

**AS LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**H072**

For first teaching in 2015

**H072/02 Summer 2022 series**

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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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper 2 series overview

The Drama and Prose post-1900 component invites candidates to explore a set drama text as well as connections between a set prose text and an unseen passage. The component is designed to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the full breadth of their ability to fulfil the requirements of the range of the English Literature assessment objectives.

Success in this component is characterised by work that shows detailed knowledge of the set texts often demonstrated by well selected textual detail (AO2) in support of clear and developed arguments (AO1). Writing is fluent and clear (AO1) and closely focused on the question, using relevant critical concepts and terminology. Understanding of the influence of contexts (AO3) is shown through relevant references which are appropriate to the question posed and support the argument of the response. In Section 1 (Drama) successful responses demonstrated a strong sense of the set text as drama through detailed discussion of dramatic effects (AO2) or references to performances (AO5). There is a range of interpretations of the text in the light of the question (AO5) relevant to the question and the argument of the response. In section 2 (Prose) the unseen extract is connected to the set text in a number of detailed and interesting ways which often illuminate the set text itself (AO4).

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constructed a clear and organised argument based on a close reading of the question</li> <li>• showed detailed knowledge of the text through apt selection of quotations or textual references to support their interpretation</li> <li>• wrote clearly and precisely</li> <li>• used references to context to support the argument and blended them into discussion</li> <li>• made full use of the extract in Section 2 to create links to the set text which helped to deepen analysis</li> <li>• blended critical readings into the argument to support and extend interpretations</li> <li>• showed a confident use of critical concepts and terminology</li> <li>• engaged enthusiastically with the text and question.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paid too little attention to the question especially in focusing on each part of its wording in Section 1</li> <li>• paid too little attention to the methods the writer used to present themes in Section 2</li> <li>• reproduced material from other questions they had used in practice or preparation without sufficient focus on the question in this exam</li> <li>• paid too little attention to the opportunities offered by the extract to create illuminating links</li> <li>• spent too much time on considerations of context which were not central to the question or the argument</li> <li>• lacked clarity in written expression or lacked clarity in in the construction of the argument.</li> </ul>

### Assessment for learning



In Section 1 candidates who write about their drama text with a strong sense of its drama tend to achieve well.

In Section 2 the better the candidates know their text, the more use they are able to make of the extract.

## Section 1 overview

In general, the level of knowledge candidates showed about their texts was comparable to previous series. The range of texts studied in centres has declined so that only two (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *History Boys*) were seen in any number. Successful responses managed to include a wide range of reference to the text and to contexts as well as critical readings. Less successful responses allowed aspects of these strengths to dominate to the detriment of the argument (AO1). For example, critical readings were included in the form of learnt critical quotations and were sometimes not embedded within the candidate's argument and sometimes contradicted (or simply repeated) what the candidate was arguing at the point the AO5 critical reading was included. Similarly, context (AO3) was sometimes irrelevant to the argument at the point the reference to context was included. Many successful responses demonstrated a strong, clear argument, first and foremost, with support from AO3 and AO5. Care was often shown as to how the reference was used and embedded.

### Question 1 (a) and (b)

#### 1 Noel Coward: *Private Lives*

##### Either

(a) 'The play presents four characters in need of love and care.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *Private Lives*? [30]

(b) 'In some ways the two women are more allies than rivals.'

In the light of this comment, discuss the roles of Sybil and Amanda in *Private Lives*. [30]

Very few responses were seen to this text option.

## Question 2 (a)

### 2 Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

#### Either

(a) 'Everyone in *A Streetcar Named Desire* shows a strong instinct for survival.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *A Streetcar Named Desire*? [30]

This set text was overwhelmingly the most popular text on this component as it has been for several past series. There is plenty of material in the play which engages candidates and their responses were very often knowledgeable and engaged.

