

**B O A R D O F S T U D I E S**  
NEW SOUTH WALES

**2007**

**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATION**

# Comparative Literature

## General Instructions

- Reading time – 5 minutes
- Working time – 3 hours
- Write using black or blue pen

## Total marks – 50

- All questions are of equal value
- Attempt THREE questions, ONE from each section

### **Section I** Pages 2–6

- Question 1 is COMPULSORY
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

### **Section II** Pages 7–8

- Attempt ONE question from Questions 2–6
- Refer ONLY to set texts
- Use different texts from the ones you use in Section III
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

### **Section III** Pages 9–10

- Attempt ONE question from Questions 7–14
- Refer ONLY to set texts
- Use different texts from the ones you use in Section II
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

## Section I

### Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question in a writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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**This question is COMPULSORY.**

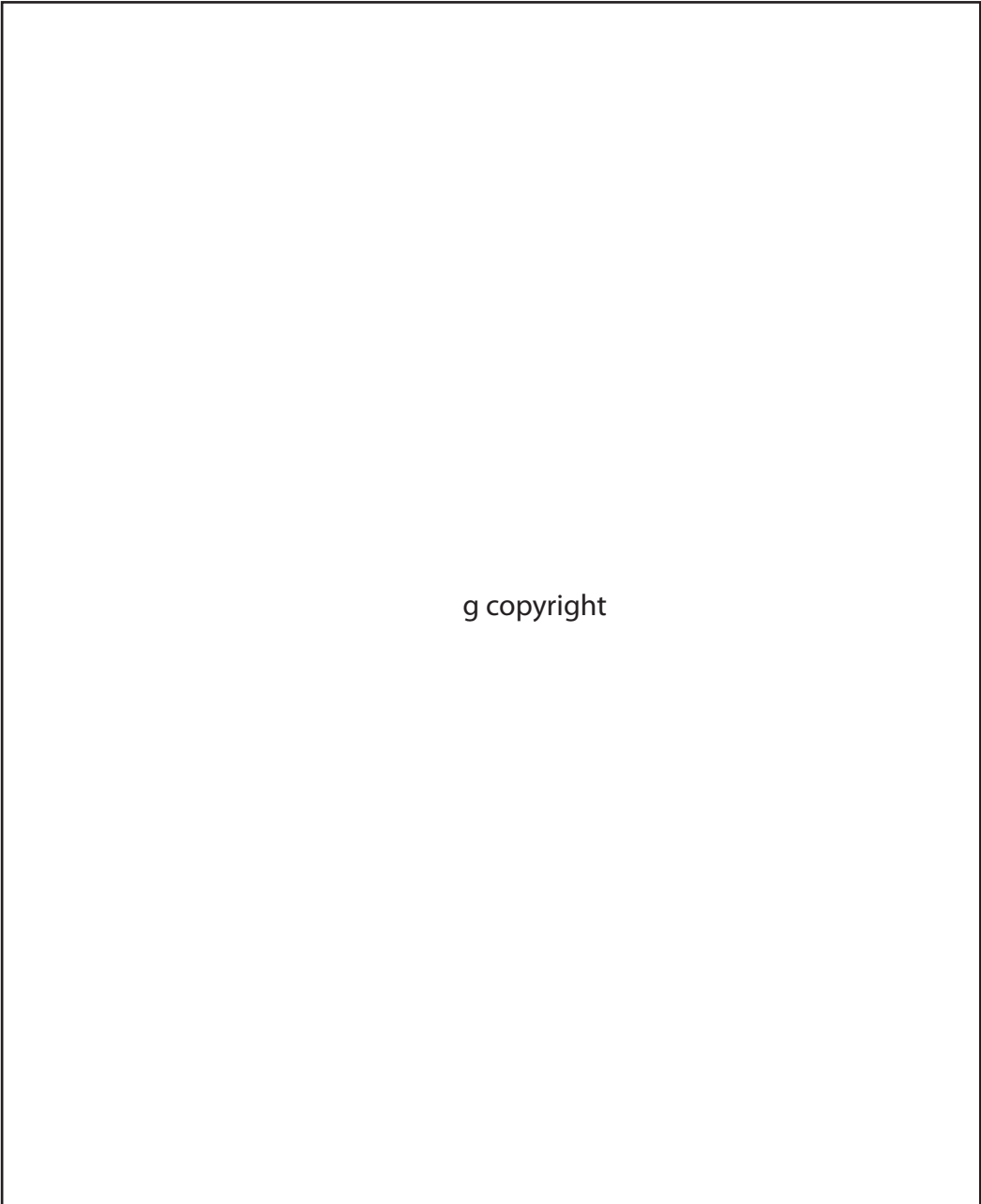
### Question 1

The FOUR extracts below are translations of lines 127 – 150 from Book 1 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, completed in 8 A.D.

Using THREE of the extracts, write an essay showing the principal differences in the use of language in the three translations you are discussing AND what the effects of these differences are.

**Context:** *Ovid is describing the Four Ages of Mankind following the creation of the world; these are Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron, in descending order from perfection (Gold) – when people were naturally good and needed no laws because they kept faith with one another, were neither aggressive, nor fearful, nor greedy but lived in harmony with one another and with nature, without despoiling it – to the modern age of degradation and degeneracy (Iron). This passage is his account of the age of Iron.*

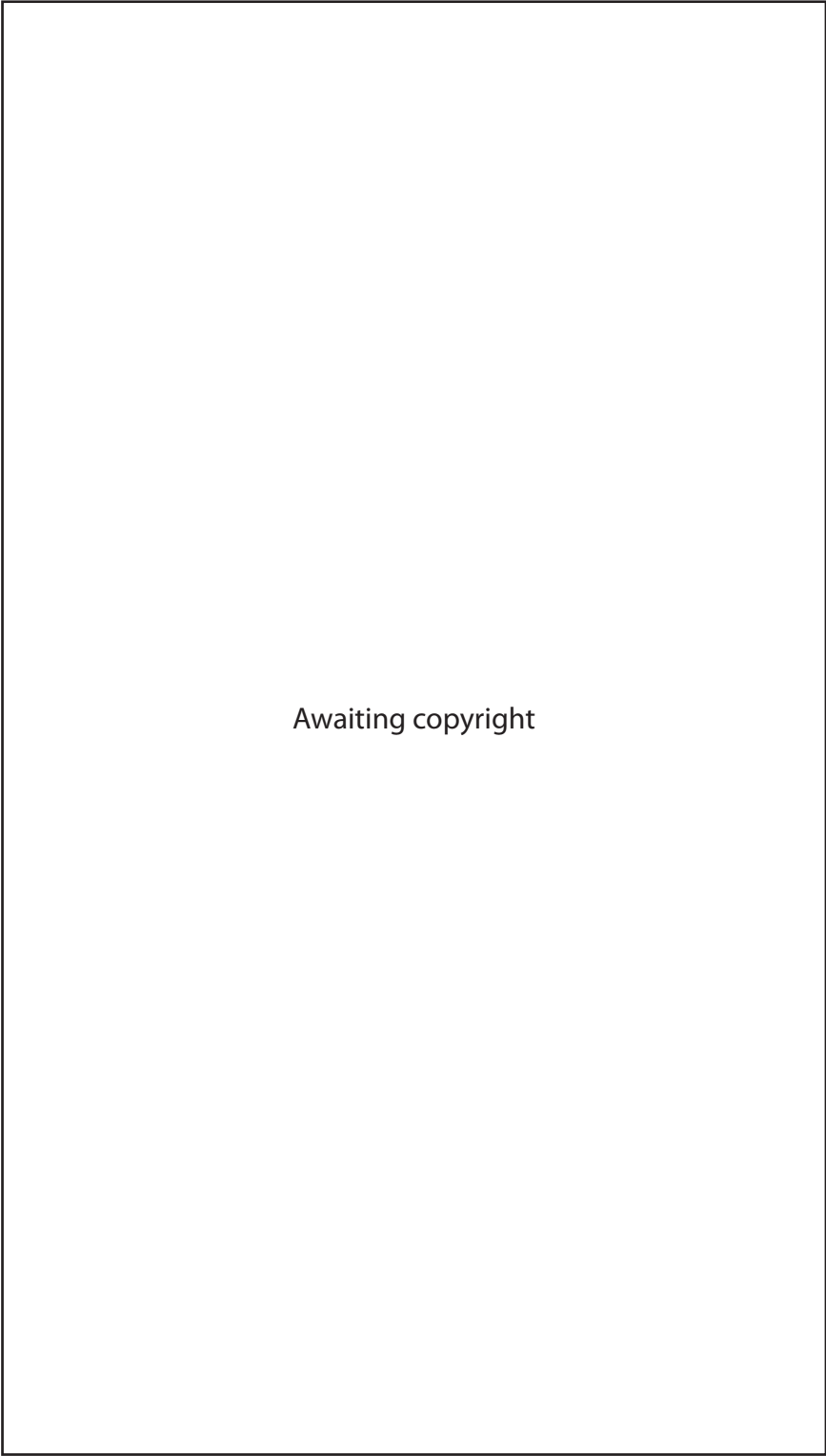
Question 1 (continued)



