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EXAMINATION REPORT

English
2 Unit General

Including:

- Marking criteria
- Sample responses
- Examiners' comments

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ENGLISH 2/3 UNIT GENERAL

Introduction

Candidature

The 2 Unit General candidature was approximately 30,530, the largest number of candidates of the 2 Unit English courses and as such encompasses a diverse range of abilities.

The Common Questions

In 1998 the Board of Studies required the English 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 in the Higher School Certificate.

HSC Marking Procedures

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

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 underway, a sample script considered typical of a particular range is sent around at regular intervals to check that all markers are adhering to the marking centre standards.

Markers are given the following advice 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 marking 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 exam 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, Drama in the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) course was exactly the same. However, the texts in most cases were different for each course.

Examiners marked either 2 Unit (General) scripts or 2/3 Unit (Common) scripts but not both. Marker reliability was ensured through the use of an Audit Team. The Audit Team selected the pilot scripts from both sets of candidatures and also selected both 'sample' and 'example' scripts, which were distributed to markers at regular intervals.

The Audit Team also 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 Procedures for the Common Question in 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) Writing

This question was marked using the same procedures as for all other sections of the 2 Unit (General) and 2/3 Unit (Common) course. Senior Markers selected pilot samples from both sets of candidatures and the common scale was applied in relation to the marking guidelines.

An Audit Team was not necessary as there were no texts to identify candidates in a particular course.

Clerical Procedures in the Marking Operations

1. All scripts from an examination centre are divided into bundles of approximately 20. 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 their 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 Supervisor of Marking 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 10, 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.

Marking Guidelines

Marking guidelines for each section of an examination paper are arrived at after reading a wide range of student responses to the various questions. Guidelines assist examiners in placing scripts in a particular range. They provide broad indicators of the standards set by the candidature and should not be used as a checklist of requirements. There are many valid and acceptable ways of answering a question and the examples of student responses contained in the following pages reflect the range of responses that could occur within the categories of Above Average, Average and Below Average. They do not necessarily represent the very best responses the examiners found.

PAPER 1: USES AND RESOURCES OF ENGLISH AND TOPIC AREAS

SECTION I — READING TASK

Overview

The Reading Task tests the candidate's ability to communicate effectively about the way language is used. Candidates need to recognise 'key words' within the questions which will provide them with direction for their answers. The number of marks allocated for each question must be considered by the candidate as a guide to the amount of detail required in the answer.

DEATH BY CHOKO

Under the alias of some rather exotic names, the common choko is rising to culinary heights.

I've taken a long, hard look at the counselling scene. There's help available for alcohol and drug abuse, assertiveness and self-esteem, marriage and personal relationships, trauma and stress, phobia and panic. I called the conflict resolution and eating disorder clinics, but neither offered anything specific about chokoes.

The choko has to be the most divisive element in modern Australian society. Relationships can be saved from the brink of most pressures and conflicts, but the relationship that comprises a choko fancier and a choko aversionist is going to know bleak times.

I spotted a couple of the bog-boring things in the kitchen the other day.

'These ready for the chooks?' I inquired of The Chosen One.

'They're for dinner,' she hissed, driving me off with an upraised ladle. 'I'm doing them with a béchamel sauce.'

Nature intended the choko for chooks or it wouldn't invariably grow in chook yards and be spelled as a naïve rearrangement of the chook. As a depression food it is almost solely the reason why we haven't had a second global depression. People don't quickly forget things like eating such mush. In fact, the choko is so universally reviled it is reserved for the lowest links in the food chain – the camp, the boarding school and the chook yard.

It fails to qualify as food on several levels. The first is appearance. Anything that resembles the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant is not meant for the dinner table. Lack of flavour, texture and its inability to make any impression on any of the senses disqualifies it as a contender for human consumption.

This is the dullard and the wimp of the vegetable world. Fruit and veg have personalities, too, you know. I feel about as affectionate towards rhubarb as I do towards chokoes. But at least rhubarb has attitude. It is the Patrick White of the pantry. The choko is more like the Dannii Minogue of culinary karaoke.

As a consequence, Nature with infinite irony has decreed that the choko shall grow everywhere, even in places where you can't get a decent crop of weeds. It's impossible to leave a social gathering in the country without the host giving everyone a bag of chokoes as a little goodwill gesture.

The other night, I settled back with a gastronomic bible to catch up on real food – the sophisticated stuff at the cutting edge of culinary fashion overseas. New York, it seems has gone mad for something called the chayote, so I made enquiries. ‘An irregularly-ridged, pear-shaped squash . . . growing on a trailing vine and the green variety is the best to eat. The chayote is also known as the mango squash and the custard marrow.’

Alarm bells started to ring, so I thumbed quickly to the Cajun cooking feature where they seemed dangerously excited about something called the mirliton. The mirliton, apparently, is the size of a large pear, with firm, creamy flesh and a delicate taste. It has a green skin often covered with prickly hairs, and is also known as the vegetable pear.

I quickly retired to the Mediterranean food feature – this having more relevance to our local climate, lifestyle and produce – where new inspiration has been found in something called the pepinello, described as a green, pear-shaped squash that grows on a trailing vine. It has firm, creamy white flesh, one big seed and a very delicate flavour.

‘Originally a squash from tropical America,’ said the reference material, ‘it was the food of the Aztecs and the Mayas. It is also known as the custard marrow, the vegetable pear, the chayote . . . and the choko.’

I maintain that Aztecs and Mayas are damned thin on the ground these days – especially out our way – but the same certainly can’t be said of the choko. We’ve moved the chook yard to give the vine a bit of protection and put in a few more vines along the back of the stables. This noble vegetable could be the very thing our rural economy has been looking for. Forget macadamias, avocados and tea tree . . . plant chokoes.

PS: There’s a piece in the paper about the latest fad item in Tokyo’s tempura bars. It’s a variety of vegetable pear with green skin and a delicate creamy flesh. And they can’t get enough of it. We’re lucky enough to be having some for dinner tonight.

Marking Criteria

Marking criteria are arrived at after reading a wide range of student responses. Criteria are developed from candidates responses and not from a pre-conceived notion of standards.

The Questions

(a) *In your own words, summarise what the writer is saying about chokoes.* 5 marks

Key elements of the question:

1. Obvious understanding of the overall passage
2. Ability to reduce the understanding to distinct / discrete points the writer makes about chokoes, not about side issues such as tone, style and purpose.
3. Needs to understand the concept of a summary and 'own words'.

5 Marks

- At least three main points about chokoes, clearly explained, with obvious understanding of the overall passage OR
- Sound explanation of the division of the argument between the choko's lack of appeal and its resurgence and one other point.

4 Marks

- At least two main points from the article, clearly explained and at least a mention of any other relevant point, with an obvious understanding of the overall passage OR
- Clear understanding of the main division of the argument between the choko's lack of appeal and its resurgence and any other relevant point.

3 Marks

- At least two main points less well explained OR
- A number of aspects of the one point well explained.
- No concept of summary and / or own words.

LITERAL INTERPRETATION CANNOT SCORE ABOVE THREE

2 Marks

- No concept of a summary – just paraphrasing OR
- A reasonable point the passage makes about ‘chokoes’ explained OR
- A number of aspects of the one point, not explained.

1 Mark

- No concept of summary but starting one correct thing from the passage about chokoes.
- Just copying or quoting about chokoes.

0 Marks

- Complete misreading of the passage / question.

Main Summary Points:

- some concept that the choko is loved / hated — idea of intensity of feeling about a vegetable — polarising effect
- for a vast number of reasons they are unappealing to humans
- indestructible / everywhere
- enjoying a resurgence in popularity, despite the fact they have been around for a long time
- choko could be the salvation of the rural economic problem (ironic).

Additional but not main points — use as a guide only:

A list of some of the possible statements that students may offer about chokoes:

- no advice or counselling for people who have a problem with chokoes
- chokoes are boring
- chokoes are the sole reason for not having a second Depression
- chokoes are at the bottom of the food chain
- chokoes are tasteless and lack texture
- chokoes have no personality as a vegetable
- chokoes are ugly
- chokoes are given as gifts in the country as people can’t get rid of them
- chokoes grew in ancient times.

Examples of Candidate Responses

5 Marks

Example 1

‘Chokoes being a rather banal and tedious subject of writing and also, culinary delicacy – the writer felt it necessary to spice up the article by exaggerating his points and using extreme sarcasm. What he says is hardly what he means. He shares with the reader amusing anecdotes involving a fierce scene in the kitchen ; a conflict with the ‘hissing’ Chosen One (most likely ‘she’ is Dear Old Mother, or the lovely Missus, cooking up a storm with the infallible choko). He recounts calling various counselling centres regarding chokoes and settling back with the ‘gastronomic bible’, obviously fabricated for the benefit of the entertainment value of this article. He reads of the latest overseas gourmet craze, all coincidentally resulting to be the choko. Implied is the distaste on his behalf at the flourishing fruit – and that he would export the entire choko population of the country if given the chance.’

Examiner’s Comments

This script has an obvious and sophisticated understanding of the overall passage and is able to summarise the passage succinctly using the candidate’s own words.

Example 2

‘The writer is ridiculing chokoes, identifying them as bland, unattractive and unappealing fruit. Yet through the identification, he is subtly satirising culinary fashions who will adopt and praise such an ordinary vegetable. In the writer’s opinion chokoes are suitable only for animals such as chickens because they grew so prolific and hence so inexpensive and tasteless. Used widely by most mass produced and uninspiring food outlets such as school camps they should not have any place amongst the menus of the worlds international gourmets.

‘The writer comments on the appearance of the choko; large, green and strangely shaped like male testes. In doing this he makes the point that for food to be appealing it must actually have the best number of features, not merely taste. He says the choko has no personality, a distasteful texture and is so undesirable, that in rural areas they are given away.

‘The subheading introduces the writer’s main theme for the second half of the article – that although chokoes are called exotic names, in other cultures they are still the ‘common’ vegetable that he dispises. Such names he cites as ‘chayote’, ‘custard marrow’, ‘vegetable pear’ and ‘pepinello’. These are all very exotic names worthy of tasty and gourmet foodstuffs. By showing that other cultures can actually classify the choko as such a food the writer indirectly comments on how different personal tastes can be.

‘In the end of the article the writer begins to stop mocking the choko and see it as something he can make money out of. He humourously states that he moved the chook shed to give the choko vine a better environment. Yet even though he could be literally interpreted to have accepted the choko, the tone of this passage is so sarcastic and the reader can conclude that even though the writer seems to be conforming to fashion dictates, he will never really accept the choko.’

Examiner’s Comments

Although a lengthy summary, this script exhibits a good understanding of the ‘tone’ of the passage and is presented in the candidate’s own words.

Example 3

‘The writer is saying the chokos, though being unpleasing to the eye and tongue, are found throughout the world and are actually considered quite a treat.

‘The writer hates chokoes as is evident by the title ‘Death By Chokoes’ and when reading the article we find out that he feels this way due to their ‘lack of flavour’, ‘texture’ and inability to satisfy human hunger. To add to this, the writer is also aware of the numbers of chokoes around and that they grow like nothing else, the ‘choko shall grow everywhere’. This is another reason as to why chokoes do not tickle the fancy of this writer.

‘The writer is also shocked as to find out that this vegetable that he loathes so much is found throughout the world and is considered a cuisine. He finds through his ‘bible’ of food that New York, the Mediterranean regions and Cajuns love the vegetable as in the book they are described as ‘creamy white fleshed’ vegetables with ‘a delicate flavour’. Finding out this knowledge shocks the writer and causes his ‘alarms bells’ to ring.

‘The choko has also been food for those in the past – Mayas and Aztecs. And in knowing that these cultures are long since gone, the writer complains that the choko should too have disappeared.

‘The writer is basically critisizing how the world can love such a vegetable when it tastes bad, looks bad and grows unstoppingly.’

Examiner’s Comments

This typical script shows that the candidate has clearly understood the whole passage. The candidate has written a lengthy response which shows clear understanding of the writer’s stance.

4 Marks

Example 1

‘The writer believes that the choko is not fit for humans as food. They are ugly, tasteless and revolting. The choko was intended for chickens and to feed children at camps and boarding schools.’

‘The mockery of every aspect of this vegetable shows that the writer does not have a very high opinion.’

‘The writer also addresses the demand for this grotesque barely edible thing in such places as New York and the Mediterranean, which name the chokoes differently. The writer has then decided that the demand is so high that it is ‘noble’ and can save our rural economic problems.’

‘The tone changes and we see that he is being sarcastic when he states that he is lucky to be eating choko for dinner.’

Examiner’s Comments

This script has a clear understanding of the overall passage, rather than the more sound or sophisticated understanding found in a 5 mark response.

Example 2

‘The writer of this passage brings to our attention that the relationship between ‘choko lover’ and a ‘choko hater’ will be rocky one. Meaning by this, that a person either loves or hates chokoes. The writer of the passage happens to be a choko hater and so develops the passage to try and convince the readers that chokoes should not be for human consumption.’

‘Criticisms take place about the choko. They are described as ‘mush’ to eat and are only eaten as a last resort, such as for camps. The appearance of chokos also leaves a lot to be desired, as does the tasteless flavour and texture. For this reason, the writer is astonished when he finds several entries about chokos in culinary books.’

‘Several descriptions of chokos are made but they all use the different names. Some examples of these names are ‘mango squash’, ‘vegetable pear’ and ‘chayote’. The writer seems to suggest that the se names are harnessed by different countrys to disguise that fact that these hairy vegetables are chokos.’

‘On the whole, the writer seeks to criticize the growing pleasure people are taking in eating chokos, and tries to convince the readers of their bad taste.’

Examiner’s Comments

This script shows a candidate with non-literal, ‘clear understanding of the main division of the argument’.

3 Marks

Example 1

'In the beginning of the passage, it is obvious the writer detests chokoes. He believes they have no flavour, they are intended to be eaten by chooks and fail to qualify as food. When he discovers, however that chokes are being sought after in other countries such America, Cajun, the Mediterranean, his views on this 'food' change drastically.

'The writer is saying that the dull, boring, tasteless choko, for some strange and unknown reason has become popular around the world. Whatever the reason he grows them at home and is happy to increase his supply.'

Examiner's Comments

This literal response comes from a candidate who shows clear understanding of the division of the argument but is less well explained.