This question invited candidates to explore a range of the characters in the play (Everyone) and successful responses were able to do this, showing their detailed knowledge by exploring a range of characters, including more minor characters such as Eunice and Steve. The word "instinct" persuaded many candidates, rightly, to focus closely on Stanley, ("a little bit on the primitive side") and to explore his violence and bullish determination to defeat Blanche in their competition for survival. Many good candidates contrasted the means of survival: "Tennessee Williams explores the primitive nature of survival through a masculine and feminine lens" as one strong response began. Good responses often showed that conformity to societal norms of the 1940s in Stella's relationship with Stanley is a legitimate expression of the survival instinct. In less successful responses context (AO3) was relied upon too much and it sometimes comprised of over-simplified generalisations about how men and women related to one another at the time the play was written. More successful responses used contextual references from a range of evidence including: the play itself, interviews with Williams, contemporary literature (*The Glass Menagerie*, for example) or journalism.

There were sophisticated responses which explored Blanche's Freudian "death wish" and showed how her fate resulted from a lack of "a strong instinct for survival" demonstrating how arguing against the question can sometimes produce a strong and coherent structure.

The best responses took a conceptual approach looking, perhaps, at the play as a Darwinian struggle for survival with echoes of the work of Pinter, (although sadly very few or no responses to the Pinter set text were seen across the component). This worked very well as a basis and showed how a strong argument (AO1) is often the making of an outstanding response. Less successful responses tended to offer character sketches of a range of the dramatis personae with a lean towards the idea of "instinct".

## Exemplar 1

2	a	<p>In a Streetcar named desire, all characters undergo some sort of struggle whether themselves in order to survive in their unchangeable world.</p> <p>Blanche is forced to survive the transition from the old south to new south via often unearthy means, Stella makes the ultimately painful decision to remain in her own delusions and Stanley takes on the unmasculine position of alpha male of his household and friendship group to survive in America's <sup>his</sup> dog-eat-dog <sup>culture</sup> world. Williams <sup>intends to</sup> <del>writes</del> <sup>illustrates</sup> <del>shows</del> <sup>demonstrates</sup> in them all a strong <sup>desire to survive, with varying degrees of success</sup> <del>capacity to survive</del> <del>desire</del>.</p> <p><sup>Williams uses Blanche to expose the fragility of attempting to</sup> <sup>survive for certain groups in America.</sup> <sup>many</sup> Blanche undergoes "trials and tribulations" as she is forced out of her family home of Belle Reve due to the "epic feminization" of her <del>to</del> father and the death of her high school sweetheart Alan. He kills himself after she finds out he is gay and subsequently proclaims "You disgust me!" It has haunted her ever since, as Williams portrays during the Varsouviana, a polka tune they last danced to. It plays when Blanche thinks of Alan, ending only in a gunshot to signify his death.</p> <p>Blanche explains to Mitch the anguish it caused in her, saying that "ever since, the searchlight turned on the world turned</p>
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off again, and never since has there been any light that's stronger than this - Kitchen - candle". The metaphorical description of her mental health suggests her to be plunged into darkness, yet she knows the persona she must personify should she wish to preserve her honour. As Stanley Tapp states, "Blanche is a victim of the mythicized Southern Belle". She is desperately trying to play a character which doesn't really exist. To ~~achieve~~ receive a proposal from Mitch she dumbs herself down - "[reading with feigned difficulty]" - and compliments his bony figure. She avoids questions about age, and refuses to stand in the light, knowing this may make her less ~~managable~~ ~~and~~ desirable and attractive. She even refuses to kiss him, stating she has "old-fashioned ideals". Yet, despite Blanche's best attempts at self-preservation, she is ultimately broken down. Mitch forces her into light, Stanley dismantles her dignity, and ultimately she gives in to others. She lets the doctor take her away as she proclaims "I have always <sup>depended</sup> ~~relied~~ on the kindness of strangers". Blanche cannot integrate into the New South no matter how hard she tries, thus her attempts <sup>to survive</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>prove</sup> to be in vain.

Williams uses Stella to expose the ~~conflict~~ mental conflict between choosing to survive or doing the



		right thing. Throughout the play, Williams places
		her between the constant push and pull of
		Stanley and Blanche. Despite her sister's
		incessant demands and Stanley's aggression,
		she loves and is loyal to them both.

