

BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1997 HSC

EXAMINATION REPORT

English
2 Unit General

Including:

- Marking criteria
- Sample responses
- Examiners' comments

Acknowledgement

‘The Greatest Lyrics Ever Sold’, Bruce Elder,
The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 December 1996, Spectrum 5S.
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1997 HSC Enhanced Examination Report

English 2 Unit General

Introduction

Candidature 1997

The 2 Unit General candidature was approximately 29,500, the largest number of candidates of the 2 Unit English courses and as such encompasses a diverse range of abilities.

The Common Questions

In 1997 the Board of Studies required the Higher School Certificate examination committee to provide common questions in the 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common examination papers. Common questions were written for Paper 1: Writing Task and Paper 2: Section I — Poetry, Fiction, Drama.

The purpose of the common questions was to ascertain the relative performances of candidates in the two courses. Information on the relative performances is used in the reporting of English at the Higher School Certificate.

HSC Marking Procedures

All scripts in the 2 Unit English courses are marked by at least two independent markers from different groups at different stages of the marking operation.

First marking of scripts begins after a pilot marking phase during which markers are briefed on the standards established by Senior Markers after an initial reading of a wide sample of scripts. Once marking is under way, a sample script considered typical of a particular range is sent around at regular intervals to check that all markers are adhering to the centre standards.

Markers are given the advice below to assist them in the marking process:

1. This is a ranking procedure. Use the entire range of marks.
2. Forget school and personal standards. Forget your memories of past papers and questions. Adhere to the centre standards.
3. The Reading Task contains a number of questions or parts. Within each answer there will be a range of responses.
4. Mark positively — reward what is there rather than penalise what is missing.
5. Aim for accuracy, not speed.
6. Don't 'agonise' over a script. Talk to other members of your group or to your Senior Marker.
7. In general, candidate responses are those of an eighteen-year-old completing an answer under examination conditions in forty minutes.

HSC Marking Procedures for the Common Question in 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common Poetry, Fiction, Drama

The question for Poetry, Fiction and Drama for candidates in the 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common course was common. The prescribed texts in most cases were different for each course.

Senior Markers developed a marking scheme common to both courses. Markers were then briefed to mark either 2 Unit General scripts or 2/3 Unit Common scripts but *not* both. Accurate application of the common marking scheme was checked by the Audit Team.

The Audit Team check-marked scripts from both the 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common group to ensure that the common scale of marking was being adhered to. This ensured that a script worth a 10, for example, for 2 Unit General was the equivalent of a 10 for the 2/3 Unit Common course.

HSC Marking Procedure for the Common Question in 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common Writing

This question was marked using the same procedures as for other sections of the 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common paper. A common scale was developed and applied and in this case markers were able to 'blind mark' scripts from both the 2 Unit Common and 2 Unit General papers.

Clerical Procedures in the Marking Operations

1. All scripts from an examination centre are divided into bundles of approximately twenty. Bundles from the one examination centre are distributed to many different markers. Schools are identified by an examination centre number only. These numbers are not available to markers.
2. Each bundle has an accompanying mark sheet. Marks are recorded on the mark sheet. No annotation is made on the scripts. There is a second mark sheet for the recording of marks during the second marking. Both the first and second markings are completed independently.
3. Procedures are in place to ensure that markers do not mark scripts from their own schools or in the school of their Senior Marker. In addition, markers do not mark scripts belonging to close relatives sitting for the HSC.
4. The confidential nature of the marking operation is stressed at all times and markers do not have access to marks awarded by other markers.

The Marker Reliability Operation

The marker reliability operation has two important roles.

It assists Supervisors of Marking (SOMs) and Senior Markers (SMs) in establishing an appropriate marking scheme for each question during the pilot marking operation.

Once the marking scheme is finalised and the actual marking operation begins, the statistical reports enable the SOMs and SMs to check that the distribution of marks established during the pilot marking operation is being maintained. To ensure that the marking scale for each question is being applied consistently, feedback is provided to SOMs and SMs on the marking patterns of each marker.

How it Works

1. When a marker allocates a mark to a script, they put a tally mark on the tally card alongside that mark.
2. The tally cards are processed and reports are generated. The reports will typically contain information such as the overall distribution of marks, the mean (average) mark and the standard deviation (spread of marks) for each question.
3. Copies of the various reports are given to the SOM and are used to monitor trends in marking.

Resolving Discrepancies in Marking

A pair of marks is considered discrepant if the mark awarded during the first marking differs by a set amount determined by the Board. Three or more marks are considered discrepant if the scripts are marked out of ten, for example. The discrepancy is resolved by a third marker, usually a Senior Marker, who provides a third mark without knowing the marks awarded previously. If the third marking does not resolve the discrepancy, the script is passed on to a fourth marker and so on until the discrepancy is resolved. A relatively small number of scripts is discrepant, and very few scripts require reading by a fourth marker.

Paper 1: Uses of English and Topic Areas

Section I — Reading Task

Overview

The Reading Task tests the candidates' ability to communicate effectively about the way language is used. Candidates are asked to read the text and respond to the questions asked. These questions are based on the text provided and do not require personal opinions or creative responses from the candidates.

Candidates also need to recognise 'key' words within the questions which provide them with direction for their answers.

Sound structure in terms of appropriate paragraphing will allow most candidates to develop their arguments and explanations effectively.

Marking Criteria

Marking criteria are arrived at after reading a wide range of student responses. Criteria are based on candidates' responses and not on a preconceived notion of standards.

QUESTION 1 (20 marks)

Use a *separate* Writing Booklet.

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

Read the following passage, then answer the questions on page 3.

THE GREATEST LYRICS EVER SOLD

Rock 'n' roll changed the way we live — and the songs we sing.

But don't ever confuse it with poetry.

Shakespeare knew the difference between lyrics and poetry. When he wrote poetry he wrote lines such as:

*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.*

When he felt a song coming on he wrote lyrics such as:

*It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey-nonny-no,
That o'er the green cornfield did pass
In spring-time, the only pretty ring-time
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding ding,
Sweet lovers love the spring.*

You don't need to be a poet, critic or English Literature graduate to recognise the difference. Quality is not the issue — lyrics are not 'bad' poetry — it's a case of confusing the horse with the ass. They might have a superficial similarity but they are different and any comparison is both silly and pointless.

A famous songwriter once observed: 'Anyone who thinks I'm a poet has obviously never read real poetry.' The romantic image of the long-suffering, poverty-stricken poet persists, however, and rock music is full of misguided 'wannabes' all writing moderately interesting lyrics and dreaming of fame.

So, when it comes to the truly great lyrics written in the rock and pop idiom, where do you start, what do you look for? How on Earth does anyone attempt any kind of evaluation of the millions of words which are unleashed on the hordes of indiscriminating pop pickers each year? A reasonable starting point is to recognise that great lyrics cannot exist in isolation.

A great lyric is one which works, seamlessly and organically, with the music which surrounds it. It is a total experience of music, vocals and lyrics. Often a lyric which would look stupid on the printed page can be given layers of meaning by the intonation in the singer's voice and the way the words mesh with the rhythms and arrangements which surround them.

This need for an integrated whole means that some of the best 'poetic' lyrics rule themselves out of contention because the songwriter, entranced by the imagery, simply forgot that he or she was writing a song.

Since its beginnings in the early 1950s, rock 'n' roll and pop music have been centrally concerned with the various aspects of adolescent lifestyle. Thus sex and love (in all their endless variations), relations with peers and parents, rebellion by those who are essentially powerless, the monotony and boredom of a life which should be filled with excitement, life as an absurd comedy, and dreams of a problem-free world are the stuff from which most lyrics are made.

There is nothing wrong with this subject matter. If these themes were good enough for Shakespeare (and you really need look no further than *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*) they are certainly good enough for the modern pop song.

The point is that each generation finds its own way to give expression to these themes — and the way that expression occurs reflects the musical and lyrical styles of the time.

The central problem here is the issue of the larger context in which the lyrics are first heard. Popular music is a living sound-track to daily life. It is not some kind of work of art to be preserved in the pages of a book or hung on an art gallery wall. It is one element in the experience of driving a car, working at a dreary job, going to a party, sitting in your bedroom being bored and romancing someone who has just turned your neurones into champagne bubbles.

The songs acquire a power which goes beyond what they say because, at a critical point in a person's development, they articulate thoughts and feelings which that person has not been able to express.

So, what is the greatest rock lyric ever written? Simple. It's the ultimate statement of antagonism between those who want conformity and those who know there is more to life than a dull, nine-to-five job. It's a song which captures perfectly the sounds of non-stop nagging so

hated by harassed adolescents and layabouts. Out of a torrent of incomprehensible noise come the three words scorned by those staring down the long tunnel of boredom and social convention. It was written as long ago as 1958 by Rick Lewis of the Silhouettes.

He wrote it while he was in the U.S. Army. It got to No. 1, something that Bob Dylan has never managed to do, and it is still as relevant today as it was then — you can dance to it and you can sing along after only a single listen.

What more could anyone ask from a song?

Sha na na na Sha na na na na,
Sha na na na Sha na na na na,
Sha na na na Sha na na na na,
Sha na na na Sha na na na na,
Yip yip yip yip Yip yip yip yip
Mum mum mum mum
Mum mum Get a job.

— adapted from: Bruce Elder, *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 1996

THE QUESTIONS

- | |
|--|
| (a) In what ways are the headline and subheading effective in catching the readers' attention? |
|--|

3 marks

Marking Criteria

Key elements of the question:

1. 'ways' = more than one technique identified
2. both the heading and subheading should be identified
3. 'effective' = evaluation/judgement on the impact of methods identified.

3 Marks

- addresses both the
 - heading: illustrated by valid reference to the passage
 - subheading: illustrated by valid reference to the passage (either by example or inference)
- should either identify relationship of both and/or make a judgement about how 'ways' identified worked. (This can be stated or implied.)

2 Marks

- addresses both heading and subheading — illustrated by valid reference to the passage (either by example or inference) BUT

1. uses basic listing of techniques without mentioning how (recognition without understanding) OR
2. doesn't mention both heading and subheading but possibly a detailed reference to one.

1 Mark

- one of either heading or subheading mentioned only
- example may or may not be given.

0 Marks

- irrelevant to the question asked (paraphrasing without attempting to address the question asked)
- doesn't show any real understanding of the question asked.

Examples of Candidates' Responses

3 Marks

The heading captures the readers' attention first by the use of large, bold, upper-case type, conveying importance and urgency. The italics focus the attention on 'Greatest Lyrics'. The hyperboles of 'Greatest' and 'ever' dramatise the passage and exaggerate its excitement.

The sub-heading employs a reminiscent, nostalgic tone to lure the reader. The contemporary references appeal to the reader and the use of 'we' introduces involvement on a personal level. The use of 'but' suggests argument which intrigues the reader and secures their attention.

Examiners' Comments

This sample addresses both heading and subheading. It makes excellent comments on tone and first person, showing how these effectively catch the readers' attention.

2 Marks

The headline captures the readers attention because it is printed in a bold font. The subheading is effective in that it appeals to the readers who would appreciate rock'n'roll and those who appreciate poetry.

Examiners' Comments

This sample addresses both heading and subheading. However, the comment on the subheading is too superficial and fails to show clearly how this is effective in catching the readers' attention.

1 Mark

The headline is large and easy to see which in turn catches the eye. It is when we read below the heading to the subheading that we can see what the passage is about.

Examiners' Comments

This sample addresses only what is effective about the heading and only provides one valid reason.

0 Marks

The headline and the subheading catch the readers' attention as they give an interesting taste to what the article is about. They cause the reader to stop, think and say 'mmm this sounds interesting'.

Examiners' Comments

This example fails to provide any valid reasons but relies on support by using generalisations which could apply to any heading.

(b) Who do you think is the intended audience for this article?
Give your reasons.

3 marks

Marking Criteria

Valid audiences:

1. older generation
2. those interested in music
3. adolescents of today
4. educated
5. interested in the arts.

Valid reasons include:

- reference to *Sydney Morning Herald* audience
- reference to Shakespeare
- use of formal language — 'lyrics', 'seemlessly', 'organically'
- use of colloquial language — 'wannabes', 'nagging'
- adolescent concerns — affinity with 'rock'n'roll'; rebellion, relationships
- teenagers of the '60s and '70s would be familiar with a rock song written in 1958
- those with tertiary education, senior school English students, white collar workers, followers of Bruce Elder (by-line) would find this interesting/entertaining
- those who appreciate satire and use of humour would appreciate the writing style
- people interested in the wider world and its contemporary social issues would read this as both the location of the article in a daily newspaper, its subject matter and use of language would be of interest.

3 Marks

- identifies a valid audience and supports with at least two valid reasons OR
- identifies more than one audience with a valid reason for each.

2 Marks

- identifies a valid audience with some support/only one reason.

1 Mark

- identifies a valid audience with no valid reasons given or a very superficial reason, such as ‘... people like music’.

0 Marks

- no sensible identification of audience.

Examples of Students’ Responses

3 Marks

The people who are the intended audience for this article are those who grew up in the 50s, 60s and 70s and listen to ‘older’ music and who are now adults. The very colloquial language gives this away, as it sounds like something for more mature adults to read.

Words like ‘idiom’ (line 4, word 7) are used and the article refers a lot to music and people in the past, ‘since it’s beginnings in the 1950’s’ (line 64) or talk about Shakespeare.

The use of a 1958 pop song at the end of the article, again reinforces this.

Examiners’ Comments

This sample successfully identifies an audience and provides two valid reasons.

2 Marks

The intended audience is any rock’n’roll fans. The subheading uses the words ‘Rock’n’roll’ and throughout the article there are references to this form of music. For example, ‘rock music is full’, ‘rock and pop idiom’, ‘undiscriminating pop pickers’, ‘1950’s rock’n’roll and pop music’. These are just a few examples.

Examiners’ Comments

This sample identifies an audience but gives only one valid reason in support.

1 Mark

I think this article is intended for anyone, Female or Male, Young or Old. But I think music lovers would probably be interested in these things more than others.

Examiners’ Comments

Only one audience is eventually identified with no valid textual reason.

0 Marks

Quite a range of people would read an article like this because music and lyrics are something that everyone listens to. So the article would be an effective piece of writing.

Examiners' Comments

No audience identified or reason from the text given.

- | |
|--|
| (c) In what ways, according to the article, do 'song acquire a power' (line 99)? |
|--|

6 marks

Marking Criteria

6/5 band: two or more ways identified with comprehensive support from the passage.

6 Marks

- outstanding — clearly expresses how they obtain power OR
- very thorough explanation of how songs obtain/'acquire' power.

5 Marks

- not as clearly explained or logically expressed OR
- not as thorough an explanation of how songs 'acquire' power.

4/3 band: two ways identified with basic support from the passage (quoted or inferred).

4 Marks

- some specific referencing to the passage
- may mention additional ways or points but not explained or supported.

3 Marks

- a listing approach only or may identify one in detail and list others
- goes beyond the paragraph cited (lines 99–104)

2/1 band: only/mainly refers to the paragraph cited (lines 99–104). Basic mention of one way OR two ways with no explanation.

2 Marks

- explaining 'the' paragraph about how 'lyrics' put into words our 'thoughts and emotions' OR
- identifies only one way by which songs acquire power with some explanation.

1 Mark

- simple paraphrasing of the paragraph cited (lines 99–104). A basic rewrite with limited understanding OR

- identifies one way with no valid explanation.

0 Marks

- completely missed the point of the question
- no techniques or recognition of why songs are powerful.

Key Methods/Ways

1. By integration of words/music/presentation. Presentation of words/music/singer enhances the lyrics — ‘layers of meaning’ is an outcome.
2. By using themes and issues relevant to adolescent life, eg love, sex, boredom, rebellion, unemployment.
3. By having each generation express these themes in a unique way — its own ‘style’.
4. By making song lyrics accessible to all — part of our daily lives.
5. By articulating thoughts and feelings — emotions that people can’t normally express, conveyed in words and music.

Examples of Candidates’ Responses

6 Marks

According to the article, songs have great power beyond actual lyrics for several reasons. It says that a ‘lyric which would look stupid on the printed page can be given layers of meaning by ‘intonation, expression and the actual music to which it is set’. The overall experience of music, vocals and lyrics takes the song beyond the literal meaning of the words. The article would also seem to suggest that songs, especially rock and roll, gain powers because they discuss issues relevant to their audience, generally adolescents which can provide a release from a boring daily life.