Example 2

'The writer is presenting chokoes to the reader as a universal food. This is done using humor, suggesting this vegetable does not have all the qualities it is presented to have.

The article discusses chokoes intended for chooks and how it is so, 'universally reviled it is reserved for the lowest links in the food chain.' Again suggesting the horrible taste of this vegetable. 'It fails to qualify as food' also suggests this idea. The writer then continues to explain why, through the chokoes, 'appearance', 'lack of flavour', 'texture' and 'inability to make any impression of any of the senses'.

'Through use of the writer's sarcastic tone, the article then goes on to talk about the chokoes 'personality'.

'The writer feels chokoes are tasteless, and 'reserved for the lowest links in the food chain' suggesting the writers dislike for chokoes. The writer uses a sarcastic tone and exaggeration to portray his feelings about chokoes.'

Examiner's Comments

This script is typical of many who identified the main point of the first part of the passage and explained it well, often using many quotes rather than the candidate's own words.

2 Marks

Example 1

‘The writer is saying that chokoes are disgusting and does not qualify as part of the food chain. It is the most divisive thing in our country. Also it does not have any taste or colour or texture. It can’t affect our senses which disqualifies it from human consumption. It is a dull vegetable with no personality but will grow everywhere even where weeds can’t grow. Country people give them away as presents to guests when they leave. But other cultures see chokoes as ‘sophisticated stuff’. It’s the latest fad in New York where it is a chayote or mango squash or custard marrow. In Cajun it is the mirliton with firm creamy flesh and a delicate taste as well as green skin and prickly hairs. In the Mediterranean with a climate like ours we have a pepinello which also has creamy white flesh and a big seed.’

Examiner’s Comments

This candidate has simply paraphrased much of the passage.

Example 2

‘The writer in the article ‘Death by Choko’ is presenting an editorial-style view on a vegetable called the choko.

‘It is a light-hearted analysis of an item in the food chain that has both its positive and negative elements.

‘At first the writer critically discusses the many negative points on chokes, ‘it fails to qualify as food on several levels; despite the overall theme that these despicable items may be the answer to many of our world hunger problems.

‘Towards the conclusion of the article the writer begins to have a turnaround in attitude in favour of these vegetables. They begin to use the piece of writing as a marketing campaign for chokoes, right up until the passionately blunt conclusion, ‘forget macadameias, avocados and tea trees . . . plant chokes’.

Examiner’s Comments

This sample is typical of many who had a poor understanding of the passage but managed to give one point about chokoes, explained.

Example 3

‘The writer is saying that he/she doesn’t consider the choko to be qualified as food for humans for many reasons. According to the writer chokos resemble the ‘Jolly Green giant’s scrotum’ but also lack flavour and can not be classified as food.’

Examiner's Comments

This sample contains 'a reasonable point the passage makes about chokes, explained'.

1 Mark

Example 1

'Chokoes is a type of herb that relieves pressures and can be used as a tranquil to deter irritable habits such as alcohol and drug abuse and to make better a person who is struggling to get by in life.

'People with eating disorders can take the choko which should create a cure for their eating disorder.

'Stress related and other sorts of problems can be easily cured by this choko in a bid to prevent things such as divorce, or heart attacks if at an old age.

'The choko is also a rapidly increasing item with large amounts of people wanting this, and it can certainly grow anywhere with a bit of infinite irony.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample shows predominantly no understanding of the passage but has located one correct thing about chokoes from it.

Example 2

'The choko has to be the most divisive element in modern Australian Society and the relationship between a 'choko fancier' and a 'choko aversionist' is going to be bleak.

'Nature intended the choko for chooks or it wouldn't invariably grow in chook yards and be spelled as a naïve rearrangement of the word chook' This is why he says to The Chosen One 'These ready for the chooks?'

'It fails to qualify as food on several levels – appearance, lack of flavour, texture and its inability to make any impression on any of the senses.

'The writer says chokos have no attitude. 'Fruit and veg have personalities . . . I feel about as affectionate towards rhubarb. It is the Patrick White of the pantry. The choko is more like the Dannii Minogue of the culinary karaoke.'

Examiner's Comments

This extract from a sample just copies or quotes from the passage.

0 Marks

Example 1

‘The writer is saying that chokoes are people who are eating this unheard of food. Chokoes are eating food that should be for chooks. They are people who are eating a food that should be for ‘the camp, the boarding school and the chook yard’. Chokoes are people that enjoy a food that has bad appearance. The writer doesn’t think chockoes are very high ? worthy people because of the food they eat. ‘I feel about as affectionate towards rhubarb as I do towards chokoes’ chokoes enjoy this food a lot. chockoes eat this food that is a ‘depression food’ meaning that there is so much of this food that will just last survival – they eat a food as a means of desperation chokoes are a rather discarded food today.’

Examiner’s Comments

This sample misunderstands the meaning of the word ‘choko’ and refers throughout to chokoes as ‘people’.

Example 2

‘The writer is trying to find an cure to save the chokoes from dying. He mentioned that their are cures to help the alcoho, drug abuse, assertiveness, self esstem, marriage and personal relationship, trauma and stress, phobia and panic all these things can be helped by today society. Why can’t chokoes, he tried to change by growing other kinds of green stuff, but he mentioned ‘I settled back with a gastronomic bible to catch up on real food’ it’s not the same, no matter how much he tries to change to Mirliton, pepinello Macadamias, avocados and tree plants it would never be the same as ‘CHOKO’.’

Examiner’s Comments

Complete misreading of the passage.

Example 3

‘The writer’s purpose appears to be to humorously describe, in vast detail, the choko. Initially, the writer over-dramatises the audience by discussing serious matters, such as alcohol and drug abuse, and then proceeds to vaguely mention chokoes. Following this rather serious introduction, the writer adopts a humorous tone and is writing for a general adult audience.

‘By stating that the choko is ‘the most divisive element in Australian society’ in a warm, sarcastic tone, the writer both attracts and interests the reader.

‘Although the writer is taking a negative attitude towards the chokoes themselves, he/she is able to retain the warm, humorous tone. This ‘negative’ attitude remains throughout the first half of the piece of writing and is done so by describing the choko in flowing, coherent, and precise sentences. The writers point has, thus, effectively been made.

‘The second half of the article is a little more vaguely discussing the choko. By describing the

choko constantly, get giving it an alias name, the reader is once again inquisitive as to where this article is leading, and how it will eventually conclude.

‘When the writer finally explains that the several alias’ are in fact, the choko ‘exotically’ named, he/she returns to the initial humour of the introductory paragraphs.

‘Throughout the article, the writer uses a rather effective writing technique, negative attitude, yet warm, positive tone. The writer first describes the choko, then proceeds with humour, to list several examples of it in greater detail. If intentions were for the general adult audience, the writer has adopted effective techniques and structured the article to retain interest throughout is leading, and how it will eventually conclude.

‘When the writer finally explains that the several alias’ are in fact, the choko ‘exotically’ named, he/she returns to the initial humour of the introductory paragraphs.

‘Throughout the article, the writer uses a rather effective writing technique, negative attitude, yet warm, positive tone. The writer first describes the choko, then proceeds with humour, to list several examples of it in greater detail. If intentions were for the general adult audience, the writer has adopted effective techniques and structured the article to retain interest throughout.’

Examiner’s Comments

Complete misunderstanding of the question.

Example 4

‘The writer is parodying the fact of ‘fads’ in context those of food, and that ones own tastes change in acordance with whats in fashion, as well as that old ‘appearences can be deceiving’, judgemental, moral quagmire and the fact that ones own judgement is subject to the majority of everyone elses’. that society in general ? with a fad, ignoring the obvious flaws.’

Examiner’s Comments

While the candidate shows a sophisticated understanding of an underlying theme in the passage, it reveals an obvious misreading of the question.

(b) Find THREE examples of humour in the passage, and comment on their effect. (6 Marks)

Marking Criteria

Key elements of the question:

- accurately identifies a piece of humour such as, quote, paraphrase, graphic or reference to a specific part of the passage (1 mark);
- writes a valid comment, explaining why/ how the humour is effective (1 mark) (Note: simply saying that it is funny is not a valid comment. They don't score the second mark for explaining the meaning of the quote).

6 Marks

- Does exactly what the task demands, ie identifies and clearly explains the effect — three of each.

5 Marks

- May use three examples of humour but clearly explains the effect of only two.

4 Marks

- May use two examples of humour with two valid explanations OR
- three examples of humour with one explanation.

Must explain EFFECT of humour to score above three marks.

3 Marks

- Will usually have three examples of humour but can't explain them OR
- two examples with a valid explanation of one.

2 Marks

Two examples of humour or one example with an explanation.

1 Mark

Some attempt to identify humour but will probably have almost entirely missed the point.

0 Marks

Exhibits no understanding at all of what the task demands.

Addendum to Part (b) criteria

In an explanation of effect, a candidate should be concentrating on the element of humour identified through the example he/she has used.

For example, it is funny because of the:

- absurdity
- surprise
- shock
- contrast
- incongruity
- juxtaposition
- exaggeration.

This is what needs explaining NOT the meaning of the quote.

Note: the overall effect is to make the reader doubt the seriousness of his writing (ie to see the satire).

Examples of Candidate Responses

6 Marks

Example 1

‘Humor is used extensively in this article to show the writers views and feelings about the choko.

‘The fact that the writer describes the appearance as resembling ‘the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant’ is humour in itself. As a form of hyperbole, the writer describes the choko in a most unattractive way. This almost disgusting description of the choko is certain to make the reader think about a real choko, realise the similarities and agree with the writer. It is from an observation humor that appeals to everyone.

‘‘I maintain that Aztecs and Mayas are damned thin on the ground these days – especially out our way but the same certainly can’t be said of the choko’ appeals because of it’s absurdity. The affect of this humour emphasises the writers purpose and message in writing the article – that the choko and the eating of it is absurd.

‘We’re lucky enough to be having some for dinner tonight’ is reflecting the writers consumate distaste for the vegetable and the futility in resisting his wives wishes to eat choko. This sarcasm at the close of the article helps finish of the piece with a light hearted feel while still emphasising the purpose of the piece.’

Examiner’s Comments

This script clearly identifies three examples of humour and explains the effect of each example. The student is able to discuss such things as hyperbole, absurdity and sarcasm when commenting on the effect of humour.

Example 2

‘The three examples of humour that I found are as follows;

1. ‘the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant is not meant for the dinner table’. This is a humorous description of a vegetable. To refer to the green, prickly covered choko to the scrotum of a green giant produces humour because it is such an exaggeration and also because it is rude.
2. ‘This is the dullard and wimp of the vegetable world’. This description is humorous as it conjures up the image of a small, skinny boy with glasses that everyone picks on – To compare this image with the image of a choko is funny.
3. ‘The choko shall grow anywhere, even in places where you can’t get a decent crop weeds’. This third example is humorous because everybody knows that weeds will grow everywhere, so a place where weeds won’t grow would have to be really extreme. And the author is saying that weeds will grow in this really extreme place.’

Examiner’s Comments

This script identifies three examples of humour, yet, while the commentary on their effect is less sophisticated than others, it is still clear and concise. As such, the script earned full marks because the student showed understanding of the effect of each example of humour.

5 Marks

Example 1

‘The opening paragraph becomes comical on the second read. At first we are unsure of how the first paragraph is linked with the heading. But on a second read you are able to laugh at the exaggeration that the hate for chokoes will require counselling just as people do when they have disorders such as drug abuse. And that is what it is, a disorder of feelings for a fruit. The writer maked out that it is traumatic.

The third and fourth linked paragraphs bring about a sense of religion. Where the ‘Chosen One’, or the next boring feast to a choko. The ‘Chosen One’ is the one that normally receives a high honour, but no the ‘Chosen One’ in the article has the ‘high’ or should I say ‘low’ honour of accompanying the choko to the chooks.

In the eighth paragraph the writer talks of fruit and veges having personality. As the reader you start to forget you are talking about a non-living object. There is comic relief where the choko remains nothing besides some rhubarb. ‘Rhubarb even has attitude’ compared to a boring choko. The writer gives real life and personal qualities in the article to try and bring you closer to this fruit in a comical way.’

Examiner's Comments

This candidate clearly identifies three examples of humour but is unable to explain the effect of 'The Chosen One'. It is also worthy of note that the candidate did not use identifiers like 'hyperbole' or 'irony' but this did not effect the mark.

4 Marks

Example 1

'The first part of humour, I used was the statement that the chokoes first pitfall is it's appearance. The writer then states, 'that anything that resembles the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant is not meant for the dinner table'. The effect of this statement creates an immediate image in one's mind of the Jolly Green Giant in all his glory, which causes one to giggle when linking his most private parts – and eating – the common food known as the choko.

The writer says that the choko is a wimp in the vegetable world, there feelings towards rhubarb are no more affectionate, yet at least rhubarb has attitude. They then create humour by giving them image in this case. The rhubarb is the Patrick White of the pantry and the choko the Danni Minogue of culinary karoake.'

Examiner's Comments

Identifies three examples of humour but is only able to explain the effect of the 'scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant'.

3 Marks

Example 1

'Three examples of humour in the passage are, 'Anything that resembles the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant is not meant for the dinner table' The way that this is a great effect is the use of imagery.

Another example of humour is 'the choko is more like the Danni Minogue of culinary karoake'. This is once again a good use of imagery and it is a simile.

Finally 'the last example is the other night I settled back with a gastronomic bible to catch up on real food'. This is a good example of onomatopoeia.'

Examiner's Comments

This script identifies three examples of humour but, despite using literary jargon such as 'simile' and 'onomatopoeia', fails to adequately explain the effect of each example.

2 Marks

Example 1

‘The introduction / first paragraph. This would be one part that shows humour in the passage. The use of hyperbole, such as looking at counselling for the cure of obsession for chokoes. It might not have mentioned ‘obsession’ for chokoes but this first paragraph describes how much chokoes has affected the writer’s lifestyle.

Another humour in the passage is the use of describing food. The writer is very descriptive with the food. It really show how much he/she loves chokoes out of all of them. This is very effective. The more descriptive it gets, the more the reader gets involved in the passage. The use of colloquialism also adds to more effect to the images the writer discribes to us.