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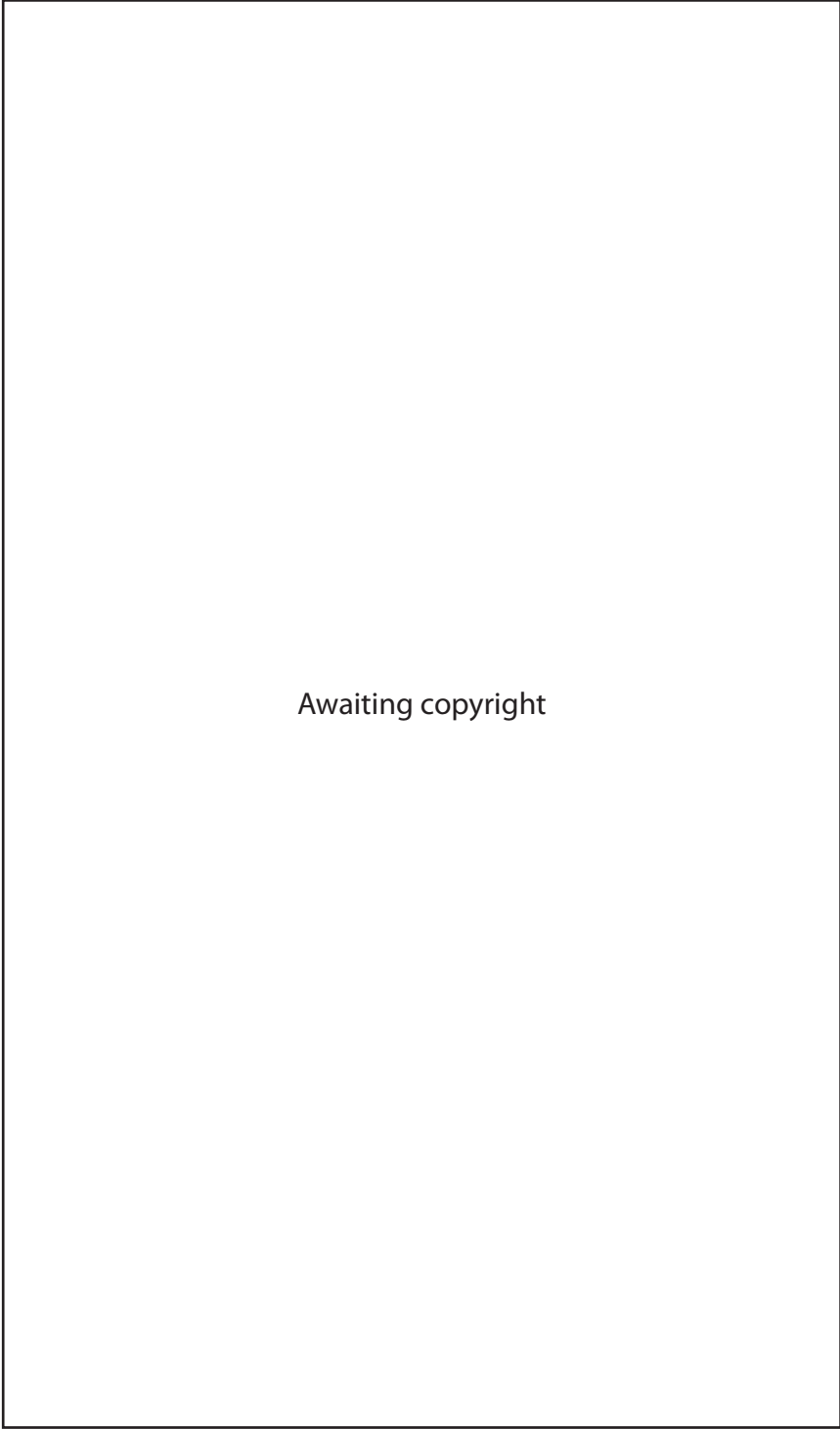
**Question 1 continues on page 4**