Yet another, and the main way in which songs acquire power is because of their emotion and expression, according to the article, they ‘articulate thoughts and feelings which that person has not been able to express’.

Thus the songs can express a person’s innermost emotions which they have not been able to bring out themselves and this gives the song great power to affect that person as they can see themselves through it.

So songs can acquire power in many ways — the music and the whole experience, not just the lyrics, the relevance of much of it to contemporary issues and the expression of feelings.

Examiners’ Comments

The sample clearly explains three ways songs acquire power with good support from the passage.

5 Marks

According to the article, songs carry the ‘articulate thoughts and feelings’ of the song writer. It is a way to express some particular themes, which cannot be otherwise expressed. It is the

way of expression of this 'generation', (in contrast to Shakespeare's — through plays like 'Romeo and Juliet') to convey concerns over various aspects of life and all its endless variations. In many cases, as stated in the article, 'the greatest rock lyric', through the 'total experience of music, helps to make a statement, to convey an argument, such as the 'antagonism between those who want conformity and those who know ... more to life ...' The power of these songs are acquired through the simplicity of the words, the 'layers of meaning by the intonation in the singer's voice and the way the words mesh with the rhythms and arrangements which surround them.' The 'relevance', allowing people to sing along also provides sense of intimacy to the listener.

Examiners' Comments

While this script identifies and explains two valid ways that songs acquire power, the explanation lacks sequence and consequently the script does not reach a persuasive conclusion. The script does acknowledge relevance of the subject matter and musical arrangement.

4 marks

The songs acquire a power ... The writer is saying that songs can influence people's thoughts and feelings. It conveys the fact that most songs deal with aspects of adolescent lifestyle. They are centrally concerned with topics such as sex and love, relationships, rebellion, and life. During the most developmental period of life these adolescents hear these songs and subsequently their minds, perhaps without consciousness, absorb the words of the song and it changes their ideas and feelings.

These songs also acquire a power because they are always around us. Whether it be 'driving a car working at a dreary job, going to a party, sitting in your bedroom or romancing someone' these songs are always played. At a critical point in a persons development these songs can change or adjust our feelings and thoughts.

Examiners' Comments

This script is a developed explanation of two ways that songs 'acquire power'. It uses relevant quotations from the passage.

3 Marks

The songs acquire power through helping a person who listens to the song to express feelings 'which that person has been unable to express'. The songs that acquire power are about everyday life and each person finds himself in a particular song. Songs that are relevant to people's jobs, lifestyles, attitudes are easily understood and they awake people's emotions which people couldn't express.

Examiners' Comments

This script identifies two ways that songs acquire power but has insufficient explanation.

2 Marks

According to the article 'songs acquire a power' through their listeners. The songs are produced to the listener at a critical point in development and the song is experienced by the listener and it will evoke and articulate feelings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences beyond

that what the song has achieved, yet it was the song that awoke these thoughts, therefore the song gives the respect and admiration of the listener and therefore acquires power.

Examiners' Comments

This script gives an adequate explanation of the candidate's understanding of the paragraph from which the quotation in the question is taken.

1 Mark

According to the article songs acquire a power when they articulate thoughts and feelings which the person has been unable to express.

Examiners' Comments

This script is only a quoting from a relevant part of the passage without any explanation.

0 Marks

Songs acquire a power because if they didn't they would be useless notes on a manuscript. Songs need passion. They need the song writer's feelings and thoughts to go through the song and light it up.

Examiners' Comments

This script is a personal response and not based on the passage.

- | | |
|---|---------|
| (d) How does your reading of the last three paragraphs (lines 104–31) affect your response to the article as a whole? | 8 marks |
|---|---------|

Marking Criteria

8/7 band: identifies change/resolution (between the last three paragraphs and the body and explains how it affects response). Sustained clear response.

8 Marks

- identifies irony/satire/social comment/humour
- shift of tone in the final three paragraphs
- thorough analysis of how the last three paragraphs affect change/affect response.

7 Marks

- as for 8 marks with less competent analysis.

6/7 band: identifies a change/resolution (between the last three paragraphs and the body but can't explain how it affects response OR may develop competent argument which links the conclusion to the passage.

6 Marks

- notes change in tone in last three paragraphs but imprecise in explaining this.

5 Marks

- students note a link between the last three paragraphs and the rest of the passage AND attempt to explain change OR
- rudimentary comments on shift in tone or point of view and attempt a basic personal response.

Note: A recognition of change/resolution without any real understanding may score less than 4 marks.

4/3 band: summary of the article but doesn't identify change/resolution in the last three paragraphs OR personal response with little reference to the article.

4 Marks

- summary of the article but can't explain shift in tone and how this affects their response OR
- good personal response not based on analysis of the passage.

3 Marks

- basic summary of the whole article OR
- fair personal response OR
- some recognition of change/resolution without understanding.

2/1 band: incomplete summary of the article, last three paragraphs OR rest of article OR a limited personal response.

2 Marks

- poor summary of only last three paragraphs OR
- rest of article OR
- limited personal response.

1 Mark

- very rudimentary, confused summary of part of the article OR
- confused response.

0 Marks

- total misunderstanding of the whole passage.

Examples of Candidates' Responses

8/7 Marks

Example 1

The last three paragraphs had two very contrasting effects on me in my response to the article as a whole. The first was brought about by the chuckle inducing last paragraph. The slightly

cynical, sarcastic tone of the article tone as a whole that had been sitting just below the surface burst with a viciousness as soon as it was given the opportunity. Thus my first response was positive. In its pure sarcasm the last paragraph was funny. The two paragraphs before that were also positive in assisting its humour as they highlight the sarcastic tone of the last paragraph with its juxtaposition — the serious tone that keeps the reader hanging on from the first line: ‘So, what is the greatest rock lyric ever written?’ and then continuously taunts the reader with clues, until all the illusions of this lyric are slammed in the last paragraph.

My second response to the last three paragraphs, which did not in any way override the first was that, well, it was a bit of a shame really. Even this reaction though only highlighted the cleverness of the article. It was a shame because well, I wanted to know, as the reader, what the ‘greatest rock lyric ever written’ was. So the article was clever in its content and serious and very valid points were made about song writing in its sarcastic yet taunting tone.

Example 2

The last three paragraphs link back to the rest of the article, particularly the headline. It is the heading that draws the reader in. They would like to discover what ‘The Greatest lyrics ever sold’ are. It is what the reader has been waiting for. The printing of these lyrics change the whole view of the article. It adds an almost humorous and mocking edge. This is because the lyrics are nothing extremely complicated, they are no more than the repetition of a few words,

‘Sha na na na ...

‘Yip, yip, yip ...

‘Mum, mum ...’

The lyrics given in the last line made the reader reflect back to some of the information given in the sixth paragraph. This was that ‘Often a lyric that would look stupid on the printed page can be given layers of meaning by the intonation in the singer’s voice’.

When reading the last paragraph the reader is then given some kind of understanding of what Bruce Elder means when he says this in paragraph six. We are made to imagine how the lyrics would sound when sung. By reading the last three paragraphs the reader is given a much better understanding of the entire article.

In the last three paragraphs the tone of the article changes. Prior to this the tone was light-hearted but informative. This is established through the subject matter and the inclusion of extracts from Shakespeare. In the last three paragraphs the tone changes to one of almost mocking humour. The tone is changed by showing the reader what the greatest lyrics are. They are simply a couple of sounds and words strung together in repetition. This creates humour for the reader as they are not what is expected. They also create a tone of mocking as they are almost contradictory to the rest of the article.

The last three paragraphs affect the readers response to the article by adding a humorous and mocking edge to it. They also give the reader greater understanding of earlier statements.

Examiners’ Comments

These responses identified the change in tone in the last three paragraphs and were able to explain the way the passage sets up the reader for the joke at the end. Alternatively the conclusion was seen as the climax of an argument presented on the theme of lyrics being more than words on a page and unable to be distinguished from their presentation and context.

In both cases the argument was convincing, well supported from the passage and clearly explained how this conclusion affected the reader's response.

5/6 band

Example 1

The last three paragraphs serve to summarise the article's content — they provide the elements required for the lyrics to be 'great'. They use emotive language — 'antagonism', 'conformity' and short sentences, 'Simple', to separate their style from the rest of the passage.

However it is only from reading the final paragraph that we learn the final essence of the passage. The supposed 'greatest lyrics' are very simplistic — perhaps to the point of questioning the description 'lyrics'. It is from this that we can determine that the passage is intended to be a parody of those who search for too much meaning in lyrics — the truth being that lyrics are as varied as the songs they come from and there is no true set of 'greatest lyrics'. Hence, from reading the last paragraph, it can be assumed that the passage is a parody — for entertaining purposes rather than a literary observation.

Example 2

Until the last three paragraphs the reader believes the lyrics were going to be a in depth song about life, however when you see that the song words are 'Sha na na na ... Yip yip ... Mum ... Get a job' you wonder what the point was. Although the words are simple and straight forward you can easily see why this song appealed to so many ... as its not hard to understand what the song is about.

The reader's response to the whole article after the last three paragraph changes from ideas of an in depth song expressing issues of great importance to a song that we see has only a few words in it but still conveys the message that was trying to be put across. The overall effect of the article wouldn't be the same without this change and the impact would be greatly lessened.

Examiners' Comments

The scripts in this range also identified the shift in tone or argued that the conclusion answered the question implied by the headline. They had some difficulty in explaining how the conclusion affected their response to the whole article and usually had an inability to select appropriate support material from the passage.

3/4 band

Example 1

The last three paragraphs of the article 'The Greatest Lyrics Ever Sold' by Bruce Elder expresses the simplicity of what he believes are the 'greatest lyrics'. 'Sha na na na ... Yip yip ... Mum mum mum ... Get a job'. These three phrase/words written by ordinary US Army member in 1958 which got to No 1. are simple and still relevant today thus relating to the simplicity of life. Therefore these last three paragraphs affect your response to the article as a whole by in some ways depicting the simpleness of life, that it doesn't need to be as complicated as Shakespeare can.

The last three paragraphs also support why the lyrics to Rick Lewis of the Silhouettes song attained the title of having 'the greatest lyrics ever' as unlike Bob Dylan, 'you can dance to it and you can sing along after only one listen' as it is not just 'one element in the experience of life such as 'driving a car' or 'working at a dreary job' it is life itself. Therefore the reading of the last three paragraphs affects the response of the article as a whole by virtually agreeing the Rick Lewis song is the greatest lyric ever sold and the rest of the rock and roll that changed the way we live hasn't stuck with us but the simplicity of Rick Lewis' lyrics have 'and it is still as relevant today as it was then' when it was 'written as long ago as 1958'.

Example 2

After reading the last three paragraphs of the article it is a bit of a disappointment. The article up to this point was pretty much on the point and written well but the last paragraph made it out to be a joke, so now, don't know whether or not the writer was being truthful about how he felt about music.

Examiners' Comments

These responses consisted of weak attempts to explain how the conclusion changed their response. Scripts in this band are frequently confused or supported by irrelevant or inappropriate material.

2/1 band

Example 1

The last three paragraphs shows the difference between poetry and lyrics by showing/explaining what the song was about, who wrote it, when it was written and how the song goes. By doing this, it clearly shows the audience that there is a clear distinction between the lines of poetry and the lyrics of a song, especially by illustrating the lyrics of the song that went to number one, written by Rick Lewis of 'The Silhouettes'.

The remainder of the article leading up to the last three paragraphs just explains that there is a difference, but does so in a way that it confuses the reader.

Example 2

The final three paragraphs made me less interest because I haven't heard the song containing 'the greatest lyrics ever ...' I haven't heard of Rick Lewis. I was around in 1958 and have never hear of 'The Silhouettes'. The lyrics didn't appear exciting or interesting. The build up was good but the conclusion made the whole article less interesting and less relevant to me. I think if the article had been written about modern (example 1990 onwards) I would have enjoyed it more in be much more interested in what it had to say because I would be able to judge my beliefs against those in the article.

Is the summing up of the article 'So what is the greatest rock lyric ever written'. After the rock'n roll history lesson it finally gets to the point of the question. For me, the last three paragraphs were very disappointing compared to the rest of the article. 'Rick Lewis of The Silhouettes' having written the greatest rock'n roll lyrics. Three noises and three words is all he could do and is praised in having the greatest rock'n roll lyrics around.

These last three paragraphs denote the rest of the article.

Examiners' Comments

Scripts in this range have only poorly summarised the last three paragraphs or in some cases paraphrased the entire article. They offer limited personal response to the question and may be confused and difficult to follow.

0 Marks

Example 1

The reading of the last three paragraphs show that a song is just a song which can be anything the song writer wants to write. It could be as dull as Rick Lewis's song.

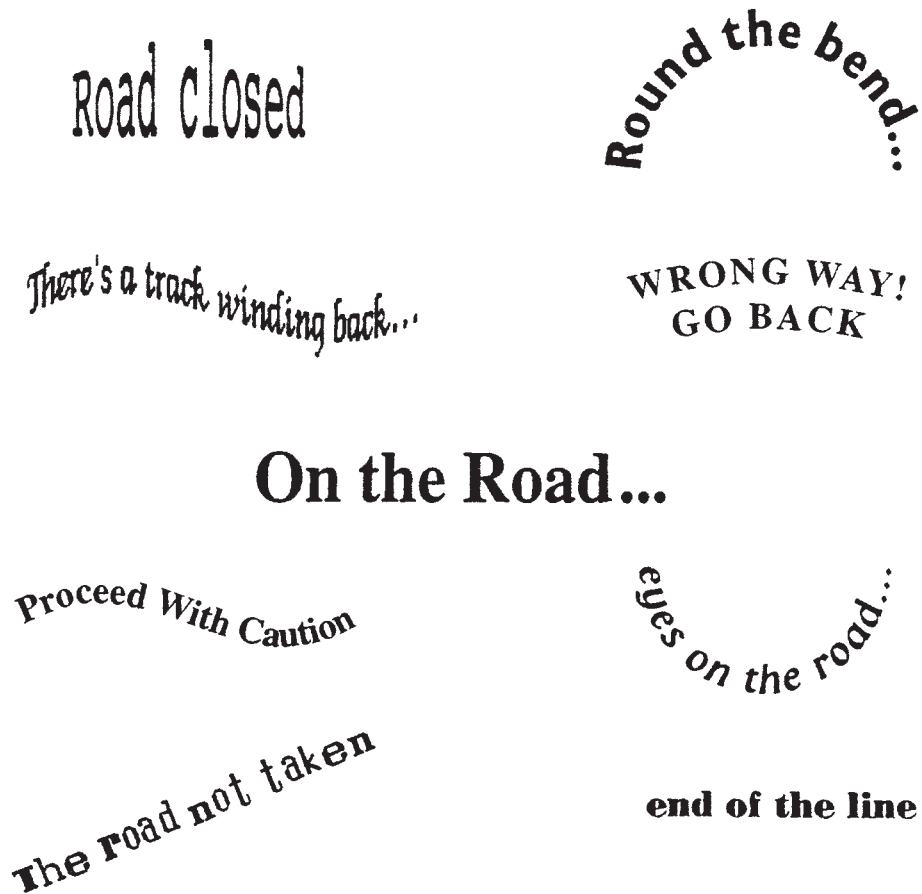
Examiners' Comments

This script reflected a total misunderstanding of the whole passage and was totally irrelevant to the question asked.

Section II — Writing Task (20 marks)

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

The road has provided our common language with many familiar phrases, images, and metaphors.



Use ONE of the phrases in the stimulus material above as the basis for a piece of writing, and use it as your title.

Write in any form you wish, and from any point(s) of view.

General Comments

Part A: How the Question Performed

The 1997 Writing Task catered to the wide range of candidates presenting at 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common levels, with the choice of form and variety of topics providing scope for candidates to write at different levels. On average, responses were longer and well developed, and this was interpreted to be a consequence of candidates feeling comfortable with the questions as well as the lack of any suggested word length.

The open-ended nature of the question allowed candidates to respond creatively, and better students exercised considerable imaginative scope and flair in their writing. A large number of candidates, however, interpreted titles literally and responded in a clichéd form. Many of the weaker scripts had a negative tone exploring topics such as teenage suicide, death, road accidents, alcohol and drugs. Some students chose to link the stimulus to texts studied during the year — in particular, Frost — and many of the resulting scripts were predictable and lacked creativity.

