girls.' There is ~~a break in structure~~ The regularity of the tercets is broken in stanza six where the children question the poets presence. They proclaim that they are the 'dumb kids.' The lexical choice of

A perceptive consideration of the way in which the poet combines language and structural choices to convey meaning. 23 marks

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