Question 1 (continued)



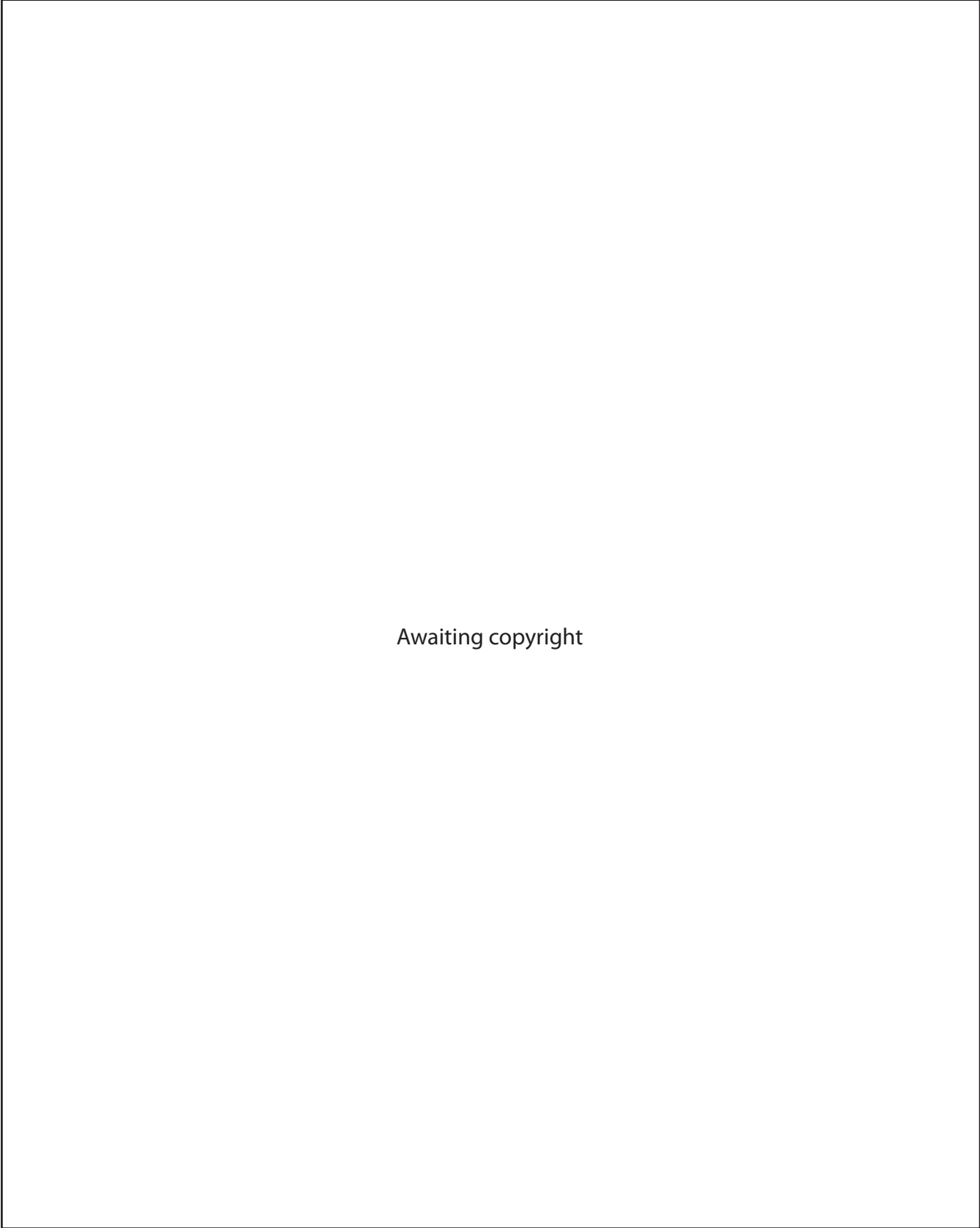
**Question 1 continues on page 5**

Question 1 (continued)