Some candidates tried to relate all the titles to their writing, and these pieces were generally unsuccessful and poorly planned. Because of the wide range of choices available to candidates in terms of form and content, very few scripts were totally unrelated to the stimulus. However, in weaker scripts there was evidence of some plagiarism from books, and films. It was noted by some markers, however, that an otherwise well presented script could have gained a very poor ranking if it was not linked to the topic.

The guidelines for marking the Writing Task discriminated across the range of candidates from A to E level responses.

Part B: How the Students Performed

Overall, most candidates completed the task competently, demonstrating an ability to communicate their ideas satisfactorily.

Candidates generally showed an awareness of the need for a clear purpose. The better candidates ensured that purpose was the controlling factor in terms of the choices that they made. These included:

- clearly delineated choice of form, with narrative being the most common choice. Better candidates were able to manipulate the form subtly with flair and originality. These students often adopted personae, used time shifts, or combinations of forms, while maintaining appropriate control of structures. While other forms were less often chosen, candidates did make use of forms such as diary entries, personal letters, letters to the editor, newspaper articles, play scripts, editorials, speeches, internal monologues, and combinations of the above. Weaker candidates were not able to maintain their choice of form and this hindered reader engagement. A number of candidates attempted poetry but on the whole their scripts highlighted the difficulty of writing well in this form when under time pressure
- originality when selecting ideas. Better candidates avoided commonplace ideas which led, in weaker candidates, to clichéd and predictable writing, such as simple ideas relating to doing the HSC, driving scenarios, arguments with parents or adolescent traumas. Better candidates displayed an ability to deal metaphorically with the stimulus material which often increased reader engagement
- use of a wide and appropriate vocabulary. Better students displayed an ability to use vocabulary to develop a freshness of imagery that enhanced the achievement of selection of purpose and form. Less able candidates' use of language was more stereotypical, and therefore, predictable and tedious
- technical competency. While many candidates displayed an adequate technical competency, better candidates showed an ability to manipulate the technical aspects to enhance their purpose. For example, these candidates were able to control sentence length and construction, set out, punctuate and develop dialogue to serve better the

intended purpose. Weaker candidates had difficulty paragraphing and punctuating which mitigated against the reader gaining a clear understanding. Spelling, especially of words which sound similar, was still a problem in many scripts and again hindered the reader's ability to engage fully with the script. Weaker candidates' scripts also generally showed poor planning, which sometimes led to overly long and rambling writing.

Marking Criteria

(These guidelines are distributed to markers.)

Markers will encounter a large variety of purposes, forms, voices and subject matter during the course of marking.

It should be noted that no one purpose is inherently more valuable, or worth more marks, than another; no one form or style more valuable than another. Each script is to be considered in the context of how it fulfils the guidelines in its own right, in terms of what it sets out to achieve (ie its purpose).

The guidelines are not to be used as a checklist; they are used to assist the impression marking of the question.

The different ranges may be characterised by the following:

A Range (15, 14, 13)

- achieves its purpose through:
 - structural unity/completeness
 - clearly delineated choice of form and execution of that form
 - sustained engagement of audience
- use of language/expression to enhance purpose and form
- characterised by flair/originality/subtlety
- makes a link between title and content which informs all the above elements
- fulfils all the above elements, but is not necessarily perfect.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

- achieves purpose
- maintains direction/organised/controlled
- makes appropriate use of form
- engagement of audience is present but not necessarily sustained
- uses language appropriate to purpose
- does not fulfil all elements but still achieves purpose
- may contain flair/originality/subtlety in language and/or ideas
- makes a link between title and content which offers scope for development of all the above elements
- may have minor flaws in grammar/expression.

C Range (9, 8, 7)

- may be complete, but pedestrian
- has purpose, but is not sustained/developed
- addresses the scope of the question
- uses an appropriate form but not well executed
- uses a form inappropriate to purpose
- moves across forms to detriment of purpose or engagement
- engagement of audience inconsistent
- makes reasonable use of language
- makes predictable/simplistic link between title and content.

D Range (6, 5, 4)

- purpose very simple or unclear
- lacks unity
- lacks direction/disjointed, eg short/undeveloped or long/rambling
- little or no engagement of the audience
- fragmented use of form
- could be literate; alternatively, could contain problems in expression
- makes a tenuous link between title/content.

E Range (3, 2, 1, 0)

- little or no purpose
- lacks any development
- mostly or nearly all irrelevant
- may be incomplete but literate
- very poor control of language
- off task; no link between title and content.

Candidate's Response — Well Above Average

The End of the Line

*I am lying in a white hospital bed, the white lights are glaring down at me. There are superfluous coloured tubes absurdly embedded in my nose. I see a man in a coat, an embodiment of the hospital — white and clean, he is talking to someone ... whispering and glancing at me.*¹

*I see an ocean. I am in a boat, only for an instance. I am back in the bed. His words drift into my ears 'Not much longer ... could be ... the end of the line'.*²

The boat is dark, tenuous and wooden, a mermaid bares her slender throat at the prow. The ocean is lunging and swooping about me.

The doctor has edged over to my bed, he looks politely concerned ... clinically intrigued.

There is a crimson sunset, expressionless and eternal, it drips down and reflects on the waves. Water licks and nibbles at my lifeless, cold feet at the bottom of the boat. Streams of emotion converge between my shoulder blades. The emerald waves reach out to hold me but are pulled back by the envious ocean.

Before me a surface looms, within the smooth jade, blues and greens swell beside the red reflections.

Tears channel down my marble face and fall into a sea of tears ... tears cried by all those who floated on these seas before they now lie at the bottom, the pain and fear engraved in their expressions long having been eroded by the seawater, the nibbling fish. Vacant giant pupils house stagnant sea water. ³

There is a distant, mechanical beeping, urgent and sharp — but my attention cannot be diverted, I am being mesmerised by the hypnotic growth of the omnipotent wave, small frothy white hands appear at the tip. They are ready to plunge down and grapple for my broken heart. The two pieces thud into the cage of my ribs like frightened birds. ⁴

I cry out but I make no sound. The hiss of the straining wave whispers in my ear. I look into the base where I see my face reflecting contorted and alien. Steel rods are my bones, concrete is my skin. Panic despair and unbelief twist and writhe like thick worms inside my stomach. A ripple slaps against the side of the boat, leaps up and spits into my face. I wonder whether to wipe it off — a pang of thought — but then it is drowned again in the confusion. ⁵

The doctor stood there, a serene presence in his immaculate coat.

His arm was placed around the old woman. ⁶

'If it's any consolation Mrs Perry ... he died peacefully, he just drifted off in his sleep.'

Mournful, yet placated she stifled the tears with a dirty handkerchief and bravely smiled. ⁷

¹ The introduction effectively establishes the hospital setting.

² The link is established with title and the symbolic world of the patient's fading consciousness is introduced.

³ Using the qualities of the ocean and symbols of death (sunset etc) the script vividly describes the emotions of the dying man.

⁴ The ocean is presented as an antithetical force at once cajoling and attacking the man in his fight to postpone death.

⁵ The moment of death is reached as the waves rise in a tide of panic and despair — the imagery mirrors this in a sophisticated way.

⁶ The logical impossibility of the first person narrator finishing the story is successfully avoided by the doctor concluding the narrative.

⁷ The doctor's last comment provides a satisfying resolution by contrasting ironically with the struggle with the forces of death in the patient's last moments.

Examiners' Comments

A clever, imaginative script which engages the audience, interweaves the clinical atmosphere of the emergency ward and the aloofness of the doctor with the turmoil going on in the consciousness of the dying man. The contrasting worlds are sustained through skilful use of language and imagery which serves to enhance the purpose and form.

Candidate's Response — Above Average

Eyes on the Road

*The young boy named Colin paused before opening the door. He studied it with care, taking in every small detail: the perfectly round knob, it's fake gold sheen coming off in flakes, the grainy swirls of the wood, the badly attached top hinge. In his infant mind he saw the door as the final barrier, the last protection from the outside world. His mother had told him often enough that this world was fraught with danger. This world was evil personified, eager to consume his soul and crush his young bones.*¹

*He closed his eyes, took a deep steadying breath, and stilled himself for what was to come. But he was prevented from opening the door by his mother.*²

Before she could say another word he yanked the door open. He slammed it on her fearful yet accusing eyes. He tried to ignore her muffled warning that was struggling to come from behind the heavy wood. 'Be careful ...'

He hurried down the path that led to the front gate, opened it, and walked onto the pavement. He was in the 'big, bad'³ outside world now, and he would not know sanctuary until four o'clock that afternoon, when he was again able to shut the door against the outside world.

*As he walked hurriedly to school, he kept his eyes downward cast. He could not bear to see the frightful sights of the city, the loud colours, the flashing signs, the scary people. And most of all, the cars. So he blocked out all the sights and the sounds, and he concentrated on the pavement, its greyness, its beaten look.*⁴

He finally arrived at school, but this offered no sanctuary, only a new set of frightful experiences. He remained seated in his chair at the table all day. He did not join in the gleeful cries of the other children as the lunch bell rang. He just sat and waited for the clock to strike four.

*It did so, eventually, after what to Colin seemed a lifetime. He jumped out of his seat and hurried home to his mother and to sanctuary.*⁵ *Unbeknownst to him, his concerned teacher was watching his hasty progress home from the window of the classroom, discussing him with an official-looking man who held a clipboard.*

'The poor boy,' the man commiserated. 'Why does he walk so, with his face downcast, his eyes on the road — It's as though he's frightened to live.'

*'He is,' replied the concerned teacher. 'His father was killed in a car crash a few years back. His mother is frightened the same thing will happen to her son, so she protects him from the world, and in doing so, prevents him from living ...'*⁶

¹ The narrative begins well with the creation of the child's world. The attention to detail on the door is particularly effective in establishing the idea of the 'sanctuary'.

² The boy's feelings and resolve are well created in this paragraph.

³ There is a lapse in the narration and an inconsistency in the style.

⁴ Once again the focus on the boy is well controlled through the impressionistic use of language.

⁵ The step back into straight narration creates a loss of impetus and becomes simplistic.

⁶ The conclusion is well controlled but reduces the impact of the story because of its simplicity of ideas. It's a convenient resolution which detracts from the very promising beginning.

Examiners' Comments

This script is characterised by a clear sense of purpose maintaining its direction and control reasonably well throughout. The opening strongly establishes a sense of time and place. Any weakness lies in the lack of development and the falling away in the resolution. This simplicity of narration keeps it in the B range.

Candidate's Response — Average

Proceed with Caution

'Always son, Proceed with Caution' father said, was a familiar statement to me. He felt that if he was to leave me with something, that this would be it. For all of my endeavours he would state it. Yet I tried to ignore it, by just blissfully walking out the door before anyone namely my father could finish the statement. ¹

My story begins here, A Friday afternoon the sun was lowering and Col had arrived to pick me up. 'Knock, Knock, Knock!'

The rattle on the door made me shutter. ² I tried to hide like a snail in his shell. Colin being the arrogant, obnoxious type he opened the door and began to walk around when he found me hiding behind the kitchen bench.

'What are you doing,' he jiggled

'I'm just tying my shoelaces up,' A poor lie which he probably saw through from the start. 'We better go or we'll be late', he yelled as he rushed out the door to his father's MGB roadster.

I slowly followed knowing that my life was now in his hands, yet I felt like my life was in god's hands. ³

I could see my coffin being carried out by my family and my gravestone,

Born: 1 piece of body

Died: Many smaller pieces of body. ⁴

To my better judgement, I started to enjoy the ride. The cool wind blowing against my face like an overpowered fan at work.

The time had arrived, the wind had stopped blowing and the ignition was turned off. We jumped out of the car, as stylishly as we could, both of us wearing old British racing hats which we found in the glove compartment. The Boys rushed over to see the car, we parraded in front of it like Peacocks waving their feathers. My mood had changed suddenly and I felt better than life itself, and once I had a few beers in me, I was ready to take on the world. ⁵

Through our stupidity or perhaps our drunkenness we decided to 'have a little fun'.

Up the road from where we were there was a paddock of luscious green grass and the old style paling fence which was slowly decaying over the years. The wood was extremely splinterly and also covered with muck. ⁶

There it was, what we were all looking for, in the far back corner 'a bull'. Not just any bull, but the biggest bull I had ever seen. It was our bet that Col and I could run right across the paddock and back without getting touched by the bull.

Money wasn't just on the line, but our pride and respect from our friends. We climbed the fence cautiously. My fathers statement stuck in my mind 'Proceed with Caution'.

I followed these orders, while Col said 'bugger it, Ahhhhhhhh' and bolted across the middle of the paddock. He had made the other side of the fence before I had even left the starting blocks. The Bull raised his head. His beady eyes fixed directly on the moving target. I proceeded slowly, trying to follow the tree line, ducking behind trees when even I had the chance.

By now the Bull was active and on the prowl, he started to move after Col as he darted back to the starting point. ⁷

I couldn't believe it my father's advice was working. The Bull hadn't even noticed me yet. The Bull was gaining on Col, It was going to be close.

I couldn't bare to look, Yet I couldn't turn away. He made it, dived over the fence without even touching it. The bull looked angry. Still I stuck to the tree line. 'SNAP' I broke a branch with my foot, The head slowly turned and the beady red eyes of the bull were fixed firmly on my backside. ⁸

I was in a fix, the statement still fixed firmly in my brain.

The bull turned and started to move as fast as a formula one car. ⁹ I had no choice, too far from the fence and too close to the bull, I scaled a tree until I was safe 'Phew.' I huffed.

The fellas laughed especially Col and here I would stay for safe keeping. ¹⁰

From this moment on, I would realise that 'Proceed with caution' was not my rite of passage. I also realised that under certain conditions a slow, steady start was not the answer, but a 'bullheaded' approach should be appropriate. ¹¹

¹ Simple introduction. Spelling and grammatical errors.

² Flaws in expression.

³ Inability to develop atmosphere and to focus on purpose and storyline.

⁴ Attempt at humour. There is a lack of continuity between the 'joke' and the following text.

⁵ Text is disjointed and irrelevant to eventual story.

⁶ Lacks unity and direction. At this point the writer finally starts to tell the story.

⁷ Predictable and unvaried sentence structure fails to create interest or atmosphere.

⁸ Does not sustain any degree of tension.

⁹ Use of simile.

¹⁰ Poor sentence structure.

¹¹ Weak resolution but does manage to re-establish link with title.

Examiners' Comments

A predictable, pedestrian response that addresses the scope of the question. Simplistic purpose is achieved through the autobiographical style but the response is lacking in any real depth, atmosphere or development. Audience engagement is sporadic and the attempts at humour are ineffective. There is, however, a reasonable control of language evident in this average script.

Section III — Topic Areas

General Comments

Topic Areas questions require candidates to:

- display an understanding of the Topic Area which clearly demonstrates an understanding of the issues presented in the Core Text and also how these issues are further developed or contrasted in the Supplementary Material
- engage in a discussion which demonstrates an integrated response to the question
- use Supplementary Material in the context of the above.

The best responses show a clear addressing of all parts of the question with integrated material from the Core Text and the Supplementary Material and a clear personal point of view.

Marking Criteria

Candidates have taken two different approaches to answering the question:

1. Separate treatment of text and issues in Core Text followed by discussion of Supplementary Material to support argument.
2. An integrated approach to issues in the Core Text followed by discussion of relevant Supplementary Material for that point. This pattern is evident throughout the essay.

Both approaches are equally valid.

Characteristics of responses across the different mark/range categories are:

A Range (10)

- clearly addresses the question and communicates an obvious understanding of the question through a sustained argument
- comprehensive textual knowledge
- must have a variety of Supplementary Material and it must be extensively analysed. Supplementary material must be appropriate to develop argument
- integration of Core Text, issues and Supplementary Material should be balanced, with clear and developed linkages
- an analytical approach
- not necessarily flawless.

B Range (8, 9)

- the question is obviously addressed with relevant arguments developed
- sound Core Text knowledge
- a variety of Supplementary Material is necessary (more than two pieces) but may have only two pieces treated in great detail

- a definite linkage of text, issues and Supplementary Material, however, there may be some imbalance in this area
- a largely analytical response but may have some descriptive elements.

C Range (5, 6, 7)

- must attempt to address the question
- there should be obvious knowledge of the Core Text
- must have a variety of Supplementary Material (at least two pieces)
- description of Core Text and Supplementary Material rather than analysis
- links between Core Text, issues and Supplementary Material should be present but may fail to fully enhance the argument — may not be well integrated
- Core Text and Supplementary Material discussion often not balanced and may be fragmented.