‘The paragraph ‘I maintain that Aztecs ... plant chokoes’. This also is very effective. It is to remind us that the passage is humorous. It links it to the first paragraph. It is showing us and reminding us how the writer loves chokoes.’

Examiner’s Comments

This candidate is able to identify humour in the first paragraph but is unable to explain the effect of this humour. ‘Describing food’ does not score a mark because it is too general. The marker has to know specifically what the candidate found humorous. The script also identifies as humorous the second example, ‘I maintain that...’ but once again is unable to explain the effect of the humour.

0 Marks

Example 1

‘In this passage the writer uses many types of humour. Three types of humour he uses are sarcasm, his use of description and

In this passage sarcasm is used throughout it. In the passage the writer has written ‘ ... it is reserved for the lowest links in the food chain’. In this, the writer is saying that this is the worst food for consumption. In the passage the writers description of the choko is humerous.’

Examiner’s Comments

Despite using terms such as ‘sarcasm’ and ‘description’, this candidate scored zero because the script failed to adequately identify any examples of humour.

(c) What additional language techniques are used in developing the writer's point of view?
(6 Marks)

Marking Criteria

Key elements of the question:

Two or more language techniques identified with at least one accurate example of each, clearly explaining how each technique specifically develops the writer's point/s of view.

Note: 'additional' should not exclude language techniques, which create humour and develop the writer's point of view.

6 Marks

MUST discuss links between language and writer's point of view.

An articulate response which:

- identifies at least two techniques
- uses examples
- explains/links to point/s of view.

5 Marks

MUST discuss links between language and writer's point of view.

Less articulate response which:

- identifies at least two techniques
- uses examples
- explains/links to point/s of view

OR

not as logically expressed, eg links to each not fully established.

4 Marks

Identifies two or more language techniques linked to specified points of view without appropriate examples.

3 Marks

- A less articulate response omitting either/or appropriate examples/specific points of view.
OR
- identifies two or more language techniques with examples but doesn't specify point/s of view OR
- one technique only discussed, fulfilling all criteria.

2 Marks

- Only accurately identifies two or more appropriate techniques OR
- any combination of two of these elements (techniques, examples, points of view).

1 Mark

Accurately identifies only one of the above.

0 Marks

Totally inaccurate or irrelevant or only mentions 'humour'.

Examples only of additional language techniques

1. The whole tone of the article is satiric humour, eg:

- sarcasm
- irony
- hyperbole/exaggeration
- parody
- caricature
- mockery
- elevated language
- word play/ pun
- graphic.

2. Use of person:

- first and second
- conversational techniques.

3. Figurative language:

- imagery
- metaphor/simile
- personification.

4. Sound patterns:

- alliteration
- onomatopoeia.

5. Punctuation devices:

- ellipsis (...)

6. Choice of words/diction:

- adjectives
- religious terms.

7. Register:

- juxtaposition between formal and informal (colloquial) language, clichés
- anecdotal comments.

8. Types of sentences:

- statements
- imperatives 'plant chokoes'
- compound, complex, loose.

9. Structure:

- repetition
- reflection
- listing, cumulation
- post script.

10. Title and subheading.

Examples of acceptable points of view:

1. the writer hates chokoes
2. chokoes have become very fashionable
3. chokoes are taking over the world
4. we can't fight against the rise of the choko
5. chokoes will kill us (see title)
6. chokoes are dull and boring
7. the choko may be the saviour of the rural economy
8. plant chokoes (ironic imperative)
9. rhubarb has 'attitude', chokoes don't
10. the choko is not a real food
11. people misjudge chokoes
12. chokoes belong to the chook yard
13. the choko has outlived ancient civilisations
14. society is fickle – we value the exotic over the common
15. the power of nature is stronger than man – chokoes are ubiquitous, outgrow weeds
16. chokoes destroy personal relationships (irony)
17. the writer is in awe of his wife.

Examples of Candidate Responses

6 Marks

Example 1

'Other than humour the writer uses other techniques to involve the reader as well as portray his point of view. Some of these include sarcasm and the personification of vegetables which help to show that he doesn't like chokoes.

'Toward the end of the article the writer is so overwhelmed with the choko advent that he resorts to using sarcasm as a means to present his point of view. He states 'forget macadamias, avocados and tea tree ... plant chokoes'. In this sentence there is a hint of sarcasm which shows how bitter the writer is about chokoes being found and liked all over the world.

'The writer also personifies vegetables which creates humour but most importantly portrays his ideas about chokoes. He defines the rhubarb as having 'attitude' and the choko as being like 'Dannii Minogue of the culinary karaoke'. In doing this he shows the extent to which he dislikes chokoes, actually comparing characteristics (that they don't really have) to show how the choko is not really his cup of tea.

'The writer also contrasts his views to that of the cook book's. The cook book's description of the choko is that of it having a 'creamy flesh and a delicate taste'. This contrasts the view of the writer and indicates so more clearly that he is probably one of the minority that hates chokoes. In contrasting himself we see how much he hates chokoes.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample is a well integrated answer identifying the links between point/s of view with clear identification of techniques plus examples.

5 Marks

Example 1

'The title 'Death by Choko' is an allusion to the restaurant 'Death by Chocolate'. It indicates that one could indulge in eating so many chokoes that they feel they may die from pleasure.

'The writer uses a listing technique when he lists all the forms of counselling available, such as 'alcohol and drug abuse, assertiveness', and so on. The effect is to compile a long list to emphasise how there is a superfluous amount of services available, but none of them for chokoes.

'Assonance is used in the phrase, 'such mush'. It serves to emphasise the 'mushiness' of the chokoes, which serves to further the idea of the chokoes being unpleasant to eat.

'Hyperbole is used when the writer says, 'the choko is so universally reviled'. This, again, emphasises how much he hates chokoes, but it is far-fetched because the term 'universally' implicates it is so wide spread as to encompass a universe. this is impossible, as some people must surely like chokos.

'Personification is used in the line, 'This is the dullard and the wimp of the vegetable world'. It gives the choko human qualities, comparing it to wimps and dullards who are often disliked as well.

'Imagery is used when the writer says, 'it's impossible to leave ... without the host giving everyone a bag of chokoes ..' This serves to further illustrate the idea that the choko grows wildly, so wildly that they are handed out in vast quantities at every given opportunity.'

Examiner's Comments

A less articulate response which fulfills the criteria of two techniques, two examples and links to point of views.

4 Marks

Example 1

'Additional language techniques such as the use of irony to develop the writer's point of view, it can be seen obviously that the writer doesn't favour chokoes very highly and sees them as useless yet dominant features of his life. Irony is used.

'The personification of the 'choko is also used to develop the writer's point of view. Fruits and vegies having personalities and yet the choko having none. It's ability to grow in all sorts of places gives it the human thinking quality. With personification of the chokoes, it makes the readers aware of what the writer is trying to get across about chokoes – as alive, thinking objects that are in existence to make life difficult, for the writer anyway. It makes readers feel sympathy towards the writer, for it seems as if he's the only one who suffers from chokoes.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample identifies two techniques linked to specified points of view without clear or accurate examples.

3 Marks

Example 1

'The language techniques in this report is definatly colloquiel. The use of informal language can be clearly seen due to the tone and speaking level or language used in the report. It's as if the writer is telling a story on the hatred for the choko and the use of sarcastic descriptions keep the reader interested through the uses of sarcastic language'

Examiner's Comments

A less articulate response omitting either appropriate examples or specific points of view.

Example 2

‘The writer uses metaphors and similies such as ‘the Danni Minogue of culinary karaoke’ and ‘like the scrotum of the Jolly Green Giant’.

‘The writer also uses sarcasm as in the last line of the piece ‘and we are lucky enough to be having some for dinner tonight’.

‘The writer also uses a light hearted tone, using phrases such as ‘a gastronomic bible’, and ‘this is dullard and the wimp of the vegetable world’, and addressing his wife as ‘The Chosen one’. The writer also uses examples of alliteration such as; bog-boring and Jolly Green Giant. The writer also uses an interesting first paragraph that has little to do with the story, to grab the readers attention.’

Examiner’s Comments

The example identifies two or more language techniques with examples but does not specify point of view.

Example 3

‘The writer uses humour in this passage and in a way is mocking the Chokoes, how he says ‘at least rhubarb has attitude’. This shows that he does not think much of Chokoes.’

Examiner’s Comments

This example only identified one technique while fulfilling all criteria.

2 Marks

Example 1

‘The writer has used colloquial language throughout the article in order to have a wider range of audience. This form of language is the everyday type of language and allows the reader to comprehend the ideas presented. The writer also chooses to include excerpts from other reference resources. These entertain the reader and keep the reader interested. He also uses humour to do this.

‘He also provides factual information about the subject he is talking about to inform the reader. The writer also uses similes in his piece of writing to develop his point of view. He has written this in the form of neatly structured paragraphs. This portrays that this would be probably an article out of a newspaper or magazine. The neatly structured paragraph allows the reader to follow smoothly through the ideas and all ideas are in a flow. The writer also uses to include a picture to give its reader an visually stimulating image.’

Examiner's Comments

The sample identifies two techniques (colloquial language and simile — but no effective examples given).

Example 2

'The writer's point of view can also be expressed using a variety of language techniques. The tone is very relaxed and humorous, giving us an alternative view on chokoes. The simile of 'the scrotum of the jolly green giant shows' shows a strange view of this vegetable. The humour is used in the article by creating metaphors. The conversation about the chokos being for dinner shows a situation that many people will fear. The use of hyphens in many sentences drags the sentence out expressing the boredom and blandness of the chokoes. The 'ps' shows an extra peice of information that doesn't fit with the rest of the article but show how chokoes are appreciated in one part of the world. The descriptive language such as 'firm, creamy, white flesh' adds to the interest of the article.'

Examiner's Comments

The sample accurately identifies two techniques but the examples given are incorrect.

1 Mark

Example 1

'The languages technique used is very colloquial to get everybody to agree with his point of view. The use of humour in his technique is used greatly to develop his point of view, by generalised comment before, within, and after the humour to associate it with a very general audience.'

Examiner's Comments

Identifies only one technique (colloquial).

Example 2

'He uses similies a lot describing chokos to another ... Describing it in a disgusting or funny ways.

'The writer relates this not independantly of what he thinks he does it widely discussing chokos in everyway as possible.

'Jokes and passages of sense of humour makes the readers captured by his attention and facts that once you go for it you can't stop like Dannii Minogue as a singer.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample accurately identifies only one technique (simile).

0 Marks

Example 1

'Additional language techniques used in developing the writer's point of view is other foods available and of particular interest from overseas. These include the chayote which is also known as the mango squash and the custard marrow. The mirliton and the pepinello together with chayote also have in common their pear shaped and also have custard marrow.

'However, he does state that the choko could be what we well need and to disregard macadamias, avocados and tea tree, and to substitute them with chokoes.'

Examiner's Comments

Irrelevant response — does not identify any language techniques.

Example 2

'Additional language techniques that are used in developing the writers point of view, would be the use of facts and humour witch create an interesting yet not plain and boring read.

'This helps to develop his message because people will read on to understand the writers point of view.'

Examiner's Comments

This response only mentions 'humour'.

Example 3

'The writer uses history and has a description of the other possibilities for the choko, eg 'chayote, Pepinello and Mirliton'. The History and origin of the vegetable comes after the writer has delved into culinary history of vegetable and offers a very optomistic approach to the new but strangely familiar veges. Thats how the writer creates his/her point of view because she is a definate hater of chokoes (if she knows she is eating them) and because he/she has never tried Papinello, chayote and Mirliton' she is happy to want to greet there lovely taste. (from what we can percieve from the excerpt).'

Examiner's Comments

This response does not address the question at all.

(d) Do you think the title is appropriate, or not? Give your reasons. (3 marks)

Marking Criteria

Key elements of the question:

- response can be that the title is appropriate or inappropriate or appropriate for a part of the article but not the rest;
- marks are awarded according to the reasons given;
- responses do not earn marks for referring to the subheading.

3 Marks

- Gives two perceptive reasons OR
- gives one perceptive reason and one mundane reason, in some detail OR
- gives three mundane reasons, in some detail.

2 Marks

- Gives one perceptive reason, in some detail OR
- gives two or three reasons, with no detail.

1 Mark

- Gives one mundane reason.

0 Marks

- Irrelevant response OR
- yes/no answer with no reason.

Examples of acceptable reasons

Mundane reasons:

- title is inappropriate because nobody actually dies from eating chokoes
- title is appropriate because civilisations who were choko eaters have died out
- title is appropriate because it attracts the reader's attention
- title is appropriate because the use of capitals/large print/bold attracts the reader.

Perceptive reasons:

- style of title mirrors the humorous style of the article
- cleverness of the title (word play on 'Death by choking/chocolate') relates to the cleverness of the article
- title complements the message of the cartoon/picture/graphic to indicate the article's tone.

Examples of Candidate Responses

3 Marks

Example 1

'I think it is appropriate; because firstly it plays on words – instead of 'death by choking' it is 'death by choko'. This establishes the humour which is intended by the article, and links it with a negative word (death) so that we can guess the article will be humouristically looking at the vegetable, in a negative way. It also is linked to the writer's point of view that the choko, like death, is everywhere; and there seems to be no escaping it.'

Examiner's Comments

This concise sample does a number of effective things. It shows perception in identifying the play on words and explaining its effect. As well, it comments on the writer's negative tone. Finally, it points to the writer's exaggerated feeling of being overwhelmed by the chokoes.

Example 2

'I think the title is appropriate because (1) The writer sees choko's as a horrible tasteless thing that would 'kill' your pleasure while eating it. (2) Because the choko is so rampant and will grow even in places where you can't get a decent crop of weeds' it is like it could grow all over you killing you – suffocating you. (3) The fact that she obviously hates it so much but so many from all over the world are loving it under different alias names gives her a sort of death by being out numbered I suppose by the choko loves. (4) She says 'the choice has to be divisive element in Australian Society. Being the most divisive element suggests that people may kill over the love/hate of choko's.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample script, though pedestrian in nature, earns full marks. It gives at least three mundane reasons.

Example 3

'I feel that the title is appropriate in some ways as it is humorous and gives an indication of what the article is about. However the 'death' part is not so appropriate as no one is really being killed chokoes and thus it could mislead the reader into thinking chokoes could actually be bad for you.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample script considers both the appropriateness and inappropriateness of the title. It gives one perceptive reason showing why the title is appropriate and one mundane reason showing its inappropriateness.