This exemplar opens by introducing the idea of “struggle” which echoes the idea of “survival” in the question. This dwelling on the meaning behind the question at the start often characterises more successful responses because the focus is on the question and there is a suggestion as to how the candidate is going to tackle it. There is a concise overview in the opening paragraph which includes phrases such as “Williams uses Blanche to expose the futility of attempting to survive for certain groups in America” – this indicates a response that is looking at how the *writer* is working and suggests sophistication in approach by looking at characters as representative rather than simply realistic. The quotation from Blanche at the bottom of page 7 is aptly chosen although not necessarily one that every candidate would use, showing this candidate knows the text well. It provides a key for one of the metaphorical structures of the play. AO5 critical reading is included – a reference from Stanley Tapp, it says a lot in little and is blended smoothly into the argument, used, in fact as a springboard for development; this is an ideal way to include a critical quotation. The phrase “Stanley dismantles her dignity” shows the importance of vocabulary selection – the word “dismantles” works hard and, again, enables a lot to be said in little.

The second paragraph moves to Stella and that same phrase “Williams uses...” ensures that the level of discussion remains sophisticated rather than simply straightforward. The idea of conflict between choosing to survive or doing the right thing shows the candidate is identifying the underpinning of the argument of the play itself. “Williams places her between the constant push and pull of Stanley and Blanche” is another example of a lot being said in a little, where some candidates would have spent much more than simply one phrase to sum up one of the structures of the play. This is a reminder that candidates need to cover a lot of ground in a short time and cogency and conciseness are valuable assets.

## Question 2 (b)

(b) 'Blanche represents beauty in an ugly, materialistic world.'

In the light of this comment, discuss the role of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. [30]

This question produced a wide range of responses in terms of quality. The question requires candidates to offer some kind of definition; there are many different kinds of "beauty". Less successful responses tended to see the name "Blanche" in the question and offered a broad character-based essay with just a few nods to the question posed. As an examiner commented: "A number of answers completely ignored the quotation; a lot of answers settled for a straightforward physical interpretation of beauty; the better ones went beyond this." Many successful responses contrasted physical beauty with moral beauty in the presentation of Blanche. It was interesting to see how many candidates had strong feelings for and against Blanche – the play can engage students deeply and they engaged, sometimes passionately, with the issues this question raised. Successful responses often explored the divergence between appearance and reality within Blanche. The very best responses looked deeply into the language and particularly the poetry Williams gives Blanche to speak. This enabled candidates to examine a range of different readings of the word "beauty" and how Williams himself identified with Blanche in her creativity and imagination.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, candidates argued that Blanche's moral flaws were impossible to ignore and tainted any sense of beauty or potential for goodness within the character: "Blanche represents the old, ugly and dark America which is why by the end of the play she has lost to Stanley, who represents the new America, and is sent away" as one response opened. This, sometimes, created difficulties in the construction of argument because ugliness is everywhere rather than there being a distinction (even if sometimes compromised) between Blanche and an "ugly materialistic world".

The question invites the use of context (AO3) in the argument of the "Old South" versus the "New South". One response used the "Southern Belle" context successfully in this way: "Blanche cannot be seen as "Beauty" in a materialistic world as she does not attempt to defy the standards the "ugly" world sets for her to be a Southern Belle... but rather Williams depicts her as hopelessly chasing and trying to adhere to societal standards which simply makes her a component in the "ugly materialistic world"". An increasing number of candidates are succeeding through looking at the play from a conceptual basis, for example Marxist interpretations whereby the characters become representatives of social and economic forces as well as representations of individuals. This has the benefit of avoiding discussions of characters as though they are straightforwardly "real" representations.