D Range (3, 4)

- does not address the question but may mention words from the question (prepared answer often falls into this category)
- no clear sense of an argument
- limited knowledge of the Core Text with possibly some inaccuracies
- Core Text and Supplementary Material often merely described or listed
- may have only one piece of Supplementary Material or a variety which is not linked and is superficially treated.

E Range (0, 1, 2)

- no attempt to address the question
- Core Text and/or Supplementary Material briefly described
- may use only Core Text or Supplementary Material
- unsubstantiated anecdotal discussion with no reference to Core Text or Supplementary Material
- no linkage between Core Text and Supplementary Material.

Question

EITHER

(a) Aboriginal Experience

What, to you, is distinctive about the Aboriginal experience?

In your answer, refer to ONE of the set texts and a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are :

Jack Davis, Stephen Muecke, Mudrooroo, and Adam Shoemaker (eds), *Paperbark: A Collection of Black Australian Writings*

Ruby Langford, *Don't Take Your Love to Town*

Sally Morgan, *My Place*

Mudrooroo (Colin Johnson), *Wildcat Falling*.

OR

(b) Crossing Boundaries

'We share boundaries. How they are crossed is the measure of personal achievement.'

In what ways do the text and supplementary material you have studied demonstrate this?

In your answer, refer to ONE of the set texts and a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are:

Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*

Melina Marchetta, *Looking for Alibrandi*

Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*

Willy Russell, *Educating Rita*.

Strengths and Weaknesses in Candidates' Performances

Candidates must ensure that they clearly address the question by demonstrating an understanding of all relevant aspects. An above average example:

The topic area 'Crossing Boundaries' is very relevant in modern day society. We live in a world bounded by other people's beliefs and attitudes. Having to cross boundaries in life is not the problem of a selected few, rather we all share the boundaries, and they affect us all. The task of crossing boundaries is not an easy one and how and if they are crossed is a measure of personal achievement.

This response is indicative of the better candidates who showed a clear grasp of the demands of the question and immediately began to signal the direction of their argument. Poorer candidates tended to reword the question with minimal analysis:

This statement is true. We all share goals in life it just depends on our actions and attitudes on how we achieve, meet and cross our boundaries.

The question for Crossing Boundaries proved a difficult one for candidates to come to grips with but the better candidates obviously were able to address all aspects of the question, not necessarily treating all three parts of the question equally. Better responses clearly displayed in depth analysis of both Core Text and Supplementary Material and were able to make obvious linkages between the two. Ability to use the Core Text in a clear and concise manner was a discriminator for better responses:

People's view of society and on their personal relationships, influence the way they see themselves. As Rita identifies her self-inadequacies, her ignorance and her lack of education, she sees that to change 'you have to change from the inside don't you'. She shows great determination by changing her name to 'Rita', yet lacks the confidence to cross this personal boundary 'I take the piss, 'cause I'm not like, confident'. Nevertheless, she achieves the confidence and self-knowledge she so eagerly desires through gaining an education. These

actions are mirrored in Degrees of Strain (SMH Features October 1997) where mature-aged female students are reaping the benefits of study but at the same time face ‘personal and domestic upheaval’. Dr Susan Kelly from the centre for Adult Education reveals ‘many [women] were keen to develop an identity separate to their roles as mother and wife. And they did so through years of study. They grew in self-confidence and became more independent but many relationships collapsed under the strain.’ Likewise, Rita, too, faces ‘upheavals’ such as the loss of Denny; however, it is her independence from him that enables her to choose her own life — a true personal achievement.

A second example from Aboriginal Experience:

It is not until the end of the novel where the Duggan Boy finds his identity in the old Aboriginal rabbit trapper — his uncle. Before this he had spent a life in and out of jail due to his sense of hopelessness and disrespect for himself and others. It is not until meeting his uncle and gaining some hope in his life that he realises his identity — his Aboriginality. The strong link with the land is another distinctive feature of the Aboriginal experience.

This is then clearly linked in a piece of Supplementary Material:

The life story of Roger Bennett told to Helen Chryssides in a collection of biographical stories, ‘Local Heroes’ also highlights that the Aboriginal experience of loss of identity is distinctive ... It is not until late in life that Roger found his identity ... through discovering and nurturing a talent for playwrighting ... The experiences of the Duggan Boy and Roger Bennett are extremely similar ... Bennett’s story highlights that the Aboriginal experience is made distinctive by institutionalisation, crime and a sense of hopelessness.

Candidates are increasingly aware of the importance of including, and actively using, Supplementary Material in their responses. Stronger candidates were able to further their argument and produce an integrated response to either question by successfully linking their Core Text and Supplementary Material. Supplementary Material should also be varied (the question demands this). Numerically, this means having more than two pieces and from different media. For example, one newspaper article, one film and one poem. Many candidates used only films as their Supplementary Material which does not comply with the Syllabus Objectives and limits the quality of their responses. It is vital that candidates clearly and correctly source their material to give authenticity to their argument. For example:

Nonna Katia may be compared to the subjects in the magazine article ‘Having the Times of Their Lives’ (The Good Weekend, Sydney Morning Herald Magazine, 7th Dec 1996).

Supplementary Material which is not sufficiently referenced cannot be counted as furthering a candidate’s argument. For example:

In the newspapers every day you see articles on Racism.

And another example:

Social boundaries also show a personal achievement. A soccer match earlier this year broke into a fight after some passing comments at opposing teams. Thus crossing the social boundary, just like Josie in the book crossed this boundary when she broke a classmates nose because of a passing comment.

Further, it is important for candidates to fully source other material. Poems need not just the title and author but a brief summary or quotes to clearly reveal the line of argument taken by

the candidate. Similarly, works of art must be clearly titled with the name of the artist, a description and the analysis of its importance in developing the issue or argument.

Interviews, which are becoming increasingly popular as a form of Supplementary Material, require very careful sourcing. They should not give an indication of the school where the interview took place or even the town if possible. An example could be:

In an interview on 5th June 1997 with Nadia Surname who emigrated to Australia at the age of ten and now works as a journalist for a major newspaper ... she discussed the problems she had in trying to fit into two different sets of cultural expectations and the boundaries that were set because of these two worlds

It is not adequate to simply say:

In an interview with a person in my street ...

Note: The analysis of Supplementary Material is the key for a good response, not merely the description of the material.

Overall Comments on Topic Area

- There was a marked change in the number of candidates attempting the Aboriginal Experience option rather than the Crossing Boundaries option. The two areas are now basically even in terms of the number of candidates. This may be a reflection of the perception that the Aboriginal Experience questions have been less complicated.
- The most popular texts for Aboriginal Experience were Wildcat Falling and My Place.
- There were far more candidates attempting *Educating Rita* this year rather than *Looking for Alibrandi* and these two remain the most popular texts in Crossing Boundaries. It should be noted, however, that *Looking for Alibrandi* presents problems for many candidates in terms of identifying clear issues and being able to demonstrate how these are shown in the text. Many candidates are still fixated on the issue of death/suicide (John Barton) as a major issue but have very weak arguments and supporting material. *Educating Rita* proved to be easily understood by candidates and they were able to identify clear issues and use textual references very well.
- Candidates should remember the importance of the study of the Core Text but must also be aware of how important Supplementary Material is in extending the point of view for studying the Topic Area. They should not be afraid to use contrasting pieces of Supplementary Material. It is disturbing to still find a number of candidates with no Supplementary Material or only one piece.
- Some candidates continue to make poor use of the Core Text despite obviously knowing it well. They tend to pick very isolated incidents or minor ones and attempt to build an argument around these, often finding that there is not enough in this example to sustain an argument.
- Candidates must ensure that they address the question asked rather than writing a prepared answer or picking up on only one aspect of the question.

A further clear example of a candidate demonstrating that he/she understands the question and is going to address it in a clear manner:

The Aboriginal Experience is definitely distinctive. There are three easily identifiable issues that make the experiences of Aborigines distinctive. These issues are: loss of identity, racism, stereotyping and prejudice and poor health and inadequate welfare.

Finally, although it is possible to gain high marks using a limited range of Supplementary Material, it is nevertheless a disadvantage if students are trying to mould an argument for a particular question. Variety of Supplementary Material allows for better links between the Core Text issues and allows candidates to extend their argument in a more meaningful and convincing way.

Paper 2: Responses to Literature

Section I

Question 1: Poetry (Common)

2 Unit General Question

‘The most effective poems vividly convey the poet’s ideas and feelings.’

How do they do this?

The poems you can write about in your answer have already been selected and listed below.

Write about TWO poems, ONE from each poet you have studied from the list below.

Joanne Burns,	‘australian crawl’	OR	‘echo’
Bruce Dawe,	‘Drifters’	OR	‘Homo Suburbiensis’
Robert Gray,	‘Old House’	OR	‘Going Back, on a Hot Night’
Mark O’Connor,	‘To Kill an Olive’	OR	‘Pozières Cemetery’
Kenneth Slessor,	‘Wild Grapes’	OR	‘North Country’
Judith Wright,	‘Remittance Man’	OR	‘Eve to her Daughters’

Note: You must write on TWO poets in this question.

2/3 Unit Common Question

‘The most effective poems vividly convey the poet’s ideas and feelings.’

How do they do this?

The poems you can write about in your answer have already been selected and listed below.

Write about TWO poems, ONE from each poet you have studied from the list below.

Geoffrey Chaucer,	‘The Pardoner’s Tale’	OR	its prologue
John Donne,	‘The Apparition’	OR	‘O my blacke Soule! now thou art summoned’
John Keats,	‘To Autumn’	OR	‘Bright Star’
Robert Browning,	‘Porphyria’s Lover’	OR	‘Andrea del Sarto’
Gerard Manley Hopkins	‘Binsey Poplars’	OR	‘No worst, there is none ...’
Seamus Heaney,	‘Funeral Rites’	OR	‘Exposure’

Les Murray	'Driving through Sawmill Towns'	OR	'An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow'
Gwen Harwood	'At the Water's Edge'	OR	'Hospital Evening'
Robert Gray,	'Flames and Dangling Wire'	OR	'Watching by the Harbour'
Jennifer Maiden,	'The Patient'	OR	'Tiananmen Square'

Note: You must write on TWO poets in this question.

Marking Guidelines

Answers may be characterised by some or all of these:

A Range (15, 14, 13) Well above average

- well above average but not necessarily perfect
- answer strongly focused on ideas and feelings and demonstrating how these are conveyed
- generally a sophisticated style and structure
- often superior discussion/analysis of effects of language/imagery
- deals effectively with two poems — one may be stronger than the other/not necessarily perfect
- sustained discussion of the poems in answer to the question
- often displays flair, fluency and originality
- may be succinct
- effective use of quotations
- may be an integrated approach making a coherent link between discussion of two poems to illustrate points made
- interpretation of poetry displays insight and engagement
- may be comprehensive though not inspirational.

B Range (12, 11, 10) Above Average

- above average response that may have some flaws which restrict it to the B range
- engages with the question demonstrating *how* ideas and feelings are conveyed
- more sophisticated style and structure than the average range
- proficient discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- may be stronger on one poem than the other
- sustained response
- interpretation is supported by evidence drawn from the poems
- detailed understanding of the ideas in the poems
- appropriate choice and constructive use of quotation

- good expression in a more structured approach
- may be very detailed answer with mundane expression
- deals with more than simply content.

C Range (9, 8, 7) Average

- reasonable understanding of the poems
- a reasonable attempt to answer the question
- competent if pedestrian approach; repetitive; regurgitating poem with some comments; persistent; laboured expression; some language problems
- some discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- demonstrates an understanding of the ideas in the poems but may demonstrate a superficial understanding
- may be stronger on one poem than the other
- competent retelling
- may refer to poetic devices but with little understanding as to effect
- at the top of the range the candidate may have an understanding of the poems and some understanding of how the impact is conveyed
- weaker C may tend to tell story but shows knowledge of the poems with some appropriate evidence
- may communicate ideas clearly but have flawed expression
- some discussion of ideas and feelings without discussion of technique.

D Range (6, 5, 4) Below Average

- below average response
- limited attempt to answer the question
- over reliance on recounting content, storytelling, paraphrasing with no attempt to select salient points
- weak discussion/analysis of effects of language and imagery
- unsupported generalisations
- limited understanding
- ideas but poor expression
- repetitive
- simplistic ideas with little substantiation
- misinterpretation
- may not be completed
- may be articulate but not enough content
- problems with expression
- discernible padding.

E Range (3, 2, 1) Well Below Average

- well below average response
- doesn't engage with the question
- discussion not substantiated, unsupported generalisations
- irrelevant discussion
- serious misunderstanding or lack of understanding of poems
- problems with and/or poor expression
- inadequate treatment of two poem(s)
- ideas often simplistic
- may be very short or incomplete.

'O' mark says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the question or provides an incomprehensible answer.

N.A. is awarded for a Non Attempt — a blank page or the words 'Not Attempted' may appear on the script.

It is anticipated that a candidate who answers using only one poet will score no higher than the C range but may reach C8.

Examiners' Comments

The poetry common question was sufficiently open to allow each candidate to explore and discuss the poems set for each poet. The question required a comprehensive study of all prescribed poems.

Candidates who assumed that set poems would not be specified, discussed the question in a very generalised way. A mere listing of techniques without consideration of effect was considered to be of little value. The more able candidates communicated well the integration of ideas, feelings and techniques when discussing the poems. Less able candidates found it difficult to deal with 'the technique' aspect of the question.

The words 'the poet's ideas and feelings' led to a variety of responses which generally focused on the poet's ideas and thematic concerns. Candidates interpreted 'feelings' as the poet's, the persona's, the characters within the poems or their own feelings.

The poetry question itself focused on the basic elements of poetry and this gave candidates much to discuss if they were prepared. This allowed for discrimination between responses.

The common question does not necessitate a comparative response. Although some candidates attempted an integrated response, the majority of candidates wrote an essay which dealt with the two poems separately. Some of the better candidates used linking statements or paragraphs to give structure to their response.

Questions of this nature demand a thorough knowledge of the poems supported by carefully selected and well integrated quotations. Lengthy irrelevant quotations do little to advance the discussion and argument in the context of the question.

Candidates' Responses — General Comments

Candidates who were well prepared had no difficulty in dealing with the requirements of the question. However, some candidates despite clear instructions chose to write on poems other than the ones set.

Dawe, Slessor and Wright were the most popular poets in 2 Unit General, with an increasing number of candidates responding to the Gray poems in both General and Related. In the 2 Unit Related paper Keats, Donne and Browning commanded the most responses, with increasing numbers of students attempting the Harwood option.

Above Average Responses — A and B Range

Above average responses were characterised by a sustained and detailed discussion of the individual poems specified with candidates showing the ability to effectively deal with ideas, feelings and poetic techniques.

Above average responses were characterised by excellence in essay technique, style, structure, flair and expression and sophisticated vocabulary.

Judicious selection of quotations was also a feature of the A and B range responses.

Example of a Well Above Average Response

To create an effective poem, poets must be able to convey their ideas and feelings vividly and passionately. There are many poetical devices used by poets to express their emotions and thoughts. Two such poems where this is effectively accomplished are John Keats 'To Autumn' and Seamus Heaney's 'Funeral Rites'.

Keats' poems all have a passionate intensity in the expression of his thoughts and feelings, especially in 'To Autumn'. The techniques he uses to convey this are the form, structure and language. The sensual imagery however is one of the most effective devices used to create the vivid portrayal of his feelings of acceptance for the passing of the beauty of Autumn because he knows it will come again.

The form of the poem as an ode is very important in conveying Keats' ideas. It signifies that Autumn is worthy of praise and reverence thereby stressing Keats' love for the beauty of Autumn. It is also extremely subjective form of poetry that requires the poet's feelings and emotions.

The structure of the poem is another aspect which reveals the poets ideas. The poem is arranged into three sections representing the development of the season of Autumn, a person's life or the three senses of feeling, seeing and hearing. Each is symbolic of a part of Keats' thoughts, either the cyclical aspect of nature or his love and admiration for the senses. Also each stanza of the ode has an extra line, symbolic of Keats' ideas on the overwhelming abundance and fertility of Autumn.

Another literary technique is the language of the poem. The diction is all about nature, such as 'fruit', 'sun', 'vines' reflecting Keats' romantic love of the beauty and inspiration in nature. The poem is also written in the present tense which is important because it adds more life and immediacy to the poem. This emphasises Keats' love of Autumn for its life and fecundity and its regeneration. There are also no personal references or allusions to humans because Keats is so vividly focused on the beauty and life in Autumn.