2 Marks

Example 1

'The title 'Death by Choko' is appropriate as it sums up the uncommon nature of the choko, and emphasises how we know little about it, that we could die from it. Though it is a take off of the phrase Death by Chocolate as it is not popular like chocolate and emphasises the writer's view as it is like a 'scrotum', with 'lack of flavour'. the byline of 'Under the alias ... culinary heights', is a humorous attempt to catch our eye, such is the title also, so we will be interested in the article.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample script scores for the perceptive reason in the second sentence.

Note: mention of the subheading is irrelevant and scores no marks.

Example 2

“DEATH BY CHOKO’ the title is striking because it would catch a readers attention. The word ‘Death’ would make any reader curious to what the passage is about. I don’t think it is appropriate though because it really has nothing much to do with the passage.’

Examiner’s Comments

This sample script offers two mundane reasons, one for and one against, the title being appropriate.

1 Mark

Example 1

‘I think the title isn’t very appropriate because ‘Death by Choko’ sounds as though someone has died, however in the passage this is not evident.’

Examiner’s Comments

This sample script offers one mundane reason for the title’s inappropriateness.

Example 2

‘The title ‘Death by Choko’ I believe is appropriate for this article as throughout the article, the writer continually includes the immense popularity of chokoes in the world and this title effectively captures this effect. The title portrays what the article is saying. Chokoes have become so universally popular and are grown all over the world that by using the title ‘Death by Choko’ it shows that in a sense that the world has been taken over by these chokoes. Another aspect the title conveys is that as many other foods from a range of countries have come out, chokoes aren’t as popular as they once were, hence the title ‘Death by Choko’. It shows that we have world and Australian market.’

Examiner’s Comments

This sample, although quite lengthy, comments on the one idea of the world being taken over by chokoes.

Note: although the second part of the answer is wrong, the writer has not lost a mark because of it.

0 Marks

Example 1

'The title death by Choko is appropriate. We all know there are still Choko being grown all around the world. But the heading is telling us that the Chokoes are not being remember as they are dead of extent for a long time. People tried to forget this food as not too many people in favour of it. As less people try to remember about the Chokoes, it is like a dead person who had die for a long time which not too many one could remember. So the heading is appropriate.'

Examiner's Comments

An irrelevant response which demonstrates a failure to understand the passage.

Example 2

'DEATH BY CHOKO is very appropriate for todays choko. These days the common choko has been pushed to the back of Australian vegies ever since it was first introduced. The choko being pushed had lost all of it's life and kick, the choko has died this being said in the head DEATH BY CHOKO.'

Examiner's Comments

This sample fails to score because of its obvious misunderstanding of the passage and title. It makes the mistake, evident in a number of scripts, of seeing the choko as the object rather than the subject of the title.

SECTION II — WRITING TASK (20 marks)

Question 2 (20 marks)

Answer the question in the Question 2 Answer Booklet provided.

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

Look at the picture below.

Imagine the letter she is reading.

Your task: write the letter.

Write at least 300 words.

(Do NOT sign the letter with your own name or address.)

GENERAL COMMENTS

How the question performed

The 1998 Writing Task catered to the wide variety of candidates presenting at 2 Unit General and 2/3 Unit Common levels. The stimulus material, that of the girl on the train, and the instructions to write a letter, gave all candidates an opportunity to engage with the task.

The situation suggested by the picture also had the effect of encouraging a great deal of emotional content, with the result that students were able to draw on their own experiences, and the experiences gained from other material, such as literature, television and movies. This resulted in many stereotypical, clichéd scripts which were predictable, and lacked genuine development of the ‘voice’ of the writer. Letter writing is not something undertaken by many students outside of classroom experiences, and this led to many students having difficulty in establishing and/or sustaining the appropriate ‘voice’ for the letter chosen.

More able candidates took advantage of both form and the situation provided by the stimulus to write complex, sophisticated pieces of writing, using powerful language and voice to engage the reader.

In practice, however, it was clear that many able candidates were constrained by the form (letter) and situation both being prescribed. Many tended to be ‘safe’, and the degree of creativity was weaker than last year. Notwithstanding this, the guidelines for marking the Writing Task successfully discriminated across the range of candidates from A to E level responses.

How the candidates performed

Overall, most candidates completed the task competently, encouraged by the situation and the type of content it seemed to suggest, and most were able to write a letter about a chosen situation, even if not fully or clearly developed in all cases.

The better candidates understood what was being offered through the combination of letter and situation, and responded accordingly. They were able to establish and maintain a genuine and appropriate voice, through language, content and structure. They developed a sense of authentic detail and creative layering that produced, and sustained, the engagement of the reader. Better candidates also showed an awareness of language, in selectively using appropriate vocabulary, and producing a structural unity or completeness. They planned their writing, and ideas thoughtfully and clearly developed across a wide range of letters.

Weaker candidates presented stereotypical and clichéd personal situations, often in an overly conversational or narrative fashion within the letter. The voice or person was either not developed, or developed in a simple fashion only. These candidates produced writing which could not sustain the engagement of the reader. They showed little selectivity writing in language, with either a florid style, or little description. Some weaker candidates presented quite implausible situations, which really did not produce any development of either voice or engagement.

Very weak candidates had little or no sense of letter at all.

For many candidates who attempted to write different types of letters (eg letters from various authorities) the creation of an appropriate voice proved difficult.

1998 Writing Guidelines

The guidelines assist the marking of the question. They are distributed to markers who are advised that each script is to be considered in the context of how it fulfils the guidelines. Markers are requested to bring to the attention of their Senior Marker any script which does not comply with the guidelines.

There are many ways to respond to this writing task. They include the use of the letter/sense of the letter. While the engagement of the reader is the ultimate aim of each piece of writing, how the writing actually achieves that engagement will vary. These guidelines reflect the various elements through which engagement occurs, and in turn reflect the combinations and emphases of those elements within the different types. Markers will encounter a variety of responses in their marking, and need to consider the manner in which they operate.

The different ranges may be characterised by the following:

A Range 15, 14, 13 — Well Above Average

Sustains the engagement of the reader through:

- the establishment of a clear and appropriate voice which is sustained throughout
- control in the selective and appropriate use of language to enhance the writer's purpose
- a sense of completeness of the piece, in which the letter is central to the piece of writing
- successful use of the letter to fulfil the writer's intention
- complex, sophisticated development of persona/situation/voice/content/language.

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

Engages the reader through:

- the establishment of a clear and appropriate voice
- control in the use of appropriate language to achieve the writer's purpose
- use of the letter/establishment of strong sense of letter to achieve the writer's purpose
- effective development of persona/situation/voice/content/language.

C Range 9, 8, 7 — Average

Inconsistent engagement, or engagement on a simple level, through:

- the establishment of a voice lacking development or consistency
- reasonable control of use of language
- use of the letter/establishment of a clear sense of letter
- simple or pedestrian presentation of persona/situation/voice/content/language (could be repetitive or overwritten).

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

Limited engagement of the reader through:

- limited voice
- could be illiterate or contain problems in expression
- limited use of letter/limited establishment of the sense of letter
- very simple or unclear or undeveloped persona/situation/voice/content/language (could be disjointed, short/undeveloped or long/rambling).

E Range 3, 2, 1, 0 — Well Below Average

Little or no engagement of the reader:

- voice not established
- could be illiterate or have poor control of language
- no sense of letter
- little or no persona/situation/voice/content
- may be incomplete but literate.

An Example of a Well Above Average Response

What did I tell you? You didn't listen to me did you? Think you can outsmart me? No way! What do you take me for?¹ I said from the beginning – no complications, no muck-ups, and I'll give him back. You meet me, come out with the money, and we'll exchange – I take the money, you take him back. As simple as that. See how easy it would've been? But nooooo... you thought you could fool me, didn't you? Hey I'm not the low-life intellectual idiot you think I am. Yeah I know what I'm doing it's not the first time I've done this. You know.

Anyway. You didn't give me what I wanted, how I wanted it, so the same goes for you. Do you wanna listen to what I did to him? I don't care I'm telling you away.²

I left him in the cellar, no food, no water... nothing. For the whole time. Pitch dark up there too, wouldn't be able to see my tat if I waved it right in front of my eyes. Ha ha. Yeah, I left him there, but I couldn't let him go that easily. After what you made me go through. So I went up there last night – he was sleeping. And then I took him to the bathroom where I had filled the bathtub with scorching hot water, and shoved him in there squirmed and wriggled trying to get free, but couldn't let him go, could I? I could see his skin turning red gosh it was exciting to watch. But that isn't even the half of it. Just before he had had it, I took him out and took him back into the cellar.

This is where the fun begins. I took out my fork – my favourite one that I dented a little last time doing this. Those eyeballs of his were really getting to me- darting left to right, right to left, up and down like that. So I just absolutely had to get rid of those first. In went the fork, out come the eyeballs. Ha ha ha. Now wasn't that fun?

But I'm still not finished yet. I let in my pet Doberman who chopped him all to bits. Pieces of little body parts all over my cellar floor. It was beautiful.³ Absolutely marvellous, it was, just marvellous.

So now how do you feel, huh? Paid you back, didn't I? Yeah, well that's what you get if you mess around with a person like me. I'm for real, man! I'm for real! No playing games with this guy. And always remember, – I'll be watching you. Any more fishy business and you'll get it too. You'll be joining your lizard.⁴

1 Effective use of rhetorical questions to immediately engage the reader and establish the threatening aggressive tone.

2 Establishment of strong persona through control of language evidenced in the variety of sentence type and structure.

3 Use of short, sharp statements to contribute to the aggression.

4 Clever twist at the end of the script which adds shock value and humour.

Examiner's Comments

A clever, complex piece of writing. A strong persona, sinister and menacing is established through control in the selective use of language. The conclusion surprises and disturbs the reader who has been cleverly deceived by the writer.

An Example of an Above Average Response

“Rose Cottage”

Wentshores VIC 4075

22 May 1983

‘Dear Amy,

I am sorry to tell you this way but I feel if I tell you over the phone then it will really be true and I’m not ready to except that yet.⁵

Yesterday afternoon I went for a horse ride with my youngest brother Tony. The sun was so warm for early spring and the horses were really thirsty. We rode over to the old stockman’s hut. You know the one we were going to camp in last summer until Brad told us it was haunted.⁶ Well Tony wanted to see if the mulberry vine that’s growing there had any ripe mulberries yet. We got to the long paddock, the one near the creek, and Tony dared me to race him. Well you know me I won’t go back on a dare. So off I went it felt so good.

The wind, the speed I felt so alive. How ironic is that? As I was feeling so alive Tony lost his life.⁷ I didn’t see it happen I just heard a small yell and a thud. Tony was slightly behind me at the time. I stopped and turned around and there he was Amy, my little brother lying on ground not moving. It happened so quickly I couldn’t have stopped it but I wish it was me it was my fault Amy.

He wasn’t wearing a helmet because we decided it was too hot to be worried about a heavy hat on our heads. I was the oldest, Amy I should have know how dangerous it is not to wear a helmet. I should have made him put it on. But I never imagined that this could happen. The horse found a rabbit hole and fell. He threw Tony over his head and he felt on to probably the only rock in the whole paddock.⁸ Mum and Dad are devastated and I know that they would never say it but I know it’s me that they blame, me! I blame myself so why shouldn’t they?⁹ He was only ten, Amy, ten. His life hadn’t really begun. Remember the time he hid in the tree and threw the overripe pears at us we could have killed him for that. What I would give to walk outside now and feel a ripe pear splatter on my back and hear that impish laugh. I would give anything.

5 The opening of the letter establishes a tone of sincerity and the feeling that some news of great importance is to follow.

6 The simplicity of the language reflects the persona of the writer and the reminiscences of the past allow the reader to engage with the situation.

7 The writer’s guilt becomes apparent in her effective contrasting of her feeling of energy and the death of her brother.

8 The voice of the writer is maintained through the simple retelling of the accident as she grapples with the reality of her brother’s death.

9 The simple repetition effectively conveys the tragedy and poignancy of the loss and is reflective of the style of the writer.

I wish you were here, instead of living hundreds of kilometres away in the city. I need my best friend Amy, please will you come soon please.¹⁰

It's so sad here I feel like I can't breathe, every breath is painful. When I woke up this morning for a split second I forgot what had happened and for that split second I felt normal. And then it all came rushing back. I see him lying there, Amy a million times in my head and each time I see it the feeling's getting worse. Will I ever feel that normality again? I hope so because the feeling's that I feel now are almost unbearable.

Amy I am so lost my brother is gone, I feel my parents blame me, I blame me. I need your friendship and love please come.¹¹

Your Best Friend

Reanna

P.S: Please don't blame me, enough people blame me as it is. And if you blame me then it would be unbearable.'

Examiner's Comments

The script uses the letter form effectively and therefore addresses the set task. The letter engages the reader through the establishment of the voice of the writer who is grappling with her guilt over her brother's death. The simplicity of language and the sincere tone are committed with the persona of the writer. There is good control of appropriate language, however there are lapses of expression. The effective development of persona, situation, voice and control make this an above average script.

¹⁰ This section effectively develops the persona and the reader clearly understand the personal struggle of Reanna.

¹¹ The conclusion is controlled and appropriate to the writer's purpose. It clearly states her feelings and her personal plea evokes an emotive response from the reader.