Contexts for this text are often complicated and there were some responses which struggled with the terms "Ante Bellum Southern Belle" – which war is being referred to? Various the American War of Independence, the American Civil War, the First World War and the Second World War were invoked as the war in question. Of course, in the wider scheme of things all four wars can be seen as relevant context but confusion sometimes undermined the argument of some candidates. Successful candidates were confident, precise and accurate about the social and historical contexts of the play even to the extent of understanding in detail the nuances of cultural difference between Laurel and New Orleans in the 1940s, in some cases.

## Question 3 (a) and (b)

3 Harold Pinter: *The Homecoming*

## Either

- (a) 'Pinter is writing about a group of men who don't know how to converse with women.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Homecoming*? [30]

- (b) 'Much of the play's dramatic effect comes from the contrast between the coarseness of Max and his quietly spoken brother Sam.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the roles of Max and Sam in *The Homecoming*? [30]

Very few responses seen.

## Question 4 (a)

4 Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

## Either

- (a) 'Good teaching always comes at a cost.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this comment on *The History Boys*? [30]

There were very few responses to this question. The successful ones spent some time considering what "good teaching" means in terms of this play and what kinds of "cost" there may be involved. It was a good example of a question that requires a close focus on what is being asked if a successful argument is to be established. The play is devised as a debate around the issues inherent in the question and there was no shortage of engaged opinion from candidates. Some very confident responses used the Thatcherite political context of the 1980s when the play is set (AO3) to explore ideas about efficiency and effectiveness of teaching based on tangible outcomes. It is always interesting to read students' views on situations, such as studying for examinations, with which they are themselves closely involved. Many were dismissive of Hector's effectiveness as a teacher for a number of reasons but notably because of his inappropriate relationships with the boys; others dismissed a teacher who was dismissive of the exam regime itself. Sometimes these approaches were influenced, as they rightly are, by current views about sexual propriety and this sometimes prevented candidates from perceiving the way that Bennett deliberately balances the debate with some care and offers positive ideas about Hector's qualities as a teacher. It may be that time has moved on and the play is more difficult to take on its own terms than was the case when it was first performed.

## Question 4 (b)

- (b) 'Surely Mrs. Lintott is this play's real hero?'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Mrs. Lintott in *The History Boys*?

[30]

This was the more popular question and enabled a good range of successful responses. Successful responses were thorough and knowledgeable in their exploration of Mrs Lintott. There is less material to base a response on than some of the other characters so knowledge of the text and the ability to recall detail and textual references was evident in successful answers. There was an opportunity to take a feminist perspective (AO5) and many candidates did so, relishing some of Mrs Lintott's acerbic and devastating pronouncements. The following typifies a solid response and it is worth considering how much apt textual reference (AO2) adds to its effectiveness: "Mrs Lintott is our only female presence throughout the play and her arguably feminist ideals could ensure her "heroic" characterisation. Her lack of voice is exemplified as she asks the boys if they understand how dispiriting it is to teach "five centuries of male ineptitude." Here Bennett is able to use her disposition to evoke sympathy from a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience. The enforced semantics of gender inequality surrounding Mrs Lintott's character is again perpetuated as she describes "history", a subject which she teaches, to be "women following behind with a bucket.""

## Question 5 (a) and (b)

### 5 Polly Stenham: *That Face*

Either

- (a) 'The drama of the play depends too much on shock tactics.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *That Face*?

[30]

- (b) 'Martha's addictions are the key subject of *That Face*.'

In the light of this comment, discuss the role of Martha in the play.

[30]

No responses seen.

## Question 6 (a) and (b)

**6 Jez Butterworth: *Jerusalem*****Either**

**(a)** '*Jerusalem* is a play about the unexpected power of fable in the modern world.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *Jerusalem*? **[30]**

**(b)** 'The play's forest is a male space: female characters become victims and men hold court.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the female roles in *Jerusalem*? **[30]**

Very few responses seen.