**Question 1 continues on page 6**

Question 1 (continued)



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**End of Question 1**

## **Section II**

**Attempt ONE question from Questions 2–6**

**Allow about 1 hour for this section**

In Section II, your answer must make close reference to works from MORE THAN ONE MODULE.

Answer EITHER on a play, a novel and at least two poems, OR on TWO or THREE longer works, OR on ONE longer work and FOUR or FIVE poems or extracts.

Refer ONLY to set texts.

Use different texts from the ones you use in Section III.

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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### **Question 2**

‘When we read, we are all foreigners in a strange land.’

Explore the implications of this statement.

**OR**

### **Question 3**

Jane Austen describes the novel as ‘some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language’.

Why would anyone consider plays or poems when they could read a novel?

**OR**

### **Question 4**

‘Words do not express; they dazzle.’

Respond to this statement.

**OR**

### **Question 5**

‘Our understanding of and pleasure in literature derive from the tensed imbalance between the expected and the shock of the new.’ (George Steiner)

NO PASSION SPENT: ESSAYS 1978-1995 by George Steiner. Copyright © 1996 by George Steiner (Yale University Press, 1996). Reprinted by permission of George Borchart, Inc., on behalf of the author.

Explore this assertion, taking into account language and structure as well as content.

**OR**

### **Question 6**

‘The principal value of literature is to remove the shackles of our solitary confinement by opening windows to the confinements of other people.’

Discuss.



## Section III

Attempt ONE question from Questions 7–14

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Refer ONLY to set texts.

Use different texts from the ones you use in Section II.

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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### Question 7 — The Nineteenth-Century European Novel

‘The central characters in nineteenth-century novels are constructed as victims of whatever systems, ideas and philosophies their creators dislike.’

‘All happy people are alike. Each unhappy person is unhappy in a different way.’

‘You can’t maintain interest in an extended narrative, without introducing conflict.’

Take any TWO of these statements as a starting point for a discussion comparing the authors’ strategies in TWO or THREE novels.

OR

### Question 8 — The Nineteenth-Century European Novel

‘The nineteenth-century novel hinges on “the power of the petticoat” – in one sense or another.’

Explore some of the ways in which issues of gender and power are dealt with in the novels you have read. Refer in some detail to TWO or THREE novels in your answer.

OR

### Question 9 — Poetry and Religious Experience

‘Writing about religious experience is always centred on self.’

Do you agree? Support your answer with close reference to the language of EITHER *An Imaginary Life* and up to THREE poems or extracts OR no more than FIVE poems or extracts.

OR

### **Question 10 — Poetry and Religious Experience**

In what ways does the writing of religious experience seek answers to the question: ‘Is this all there is?’

Support your answer with close reference to the language and structure of EITHER *An Imaginary Life* and up to THREE poems or extracts OR no more than FIVE poems or extracts.

**OR**

### **Question 11 — Satiric Voices**

‘Satirists set impossibly high standards.’

Do you agree? Your argument should be supported by a close examination of the ways in which standards are implied or stated in the language, structure and content of at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

### **Question 12 — Satiric Voices**

‘Satire is essentially silly; no-one takes it seriously.’

Explore the implications of this view with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

### **Question 13 — Post-Colonial Voices**

‘The problem with many post-colonial writers is that they insist on walking backwards through the present, focused only on the past.’

Is this a valid assessment of the post-colonial texts you have studied? Answer with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

### **Question 14 — Post-Colonial Voices**

‘Post-colonial writing charts the failure of the individual and the survival of the community.’

Or is it *vice versa*? Support your answer with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**End of paper**

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