An Example of an Average Response

Nicholas Smith

27 Shellbank Ave

Mosman NSW 2088¹²

26 October 1998

'Dearest Sheryl,

I don't know how gently I can break this sudden news to you but here it goes.¹³ About six days ago your father, my older brother, fell ill. The doctors said that he had a severe case of fever, his temperature reaching highs of forty-one degrees celsius. They put him in a basin of ice to cool his body down but unfortunately it did not run down his temperature.¹⁴

I have been visiting the Mount Alvernia Hospital everyday since he has been admitted. And I'm extremely sad to say that his condition is getting no better, but in fact his health is fast deteriorating.¹⁵ The doctors and specialists are doing their utmost best to try and make him well again.¹⁶ Today when I visited James, he told me to pass on this message to you if he does not see you ever again.¹⁷ Your father wants you to know that you're his special daughter and that he loves you and wishes he could see you before he is reunited with God.¹⁸ He also wants you to promise him that you'll take good care of your younger brother, Joshua. He is too young to understand what's going on now but please take extra care of him when I am gone.¹⁹

I have taken the necessary bookings to fly you home tomorrow. Your flight departs at 8.30 am and I'll pick you up from the airport and go straight to see your father. I have spoken to your headmaster and told him about the situation, he told me to tell you to spend as much time with Dad as possible and not worry about school for the time being.²⁰

Don't worry too much now, I'm sure your father will recover soon, he was always a very courageous man. So I'll see you tomorrow at noon. Take care.²¹

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Smith'

12 Establishes letter format.

13 Quickly addresses question via simple presentation of persona and situation.

14 Continues simple presentation of situation and uses repetitive language.

15 Introduction of complication but little development.

16 Lack of control of language.

17 Pedestrian presentation and lack of engagement continues.

18 More repetitive language eg 'you'.

19 Poor structure, lack of control highlighted by repetition.

20 Simplistic presentation of situation fails to develop tension.

21 Predictable unvaried sentence structure and literal language fail to create interest.

Examiner's Comments

A predictable pedestrian response that addresses the scope of the question. The simplistic purpose is achieved through simple sentence structure and vocabulary, literal repetitive language and superficial development of persona and situation. The response has very limited audience engagement and is simpler in content.

SECTION III — TOPIC AREAS

Question 3 (20 marks)

EITHER

(a) Aboriginal Experience

‘The sense of identity is fundamental to the Aboriginal Experience.’

What in your view contributes to that sense of identity?

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

The texts set for study are listed below:

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

‘You can’t go back once you cross the boundary.’

What makes people cross boundaries?

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

The texts set for study are listed below.

Nadine Gordimer, July’s People

Melina Marchetta, Looking for Alibrandi

Beryl Markham, West with the Night

Willy Russell, Educating Rita

General Comments

Demands of the Topic Areas section are high, as candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge of their Topic Area by discussing the Core Text, related issues and supplementary material in response to a specific question.

The best responses present an argument by integrating material from these different components. Candidates should realise that while the quote is important, it is the actual question which must be addressed in their response.

This year *My Place* in the Aboriginal Experience section and *Looking for Alibrandi* in the Crossing Boundaries section were the most popular texts. *Wildcat Falling* and *Educating Rita* were the next most popular texts. *West with the Night* and, in particular, *Don't take Your Love to Town* along with *July's People* were studied by very few candidates.

Candidates' Responses

Better responses communicated an obvious understanding of the requirements of their question using both quote and question in their introduction and then delivering a sustained argument. Examples of an introduction from above average responses:

Example 1

'The sense of identity is fundamental to the Aboriginal experience. From examining the novel 'My Place' as well as relevant supplementary material, there are many elements that contribute to that sense of identity. The loss of identity was a significant part of the Aboriginal experience and the need to regain this identity has been part of many Aboriginal people's lives. Other factors that have contributed to this sense of identity include an affinity with the land, and spirituality. Although the Aboriginal experience was very tough, their sense of identity was always evident.'

Example 2

'People are motivated to cross boundaries so they can achieve a sense of personal fulfilment, achievement and so they can enrich their own understanding. Once a boundary is crossed one can not 'go back'. In 'West With the Night' an autobiographical examination of one woman's remarkable life, Beryl Markham is motivated to cross boundaries of a personal, physical and cultural nature. If one takes into account the wealth of materials that also explore what motivates people to cross boundaries, then the issue of 'crossing boundaries' is universally significant.'

The examination's use of quote and question posed problems for some candidates.

Most students were aware they had to focus on the actual question, using the quote as stimulus. However, in the Aboriginal Experience question, some candidates discussed only loss of identity, and how this was fundamental, rather than 'what contributes to that sense of identity'.

Use of prepared answers, which are often merely issue based, clearly disadvantaged candidates, as their ability to engage with the question was severely limited. The majority of students exhibited an understanding that both their core text and supplementary material had to be discussed. Extensive quoting from both Topic Areas was evident, indicating sound knowledge of text and supplementary materials.

Candidates were aware of the need to link core text and supplementary material.

Example 3

‘The notion of crossing physical boundaries to gain a sense of achievement is also examined in the newspaper article ‘Moroney Conquers Cuba’ which appeared in *The Australian* in June 1998. Moroney’s determination is clear as she is motivated to swim between Mexico and Cuba, and enduring terrible conditions such as rough seas and stinging jellyfish. Even when she discovered a hole in her shark cage she kept swimming as she was ‘determined to get there’. It is clear that, like Markham, Moroney is motivated to cross physical boundaries to gain a sense of achievement.’

Above average candidates were able to be more than just descriptive and were able to analyse and integrate their text and supplementary material to produce a thorough response.

Example 4

‘Josie is one person that crosses a boundary in *Looking for Alibrandi*. She gains understanding and respect for her culture, which help her to cross her cultural boundary of being ethnic-Italian with strict cultural values, in Australia where there is ignorance to other cultures. Josie’s experience can be linked to Pina Lombardo’s ‘No salami Sandwiches for lunch please’. The proceedings from: *Italians in Australia: The first Congress of Italo-Australian Women, 1985*. Josie and Pina experience cultural boundaries at school, where they are isolated from other Italians. Josie ‘I want to be a part of her (Ivy) world...a world of sleek haircuts and upperclass privileges...a world where I can be accepted.’ Pina experiences a similar boundary. ‘I wanted to be seen and known as an Australian. That way I would be accepted.’ This isolation and alienation Pina and Josie felt at highschool brings them to find value in their culture. In both instances the boundary is crossed, both Josie and Pina learning, understanding and gaining pride in their background. Josie finds talking to Nonna Katia, interesting after previously showing little concern of the stories about Sicily.’

Candidates should be encouraged to accumulate a variety of supplementary materials such as newspaper articles, film, documentaries, autobiographies, poetry etc. Supplementary material is a definite requirement of any Topic Area question. Fewer candidates this year produced work on text or issue only; however, there are still candidates who discuss one piece of supplementary material and not a variety as required.

Candidates must be reminded that it is vital that their supplementary material be carefully chosen. Appropriateness must be a prime consideration. Poorly chosen supplementary material cannot successfully develop an argument and instead weakens the entire response. While one weak piece of supplementary material, amongst several pertinent ones may be a disappointment in an otherwise excellent essay, a candidate will fall into the below average category if none of their supplementary material is useful or appropriate. The following example does not link to the text in any valid way, it does not support or further the argument or indeed answer the question.

Example 5

‘Final Fantasy VII, a game on the Sony Playstation released by Squaresoft in 1997 hits this topic well. Cloud Strife a human rights fighter falls into a coma and also comes down with radiation poisoning. His friends Tifa, Barret and Cait Sith stand by him helping him recover from this illness making him lose the ‘every man for himself’ concept on life he approached. Josie too learns this lesson that Friends and Family are always there for support, she will never be able to retrace that Friends and Family will be there until the end.’

Supplementary material cannot just be listed. It must be sufficiently discussed and linked to the rest of the argument. A quote tacked on at the end before moving to a new issue is insufficient.

Example 6

‘To the Aboriginal culture family and the land are the two most important things in their lives. That is why ‘we couldn’t understand why they had taken us, we weren’t their family’ (My Place by Sally Morgan). The loss of their land and families is extremely traumatic towards self identity as ‘Growing up without my mother left gaps in my understanding of my proper family connections’ (Apekathe Documentary SBS late 1997).’

The sourcing of supplementary material continues to be a weakness. It was noted that interviews and the Internet were increasingly being used this year. Sourcing of an interview requires the person’s name, date of the interview and enough description of the contents of the interview to provide a sense of authenticity to be a valid piece of supplementary material. The site, name of the home page and access date should be provided for an Internet piece. Use of a poem requires the title, author and brief summary or quotes to provide a clear idea of its contents.

Example 7

‘In the poem ‘I am What I am’ by Margaret Brunahan, Margaret also talks of this sense of belonging to the Aboriginal experience

‘I have this feeling inside of me,

The one that you call affinity’.

Part of her identity, like Sally’s, is a close affinity with nature and the land.’

The use of artwork is similar as the following example proves.

Example 8

‘Through Aboriginal art, we can see that expressing past injustices was a means to find an identity. Trevor Nicholl’s painting ‘inside looking out 2’, 1988, portrays a large blank and empty black face, with no sense of belonging. The doors at the bottom corners of the painting have been blocked by white people. The doors behind the empty eyes lead to nowhere, only blackness and empty space. By aboriginal artists expressing to the public, how their culture has been destroyed, it shows us that a part of the Aboriginal identity, was feeling that they have not been accepted by white Australians. The use of traditional signs and symbols such as a serpent, shows the viewer that their spirituality and affinity with the land was what contributed to their sense of identity.’

In contrast, a piece of supplementary material that has no sourcing, no link and no furthering of the argument:

‘In a real life example; 2 people, a boy and a girl were best friends for years, did everything together and thought it would be that way forever, as did their friends. One day they decided to go a step further and started dating. After a few months they fought and broke up. Hence ruining a strong relationship. So some boundaries are hard to cross because these two never spoke again.’

Example of a Well Above Average Response for Aboriginal Identity

‘The sense of identity within a culture is an important element which determines the survival and preservation of a culture and its people. The Aboriginal sense of identity not only rests heavily on the people’s connection with their culture and tradition but also on the tolerance and understanding of the society in which they live. However, history has witnessed the brutal practice of our societies social Darwinist ideologies and attempt to destroy the Aboriginal sense of identity. The core text ‘Paperbark’ by Jack Davis (ET al) is a unified voice of the pain of the Aboriginal people as they try to preserve their pride in their identity. It informs our perception with the brutal atrocities which have hindered their ability to sustain their sense of identity such as the destruction of their culture through the removal of their children and prejudice and racism. It also reveals their painful journey towards reclaiming and embracing their culture with pride and maintain their sense of identity. We need to be motivated by appreciation of the Aboriginal culture in order to allow them to survive.

Since white colonisation, society has instigated the attempt to destroy the aboriginal culture through the systematic removal of their children. This has had a detrimental effect on the other people’s sense of identity as it has forced many to deny their culture. The story ‘The Letter’ by S.Morgan is a unified lament of all Aboriginal mothers touched by these ‘unwritten policies’. It traces the traumatising experience of an Aboriginal mother who had her child stolen by the A.P.B on the grounds that ‘it was the best thing’. Since Elaine was deemed halfcaste it was ‘the law that black mothers were not allowed to keep babies like her.’ This was purely because ‘they didn’t want you brought up as one of us’. In reality these acts served to break down the family unit and deprive the child of cultural nourishment, essential to the contribution to their sense of identity. As a result psychological dispossession could be more effective as the forces of indoctrination inculcated a ‘white identity’ into the children. This is reflected by Elaine who coldly rebuffs her families plea to ‘come back to her own people’. How can this race uphold their sense of identity if they are forced to assimilate into society. This has had a destructive contribution to the

Aboriginal sense of identity, leaving many to realise the artificial one they have been forced to uphold. Similarly, in the article 'Who Took the Children' by J. Cowshaw (SMH 2/9/97) we also deal with the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and how it has hindered or obliterated their attempts to preserve their sense of identity. The article extinguishes the claim that the removals were a sympathetic attempt to lift the children 'out of the dirt'. It reveals how the poor condition of their settlements were a direct result of Government exploitation, as they were held in virtual serfdom 'their captive labour force.' In addition it reveals their genocidal intentions, driven by the motivation that assimilation would eventually eradicate 'full bloods and destroy the culture.' It is impossible for one to sustain their identity when their culture is being annihilated. In addition we explore the institutionalised lives forced upon the children as they were enthralled by assimilation policies which 'implanted white ways into them, even hatred of black culture'. This psychological brainwash is reflected by Elaine who dismisses her families plea to claim 'your Aboriginality'. It is indeed these intolerant and genocidal acts which have denied the people to keep their sense of identity through the practice of their culture. We need to be more appreciative and openminded and destroy our myopic visions so that we can allow them to rebuild and practice their culture, and eventually their sense of identity.

Aboriginal people have also suffered a legacy of racism as they struggle to find acceptance within society, enmeshed in our ignorance. The story 'Bidjibub' by T. Birda mirrors the reality of societies ignored racism towards Aboriginal people which has left them displaced, aimlessly groping for acceptance. The story traces the traumatising experience of an Aboriginal girl, Bidjibub, who battles the racial anecdotes of her obnoxious teacher. Bidjibub's Aboriginality becomes the perpetual target of hatred which continually displaces her, fearful to uphold her sense of identity. For example, she is discriminated when she is warned of her racial and social inferiority within society since 'not many people will employ black people' like her. In addition, the physical abuse at home compounds the mental deterioration at school. For example, when she returns bruised due to her fathers physical abuse, she becomes the immediate target of racial vilification which connects it to her own racial innate aggressiveness. The teacher connects her bruise to the generalisation that the Aboriginal race are violent savages 'most aggressive race I've seen'. This instills shame and pain in her, expressed by 'tears damp on her tunic'. This case reflects the general behaviour of society towards Aboriginal people and how it forces their courage and pride to diminish in their sense of identity.

Similarly the alarming poem 'racism' by O. Moonun also evokes the racist harsh world Aboriginals are forced to contend with. It reveals the hatred of society and how it has forced Aboriginals to suppress all traits of their Aboriginality. The poem opens with a harsh image of aboriginals 'stalking the corridor of life' which depicts the institutionalised lives they are forced to live, enthralled like serviles. The poet reveals the psychological deterioration and trauma caused by racism forcing the aboriginals to 'scream for release as life becomes intolerable'. Further more, the poet expresses a strong acerbity and scornful attitude towards the 'racist moulds' who 'fail to see the contentious bone' rather than 'colour the misleading curse of not judged by the colour of her skin'. The poet also reveals the demeaning nature of racism as it reduces humanity to insignificance. These brutal and ignorant attitudes have dampened the courage of Aboriginal people in society, fearful to practice their sense of identity. Their denial of freedom has overridden the Aboriginal peoples sense of identity with a feeling of failure, unwilling to display it.