## Section 2 overview

This section offers a single question on the prose set text with an unseen extract chosen to provide opportunities to make connections with the set text. The most successful responses demonstrate a balance between focus on the extract and the main text. They will often make connections as the discussion develops and provide a number of links rather than just one. The best responses blend discussion so that the extract becomes an integrated part of the response with no or little sense of the extract being pulled in for the sake of fulfilling the assessment objective (AO4). Less successful responses will pay little attention to the extract, perhaps making just a single point of connection. Slightly more successful responses may compartmentalise discussion so that the extract is dealt with separately or in a single paragraph. It is observable that the most successful responses engage with both the question and the extract and a reader can sense some element of re-thinking of the main text in the light of the extract. Less successful responses don't engage fully with the question and offer material which is clearly more relevant to questions not asked in the paper. Engaging with the extract fully is one effective way of avoiding writing irrelevantly.

### Question 7

#### 7 F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Discuss ways in which Fitzgerald shows characters trying to recapture the past in *The Great Gatsby*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the following passage in which an American businessman plucks up courage to visit Hilda Burgoyne, an old love of his.

[30]

This is probably the most popular text, although the Angela Carter runs it close. It is a text which clearly has relevance for students and there were many enthusiastic responses. In dealing with AO3 context it was clear that centres were doubling up on exploration of contexts with *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and some added depth and precise detail could be seen in successful responses as a result.

The question did not seem to pose any great difficulty for many candidates as there is much to choose from in the text and the extract was almost uncannily close to the spirit of *The Great Gatsby* such that even less successful responses didn't fail to spot and develop clear links. In this example of a successful response one can see detailed focus on the methods Fitzgerald and Alexander use to shape meaning in their writing (AO2) as well as, how to blend in discussion of extract (AO4) seamlessly: "In chapter 5, Nick comments that Gatsby's dream "[has] gone beyond [Daisy], beyond everything" and that this was due to the "colossal vitality of his illusion". The repetition of the preposition "beyond" emphasises how Gatsby's ideal of Daisy has surpassed not only her, but the whole world – an idealisation which has taken over Gatsby's reality. Similarly, in the extract Alexander considers "some one vastly dearer to him than she had ever been". The comparative "dearer" emphasised by the powerful "vastly" shows us how his conception of Burgoyne has passed beyond her, instead to "his own young self".

Less successful responses were often confined to discussing Cather's symbolism of winking waterfront lights anticipating the green light on Daisy's dock – a clear and legitimate point but not in itself a full treatment of the extract. More successful responses, looking at the way the novel and the extract are presented, understood that Cather's presentation of Alexander's reverie is more analytical and judgemental than Fitzgerald's presentation of Gatsby's dreams of Daisy perhaps because it is an omniscient narrator rather than the more biased voice of Nick. Both Gatsby and Alexander are seduced into capturing the past and the reader suspects there is a price to pay in both cases.

## Question 8

### 8 Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*

Discuss Carter's presentation of masculine power in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*.

In your answer you should select material from the whole text and make connections and comparisons with the following passage, describing the Count von Hackelberg, a hunter not of animals, but of people. [30]

This was a popular option and there was obvious engagement and interest from almost all the responses. There are some complexities in the context of this text in that the stories are derived from various literary and non-literary sources (AO3) and there is much to write about Carter's own views on what she has set out to do in this text (AO3) as well as much to write about second-wave feminism and the male gaze (AO3). There is this and more so the danger in this question is that the predominance of AO3 context will squeeze out engagement with the question, text and extract. This is particularly important to consider given that the text comprises short stories and the question of how many stories and how much detail there should be in the exploration of the stories chosen for discussion is a key one. Given these difficulties, it was pleasing to see how many students navigated through the pitfalls.

Most successful responses engaged fully in the question. They very often showed different types of masculine power, and how that power is often circumscribed by female power. The most successful responses used as much of the story they chose to focus on as was needed to support their argument, often dipping in and out of stories as required. In that mix the extract became another text to link to and compare with in support of an argument. Less successful responses tended to look at masculine power in a straightforward way without linking it to an argument so that the response became a list or a compendium of examples of masculine power. Those responses tended to end up saying similar things over and over without showing very much development.