The overwhelming sensual imagery extensively used throughout the poem is extremely important in vividly conveying the poet's emotions. The tactile imagery of the first stanza.

'Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is emphasised by the sibilance and alliteration of 'm' sounds which makes it even more powerful for the reader. The visual images in the second stanza such as, 'Thy hair soft lifted by the winnowing-wind' makes Autumn seem more real and vivid to the reader. The apostrophe of Autumn and personification further emphasises Keats' love for the abundance of life in Autumn. The final stanza is filled with aural imagery such as, 'in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn'. So by appealing to many of the senses Keats is capturing the reader's mind and able to express his ideas more effectively and vividly.

Finally the rhythm and rhyme of the poem created through the cumulation of ideas, and extensive use of alliteration and assonance such as, 'Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours' allows Keats to emphasise certain feelings and ideas. All the poetical devices of the ode, structure, language and imagery are used to create a near perfect poem reflecting Keats love of the perfect beauty and regeneration he sees in Autumn.

Similarly in 'Funeral Rites' Heaney uses a range of literary techniques to vividly express his ideas and feelings. The language of the poem, the structure, the sensual images and references linking the past and present all are used to create a poem reflecting his ideas on the cycle of violence and death and his personal experiences.

The language Heaney uses in 'Funeral Rites' is an effective technique that conveys his ideas with a vivid intensity. There are relatively small numbers of words used which creates more simplistic expressions for the reader. However there are layers of meaning within the diction which adds depth and opens the reader to the different levels of Heaney's thinking. For example 'shackled in rosary beads' could be symbolic of Catholicism but also a criticism of the power and influence of religion on people's lives. The perspective of this poem is also very significant in reflecting the poet's ideas. It begins with the first person, 'I shouldered a kind of manhood' representing the personal intimate thoughts of the poet. Then it moves to the collective, inclusive perspective of 'we will' which emphasises the unity and wholeness Heaney desires for the Irish. The tenses are also significant in that they reflect the progression of Heaney's ideas. It starts in the past, moves to the present, 'Now as news comes in', then to the future. This emphasises Heaney's ideas on the cycles of history and violence but also the importance of the past on the future.

The structure of the poem similarly reflects the poet's development of ideas. The three sections trace the progression from the personal experience, to that of the nation, 'the whole country' and finally to the more universal, common experiences found in reference to the ancient nordic myth of 'Gnmar'.

The imagery created throughout the poem adds vivid intensity to the portrayal of Heaney's ideas and feelings. The detailed, delicate descriptions in stanza I such as 'their eyelids glistening, their dough white hands shackled in rosary beads' creates a childlike perspective but also makes the scene more real for the reader. By creating detailed visual images the poet can convey his ideas more powerfully to the reader. This is continued in this poem with more sensual imagery,

burning family cars nose into line, the whole country tunes to the muffled drumming of ten thousand engines'.

The kinetic and aural and visual imagery emphasises the unity the poet so desires with more intensity and realism.

Finally by linking the present day Irish troubles to those of the Ancient North, Heaney is expressing his desire for 'the aid of memory allayed for once', in order to unite all to stop the cycle of violence and revenge. This idea and passionate hope for the future is vividly portrayed to the reader through the language, structure and imagery.

In all poetry the poets ideas and feelings must be expressed with a vivid passionate intensity through a range of poetical devices as seen in 'To Autumn' and 'Funeral Rites'.

Examiners' Comments

Although occasionally laboured, this detailed script knows the poems well. It is a superior, sustained discussion of the poems in the context of the question well supported by apt quotation. A clear writing style that displays a comprehensive understanding.

Dealt with common issues (eg 'time') in the poems well. An above average A range script.

Example of an Above Average Response

Australian poets Bruce Dawe and Judith Wright vividly convey their ideas and feelings through their poetry. Dawe's Homo Suburbiensis is a vivid portrayal of a man in his garden in the evening, which is portrayed through effective imagery. Remittance Man by Wright, likewise, vividly conveys her thoughts and feelings of the Australian outback in comparison to the greener English countryside.

'One constant in a world of variables' is how Bruce Dawe describes a man alone 'in the evening in his patch of vegetables'. This is a prosaic image, which is easy to imagine. The man's retreat into the garden, as indicated by 'all the things he takes down with him there' likely has a ritualistic quality. Dawe's vivid imagery is conveyed as the air smells of 'tomato vines' and how 'the hoarse rasping tendrils' of the pumpkins 'flourish clumsy whips' and are 'poised rampant' upon the palings. The fact that they are rampant suggests movement out of control, full of life, while 'poised' indicates that the movement is frozen, about to continue. This image is thus clearly vivid and it is also emphasised by the 'rasping tendrils' being 'sprawled' over the 'compost box', 'sprawled' being an effective description which helps us visualise the scene.

Homo Suburbiensis stands there 'lost in a green confusion'. Despite the superficially negative associations of this line, Dawe is in fact describing a state of bliss as the man is being disconnected from the tedious, mundane affairs of life and is immersed in a 'green' retreat in his garden. 'Green' suggests fertility and hope, which is the colour of the plants in the garden. Dawe, thus through his vivid imagery is pronouncing the 'vegetable patch' a sanctuary.

Homo Suburbiensis, although temporarily separated from the normal outside world is not utterly removed from it, for he still hears 'a far whisper of traffic' and 'the clatter of a dish in a sink that could be his'. He smells someone's rubbish 'burning'.

These two are commonplace images vividly portrayed by Dawe. The man is in his vegetable patch, tending to his vegetables thus taking an anthropological journey back to that action which began with man. He 'offers up instead ... time, pain, love, hate, age, war, death, laughter, fever', which is as much as any man can offer and which highlights, and vividly conveys Dawe's feelings for Homo Suburbiensis.

Wright's Remittance Man, telling of a 'spendthrift, disinherited and graceless' also portrays vividly her ideas by use of vivid imagery, that of the Australian landscape. The first impression

given of this environment is 'tramping the backtracks in the summer haze', indicating the strong hot climate of Australia.

She uses the device of onomatopoeia to describe the country — 'blue blowing smoke' and 'red blowing dust', making her writing more effective and her descriptions more vivid.

Wright emphasises the raw harshness of the Australian landscape by comparing it to England, from where the remittance man had been exiled. 'sparse swinging shadow of trees no longer foreign silted the memory of a greener climate and 'past the fallow circle of the plain's horizon faded the rainy elms seen through the nursery window'. She thus vividly highlights the stark difference. 'Sparse, swinging shadow' is the use of alliteration, providing a more vivid description. Wright sympathises for 'the freak also could never settle' as 'nowhere suited his book' but also indicates how he was also somewhat satisfied with his new life — 'that pale stalk of a wench sank back forgotten in Black Mary's eyes', vividly conveying that the 'pale', wasted out girl produced by England could not compare to the raw richness of Australia with its Aboriginal girls, 'black mary'. The remittance man dies here in 'the country of the scape goat' in its 'magnificence', where back in England the 'squire his brother let a 'vague pity blur the formal roses', signifying again the differences in the countries and the people they produce.

Judith Wright and Bruce Dawe, therefore through their poems, *Remittance Man* and *Homo Suburbienis* vividly convey their thoughts, ideas and feelings through their use of imagery and descriptions presented in their poems, making them effective pieces of work.

Examiners' Comments

Sound on both poems. Engages with the question. A little rushed at the conclusion. Discussion is well supported by evidence from the poems. Typical B range script.

Average Responses — C Range

This range was characterised by an adequate understanding of the poems set and a reasonable attempt to answer the question. Whether discussing ideas, feelings or technique, these candidates tended to provide a coherent but limited answer in regard to the question.

Some candidates had a knowledge of technique but were unable to explore and connect with these in any detailed fashion.

At the top of the C range the candidates demonstrated a more insightful understanding of techniques and how these contributed to the ideas and feelings of the poet.

Weaker scripts in the average range tended to retell and just list poetic techniques rather than discuss their impact in relation to the 'ideas and feelings' of the poet. A feature of the C range was that candidates generally engaged with most aspects of the question.

Example of an Average Response

In John Donne's 'The Apparition' and Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover', the poet vividly conveys his ideas and feelings of love and faithfulness, while creating vivid images in the reader's minds through use of imagery.

Both these poems are about love and the poet's idea of what love should be. This is shown by the way each poet deals with faithfulness and devotion in their poems. For 'The Apparition', the poet reacts to the unfaithfulness of his lover by establishing the conceit that by her unfaithfulness, she has 'killed' him. This is shown by his bitter and angry tone and his

description of her as his 'murderess'. This conjures up a vivid image of a cruel woman who has no regard for her lover. In comparison, Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' had a much less bitter and angry tone; more wistful and passionate. The lover wants Porphyria to be his alone, but she cannot 'her vainer lies. disserve'. He solves this by strangling her when 'She was mine'. The language in this poem is much less harsh and so doesn't invoke an image of violence as 'The Apparition' does, more a softer image, as if in slow motion. Both these images are vivid in the readers mind, although they are created differently.

Both lovers want to affect their partners in some way so that the authors feel contented and resolved. In 'The Apparition', the poet wishes his lover to lie 'bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat ... a vainer ghost that I.' By this he will exact revenge for her unfaithfulness. Again, this vivid and sinking image is conjured up using violent and sinister imagery; the 'quicksilver' sweat and her being as a 'ghost'. This is in contrast to Browning's lover who, after strangling Porphyria, acts as if nothing happened. In his mind she is 'pure', although the line 'And God has not yet said a word' seems to indicate divine approval for his actions. This is a much softer image which is involved by the poet's description of her 'laughing' eyes and her 'golden' hair. Again, the two images are vivid to the reader, although they are created differently.

Therefore, both John Donne's 'The Apparition' and Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' vividly convey the respective poets ideas and feelings through use of striking imagery which, even though created differently, is still very effective.

Examiners' Comments

This response demonstrates an understanding of the ideas and feelings of the poems with limited discussion. There is mention made of tone and ideas of love — fidelity and devotion. Discussion of conceit is undeveloped. Some inaccuracy but generally satisfactory.

Below Average Responses — D and E Range

This range was characterised by a generalised and limited understanding of the poems. Most candidates did not address the 'how' side of the question, with those attempting to do so presenting a weak analysis. Poor expression and misinterpretation was a feature of the range.

Special Note on E– (1) and E– – (0) Responses

A number of candidates had not prepared all of the poems set for study for each poet.

Some of these candidates had prepared answers on two poems other than those set in the question, which they wrote about despite the requirements of the question. Such responses were able to gain limited marks if they could furnish some general, relevant comments within the framework of the question. (For example, ' "Pozières Cemetery" by Mark O'Connor deals with the horrific destruction of soldiers during war.')

Other candidates made vague comments about the generalised features of poetry — often at length — without referring at all to the prescribed poems. Such responses fell into the E–E– –ranges.

Still other candidates wrote short, spurious responses of no merit, possibly reflecting poor allocation of time.

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that all poems set for study should be prepared for the examination.

Question 2: Fiction (Common)

2 Unit General Question

‘The most effective endings lead us to think again about what we have finished reading.’

Discuss the endings of TWO of the novels you have studied, commenting on their effectiveness.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

Marele Day, *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*.

2/3 Unit Common Question

‘The most effective endings lead us to think again about what we have finished reading.’

Discuss the endings of TWO of the novels you have studied, commenting on their effectiveness.

Jane Austen, *Emma*

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

George Eliot, *Adam Bede*

Henry James, *Washington Square*

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*

Henry Lawson, *Short Stories* (Refer to ONE of the Joe Wilson stories in your answer.)

Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock*

Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*

Patrick White, *The Tree of Man*

David Malouf, *The Great World*

Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

Gillian Mears, *Fineflour*.

Marking Guidelines

The guidelines are not a checklist; but rather a guide for making an objective holistic assessment.

There are many valid and acceptable ways of answering this question and therefore the approach selected should not be viewed as a discriminating aspect in itself.

A Range (15, 14, 13)

- demonstrate a perceptive, analytical and comprehensive knowledge of the texts in relation to the question. Express ideas clearly and fluently
- provide specific and relevant supporting detail and where quotes are used they are effectively integrated into the discussion
- may present a sophisticated and well articulated exploration of the ending and its relevance to the novel as a whole
- offer perceptive insights and understanding of the purpose and effectiveness of the ending in both texts.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

- demonstrate a sound and detailed knowledge of both texts in relation to the ending
- offer a sustained and often perceptive response to the question
- include supporting detail which is likely to be both appropriate and effectively used
- comment on the effectiveness of the ending and understand the way a reader may be led to think again and re-evaluate the novel in light of the ending
- although generally quite fluent, may be plodding in their thoroughness.

C Range (9, 8, 7)

- show evidence of an attempt to offer interpretative insight into the effectiveness of the ending
- demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of both texts but may include some inaccuracies of interpretation. Text knowledge may be more descriptive than insightful and may present a limited view of the effectiveness of the ending. May be preoccupied with listing themes and describing plot with limited analysis
- may have a storytelling approach as a personal response while still attempting to focus on the question.
- the approach, while generally balanced, may be stronger on one text
- the attempt to explain the effectiveness of the ending may be simplistic
- may be pedestrian and/or repetitive with occasional lapses into irrelevancy.

D Range (6, 5, 4)

Will be limited response to the question with some of the following characteristics:

- scripts in this range often depend upon a storytelling approach to answering the question

- the views offered are often simplistic. Some responses may be comparatively brief while others may be quite long and wordy
- they are likely to contain inaccuracies or misunderstandings and are usually only loosely linked to the question
- responses may be confused about what constitutes an ending and may ignore or only offer a weak comment on why it is effective. May not understand the intention of ending
- the understanding expressed is likely to be vague, poorly supported and may be stronger on one text
- the imbalance factor may be more pronounced in this range.

E Range (3, 2, 1)

- these scripts may appear to be discussing the question but do not necessarily link the discussion to the texts. The response most likely reflects a poor understanding of the question or the text(s)
- brevity of response may be a characteristic. Supporting detail is likely to be inappropriate or miss the point. Responses tend to be unstructured

E– – Range (0)

Completely irrelevant, inaccurate comments on one or both texts. Will provide no link to the question.

General Comments

This was a question which allowed for clear discrimination across the whole range of responses. The question gave the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their detailed knowledge and understanding of both texts; however, the phrase ‘lead us to think again’ prompted personal subjective responses which focused on plot development.

The question facilitated a wide range of approaches; some discussed the themes characterisation, structure, plot development or narrative technique.

Many candidates laboured under the misapprehension that the quote was the question and consequently focused on what ‘they were lead to think again’ about rather than the effectiveness of the endings. Candidates who opted to write on the short story collection (Lawson) and unconventional fiction narratives (*In the Skin of a Lion*, *Fineflour* and to a lesser degree *Lives of Girls and Women*), were challenged. Lawson responses were challenged most because of the requirement of a Joe Wilson story.

General Candidate Responses

Most candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of both texts and were able to use quotes effectively.

Unfortunately some simply retreated into the naive statement that the end finishes off the novel. The candidates fell into the inevitable plot summary where the ending was mentioned in only one or two simple sentences. Candidates had difficulty in grasping the concept of what constituted the ending, some referring to the last page, chapter or section of the book. Many

candidates did not understand the function of the ending and were therefore unable to comment on its effectiveness.

It must be stressed that this question does not require candidates to compare novels. In fact those who did seek points of comparison were often disadvantaged because of simplistic and laboured arguments. This caused candidates to make banal comments such as, 'Both Paul Crabbe and Emma played the piano'.

Markers noted that the majority of candidates demonstrated reasonable literacy skills and wrote structured essays. Most candidates successfully handled the common question requirement of writing on two texts in one essay.

Above Average Responses — A and B Range

These responses were characterised by a sustained discussion of two texts with detailed reference as to what made the endings effective. They were more sophisticated in style and structure, were fluent in expression and showed a superior analysis of texts. For example, the following introduction:

James' Washington Square and Austen's Emma are two novels whose endings instigate further contemplation, yet the effectiveness of these two endings are of a very different nature. While Emma concludes in a satisfying 'happy ending', Washington Square's effectiveness originates from its ambivalence, ambiguity and the sense of inexorability which is manifest in the destiny of its heroine.

The best responses chose appropriate quotations accompanied by perceptive analysis. Their interpretation was supported by argument and carefully selected evidence.

... Similarly, Goldsworthy uses Vienna as a symbol of Paul's step into adulthood, and a greater understanding of Keller. However it is important to note that the final revelation comes in Darwin. Paul has, in effect, come full circle.