The Aboriginal experience also impresses a need for heightened understanding of Aboriginal tradition and ways as their attempt to reclaim their culture with pride is being defeated by society's ignorance. The historical document 'Restore dignity, Restore pride' by Rob Riley reflects societies lack of comparison towards Aboriginal affairs and how it has left them 'earful to reclaim their culture with pride'. Furthermore it reveals how 'Aboriginals still occupy a wrong position in the minds of many Australians which has diminished their pride in their identity and willingness to reclaim it. In addition, it reveals how our ignorance and intolerance due to lack of understanding of Aboriginal traits is allowing our racist attitudes to mount, denying their pride to be restored in their culture. This indeed nulls and negates any attempt for their sense of identity to linger into the future. For example despite the past atrocities in relation to the dispossession of their tribal sacred lands, the high profile issue of land rights has fallen into the depths of white criticism and hatred. This is indeed due to our lack of understanding of the past atrocities of land dispossession as well as the cultural significance of Aboriginal land. It is therefore not surprising that only 56% of Australians realise how the survival of the Aboriginal culture and sense of identity rests heavily on the preservation their intimate connection with the land. Finally, Riley presents to us a need for understanding and appreciation within our society so that they may reclaim their culture with pride and maintain their Aboriginal identity.

It is very optimistic and pleasing to see Aboriginals travelling the painful journey towards revitalising and embracing their culture. In contrast to Rob Riley's document, the ABC documentary 'Song of Survival' by J.Conley illustrates the optimism and positivity among Aboriginal people and how they are beginning to reclaim their culture and identity with pride. It reveals how more and more Aboriginals are rebuilding their cultural foundations and beliefs in their own cultural worth. Today, more Aboriginals rejoice in their culture. Emancipation and survival, rather than look upon the painful past. They rejoice and project a voice that the 'spirit is alive and blooming'. In particular, it focuses on the celebration of the Aboriginal community on Australia Day. Ironically despite its significance with white colonisation and the beginning of the atrocities, it reflects a concert of 'song, dance and storytelling' as they celebrate their cultural survival and identity. This has indeed had a positive effect on the sense of pride in their identity and its life. An interesting aspect was that the concert was held on Aboriginal lands which highlights their pride in their identity, extinguishing the myth that 'the culture has diminished'. This is indeed the ambiguity of the experience as it shows their willingness to 'rebuild what we've lost', despite the past. This positivity and pride can only be restored by our acceptance of Aboriginal people and allowing their identity to be preserved.

The sense of identity in the Aboriginal society is indeed catalysed and prompted by our acceptance of the people, allowing them to exercise their culture. The core text reveals the past incidents of racism, hatred, destruction of Aboriginal culture and the denial to reclaim their culture with pride. However the future needs to promote, otherwise, so that their identity can survive.'

Example of a Well Above Average Response for Crossing Boundaries

'Rita's will and motivation to turn over a new leaf in Willy Russell's 'Educating Rita' by stepping over the barriers that have plagued her for so long give her a newfound sense of pride and fulfilment. It means getting rid of the life that had become one of lost hope, one that restrained her from achieving her dreams and similar situations arise in 'The Education of Frank McCourt', 'Trading Places' and 'Degrees of Strain'. In each of the above cases the characters want to breakaway from the normality of their lives to explore themselves and change their perceptions of life.

In 'Educating Rita', Rita has the determination to change but she quickly learns she doesn't have what the other students have – 'When I was a kid, I always wanted to go to a boardin' school'. Because of her lack of education her dreams are out of reach and she is restrained. Similarly, in 'The Education of Frank McCourt' in the Jan 98 edition of Readers Digest by Barbara Sande Dimmit, Frank's lack of education restricts his progression in life. After emigrating from Limerick, Ireland, he tries to teach in America but when asked by students where he was educated, he recalls feeling 'if I tell them the truth they'll feel superior to me' and 'You come from nothing do you are nothing'. Both Rita and Frank's desires to change and improve their life by fulfilling their dreams are held back and they cannot enjoy personal satisfaction.

It becomes evident Rita has crossed her boundary when she tells Frank 'I started talking to some students down on the lawn'. She now knows, and enjoys the benefit of being educated. Like Rita, Frank knows that denying his past restricted him from achieving his dreams so he told his students 'I never did' (get an education) and 'When I came to America, I dreamed bigger dreams. I loved reading and writing and teaching was the most exalted profession I could imagine'. Both Rita and Frank are motivated to cross boundaries because of their desire to do things they never got the chance to do.

Rita often had doubts beforehand but she now had what she always wanted – 'I'm educated. I've got what you've got'. This is why she crossed boundaries. Frank was inspired to write a book about his mother's hardships but like Rita, doubts re-entered his life – 'It's no good Mr. McCourt. I don't have what it takes.' His experience and desire intervened though – 'of course you do. Dig deeper. Find your own voice and dance your own dance'. Rita and Frank showed that because they wanted to achieve an education, personal independence and a start to a new life with exciting new prospects they were more successful people in every department of everyday life.

Rita finds it particularly hard to cross the social class boundary into the upper class. She confides to Frank 'You were sippin' drinks an' talkin' an' laughin'. An' I couldn't come in.' She wants to cross boundary to be able to understand the meaning of life better. The movie 'Trading Places' directed by John Landis and starring Eddie Murphy exhibits a similar case. Billy Ray Valentine is at the start of the film, on the bottom rung of the social class ladder forced to beg on the streets – 'Please? Anything...just a couple of dollars'. Rita and Billy Ray both feel that had their background been better they would be able to be on the other side of the social class ladder and enjoy what they see as the 'success' that goes with it.

Rita tries to become an upper class person by emulating Trish with a fake accent – 'But Frank I have to persevere in order that I shall.' Her attempt is superficial and she cannot cross her barrier to achieve the meaning and success she desires for personal fulfilment. When the chance arises for Billy Ray to progress to the upper class he does so and it becomes evident when he says of the lower class – 'They treat my house like a God damn zoo!'

Both Rita and Billy Ray understand the meaning they were searching for when they realise that there are problems in every class, rich or poor – 'Found a better song to sing? No – you've found a different song, that's all' says Frank to which Rita replies 'I just sat...thinking what you said.' Billy Ray also realises that 'Man, they're been using me like guinea pigs'. Rita and Billy Ray's ability to accept that social class is what you make of it has given them meaning and purpose as more successful people in whatever class they choose to live in.

Rita's desire to achieve independence and family support is held back by her husband Denny. She 'told him I wanted a better way of livin' me life'. His unsupportive attitude restrains her from achieving the independence she desires by crossing her boundary. Jennifer Lees in the article 'Degrees of Strain' in the Oct 14th issue of the Sydney Morning Herald by Bettina Arndt feels the same urge to achieve independence but is held back by her husband. Jennifer was 'A personal secretary who spent 10 years as a bored and frustrated full time mother'. Rita and Jennifer cannot achieve their dreams while this unsupportive attitude remains.

After studying, Denny is still unsupportive – 'Denny burnt me books' she tells Frank. Her dream of independence and support becomes an even greater motivational desire to cross her boundaries. Jennifer Lees tells the same, 'It was the best thing I had ever done. I absolutely loved it...but as far as my husband was concerned I was no longer the person he married.'

Rita and Jennifer cross their boundaries when they decide to leave their husbands so they can achieve the dreams that had for so long been an unreality. After being given an ultimatum Rita tells Denny she'll leave him and she now has the independence she desired – 'I dunno. I might go to France. I might go to me mothers. I might even have a baby. I dunno. I'll make a decision, I'll choose. I dunno.' In the same way Jennifer leaves her husband and now 'After a successful managerial career is employed at a university.'

With their new status achieved by crossing their boundaries, Rita as well as Frank McCourt, Billy Ray Valentine and Jennifer Lees have become their dreams. Because of their desire to become a new person, achieve new goals and look for new prospects they have become fulfilled for the greater success of their personal lives.'

It should be noted, as in previous reports, that Supplementary Material needs to be sufficiently sourced and then explained in relation to key issues. If the material is merely described and no attempt is made to relate it to the Core Text, then the response is unable to be placed in the average or above average categories.

Candidates continue to present challenging Supplementary Material and many successfully integrate this into their responses. The ability to shape the issues presented in both the Core Text and the Supplementary Material continues to be the major feature of the above average responses. Very few candidates fail to present a variety of Supplementary Material but many candidates fail to evenly address each piece of Supplementary Material and create an imbalance in their arguments.

MARKING GUIDELINES

Topic Area questions require candidates to:

- display an understanding of the Topic Area
- engage in a discussion which demonstrated an integrated response to the question
- use Supplementary Material appropriately in the context of the above.

At best, candidates' responses are informed, integrated, personal and address the question.

Marking Criteria

The criteria which you as a teacher may have given your students to help them answer a Topic Area question must not be seen as criteria in the marking process. Remember that the responses are first draft, written under exam conditions. Candidates have taken two different approaches to answering the question:

- (i) separate treatment of Core Text and issues followed by Supplementary Material to support or
- (ii) an integrated approach to issues in the Core Text followed by discussion of Supplementary Material.

This pattern is evident throughout the response. Both approaches are equally valid.

Note: Supplementary Material should be sourced but, if not, it must be sufficiently detailed so as to convey a sense of authenticity.

'Variety of Supplementary Material' means more than two pieces which may be of the same type, eg newspaper articles.

A Range 15, 14, 13 — Well Above Average

- Directly addresses the question obviously demonstrating a clear understanding of requirements
- A developed and sustained argument using an analytical approach
- Integration of Core Text, issues and Supplementary Material should be balanced, clear and complementary
- Comprehensive textual knowledge and analysis
- Must have a variety of Supplementary Material which is extensively analysed
- Supplementary Material must be appropriate to develop argument

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

- Must address the question with relevant arguments developed
- Integration of Core Text, issues and Supplementary Material must be obvious
- Some imbalance between Core Text and Supplementary Material may be evident
- Largely analytical
- Sound textual knowledge
- Relevant Supplementary Material which advances argument, although may have some descriptive elements

C Range 9, 8, 7 — Average

- Obvious attempt to address the question
- Core Text and Supplementary Material descriptive rather than analytical
- Links between Core Text, issues and Supplementary Material should be evident but may fail to fully enhance the argument OR may not be totally successful
- Obvious textual knowledge
- Core Text and Supplementary Material discussion often not balanced

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

- No real understanding of the requirements of the question
- No clear sense of an argument
- May mention words from the question (for example, a prepared answer)
- Core Text and/or Supplementary Material often merely described or listed
- May have only one piece of Supplementary Material or a variety which is not linked and superficially treated

E Range 3, 2, 1, 0 — Well Below Average

- No attempt to address the question
- May use only Core Text or Supplementary Material
- Core text and/or Supplementary Material briefly described
- No linkage between Core Text and Supplementary Material

ENGLISH PAPER 2

RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

SECTION 1 Common Questions for 2/3 Unit Common and 2 Unit General Candidates

Question 1: Poetry

'Poetry makes nothing happen.'

What is the point of poetry? Discuss with reference to two poems, one from each of the two poets you have studied from the list below.

2 Unit General Text List:

Joanne Burns

Bruce Dawe

Robert Gray

Mark O'Connor

Kenneth Slessor

Judith Wright

Candidates' Responses

The stimulus quote enabled candidates to respond either affirmatively or negatively and there were excellent responses adopting either viewpoint. The best candidates wrote with thorough knowledge of the poetry and with considerable feeling for it. The very best responses integrated comprehensive discussion of the poetry with solid discussion of poetic technique. Candidates in the upper range were able to engage the question with articulate and thoughtful answers which were written with insight and with flair. Average responses often mentioned the question but frequently lost sight of it as they embarked on a 'prepared' analysis reflecting their knowledge of the poetry.

Weaker responses were typified by laboured expression and limited discussion of the question. A mere listing of techniques without consideration of effect was considered to be of little value. Despite an open choice of poems, some responses did not display a detailed knowledge of the poems chosen.

Candidates who achieved higher grades were able to incorporate discussion of the set poems with a sustained argument addressing the essay question. These responses were seen to be far more successful than a standard 'prepared answer'.

Overall, the responses reflected thorough preparation by candidates. The range of poems selected demonstrated the fact that candidates were well prepared, indicating their understanding that all set poems must be prepared for the HSC exam.

Dawe, Slessor and Wright were the most popular poets in 2 Unit General. It was pleasing to note the increasing number of responses to Gray and O'Connor. In the 2/3 Unit (Common) all of the set poets (with the exception of Chaucer and Maiden) were well represented. Many candidates genuinely seemed to enjoy the experience of writing about these poets.

1998 COMMON QUESTION CRITERIA GUIDELINES – POETRY

Answers may be characterised by some or all of these features.

A Range 15, 14, 13 — Well Above Average

- Well above average but not necessarily perfect
- Answer strongly focused on what is the point of poetry. This is demonstrated through the discussion of their chosen poems and their interpretation of the question
- Generally a sophisticated style and structure
- Often superior discussion / analysis of effects of language / imagery clearly linked to ideas
- Deals effectively with two poems — one may be stronger than the other
- Sustained discussion of the poems in answer to the question
- 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; or two 'mini essays'
- Interpretation of poetry displays insight and engagement
- May be comprehensive though not inspirational
- Discussion of the point of poetry may be implied or explicit

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

- Above average response which may have some flaws which restrict it to the 'B' range
- Engages with the question demonstrating an understanding of the point of poetry
- Proficient discussion / analysis of effects of language and imagery
- May be stronger on one poem than the other
- May address the question in the introduction and conclusion but not really deal with it in the body of the essay

- Interpretation is supported by evidence drawn from the poems
- Detailed understanding of the ideas in the poems
- Appropriate choice and selective use of quotations
- Good expression with a more structured approach than 'C' range
- May be very detailed answer with mundane expression
- Deals with more than simply content
- Discussion of the point of poetry may be implied or explicit

C Range 9, 8, 7 — Average

- Competent understanding of the poems
- Acknowledges the question, but then loses sight of it in the discussion
- Competent, if pedestrian, approach; may be repetitive, regurgitating poems 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 it may be a superficial understanding
- May be stronger on one poem than the other
- Competent retelling
- At the top of the range the candidates may have an understanding of the poems and some understanding of what the point of poetry is
- A weaker C student may tend to tell a story but shows knowledge of the poems with some appropriate evidence
- May communicate ideas clearly but with flawed expression
- Some discussion of ideas and feelings without discussion of technique
- Discussion of the point of poetry may be implied or explicit

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

- Below average response
- Limited attempt to answer the question
- Excessive on recounting of content, storytelling, paraphrasing with no attempt to select salient points
- May mention techniques without further development

- 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
- Has limited grasp of the point of poetry
- Discussion of the point of poetry may be implied or explicit

E Range 3, 2, 1, 0 — Well Below Average

- Well below average response
- Little relevance to question
- Discussion not substantiated, unsupported generalisations
- Irrelevant discussion
- Serious misunderstanding or lack of understanding of poems
- May be a general discussion about the question but with little or no reference to the poems
- Poor expression
- Inadequate treatment of poems
- Significant gaps in understanding
- May be very short or incomplete

'0' mark says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the question.