This successful response shows how to use references (AO2) and detail across extract (AO4) and set text to develop an argument: "The Count in *The Sound of His Horn* exhibits these same sentiments, his facial features develop his "monstrous" image, his "immense skull" seems akin to a bludgeon or some sort of weapon that quells anything that defies his masculine power. While both the Marquis and the Count dominate with their facial features, Carter presents the Marquis' power as extending beyond this. The Marquis commands the room with his "opulent scent of leather", a fragrance so striking that the narrator senses his presence and knows instantly to "mimic her surprise" at his arrival, to please him".

The extract gives a picture of a figure of muscular energy, associated with red meat and this resonates with several of the dominant male figures in the stories where characters often explore the bestial. One examiner noted that "Regarding *Bloody Chamber*, sometimes the emphasis on physical characteristics in the extract seemed to inhibit students (i.e limit themselves to making connections to physical characteristics in Carter rather than use it as a springboard)". It is important that students look at the extract as a key or a resource to enable them to look at the set text in various ways, perhaps ways they have not considered previously rather than using the extract as a kind of template to search only for analogues in the set text.



## Exemplar 2

8		<p>In the 'Bloody Chamber and Other Stories,' Carter presents masculine power as something that is perhaps praised by society. Generally, when a man wields power it's seen as ferocious and noble; however, women wielding power is typically viewed as dangerous and unnatural. Evidently, Count Von Hackelberg is not criticised in this extract for being a "hunter of people."</p>
		<p>Masculine power is <del>pr</del> evoked to be addictive, where their desire to consume grows. Perhaps, this stems from the praise of men who attain grave amounts of power. Hackelberg is "never subdued" and <del>has</del> he possess "ferocity." This alludes to the idea that masculine power cannot be overpowered, as typically in Western literature violent males are presented as the epitome of vital force. The extract works to <del>great</del> create a daunting image; perhaps to make the reader conclude that the <del>dem</del> male desire to consume is innate and inevitable. This is evident in the beginning of Carter's stories, such as in "The Bloody Chamber," the young girl chooses to marry the Marquis even after his objectification of her young body as he "watches her in the gilded mirror with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horsemeat." The young girl is compared to meat and objectified by the Marquis sexually. Similarly, Hackelberg, a hunter of people, handles his meat extremely 'violently.' This emphasizes that masculine power always has the potential to be corrupted and taken over by evil forces. In 'The Bloody Chamber'</p>



This exemplar opens with some framing of the question showing that the candidate is focusing on what could lie behind the question and suggesting the line of argument – differences in how society judges men and women when they wield power. The extract is mentioned at the end of the opening paragraph – reassuring a reader that it will feature in the response. The second paragraph opens with the beginnings of argument: “Masculine power is evoked to be addictive...” and ideas of praise for powerful men leads quickly on to the extract: “Hackelberg is “never subdued”” so we are considering the statement about the extract in the light of the foregoing establishment of an argument. A cogent generalisation about the extract summarises the point before moving to Carter’s text. This deft movement between set text and extract characterises nearly all successful responses. Another characteristic here is a lack of padding and beating-about-the-bush: “the young girl chooses to marry the Marquis even after his objectification of her young body...as he “watched her in the gilded mirror with the assessing eye as a connoisseur inspecting horsemeat”. Many responses begin with long explanations of the complex origins of the stories in the collection in order to fulfil AO3 but the simple straight into text approach saves a lot of time and gives space in the answer to develop argument. The recall in the quotation impresses as does its placement in the argument – so much is gained by precise and apt quotation. It shows, at a stroke, that this candidate knows the text well. Note how the response immediately switches back to the extract using “meat”, used metaphorically in one case and actually in the other, as an elegant way to connect the two texts. Reading on, we can see this candidate is moving between text and extract seamlessly, always finding ways to make the links logical and smooth rather than as jolts to or interruptions of the argument.