... it is important to note however that it is a different Darwin:

'I walked out of the hospice into an unfamiliar Darwin.'

Goldsworthy is showing the reader that Paul has essentially changed, and developed as a character, in comparison to the young Paul.

Average Responses — C Range

Candidates in this range displayed good knowledge of the texts but often encountered difficulties in analysing the function of the endings. They tended to focus on the quote and 'lead us to think again' as an invitation to recount their particular prepared knowledge of the text, eg plot, themes and language.

All C range responses attempted, however tenuously, to answer the question. For example, this candidate raises the issues of theme, character, learning, reader learning to think again but fails to develop and sustain a line of argument that answers the question:

'Frankenstein' raises many themes including blind ambition and effects that corruption and immorality have on people when it comes to nature. Victor is morally corrupt and irresponsible

for what he has created. His obsession with learning and obsession with a desire to make discovery has led him to destruction. But he has not learnt from his mistakes as he says of himself, 'I have come a long way, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein, but far more will I achieve.' This effectively engaged the readers by teaching them about morals and the effects of corruption and in turn leads the reader to think again about the novel and how some of these effects affected the reader and involved the reader into the plot of the novel.

Many candidates had prepared the 1996 question and attempted to adapt it to the 1997 question.

Below Average Responses — D Range

The typical D range script was characterised by the use of unsupported generalisations. These responses showed a limited understanding of the texts and talked about ideas without giving any detail. Relying instead on recounting events and/or storytelling, they tended not to engage with the question and were characterised by their brevity.

Austen is totally different. You want to read the book again because you liked it not because you couldn't understand it.

Question 3: Drama (Common)

2 Unit General Question

In the TWO plays you have studied from the list below, choose what you see as an important moment in each, such as a scene, an exchange, or a soliloquy.

What techniques do you think the playwrights have used to achieve the dramatic impact of these moments?

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Ray Lawler, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*

Hyllus Maris and Sonia Borg, *Women of the Sun* (Maydina)

Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce, *Strictly Ballroom*

Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*

2/3 Unit Common Question

In the TWO plays you have studied from the list below, choose what you see as an important moment in each, such as a scene, an exchange, or a soliloquy.

What techniques do you think the playwrights have used to achieve the dramatic impact of these moments?

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Dylan Thomas, *Under Milkwood*

Dorothy Hewett, *The Man from Mukinupin*

Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*

Louis Nowra, *Cosi*

Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*

Marking Guidelines

A Range (15, 14, 13)

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- sophisticated language
- excellent understanding of texts

- answers question
- balance
- integrates discussion – moment, techniques, dramatic impact — with clear understanding of dramatic purpose
- sense of audience
- may be succinct
- may move from scene/movement/soliloquy into wider discussion of whole text
- fluent, relevant, coherent style
- focus on impact/technique/moment.

B Range (12, 11, 10)

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- articulate and competent in use of language
- very good understanding of the text
- adheres to question
- may make some point implicitly
- relates techniques to themes and issues
- confident control of argument
- focus on discussion
- selective in choice of support material
- may move from scene/moment/soliloquy into wider discussion of whole text
- may be laboured.

C Range (9, 8, 7)

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- competent expression (conveys their message)
- some structure evident
- addresses the question — not merely storytelling
- often simplistic in argument
- may lack selectivity even if lengthy
- problems with integrating moment/technique/impact
- focus may drift
- may show sense of audience
- may rely on plot retell as a way of getting into the importance of the scene
- may lack balance
- could be mechanical
- broad definition of moment
- may have taken climax as their moment although they don't focus on it.

D Range (6, 5, 4)

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- language could be simplistic/mechanical
- superficial/awkward/tortured
- very limited response
- may attempt question initially but gets lost along the way
- storytelling
- text inaccuracy or limited understanding of the text
- may reconstruct own question and not answer question set
- limited understanding of dramatic technique
- tenuous link between moment and dramatic technique
- may list
- could be unbalanced.

E Range (3, 2, 1, 0)

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- poorly expressed
- outpouring rather than observation
- very tenuous link or no link to the question
- may deal with only one text — poorly
- no selectivity or focus
- may try to identify the moment but struggles to do so
- no understanding of dramatic techniques
- poor or limited knowledge of the text.

Some dramatic techniques mentioned by students:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| • Characters | • Language |
| • Issues | • Lighting |
| • Conflict | • Fourth Wall |
| • Suspense | • Conflict |
| • Movement | • Climax |
| • Comedy/humour | • Music |
| • Audience | • Sound effects |
| • Dialogue | • Imagery |
| • Play within a play | • Film Techniques: |
| • Symbolism | – Camera angles |
| • Imagery | – Lighting |
| • Structure | – Colour |
| • Contrast | – Scenery |
| • Motifs | – Dance |
| • Turning point | – Costume |
| • Dramatic irony | – Satire |
| | – Gesture |

General Comments

It was a difficult question, especially challenging to the 2 Unit General candidates. Inevitably, some of the texts were better suited to the question than others.

Most of the candidates picked a scene and tried to argue its context in the play as a whole, which often led into a general discussion of the entire play without focus on a particular ‘moment’. The better answers were able to sustain an argument based on a specific moment or scene. They may have extended to another part of the play but only in direct connection with the ‘moment’ chosen.

The markers accepted a broad definition of dramatic techniques and this allowed for a discussion of a variety of aspects of the text. Dramatic technique could include character, thematic relevance of the moment, language as well as specific theatricalities like blocking, lighting etc. Similarly, the ‘impact’ of the ‘moment’ could be seen through a discussion of any aspect of the play including theme and character, for example, while those referring to *Measure for Measure* dealt with movement, symbol or staging.

Texts Studied

As in 1996, Common Drama in 2 Unit Related was the least popular choice with just over 850 candidates statewide. In 2 Unit General the percentage was very close to one-third.

2 Unit Related: Over half of the candidates studied the mix of *Cosi* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. Two-thirds used one of these two with another text. Least popular were *Measure for Measure* and *Diving for Pearls*.

Note: Ironically, while few did *The Man from Muckinupin* or *School for Scandal*, the question suited both these texts as candidates chose the opening scene of *Man* and the screen scene in *School*, which both offered a range and scope of dramatic devices. Some candidates doing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* found it difficult to define or identify a moment or scene.

2 Unit General: The most popular texts were *Death of a Salesman*, *Macbeth* and *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* with *Strictly Ballroom* not far behind. Fewer candidates wrote on the other three texts — *Diving for Pearls*, *Pygmalion* or *Women of the Sun*.

In each of the four most popular texts, candidates found a scene relatively easy to define; for example, many in *Death* used the restaurant scene. Of the four, the greatest struggle was with *Macbeth* as candidates seemed less able to find a specific scene — many used the witches opening scene.

Overall

The question clearly demonstrated this is *not* a comparison question. There was more evidence of candidates writing two separate essays. Candidates who integrate their answers should take care to ensure their answers are balanced and that equal time is given to the treatment of each play in their answer.

This year there were few of the trite comparisons or links made in 1996, such as ‘there were deaths in both *Macbeth* and *Death of a Salesman*’ or ‘both plays use imagery’.

Vocabulary: Candidates should be advised that while an extensive, accurate vocabulary is of great benefit, to simply use words randomly adds little to the essay. Better candidates showed a working specific knowledge and use of dramatic terms while others simply ‘threw the words in’.

Candidate’s Response — Excellent Range

The plays ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead’ by Tom Stoppard and ‘Cosi’ by Louis Nowra, both share some fundamental qualities of drama. They incorporate universal themes, so that the audience is able to relate to issues raised and also include the tragic-comedy element of drama. This element draws the audience to the verge of tears that are both sorrowful and amusing, and heightens realism as the real world is neither fully tragic nor fully comic. In ‘Cosi’ the ‘blackout scene’ is one which causes a dramatic impact on the audience, as does the ‘coin-tossing’ scene in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (R&G). Both Nowra and Stoppard use various techniques to enhance the dramatic impact of these scenes on the audience.

In ‘Cosi’, Louis Nowra has written a play about social issues, and he delves deep into characters so we can witness their struggles, development and triumphs. The blackout scene is manipulated by Nowra to have various effects on the audiences, and on the progression of the play. This scene accelerates the action of the play, as it allows Lewis and Julie to become closer and kiss, in the safety of the dark. The audience has been waiting for this, and this theatrical device allows their ‘getting together’ to be an easier task. This darkness also allows us to view Ruth undergo self revelation, as she tells of her abused past in the comfort of the darkness. Cheryl is also able to display her actions when she is trying to find Lewis and get ‘intimate’ with him, but instead is horrified when the lights come back on and she is greeted by Lewis and Julie kissing.

This scene also provides humour for the audience as Nowra manipulates the element of ‘black’ humour, allowing us to laugh at Ruth ‘slashing car tyres’ and defend herself ‘touch me again and I’ll make you regret it’. We are humoured by her actions, but are also made aware of the underlying seriousness of her anxiety disorder, as she tells of how she was tied up in a cupboard by her boyfriend and is more concerned whether ‘it was three knots, or four’.

Slap-stick humour is another technique used by Nowra in this scene to create audience involvement. Cherry ‘bumping into a table’ and Ruth punching Zac all provide physical amusement for the audience. Nowra also provides laughter for the audience, when Zac’s inappropriateness is shown ‘Let’s have an orgy’. This also highlights his obsession with sex, which has previously been shown. This device also heightens the audiences interaction, by encouraging them to use other senses. As the lights are turned off, we are forced to concentrate more on our sense of hearing, and are still amused by what we can ‘pick up’ and imagine what is happening. It encourages us to use our imaginations as we really can’t see what is occurring. Nowra has increased the audiences involvement with ‘Cosi’ due to the wonderfully created, diverse characters. He has also allowed us to relate to personalities shown and to question our own sanity through the exploration of the state of madness.

In ‘R&G’, Stoppard has elevated two of Shakespeare’s minor characters and placed them in centre stage. He challenges the audiences values on issues raised through the use of comedy. The coin tossing is used by Stoppard as a means of moving the audiences focus around the stage. It also seems to enhance the idea of fate and R&G’s belief that their control was like that of ‘sailors on a boat’. They could move about the boat as much as they like, but the wind

and current would draw them inexorably onward. In this situation, the coin tossing allows them to move around stage, but again, they have no control of the bigger picture. The coin-tossing is also manipulated to have a dramatic impact on the audience, by raising real and disturbing questions about humanity, 'who are we?'. It enhances the theme of direction, and how R&G have little or no direction from the palace, Stoppard, or in life. They are forced to say 'but we don't know what's going on, or what to do with ourselves'.

As the coins are tossed, and continually land on the heads side, the idea of probability is raised, and we are forced to agree with the idea that 'truth is only that which is taken to be true'.

Stoppard seems to stimulate the mind, but never permitting us to dwell for too long without realising the underlying irony and seriousness of our amusement.

*The dramatic impact of this scene causes audience interaction, but we are able to view that although R&G's situation is believable, and the questions they raise are relevant, they are merely the deliverers of the message, and so we feel less empathy for them than for the characters in *Così*. In R&G they are merely characters, and this emphasises the fact that they can't die, but in '*Così*' they are presented as real people.*

The use of isolating the two characters, R&G, on stage allows Stoppard to exaggerate their status as outsiders. We are able to explore the themes of the play more intensely as all our focus is on the two on stage. The direct reference to the audience by the characters allows us to become more involved and pathetically pass the time like R&G, constantly awaiting for structure to appear and it to cohere into meaning. The theme of Art is Life is heavily presented and the idea that we are 'Always in Character' and we are 'All actors on the stage of life' is presented.

Nowra has set his drama in a time of chaos and shambles, in the 'era of free love'. The idea of the stage as a metaphor is enhanced by the idea of the burnt out stage reflecting the world at large. By asking the audience to question the genuine autonomy of the human spirit, both playwrights ask us to consider to what degree are we all inmates of our own institutions, or minor characters in a greater play. The use of the minor characters, or 'little people' of the world allows the audience to better relate to the characters confusions and problems, and therefore the play to have a more dramatic impact.

Examiners' Comments

This script shows a superior approach to all aspects of the question. Thorough knowledge of the moment in relation to techniques and the dramatic impact is displayed. A fluent well argued piece.

Candidate's Response — Above Average Range

One of the climaxes of Ray Lawler's 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' ('The Doll') occurs in the first scene when Roo asks Olive to marry him, resulting in Olive's final breakdown. The audience is visually stunned, as Olive screams and cries in response to Roo's calmly asked question.

The scene has been 'eye-opening' for Roo, Olive and Barney. Pearl has left, after trying to tell Olive the truth about the lay-off. 'You were blind to everything outside this house,' she says, but Olive denies this, preferring to remain in the dream of the past sixteen years. She has been hurt by Pearl's words however, saying 'It's having another woman ... knowing your insides and feeling sorry for you because she thinks you've never been within cooe of the real thing.'

However, Olive refuses to accept the demise of the lay-off tradition. She even goes so far as to try to resurrect it again, telling Roo she could have fixed the dolls again, even wanting the men to leave so it would seem more like 'normal' again.

Pearl's leaving has also been a shock to Barney, who has come to the realisation that he is no longer the 'biggest prize in the packet.'

Roo has struggled with inner turmoils of his own, earnestly seeking a solution to the problems of this lay-off. Emma reveals to him that he is aged, and that no-one is to blame for the ending of the lay-offs. Roo's realisation occurs when he says 'I'm not old! Old is — what you are, and — Tony Moreno.'

So far, the scene has been rather quiet, rather subdued and melancholy, as all characters must reluctantly glimpse, even if they do not accept the truth about what is and has happened.

The room in which Roo proposes to Olive is a stark contrast to the room which it had been just the day before. All its decorations have been taken down, and, with the facade of dolls and birds and butterflies gone, the room is revealed as grimy, lonely and empty — showing its age and the wear of seventeen years. All the objects which represented the lay-off — the birds, dolls, corals, have crumbled to dust, like the lay-off seasons themselves. Nothing is left but the bare room.

And then Roo asks Olive to marry him. The reactions of Olive are wild and dramatic, a shock after the quiet scene. Visually, verbally, Olive's outburst is sharp and memorable. 'I'll kill you first' she screams at one stage. The sight of a thirty-nine year old woman screaming, falling to the ground in response to Roo's plea of love, his show of commitment to Olive, is astounding.

'I want what I had before. Give it back. Give me back what you've taken!' Roo's gift to Olive is flatly rejected. *The audience sees Olive's revulsion at the thought of marriage, and comes to realise just how much she depended on the lay-off season for her stability. The audience witnesses her inability to change, and is almost repulsed by her pathetic figure on the ground, making sounds 'too animal-like to be classed as sobbing.'*

Ray Lawler, in this climax of the scene relies on shock to achieve the dramatic impact — the shock of Olive's violent reactions as a contrast to the subdued lead up, the shock of realising Olive's dependence on the lay-off, and the shock of seeing a grown woman scream and cry.

As a contrast to this, Arthur Miller, in his 'Death of a Salesman' has the requiem as his final scene. The climax of the play has passed, the requiem is subdued and almost muffled in comparison.

Arthur Miller relies for the dramatic impact on the contrast between the climax of the play, and this solemn requiem. While Act Two finished with piercing music, shouting voices the raving of a confused man and that inevitable car crash, the requiem is still silent. All voices are lowered. Sentences are brief and hushed. While many people seemed to speak at once in the scene before, here, voices speak alone, into the silence of Willy's death.

In requiem, a contrast is also drawn between the reality of Willy's funeral, and his perceptions of it. Only Charley, Biff, Happy and Linda are present, as opposed to the 'thousands' Willy thought would come. This, for the audience, further highlights the pathos in Willy's tragedy his illusions and loneliness. 'He's only a little boat, looking for a harbour' Linda said at one stage, and here the audience realises that Willy never found his harbour, but died looking and trying.

Some dramatic impact is also given by Biff and Happy. In requiem, Biff is seen to have progressed. In the previous scene, he said 'All I want is waiting for me if I just say I know who I am'. In the requiem he says 'I know who I am,' Biff has come to realise that Willy 'had the wrong dreams. All, all wrong.' Happy has not, and the audience can feel a sense of apprehension and sympathy for Happy's blindness when he says that Willy 'didn't die in vain. His dream was a good dream.'

The final dramatic impact from the requiem comes from Linda. Her silence and inability to cry makes the scene even more sad, as it is the realisation that no one will be home when she gets there that causes her to cry. Linda's devotion to Willy has been seen throughout the play, and her silence is as if she is waiting, waiting for Willy.