'00' is awarded for a non attempt, a blank page or the words 'Not attempted' may appear on the script. Record as per marking procedure.

A candidate who answers only one poet will score no higher than the 'C' range but may reach C 8.

If a candidate attempts more than one poem from each poet, read the whole script but count only the best discussed poem from each poet.

Above Average Responses (A and B Range)

The means to achieve this grade range for the common poetry varied. Some responses were both concise and precise while others were characterised by extensive discussion which was thorough and insightful. All demonstrated apt selection of material which was well suited to the candidates' argument, reflecting both depth and breadth of understanding.

Above average responses were characterised by an insightful discussion of the chosen poems. They focused on what the point of poetry was through the analysis of effects of poetic language. The best responses demonstrated a superior and sustained discussion of poetic technique clearly linked to ideas or issues.

Most of the above average candidates provided proficient and integrated analysis of poems; the most outstanding displayed flair and fluency. Often the discussion of the point of poetry was subtle or implied.

Typical 'A' Range Response

'Poetry is one of the most powerful mediums through which we, as humans, are able to catch and preserve the past. In this painfully transient world, where Time is the ultimate arbitrator poetry allow us to store memories of past moments which can be either of personal or public historical importance. By translating feelings and emotions (which are usually so intangible and fleeting) into structured, patterned poetic artifacts, both Heaney and Harwood transcend the transience of human experience and immortalise a past moment. Harwood is concerned more with capturing the memory of her own past to defy 'death's disorientating scale', while Heaney uses poetry as a means of 'restoring the culture of the country to itself by writing about past moments in the history of Northern Ireland which have huge bearing on the national consciousness of the people.

In *The Violets*, Harwood explores the power of poetry as a means of preserving the 'lamplit presences' of her early childhood. The speaker in the poem, by the last stanza, has realised the significance of memory and by translating that highly personal experience into a structured poem, those memories are preserved. Thus the poem itself plays a role in bringing back Harwood in intimate recollections of a past time: the structure of the poem (with the indented passages visibly marking the transition to the past) reveals an interplay between past and present which the medium of poetry has facilitated. The poem has an intimate tone, created by the use of the first person, the use of enjambement between lines and stanzas (which means the poem has a flowing feel to it) and the highly personal subject matter: a childhood recollection. Each stanza has a slightly different definite rhyme scheme, yet it is significant that each rhyming word at the end of the line has a 'partner' within the same stanza; which contributes to the sense of calm and continuity which the poem evokes. At first, the speaker's tone is depressed and melancholy, suggested by the short, simple sentence which creates the milieu: 'It is dark, and cold'. The transferred epithets 'frail, melancholy flowers' suggest it is the speaker who is feeling depressed, and the references to death and finality ('ashes and loam') contribute to this atmosphere of loneliness.

Yet already in the first stanza there is a suggestion of the speaker moving back in time, with the simile of 'The melting west is striped like ice-cream'. The transition from present to past is flowing and easy: the repetition of 'ambiguous light. Ambiguous sky' and the indent enable the reader to move easily with the speaker to a past time. The word 'ambiguous' reveals the speaker's ambivalence: the light and sky and the scent of the violets belongs to two times – both present and past. While the speaker is feeling a sense of loss in the first stanza, that time has reclaimed memory, the ambiguity is that those past moments are still there – the memories are present, not absent, and by putting them down in a poem, she is able to capture them and to realise that memories are what we have, not what we have lost.

The speaker moves from first person narrative to moments of distance from herself as a child: for example, 'young parents and their restless child' as they go 'into my father's house' (the inverted sentence reinforcing the safety and idyllic harmony of the close family). The warmth of that past time is conveyed through phrase such as 'to light the lamp' (the 'l' alliteration has a gentle, lolling, comforting rhythm to it) and the use of words such as 'surrendered' 'reconciled' and 'innocent'. The crux of the child's loss as she sobs: 'where's morning gone' echoes that of the adult's lament of her 'lost' childhood. The direct speech gives it an immediacy and represents the child's premature, partial grasp of the passage of time.

Yet in the last stanza, the poet comes to realise that she still has those memories and 'lamplit presences'. Just as the child was reconciled by 'milk and storybook', the adult is pacified by the knowledge that 'death's disorientating scale' (the 'd' alliteration giving a sense of the inexorable passage of time) cannot distort her memories: hence she is reconciled by the 'storybook' of memory – which can be accessed through her poetry. Thus the speaker ends the poem in a positive note, ambiguously mixing past and present with the present tense in 'faint scent of violets drifts in air', concluding with the realisation of the power of poetry to recapture and store memories.

In *Requiem for the Croppies*, Heaney's focus is more on the importance of poetry in restoring the culture and history of his country to the people, and to emphasise the ongoing cycle of regeneration and renewal in the face of the everyday sectarian violence. By writing this poem in sonnet form, with fourteen lines and a strict abab cdcd efefef rhyme scheme, Heaney captures the importance of the 1878 uprising of the Croppies: the formal structure and religious allusions ('Requiem'; 'conclave') give the poem a serious tone, while the irregular rhythm, enjambement and imperfect rhyme ('day'; 'infantry') ensure that the poem is told through the Croppies' consciousness, as if by one of the people. This combination of sophisticated language and the people's language is evidenced in the title: while 'Requiem' has important, formal religious connotations, 'croppies' was the colloquial name given to the rebel fighters.

Heaney is conscious of how he tells the story in the people's terms, and also of how he emphasises the link between people and the landscape. He uses natural imagery to describe the massacre of the croppies in the sestet, which both removes some of the horror of the slaughter while emphasising the link the people had with the land: 'Terraced thousands died, shaking scythe at cannon. The hillside blushed, soaked in their broken wave'. He also shows how the land nourished and sustained them ('the pockets of our great coats full of barley') and in the end gave them the living memorial denied them by their enemies: 'and in August the barley grew up out of the grave'). The solidarity of the people is made reference to throughout: for example 'A people' (the singular, indefinite article highlights their togetherness); 'Terraced thousands died' and 'their broken wave'. The water and blood imagery of 'wave' and 'soaked' suggests the oneness of the people, yet also the great shame that they felt in the face of such futile bloodshed.

The volta in line ten (which is built up to the octave), slows down the rhythm of the poem and focusses attention on the references to Vinegar Hill, which the people of Ireland would recognise as a place of historical importance. The juxtaposition of two incongruent terms, 'total' and 'conclave' holds the ambiguity of the slaughter: while Heaney suggests that the deaths were not futile in that the 'barley grew up out of the grave', the word 'fatal' suggests that the cycle of vengeance and violence could also be ongoing, which has dire consequence for the people of Northern Ireland.

Thus in both *The Violets* and *Requiem for the Croppies*, the respective poets use poetry as a means of recapturing and immortalising either a personal memory, or one of historical importance. By translating a past moment in time into a structured poem, they show that poetry indeed, does make something happen: it has the power to remember and preserve the past, which is something that humans always yearn to do.'

Examiner's Comments

Perceptive analysis of the chosen poems with superior essay technique. This candidate integrates discussion with intelligent analysis of poetic devices. Quoting is brief, pertinent, and accurate. Thorough and intelligent argument is complemented by sophisticated style and structure.

Typical 'B' Range Response 1

'The statement 'Poetry makes nothing happen' is certainly not true, it has a point and we see that this is evident in Bruce Dawe and Robert Gray's poems. Bruce Dawe in 'Enter Without So Much as Knocking' brings us to question our meaning in existence, make us aware of the shallowness of modern life as he sees it and to entertain with humour as well as insight. Robert Gray's 'Late Ferry' also brings us to see the point of poetry with his images, presenting the fragility of life we gain and are asked to appreciate detail and the beauty of nature.

In 'Late Ferry' Gray frameshots a journey in which 'he makes everything happen'; the scene is set and feelings are stirred as we feel a sadness and loss for the ferry leaving 'this small tubenous bay for the big city'. Here Gray opens our eyes to see the point of poetry and providing us to see his personal insight to the familiar precious moment of watching the ferry, we see the image's meaning to him.

From the beginning of the poem a scene is set, his point to engage and focus the reader. The statement 'going up onto the huge dark harbour' conjours feelings of a daunting journey, presenting the dark harbour to be something menacing and unknown and a sympathy is created. Gray also uses imagery to create an atmosphere, 'palm tree tops touching like the brush on a snare drum'. At this point poetry creates a strong image and feeling, we can almost hear the wind in the trees from the offshore breeze of the water.

Alliteration in the 's' sounds of 'swishing' also helps to create the image of such an atmosphere but it also adds to the peace of the silent onlooker, Gray watching the ferry leave.

The simile of 'like hands after the light switch' re-enforce the nervous feeling of the little ferry going out to face the city, its fragility. Poetry here gives an insight to an image we may have overlooked and in Gray's 'painting with words' he makes us aware.

The statement 'and it looks like honeycomb' in the second last line reveals the true essence of the ferry and how Gray feels about it. Honeycomb is something rich in colour and flavour like the ferry with its familiar and comforting yellow light. It is a contrast to the 'silver blizzard', 'powerful lights in the city'. Honeycomb is something desirable which brings us to share this precious moment with him, a transient moment. This image also makes the point of the fragility of the ferry, it is leaving the 'narrow wood jetty'. Bruce Dawe's 'Enter Without So Much as Knocking' definitely is evident of poetry having a point in his negative and satirised view of modern society. His poetry makes us question our own life, how we live it and the meaning of our existence. The first Latin sentence of 'remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return' creates the feeling of hopelessness and the emptiness and meaninglessness in our lives.

In the first stanza the use of short words of 'Blink blink, hospital silence', highlights the simplicity of the beginning of life. The use of capitals in such words accentuate them and engage our attention. We are thrown into the first stanza with the announcement of 'Bobby Dazzler on Channel 7' and the statement 'lucky...' lucky because it didn't mean a thing to him then. This image of Bobby Dazzler on TV sets the scene of the commercialism and tackiness of modern society and the repetition of 'lucky' which we hear again in the third stanza points out that life is just chance.

In this poem Dawe places a strong emphasis on materialism, commercialism and advertising, suggesting that this is what modern society is really all about, but it also makes us question and look at our own lives to see if this is the case. In his description of the family 'well equipped smoothly run household, one economy sized mum and one Anthony Squires Coolstream summerweight Dad' we see this point of his poetry but the point is also made that there is little individuality in our modern world, is there just no room for it.

This description and its alliteration of the 's' sounds captures the smooth sound, as if being read out by a radio or TV announcer. The repetition of 'beep' in the third stanza and other hypocritical signs and instructions brings us to see the baseness and restrictions put on our everyday life. This repetition of such instructions at the end of the poem give a sense of unity and re-enforce the point of such restrictions taking over life.

Even the title of the poem suggests we have no choice into entering this world and Bruce Dawe strongly emphasises this.

Dawe's point in this poem highlights life as a rat race he says 'kick whoevers down, remember its number one everytime' and we see in the 4th stanza how we have little time to stop and take in the beauty of nature and to really think. Dawe creates such an effect by slowing down the pace with the word 'However' and a statement 'littered with stains'. This suggests that unlike the rest of the modern world they were natural and untainted by restrictions and modernism.

The repetition of the word 'kicked' reinforces the harshness of reality which Dawe brings us to see.

Dawe makes a strong use of satire to entertain, we laugh at the description of the family but also we see his point of the shallowness of our existence is made very clear by such exaggeration.

The final stanza we see his poetry to convey a point of a very negative society describing, that person by stating 'old automatic smile with nothing behind it' what is our purpose if we have no time for meaningful relationships?

Examiner's Comments

This is a proficient response addressing the question with well supported evidence while demonstrating an understanding of the point of poetry. Although it does not have the control of language to get into the 'A' Range, it deals thoroughly with ideas and techniques. A detailed understanding of the effects of language and imagery was a characteristic of above average scripts.

Typical 'B' Range Response 2

'The point of poetry is to examine aspects of life in a more condensed and poignant method than that in blank verse. This is evident in the poets of Robert Browning and Les Murray, and their poems, 'Soliloquy of a Spanish Cloister' and 'Widower in the Country', respectively.

Poetry presents humans in a different perspective, often at a point of crisis or revelation. This is so in 'Soliloquy of a Spanish Cloister' in the presentation of a monk who feels immense hatred for a fellow monk, 'Brother Lawrence'. Poetry captures the monk's hatred in the opening line, 'Grrr , there goes my heart's abhorence...'. Poetry aims in this instance to make pleasing to the reader, what is distasteful to the monk.

The poetry of Robert Browning is intended to grasp the complexities of the human psyche and examine the tendencies of humans to be eccentric. Irony is in the poem, as through the monk's revelations of Brother Lawrence's habits, the leader is able to perceive him as quite humble and kind. For example, 'What's the 'Latin' name for parsley?'. This innocent question is returned with a most cruel aside of 'What's the Greek name for Swine's snout?'. Poetry therefore, is able to explicitly examine the psychological balance in mind of this monk and it is done effectively through Browning's dramatic monologue.

Poetry, with the aid of the dramatic monologue is successful in delving into the mind of the speaker. This is achieved through the asides and parenthesis. '(He he there his lily snaps)', this quote further emphasises that the monk himself has the problem and not Brother Lawrence.

Poetry also gives the reader a flow in the ideas of the characters (or speaker). The even rhythm and rhyme create a lyrical quality that cannot be matched in normal blank verse. The creative flow creates action and thereby makes things happen. As in, '...(I) drink three sips...(he) at one gulp...'. This stanza has a lyrical quality in which action succinctly takes place.