## Question 9

### 9 George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Discuss ways in which Orwell presents the process of mind control in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the following passage, from a novel in which suspected mind-criminals are brainwashed. [30]

There is plenty of material in the text to address in answering this question and the extract was used very well by many candidates to pinpoint similarities and differences between the extract and the set text. A recurring theme in this year’s report on the paper is the way in which less successful responses mismanage AO3 context. It is important that the argument is given enough room in the response to develop properly with complexity and detail. Only where AO3 is absolutely needed to support the argument should context take prominence. There is so much twentieth century (and twenty-first century with context of reception) history that can be adduced as context to this novel that in order to give themselves a chance to engage with the question, students must be selective and choose only those elements of AO3 that add to the argument. As one examiner wrote: “context sometimes was excessive or a bit “bolted on.”” What was really pleasing to see, and what enhanced several successful responses was the use of Orwell’s own writing. Essays such as *Why I write*, *Shooting an Elephant* and *Politics and the English Language* were used successfully by a number of students to provide very direct context for what Orwell was writing in 1984. There was a freshness and aptness about this use of Orwell’s non-fiction writing that definitely lifted some responses.

Successful responses used the extract in a number of ways: they compared the staff carrying out mind control in the extract (perhaps routine or even bored) with the intensity and confident zeal of O'Brien in the Ministry of Truth. They contrasted the way that the detainee in Cardigan's narrative was processed and Winston's abject torture by O'Brien and showed how the threat for the narrator in *Mindplayers* wasn't in the treatment by the guards but by what might be revealed in the brain scan. Science takes the lead over terror tactics and extended torture.

The following response typifies the qualities of a mid-range response: "Fear and anxiety [become] the daily staple of life" [Bell, 1949] in *Nineteen Eighty Four*. The process of mind control is largely explored towards the end of the novel during Winston and Julia's prolonged torture. O'Brien continually uses the affirmation "you are afraid" in an attempt to indoctrinate Winston. A similar theme can be found in *Mindplayers* as the "Brain Police Officer" affirms "you can dress now" to Haas." There is a smooth blending of reference to the extract (AO4) and a degree of precision although there is more to explore in the use of language here. It is noticeable that the response offers a critical reference "Bell, 1949" and it is worth reminding centres that AO5 is not assessed in Section 2 but the kind of reference this candidate uses contributes to setting up the argument of the paragraph and would be rewarded under AO1.

The knowledge of the text is, as always, crucial and the ability to quote or refer to the text closely boosted many responses. *1984* is a long text and it is full of ideas but the language Orwell employs is often plain or low-key so candidates sometimes find it hard to explore the language and the methods of presentation in detail and come to rely on the slogans that Orwell builds into the text: "two plus two equals five" or the use of neologisms "Doublespeak", or invented proper nouns "Ministry of Love" offering a relatively narrow range of reference in less successful responses. In the best responses the range of references was impressive, precise and apt and there are few things more powerful in elevating a response than that.

## Question 10

### 10 Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

Discuss ways in which Woolf presents the impact of sudden death on people and events in *Mrs Dalloway*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the following passage, an extract from a novel in which a woman witnesses an horrific event. **[30]**

Very few responses seen.

## Question 11

### 11 Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Discuss ways in which Mohsin Hamid explores violence in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the following passage, taken from a novel in which an American mosque has been trashed by a group targeting Muslims. **[30]**

There were a good number of responses to this question and the extract was exploited more than was evident with some of the other extracts in Section 2. Many responses identified the sense of threat and implicit violence in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and contrasted this with the aftermath of brutal violence in *Amina's Voice*. Most responses focused on key relevant moments such as Changez' smile at the news of the fall of the Twin Towers and his subsequent guilt and mixed feelings; the racism Changez faced when he grew his beard, the strip search at the airport. Some strong responses used Changez' relationship with Erica, interpreting the characters conceptually and looking at the sexual violence in the relationship. Here is a middle range response to the question: "When [Erica] died, "a pile of clothes was found by the side of a cliff." Her death was a violent one in which even Changez struggled to find beauty when he finds beauty in everything she does. Her beauty before her death is similar to the beauty of the Mosque in the extract before its destruction..." This shows the simple linking of the extract (AO4) in a smooth way that develops the argument without a sense of interruption.

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