Linda's cries of 'we're free, we're free' contains the final dramatic irony, as Willy has been finally released from his torments, and as they are free — free from the obligation of a mortgage. Biff too, is free from Willy's dream, but the audience can see that the characters are in fact caught in the sadness of Willy's death, and how unnecessary it might have been.

Examiners' Comments

The candidate displays an above average understanding of the texts and knowledge of two scenes. There is a pleasing sense of theatre and comprehension of dramatic impact. The candidate makes extensive use of appropriate quotations.

Candidate's Response — Average Range

In both, 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' and, 'Death of a Salesman', the playwrights of each play have incorporated many techniques including dialogue, stage directions, authorial intrusions, etc. to achieve the intended dramatic impact of important scenes or exchanges.

One scene from, 'The Doll' which is an important scene in the outcome of the play is act three scene one, a scene of conflict in which reality is finally sought and found, resulting in a change in pattern that will never be the same again. Act three scene one begins initially with the dispute between Olive and Pearl. Pearl stating that Olive's preferred style of living involving the layoff period is 'not decent' and nothing that she had expected it to be as Olive had 'talked it up' too much. Olive is deeply hurt, with the conflict ending in Pearl's leaving. Ray Lawler, the play's creator, has included the new arrival Pearl, into this romantic quartet to give the reader some insight into an outsider's view of the entire situation, with that outsider expressing the views and beliefs common to that era, as living in modern society we do not see the 'layoff-set up as anything too unusual, but in these times marriage was seen as the only 'proper' relationship with Olive's layoff set up not being, 'a decent way of living.

Most important in this scene is the process of self-realisation on the behalf of Roo. It is in this scene, that for the first time he realises he is getting old. In this scene, Lawler has incorporated Emma as the messenger of reality, in her telling Roo, 'You're too old for it any more' to which he replies, 'I'm as good as man now as I ever was'. Before this scene Lawler has Roo stating that a fellow worker, Tony Moreno, was too old to continue working in his cane cutting team in Northern Queensland. In this scene Roo looks into the mirror and says, 'Old is what Tony Moreno is', realising as he gazes at his ageing features that he is in the same predicament as Moreno. Upon self realisation Roo proposes to Olive, with her refusing him, refusing to let go of the past. Roo's reaction is 'You're nothin' but a silly kid 'bout twelve years old' which

reinforces Lawler's descriptions in his earlier stage directions, 'an eagerness that probably belongs to extreme youth'.

The restaurant scene in, 'Death of a Salesman' is an important scene in the play's outcome in that it is the scene in which Arthur Miller allows the reader to see what the three major characters, Biff, Happy and Willy have developed into and their relationship with each other.

It is this scene that Miller allows to understand who these characters have become. We enter the scene with Happy telling a woman that he is a rich champagne salesman and that his brother Biff is a 'real football hero'. Through this opening we see that Happy is a compulsive liar; just like his father who upon losing his job tells his sons about his worry for his mother, 'the gist of it is that I don't have any stories left to tell her'. We can see that their father's influence has rubbed off on both his sons with Biff adopting his father's sense of false realisation and, 'living in a dream'. Biff says upon being totally refused and more to the point ignored 'He took one look at me and I realised what a terrible lie my whole life had been'.

More important to this scene is Miller's technical use of mixing subjective time past with objective time present to both portray the reasons why Willy believes Biff is spiting him, 'he thinks I've been spiting him and it's tearing him apart', and why Biff lost faith in his father and failed to succeed in life as a result of that loss of faith. The mixture of time-present and time-past also allows the viewer to understand Willy's poor mental state. We learn that Willy had been unfaithful to Linda while on business, with Biff catching him with another woman. The woman's laughter can be heard through this scene to illustrate Willy's self failure and pathos. 'Young Biff' says to Willy 'You're a lousy little phony', a man he once respected and admired. Those techniques allow the reader to understand the reason for such ill feeling and conflict between the characters.

Examiners' Comments

The candidate displays sound knowledge of both texts, and relates the selected scenes to the broad themes and issues of the plays, especially with regard to character development. The candidate displays no particular insight and no strong sense of 'dramatic impact', thus keeping the script out of the B range.

Section II

Part A — Poetry (Unique)

Question 4. Slessor

‘What we find in Slessor’s poems are vivid word pictures rather than feelings.’
Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This was an effective question because candidates were required to discuss the dynamics of each poem in relation to images and feelings. They also needed to sustain a line of argument. However, ‘Do you agree?’ seemed to have been ignored by many candidates. Many candidates felt compelled to agree with the quotation in its entirety. Their answers either disclosed a different response or they led themselves into arguments which ignored or denied feelings. Candidates who failed to recognise Slessor’s work had ‘vivid pictures’ and ‘feelings’ disadvantaged themselves. Less confident candidates found it difficult to argue against a quotation in a question. Better candidates stood out by dealing with both aspects of the question successfully and showed more understanding of the effects of the language.

Question 5. Wright

‘While her poems are about personal experience, they have wider significance.’
What do you see as the significance of her poetry? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This question was generally handled well by the candidates yet allowed for discrimination. The nature of the task lent itself to showing universality more than some of the other questions. Many answers dealt with themes, issues and Wright’s ‘personal experience’ rather than focusing on the language, as the Slessor answers did. Weaker answers were more generalised and relied on storytelling. Stronger candidates exhibited sophisticated textual knowledge.

Question 6. Dawe

How successful do you think Bruce Dawe is in expressing a point of view about Australian experience?
In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

More than 70 per cent of the candidates answered this question and even the below average candidates indicated both engagement with the literature and personal response to it. This question discriminated well as candidates had to apply their knowledge and understanding rather than regurgitate learned material. The best answers argued a case, showing sound knowledge and understanding of the poems chosen. They convincingly showed Dawe’s point of view about the Australian experience, particularly through discussion of his irony, satire, tone and idiom. Weaker answers often used retelling, lacked depth and understanding and did

not show Dawe's point of view. These responses failed to articulate Dawe's point of view or wrote at length on the Australian experience with little reference to the poems. Choosing 'Weapons Training' or 'And a Good Friday Was Had by All' seemed to limit many candidates. Overall, perhaps more students needed to realise that Dawe is commenting on our society rather than just providing entertainment for the reader.

Question 7. Gray

Discuss the ways in which Robert Gray captures, and makes vivid, moments of everyday life.

In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Although a small candidature, the full range of responses was encountered, therefore the question discriminated well. Candidates seemed to enjoy the poetry and answers showed enthusiasm for the literature as it seemed relevant to their experience. This was a clear question which allowed candidates to show what they knew. Better candidates dealt with 'the ways' while poorer candidates focused on 'moments of everyday life'. Popular poems with which the candidates empathised with were 'A Labourer', 'North Coast Town' and 'Late Ferry'. Less confidently handled were 'Old House' and 'Diptych'.

Question 8. O'Connor

How does Mark O'Connor make use of time and place to express a point of view in his poetry?

In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This question proved an effective discriminator across the full range of marks. The focus on 'time and place' was usually taken very literally by candidates in the C range or below. The better responses wrote on the wider concepts of time and place, relating these to universal constraints and to time as a vast past/present/future concept. The accessible nature of the poetry required a question such as this, and at the same time, avoided focusing on obvious areas the poetry lends itself to.

Question 9. Burns

What qualities do you see in Joanne Burns's poetry that make it special?

In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This was a fairly open question encouraging a range of approaches. The question discriminated well and there was a full range of grades within the relatively small number of answers submitted. Strong answers went beyond recognising the graphic innovation and were able to show also that universal perspectives, subjects and approaches made Burns' poetry special. They argued a case based soundly on two poems. They were able to illustrate her techniques, especially how the various ways she was 'playing with language' provoked thought. Weaker

answers, although usually able to present some sort of list of special features, were unable to relate them to specific poems. Neither could they say much about the poetry, perhaps indicating limited understanding or that they had not come to grips with the two poems as entities.

Marking Guidelines

The different ranges may be characterised by the following:

A Range (15, 14, 13) Well Above Average

- insightful understanding of the question
- sustained discussion of the poems
- may be succinct
- generally sophisticated style and structure
- often displays flair and originality
- fluent expression
- effective use of quotations
- deals effectively with two poems — one may be stronger than the other
- not necessarily perfect
- superior analysis of language.

B Range (12, 11, 10) Above Average

- a sustained response
- detailed understanding of the ideas in the poem
- good expression
- logical structure
- deals with more than simply content
- appropriate quotation
- related material to argument
- more sophisticated style than the average range
- makes points clearly
- relevant discussion of aspects of the two poems — language, style, content, themes, purpose.

C Range (9, 8, 7) Average

- reasonable understanding of the poems and a reasonable attempt to answer the question
- generally sound expression
- may refer to poetic devices but with little understanding of their effect

- demonstrates an understanding of the thought line of the poem but may be superficial
- weaker C may tend to storytell but shows a knowledge of the poems
- may be stronger on one poem than the other
- accurate interpretation but pedestrian approach
- may deal with only one major aspect, eg imagery
- expression may be laboured; may have some language problems
- a candidate who deals with only one poem can receive no higher than a C range.

D Range (6, 5, 4) Below Average

- limited understanding of both question and poems
- simplistic ideas with little substantiation
- over reliance on recounting content, storytelling, paraphrasing
- misinterpretation
- unsupported generalisations
- often short, but not always
- may be articulate but not enough content
- problems with expression
- ideas but poor expression
- discernible padding.

E Range (3, 2, 1) Well Below Average

- serious misreading of the poems
- failure to address the question
- problems with expression
- may be brief
- lack of specific knowledge of the poems.

0 – N/A

- 0 says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the poems or the question
- N/A — not attempted/blank/or words ‘Not attempted’.

General Comments

- The most popular poets answered on, in order of popularity, were Bruce Dawe, Kenneth Slessor and then Judith Wright. Gray and Burns were attempted by a small candidature, while O’Connor was answered on by very few centres.
- Very few candidates confused the instructions — the vast majority wrote on two poems to varying degrees. Some seemed only vaguely familiar with the chosen poems.

- Candidates need to understand that biographical information and ‘General Studies dissertations’ do not answer questions such as these. They need to address the question specifically by discussing directly relevant points.
- There were no problems with candidates answering on incorrect poems.

Above Average Responses — A and B Range

Better answers were perceptive in their analysis of two poems with superior essay technique and often, sophisticated vocabulary. Quoting was brief, pertinent, accurate and integrated, for example:

... the water imagery suggests the womb as a river from where the child receives this nourishment, and a place of purification — the child is washed in a rhythmical flow. The significant vowel sound is the long ‘u’ as in ‘estuary’, ‘bear you’, ‘ferry you’, which induces in the reader pleasurable sensations of being lulled into a narcotic state by the repetition ... more than vivid pictures but also feelings.

These A and B scripts paid close attention to the literature’s literary devices, tone, themes and effectively responded to the quotation in the question. These candidates showed a detailed and thorough knowledge of how the poetry worked, for example:

... the fruitless imagery of the green tomatoes symbolises the family’s inability to settle and epitomises Dawe’s sympathetic view of the Australian experience ... The direct contrast of the girl’s reactions recognises their relative social adjustment.

These above average responses were fluent and articulate with a high standard of literacy. They argued a case, consistently maintaining this throughout the essay and engaged with the question. Markers gained the overall impression that the poetry was not only understood but also enjoyed. Some answers were succinct but still displayed flair and originality. A further distinguishing feature of an above average script was their superior analysis of language in relation to the poems as whole entities and in response to the question.

Average Responses — C Range

In the average range candidates had an adequate knowledge of the two poems and made a reasonable attempt to answer the question. They demonstrated an understanding of the thought line of the poem but it tended to be a superficial response, for example:

... normal suburban man needs time away from his family but not too far. He can still hear ‘the clatter of a dish in the sink ... a far whisper of traffic’. He is experiencing these things everyday and lives close to his neighbours. Dawe conveys this point of view about suburban man well ...

Some scripts in this average range showed flair but were unable to sustain or support a detailed argument. Pedestrian responses that showed little engagement with the literature were common. Often these were lengthy but they were usually superficial and/or repetitive. In this exam, candidates in this range had generally balanced responses. They had a knowledge and understanding of the poems even allowing for an element of storytelling.

Candidates in the C range usually dealt with at least one aspect of language used by the poet, as shown, in this O'Connor discussion:

... through his imagery the poet portrays a picture of place ie the cemetery at Pozieres 'green is greedy' to allow the reader to imagine the scene.

Often candidates would cite examples of poetic techniques such as similes, metaphors or personification but would give little explanation of their effect.

Overall, these average responses tended to lack originality and individuality compared to the above average scripts. This was a result of excessive retelling of the poem's storyline or obvious use of learnt material not assimilated into the candidate's understanding. Such answers tended to make only token acknowledgement of the question.

Below Average Responses — D Range

In the below average range both the question and the poems were only understood in a limited way by candidates. Responses lacked detailed knowledge. Candidates with only a general knowledge of the literature did not fare well, for example:

... everyday life is something many people take for granted, but Gray is someone who takes the time to look, listen and learn and take in moments of life to bring them to life in his poetry.

The scripts in this range often included irrelevant and extraneous material that did not address either the thrust of the question or the sense of the poetry, for example:

Slessor was born in Orange in 1901 ... began writing poetry in 1919 and finished around 1940. He's one of Australia's most famous poets as he uses a lot of description.

Some of the responses in this range were articulate and fluent but simply lacked enough content to do any better. Others had good ideas and some understanding but were expressed so poorly that they did not communicate these points clearly.

Well Below Average Responses — E Range

The candidates in this range displayed either a serious misunderstanding of the poetry and/or a failure to respond to the question. Problems of expression were amplified and the scripts were generally brief. A small number of candidates seemed totally unfamiliar with the poems and wrote longish answers extemporising on the title, or generalised pieces about an issue without really referring to the literature.

Part B — Fiction (Unique)

Question 10. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

‘... a warning of the frightening potential of human ambition.’

Is it? What is your view of Frankenstein?

Many of the candidates had difficulty with this text. Many typical responses were literate discussions of the concept of human ambition with little reference to the text. Poorer responses launched into a ‘General Studies’ type response on the evils of science. Better candidates focused on the nature of human ambition and explored this in relation to the central characters, Frankenstein and Walton.

Question 11. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

‘The Great Gatsby both celebrates and criticises the American dream.’

What do you think?

Some candidates had difficulty in defining the American dream, but average candidates were able to develop a simple thesis and, while focusing on the more dramatic elements of the text, show how the novel criticises the dream. Some had difficulty discussing the concept of celebration and tended to simplify it by saying that money is good. Better candidates were able to pull back from Gatsby’s view of the American dream to comment on Fitzgerald’s view of the dream. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the text and linked text to their premise. They sometimes recognised the irony of the dream as it was explored through the characters. They sometimes dismissed the concept of celebration.

Question 12. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

‘Okonkwo’s individual tragedy is also that of his village.’

How does Achebe link Okonkwo’s story with the wider concerns of *Things Fall Apart*?

Better responses saw the way in which Okonkwo symbolised the great warrior class of Umuofia and how his downfall became representative of the change in Ibo tribal culture. Better responses were highly analytical. Average responses were limited in showing the link between Okonkwo’s fortunes and that of the village. Nevertheless there was a simple premise argued ably which tried to show some link between the two. Poorer responses retold the story and could not come to terms with this question. Typical responses demonstrated that the average candidate had a great deal of difficulty in coming to terms with the question.

Question 13. Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*

‘Alice Munro’s girls and women discover that love is not honest, kind or reliable — yet love is what they yearn for.’

What do you think they discover? In your answer refer to Del and ONE other character.

Better candidates were able to discuss the process of discovery and what Del discovered. This was integrated with Del’s relationship with one other character as the question required. They were able to focus on the concept of love and how it was often dishonest, unkind and unreliable. The average candidate gave a superficial treatment of the question, focusing simply on Del’s experience of love without developing the idea of Del’s rejection of love at the end of the novel. Nevertheless, these responses developed an argument in response to the question. Treatment of the other characters was often simple. Poorer candidates did not use text to support assertions and had little understanding of what the characters discover.

Question 14. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

‘And us so happy.’

How is it that so much suffering can result in happiness for Celie?

Better candidates recognised that there was development and personal growth in Celie’s character, ie that it was a journey and a growth in her own spirituality which led to her eventual happiness. They understood the perception of how her world changed, both spiritually, physically and emotionally. Average candidates tended to list the sufferings and then described the absence of suffering to indicate happiness. For example: Nettie comes back, she gets her kids back, she gets the house, the person who raped her wasn’t her father, Mister is somewhat nicer, no suffering and she is happy. Poorer candidates said she suffered, then things got better, but didn’t say how, or didn’t elaborate on how things got better.

Question 15. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

‘Maestro is a novel about understanding love.’

How does the novel explore this?

Better candidates focused on the development of Paul as he came to understand his love in retrospect because he had matured. Better candidates focused on the spiritual side of love in some depth. Some candidates noted the growth and development of Keller’s capacity to love again. Some looked at the narrative point of view and the stylistic devices used to show ‘how’ the novel explored love. Average candidates tended to focus on the physical love of Paul and Rosie and say how Paul came to a better understanding of physical love. They touched on the nature of love as it is explored through the relationship of Paul and Herr Keller. Still, a strong sense of argument was apparent. Less able candidates had trouble with the phrase ‘understanding love’. They tended to describe different kinds of love.

Question 16. Marele Day, *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*

‘In the Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender, corruption touches everyone and everything.’
How does Marele Day show this?

This question proved to be accessible for candidates, providing an opportunity for them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the text. Better responses focused on the ‘everyone and everything’ in the question. Some dealt with the word ‘touch’ in that corruption may touch and affect you but not necessarily make you corrupt. Average responses tended to look simply at the corruption in the novel and show how corruption is portrayed. Some briefly talked about setting too, or said that everyone was corrupt. Poorer responses tended to list. ‘This is corrupt because ...’ and were unable to specify themes or features of this genre clearly linked to the question.

Marking Guidelines

Guidelines are not used as a checklist. They are used only as a guide for choosing the appropriate category.

A Range (15, 14, 13) Well Above Average

- question answered clearly
- well developed essay structure. Sustains argument throughout essay with clear development of points. Discussion reflects insight
- accurate knowledge of text. Able to select appropriate supporting evidence often including well integrated quotes, perceptive
- very literate, fluent, sophisticated use of language.

B Range (12, 11, 10) Above Average

- may be as knowledgeable as an A range but not as refined
- developed essay structure maintaining the line of argument, although it may not be as controlled, or as strongly argued as an A range response
- as accurate as an A, but not as perceptive; alternatively, as perceptive but not as accurate; sometimes with flashes of insight
- able to select appropriate supporting evidence, often uses quotes
- literate, but not as sophisticated as the A range responses.

C Range (9, 8, 7) Average

- must establish link to the question
- makes good points, even if not always fully developed
- sometimes simplistic response to the question, sometimes limited discussion and limited supporting evidence
- knows text well but there may be some inaccuracies

- may be fluent, but more often adequate
- average control of mechanics. Often unrefined, or pedestrian in expression.

D Range (6, 5, 4) Below Average

- fails to answer the question clearly. Linking to the question may be haphazard
- poor selection of supporting evidence, eg often fragments or inappropriate
- little interpretation or real understanding of the issues as they relate to the question
- may have a good general and sometimes accurate understanding of the text but has difficulty in applying it to the question
- may be literate/fluent answers or have errors in expression and poor vocabulary.

E Range (3, 2, 1, 0) Well Below Average

- little or no attempt to answer the question
- little real discussion and this discussion is not linked to the question
- sometimes good knowledge of the text but not linked to the question
- may range from brief to quite lengthy answers
- may be fluent but more often below average expression
- errors of expression and limitations of vocabulary may be more noticeable.

Candidates' Responses

Well Above Average Responses

Example 1

Gatsby never lost the faith and ideals he had had since he was a young man in the Mid-West. Nick and the reader realises this and is uplifted by Gatsby's belief in the 'orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us.' Gatsby had a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life ... an extraordinary gift for hope ... a romantic readiness.' This is Fitzgerald's celebration of the American dream. On the other hand Fitzgerald's criticism can be seen in the shallow dreams of wealth and security and supposed superiority reflected in the characters of Tom and Jordan and Daisy.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate went on to explore how the novel both celebrates and criticises the American dream supporting assertions with clear reference to the text. Quotes were relevant and sometimes more unusual examples were used to propel the argument and analyse the text. The candidate used a sophisticated vocabulary and maintained the argument throughout. The sophisticated nature of this response clearly placed it in the A range.

Example 2

Marele Day uses several methods to develop the theme of corruption. Firstly we notice that the city itself, which is personified, has many faces and its beauty hides an inner core of corruption. Moreover, through characters and their differences we see the idea of greed and

corruption develop. To further her ideas on corruption, Day uses symbols to show the extent to which corruption has spread throughout Sydney.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate went on to write a thorough and detailed response to the question, establishing a strong argument which was supported with close textual references. A strong premise was asserted at the beginning of the essay and this line of argument was pursued relentlessly in making a case for the question. Some inconsistencies in expression placed it in the lower A range.

An Above Average Response

Peter Goldsworthy's novel, Maestro explores many issues, including maturity, music and personal development. The main emphasis of the novel though is placed on the discovery of love. Love to be understood must be experienced and Paul Crabbe experiences many different types of love throughout the novel.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate went on to write a response which maintained the premise. Supporting evidence showed some insight into the difficulties of Paul and Keller's relationship. This lifted it out of the C range and just into the above average range to score 10/15. One weakness was the simplistic view that the novel was about Paul understanding his love for music. Nevertheless other insights and the strong premise were rewarded.

An Average Response

Achebe juxtaposes Okonkwo's personal tragedy with the downfall of the Ibo society so that we can see that it is more than a story about the downfall of one man.

Okonkwos tragedy is the fall of the Ibo society and his disappointment in the tribes reluctance to act, they had left it too late.

Due to circumstances that were out of his control such as the explosion of his gun and his subsequent exile Okonkwo was not in any sort of place to act. Perhaps if he'd remained in Umuofia he could have rallied his tribe into action. It was not to be.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate had a clear understanding of the requirements of the question, however, the candidate failed to develop the premise with solid reference to the text. Examples drawn from the text were linked simplistically to the question.

Part C — Drama (Unique)

Question 17. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

‘Macbeth is responsible for his own downfall.’

Do you agree? Give your reasons.

Generally candidates showed a thorough knowledge of the play and provided excellent support through quotation.

Markers felt that while this question enabled better candidates to explore in depth a number of contributing aspects of Macbeth’s downfall, less able candidates tended to trace his downfall through storytelling which displayed a superficial understanding of the consequences of his actions.

More able candidates focused on the internal rather than the external influences. Average responses addressed the more predictable external influences of the witches and Lady Macbeth. Some poorer responses did not demonstrate knowledge of the play beyond Duncan’s murder.

Question 18. George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*

Higgins: ‘By George, Eliza, I said I’d make a woman of you; and I have.’

Does he? What effect do you think Higgins has on Eliza’s life?

Markers found some candidates had difficulty addressing both parts of this question. While better candidates addressed both parts, even they sometimes focused more on one part than the other. Average responses dealt mainly with one part only.

The definition of ‘woman’ proved to be discriminating. Better candidates commented on independence, strength of will, self respect and worth; less able candidates equated woman with ‘lady’.

Question 19. Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

‘Death of a Salesman is not just about the death of Willy Loman; it’s about the end of a way of life.’

What do you think? Give your reasons.

Many responses discussed elements of stagecraft such as lighting and music. While this is to be encouraged, often it was at the expense of answering the question.

This question proved to be discriminating, particularly with regard to the concept of ‘a way of life’. Better candidates understood the symbolic and tragic significance of Willy’s character as

representative of modern man, using excellent textual support/quotations to establish their argument. Average responses tended to confine discussion to Willy and his family and to be theme or character based, rather than selectively answering the question. Poorer responses showed some knowledge of the play but with a superficial understanding of key issues and with storytelling tending to focus on Willy's failures.

Question 20. Ray Lawler, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*

'It is lack of communication which brings about the last summer.'

What do you think? Give your reasons.

Many candidates used the 'what do you think' to avoid the issue of communication and presented a seemingly prepared answer on lack of change/growing old and its consequences.

Better candidates linked communication with change and/or relationships and supported it with detailed knowledge of the text. Average candidates tended to present a thematic argument which they were able to relate in a more limited way to communication. Less able candidates were unable to engage with the question and tended to sermonise about the importance of communication.

Question 21. Hyllus Maris and Sonia Borg, *Women of the Sun (Maydina)*

Discuss the importance of family relationships in *Women of the Sun (Maydina)*.

Markers commented that on the whole candidates attempted to answer the question using the script rather than present generalised commentary on Aboriginal history.

Better candidates demonstrated a sophisticated concept of family, beyond the literal interpretation and an understanding of the Aboriginal connection with the land. Average candidates tended to confine discussion to a more limited concept of immediate family. Less able candidates did not consider the script as a whole; they limited their discussion to one or two incidents.

Question 22. Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce, *Strictly Ballroom*

In *Strictly Ballroom*, in what ways do characters from different backgrounds come to a better understanding of one another?

This question proved to be discriminating due to the differing interpretations of 'background'.

Better answers tended to have a sense of the script's theatricality and considered backgrounds beyond the multicultural. They also dealt with characters other than just Fran and Scott. Average candidates tended to be predictable in choice of character and backgrounds discussed; though they were able to provide reasonable textual support, often showing a sense of drama. Poor responses often relied on storytelling, particularly the love story between Scott and Fran; with surface treatment of cultural background.

Question 23. Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*

Ron: Remember what your old man used to say about mining — it's dark, and you look after your own light.

[Pause]

No one else is going to do it for you.

How true do you think this opinion is for TWO of the characters in *Diving for Pearls*?

Markers thought candidates found this to be a difficult question, particularly regarding the concept of 'your own light'.

Better candidates were able to see the metaphorical use of light and darkness, with some discussion of Ron's role in the play and reasons for making the statement. Average candidates were able to relate the stories of Den and Barbara seeing 'light' as either selfish or unselfish. Less able candidates showed a simplistic understanding of characters' stories without engaging with the question.

Marking Guidelines

These guidelines are not intended to be used as a checklist. Their purpose is to guide markers in the selection of appropriate categories in which to place candidates' responses.

A Range (13, 14, 15) Well Above Average

- demonstrates a clear insight into the play
- well structured and sustained argument which thoroughly addresses the question
- demonstrates effective control of language
- argument well supported with examples from the text.

Note: A range is a wide range of scripts. There will be some that could be classified as 'super scripts' and some less so.

B Range (10, 11, 12) Above Average

- demonstrates a clear understanding of the play
- presents a clear line of argument that addresses the question fully
- supports answer with well chosen examples from the play
- need not be a sophisticated response, may be more mechanical than A scripts.

C Range (7, 8, 9) Average

- demonstrates a reasonable knowledge of the play
- identifies issues in the play with some elaboration linked to the question
- basically may list issues/themes without presenting an overall view of the play and/or the question
- answers question but may be simplistic and/or pedestrian
- uses quotes or appropriate incidents, as opposed to irrelevant storytelling.

D Range (4, 5, 6) Below Average

- demonstrates some limited knowledge of the play
- may simply be random lists of aspects of the play without clearly focusing on the question
- could contain storytelling but hits on one or two aspects relevant to the question
- literate.

E Range (0, 1, 2, 3) Well Below Average

- demonstrates little knowledge of the play or understanding of the issues but may show some background knowledge
- irrelevant/inaccurate material to the play/question
- may be quite literate
- may make only brief contact with the question.

General Comments

Overall candidates knew the texts quite well and were able to write at length. Shorter responses were often a result of running out of time rather than a lack of understanding of text or question.

In all questions most candidates displayed a good understanding of characters and themes and attempted to answer the question rather than retell the story. However, the thematic nature of the questions encouraged many predictable responses. Candidates must be advised not to rely on prepared answers or cribs, but to adapt their knowledge to focus on the question.

Better candidates who have an obvious understanding of drama as theatre were able to use this to address the question in depth. However, less able candidates often listed examples of theatrical techniques without relevance.

Some candidates appeared unable to respond to the question because they found the text studied too difficult.

Macbeth and *Death of a Salesman* were the most popular texts; over half the responses were on one of these two plays.

Candidate' Responses — Above Average Range

Macbeth

'Macbeth', explores man's potential for greatness in a society filled with chaos and evil. Macbeth is a tragic hero who takes advantage of his power, indulges in evil actions and is destroyed as a result. Although Macbeth is ultimately responsible for his downfall, he is encouraged, persuaded and in the end, driven to his demise.

Examiners' Comments

This introduction clearly acknowledges that Macbeth was responsible for his own downfall. The candidate goes on to establish his awareness of this through a sophisticated argument

which establishes that Macbeth, while influenced greatly by Lady Macbeth and driven originally by ambition alone, made the decisions himself and was fully aware of the consequences of his actions.

The candidate demonstrates an awareness of audience response to Macbeth's and his increasing decline. The roles of Banquo and the witches are discussed fully, being used to substantiate the line of argument.

Typical of an Above Average Response, it was thorough, confident and fluent.

Many candidates took a thematic approach, but the above average responses were able to go beyond the predictable and discuss a range of aspects.

Strictly Ballroom

As a result of Fran and Scott's dancing and personal relationship, the theme of independence and conformity is seen to influence other characters such as Liz Holt. Despite her different views to Scott in the past and her embarrassment at the South Pacific Grand Prix, she still re-connects the music after a struggle with Charm Leachman. Liz could see the importance of what she had done, she came to an understanding that winning wasn't the important thing.

Examiners' Comments

Through concentrating on more characters than Scott and Fran, this candidate went beyond the love story and multicultural interpretations of 'background'. Having addressed Scott and Fran's shared understandings about dance, the response discusses the contributions of other characters, demonstrating an understanding of their symbolic nature as well as a sense of performance that underlies the script.

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll

The fantasy world of the lay off seasons created by the play's protagonists, fails due to a lack of communication between characters, resulting in a breakdown of relationships. However, other factors such as the inevitability of change and the inability of characters to recognise the passage of time is responsible for the failure of the seventeenth summer ... Roo has a deep affection for Olive but is unable to reveal this outwardly. His inarticulateness is shown in the play's final moments where he is speechless and smashes the doll until 'there is nothing left ... open acknowledgment of what they have lost'.

Examiners' Comments

This response was placed in the B range as it attempts to discuss lack of communication by linking it with change. It provides some insights in its treatment of selected characters and demonstrates substantial knowledge of the text.

Candidates' Responses — Average Range

Death of a Salesman

With Willy's death we could see that not everybody can live the American Dream and fulfill their wishes. When Willy discovers that Biff really loved him, he is overcome with happiness, but it's not enough to stop him from killing himself. He figures he is worth more dead than

alive, and perhaps he feels that his family would be able to live the great American Dream once he is dead ... Willy was a man who showed us that not everyone 'makes it big'.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate attempted to discuss the American dream though in a superficial way, and while there was a discussion of the end of Willy's 'way of life', the response displayed limited perceptions and there was little depth in the supporting quotations.

Macbeth

It was the witches who strived Macbeth's ambition which eventually lead to his downfall. Upon meeting Macbeth the witches greet him with three prophecies which are ... When one of these comes true, Macbeth is exposed to his own ambition and it scares him ... So it is not only Macbeth who is responsible for his downfall but the witches also contributed.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate went on to discuss Lady Macbeth's contribution in a similar simplified manner. While there was supporting textual reference and the response focused on the question, the discussion was a superficial one.

Candidates' Responses — Below Average Range

Death of a Salesman

This is a true statement because Willy represents modern man. He wanted everything everyone wanted — the American Dream. He wanted a happy and successful life which wasn't achieved ... He was not seen as anything more than a salesman ... Willy felt he was a failure to his family as portrayed in the panty hose.

Examiners' Comments

This candidate's response displays superficial knowledge of the play and understanding of the end of Willy's 'way of life'. It makes some pertinent comments but stops short of developing an argument. Placed in the D range, this response was comparatively brief.

Macbeth

After the meeting of the witches by Macbeth and Banquo, Banquo warns that they may tell 'half-truths' so they can gain what they wish, but Macbeth still continues to think of killing the king ... At the end, Macbeth remains at the castle as a result of the prophecy 'no man of woman born shall harm Macbeth'. Even when confronted by Macduff 'untimely ripped' from his mother's womb, Macbeth continues despite this knowledge ... In conclusion, Macbeth's poor qualities and actions place the responsibility on Macbeth.

Examiners' Comments

This D range response opened in a succinct manner and, using quotes, displayed some knowledge of the play. However, the candidate only referred to the beginning and end of the play — a brief unsophisticated answer.