Poetry also allows or more of the reader's senses to be alerted and touched. The onomatopoeia of the last stanza with words such as 'st-' (hissing) 'Sanchida', 'Vespers' all create a serpentine image of the monk 'spitting' out his words. This alerts the reader to the sounds and enforces the point that poetry grasps at the senses to make the themes of hate and death in the monastery more vivid.

Les Murray's , 'The Widower in the Country' is a poem that explores the day of a widow, whose life has been rendered worthless. Poetry in this sense creates empathy for the man and thereby humans who've experienced loss. Whilst the man may seem to have no point in life, poetry through imagery makes the reader come to the conclusion on their own without a long dramatic story.

The poem captures the essence of what the man's life has become, 'and leave my bed unmade' and 'for I get up late now'. Murray's poetry is remarkable more for what isn't said than what is. From this line, the reader can see that he has no need to conform to any sort of domesticity.

The poem also has a sense of despair. The speaker uses the personal 'I' throughout which increases the sense of his aloneness. The simple use of different techniques in poetry can change the whole context of the poem and enforce the point of it making aware to the reader that there is more to the poem than what is plaintively written.

The use of imagery in poetry is effective in also conveying the man's grief and pain. 'Xmas paddocks aching in the heat' exemplifies how nature reflects human emotions. It is made even more poignant with the reference to the festive ('Xmas') season, which he has no reason or desire to be so.

Poetry also has the effect, through its structure of creating the long drawn out day that the man endures. The stanzas increase in length as they proceed through his day. Poetry makes action take place with visual images 'moonlit' 'claws' 'screaming', 'ski-ing'. The use of particular words allow for poetry to become enlightening and also complex, the latter requiring the reader's insight and imagination.

Therefore, poetry does make things or action 'happen' through the use of imagery, unpleasing characters, dramatic monologues, and specific language techniques. These all make poetry achieve its aim of entertaining, enlightening, perplexing and intriguing readers into stories that are more pleasing to read due to their sometimes lyrical qualities.'

Examiner's Comments

This response is fluent and articulate. It engages with the question. While a sound and well supported analysis of poetic technique was pursued confidently, the level of discussion of themes and ideas kept this response out of the A range.

Average Responses (C Range)

This range was characterised by an adequate understanding of the poems. At the top of the range responses were characterised by an understanding of the poems and some understanding of the point of poetry.

Weaker scripts in the average range tended to retell storylines while demonstrating knowledge of the poems with some appropriate evidence.

Average responses often selected limited material which was then used to assert, rather than argue a position.

Typical 'C' Range Response 1

'Although dramatically different in their approach, stemming particularly from the difference in time periods and presentation of ideas, both John Keats and John Donne ultimately convey the same message about the human experience. Through their poems it is not 'nothing' that happens, their utilisation of feelings, thoughts and emotions allows the reader to experience more deeply their own existence.

John Keats words, 'O for a life of sensations rather than thoughts' is the point of his poetry. His theory of negative capability whereby through imagination one escapes reality and achieves permanence and perfection is particularly evident in his poem 'Ode to a Nightingale'. In the poem, Keats does not want us to merely read and think about the poem, but experience it, therefore destroying the notion that 'poetry makes nothing happen'.

His sensuous imagery used in his quest to join with the bird allows us to feel all the thoughts and emotions Keats has throughout the poem and leave us also questioning 'was it a vision or a waking dream?'. Although Keats and ourselves are unable to physically attain the permanence symbolised by the nightingale, we are able to join with Keats via the 'viewless wings of poetry' and experience the same sadness and joy that he is writing of.

If Keats was 'sensations', Donne must be referred to as 'thoughts'. Through his practical, argumentative approach which corresponded with the age of exploration and presentation of new ideas that was occurring at the time, Donne ensures that poetry does not mean nothing. In his work, *Valediction: Forbidden Mourning* he employs the use of geology, geographical exploration, astronomy and biblical references to connect the reader to his feelings.

Although the subject of Donne's poem does not farewell his wife with 'sigh-floods and tempests' an expression linked to the 'sensations' of Keats and the romantic poets, Donne is still able to convey a message of the 'human experience' as we marvel at his intellect throughout the poem.

Donne is pedantic in his use of the circular symbol throughout the poem. By linking gold, which had the medieval symbol of a circle with a dot in the centre of it, to a wedding ring, the sun, the solar patterns of the celestials and finally culminating in the famous metaphor of love being like two compasses, Donne's common thread has allowed the reader to feel the departure. Although his argumentative approach has not allowed sorrow, we still marvel at the love between the subject and his wife, such that he shall return to complete the journey she becomes the 'fixed foot'.

Thus Keats poem of wishing for the attainment of perfection and permanence and Donne's poem of love and farewell, although dramatically different in design, lead us to think more deeply about the human experience. The joining of Keats 'sensations' and Donne's 'thoughts' span time periods to write in one common goal.

This goal is as relevant today as it was in the ages of romantic and renaissance poetry. Poetry exists to provide insight to ourselves, be it through the 'sensations' of Keats or 'thoughts' of Donne. This common goal is the point of poetry, allowing us to experience melancholy or joy. It is through the common goal that we may realise that poetry does not merely 'make nothing happen' but allows the reader, if they so desire, to look into their soul and be left intrigued, enlightened, or merely questioning.'

Examiner's Comments

This average range response engages the question through a sophisticated, but thinly supported argument. This script displays an implicit understanding of the question. The analysis of Donne's poetry demonstrates a clear understanding of the circle imagery in a succinct manner. The discussion of Keats' poetry is limited but displays a succinct knowledge of negative capability and the metaphysics of the poetry.

Typical 'C' Range Response 2

'Poetry shows us a new perspective of the world and reveal a poet's thoughts and feelings. By studying the poems 'Enter without so much as Knocking' by Bruce Dawe and 'Pozières Cemetery' by Mark O'Connor, it is proven that this statement is false.

'Enter without so much as Knocking' follows a man from birth, 'Blink. Blink. Hospital. Silence', to death 'Blink. Blink. Cemetery. Silence', showing how he changes under the forces of conformity which strip him of his innocence and reduce him to the sort of hypocritical so and so that surround him. From the very beginning, as a very young child, he is already exposed to advertising and 'Bobby Dazzler on channel seven'. We can see Dawe's disdain for television as he assets the baby with 'he was really lucky cause he didn't understand a word he was saying'. From the life of this man, we see Dawe's purpose in writing this poem which is to show the stifling, restrictive nature of urban society. But there is a glimmer of hope for this man. While watching acts of 'monstrous love' at the drive in, his attention drifts to the 'stars' and nature, stars represent freedom and one of the few things 'man hasn't fixed up yet'. This act of regeneration doesn't last long as soon it was 'goodbye stars' and to the 'soft cry is the corner when no-one was looking'. The man reverts back to the materialistic life he was leading before. We see the man's life come to an abrupt end in a tragic car accident but the lies continue on. Ironically, the martician's name is 'Probity' who gives him a 'colour he never had'. Even the man is 'six feet down nobody interested'. As was said in the epigram 'Dust to Dust', this man's life has amount to nothing. Through this poem Dawe delivers a strong warning to society, hoping to convert our foolish ways.

'Pozières Cemetery' by Mark O'Connor focuses on a World War I graveyard as its central image to dispel the 'recycling myths' that war is gloryfying and exciting. O'Connor uses morbid humour, 'the earth for centuries will show dark greasiness', greasiness representing the fat from the dead corpses, the shock the reader and to discourage war. From the list of names, 'Hagor, Brown-Jones', we see that the soldiers were just ordinary young men. This list coupled with the body parts 'fingers a clinking heap' show the huge loss of life, the futility of war and its horrifying reality. Towards the conclusion of the poem, 'two old men hobble down the rows' remembering the young men they once knew. 'Honour and folly holds the ground', showing the senselessness of war as honour has no use for the dead.

From the study of the poems 'Enter without so much as Knocking' and 'Pozières Cemetery' we are shown the realities of the world. 'Poetry makes nothing happen' is a totally untrue statement as can be seen. The ideas of Dawe and O'Connor and clearly expressed providing a purpose and 'point' to their poetry. The work of these poets truly is great.'

Examiner's Comments

This response demonstrates a competent understanding of the poems. Although brief, the candidate makes a consistent attempt to address the question.

Below Average Responses (D and E Range)

Weaker responses were typified by a simplistic and, at times, literal discussion of the poetry, often ignoring the question or engaging it in the most limited way. Poor expression and misinterpretation were also characteristic of responses in this range.

Question 2: Fiction

'In every work of fiction there is a crucial moment of understanding for the reader'.

Choose what you see as an important moment in EACH of the TWO works of fiction that you have studied from the list below. Show why these two moments are so crucial to your understanding.'

2 Unit General Text List:

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart

Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women

Alice Walker, The Colour Purple

Peter Goldsworthy, Maestro

Marele Day, The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender.

General Comments

The Common Fiction question allowed students who knew their texts and were able to relate that knowledge to the question, to achieve their potential. The question was seen as a good discriminator with the focus on 'the reader's' understanding being a key feature.

The question was accessible to all candidates. The question's focus on two moments tended to anchor the responses of capable candidates and helped students to structure their essays more coherently.

Candidates' Responses

Strengths:

- Most candidates were able to identify two crucial moments.
- Candidates on the whole produced balanced answers, demonstrated a thorough knowledge of their texts, and were able to select their supporting evidence appropriately.
- Most candidates demonstrated skilful and appropriate use of quotations that were incorporated into a meaningful discussion.
- Students wrote substantially and generally displayed sound writing skills which showed their understanding of plot, character, themes, narrative structure and stylistic features.

- Most candidates successfully handled the common question requirement of writing on two texts in one essay. The majority of candidates had been prepared well and chose to write two framed mini-essays with integrated points in the introduction and the conclusion. Some more able candidates successfully used an integrated approach, however, many others disadvantaged themselves by adopting this approach unsuccessfully.
- The majority of candidates recognised that the question did not ask for a comparison of the texts.

Concerns:

- A disturbing feature was the number of able students who ignored the question or presented a generalised or prepared response.
- A significant number of candidates failed to understand what the question demanded and could not focus on one moment. Such candidates often found security in presenting an overview of the plot as their response to the question.
- Where students attempted to compare the texts they almost invariably lost sight of the question.

1998 COMMON QUESTION CRITERIA GUIDELINES — FICTION

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 — Well Above Average

- Clearly identifies the crucial moments in both texts and engage in close, detailed discussion of the crucial moments.
- Presents a well articulated exploration of the crucial moments and why they are important to the reader's understanding of both texts.
- Offers perceptive insights and understanding of the importance of the crucial moments in both texts.
- Demonstrates a perceptive, analytical and comprehensive knowledge of the texts in relation to the question. Expresses ideas clearly and fluently.
- Provides specific and relevant supporting detail and where quotes are used they are effectively integrated into the discussion.
- May be written with flair and sophistication.

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

- Clearly identifies a crucial moment from each text and discuss it in relation to the reader's understanding of the relevant text.
- Demonstrates an awareness of what the reader understands as distinct from the character understands.
- Demonstrates a sound and detailed knowledge knowledge of both texts in relation to the question.
- Offers a sustained and often perceptive response to the question and will go beyond a plot analysis.
- Includes supporting detail which is likely to be both appropriate and effectively used.
- Although generally quite fluent, may be plodding in their thoroughness.

C Range 9, 8, 7 — Average

- Identifies and attempts to explore the crucial moments.
- May have less clearly defined moments or takes a broader perspective.
- Shows evidence of an attempt to justify the importance of the two moments selected.

- Demonstrates 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 importance of the crucial moment. May be more preoccupied with outlining the importance of the moment to the plot for the reader, and/or the importance of the moment for the insights gained by the characters.
- May have a storytelling approach or 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 importance of the moment may be simplistic.
- May be pedestrian and/or repetitive with occasional lapses into irrelevancy.

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

- Often depends upon a story telling approach to answering the question.
- Often offers simplistic views. Some responses may be comparatively brief while others may be quite long and verbose.
- Contains inaccuracies or misunderstandings and is usually only loosely linked to the question.
- May be confused about what constitutes a crucial moment and why it helps the reader's understanding. May not understand the notion of a crucial moment.
- The discussion 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 — Well Below Average

- May appear to be discussing the question but does 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 — Well Below Average

- Completely irrelevant, inaccurate comments on one or both texts. May identify a moment but do nothing more.

Note: it is anticipated that a response to only one text will not be awarded more than eight marks. Any troublesome or single text scripts need to be brought to the attention of senior markers.

2 Unit Related scripts: any Lawson scripts not dealing with at least ONE of the Joe Wilson stories must be brought to the attention of senior markers.

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.

Above Average Responses (A and B Range)

These responses were characterised by an ability to identify and discuss a crucial moment in both texts and explore why they are important to the reader's understanding of them. They were more sophisticated in style and structure, were fluent in expression and showed a superior analysis of text.

For example, the following introduction identifies two crucial moments, highlighting the importance of the moments to the reader:

In the novels *Maestro* and *The Color Purple* by Peter Goldsworthy and Alice Walker (respectively) there are crucial moments in the text which are important to the understanding of the reader. In *The Color Purple* it is a crucial moment for the understanding of the reader (and for Celie herself) when she has her first sexual experience with Shug Avery. This moment is crucial as it is a turning point in Celie's development and links to many of the themes in the text. Similarly, in the novel *Maestro* a crucial moment occurs in a scene which the central character (Paul) describes as 'a confessional', where Keller enlightens Paul on his past and the reader gains an understanding of the father/son bond that has been established between them and demonstrates Keller's affections for Paul and Paul's development. *Maestro* and *The Color Purple* contain scenes which are crucial moments not only for the characters, but for the understanding for the reader.

The best responses incorporated a detailed analysis of the moment offering perceptive insights and understanding in relation to the development of theme and character. The reader's response was at all times integral to the discussion:

It is this moment which proves to be the most crucial in this novel as this 'virginal daughter of nature' who was simply 'doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man' finally has taken action after years of indecisiveness and passivity. The reader finally loses all hopes of a happy ending as the line 'It was meant to be. There lay the pity of it' is left ringing in their minds. Tess, 'caught up living her days of immaturity like a bird in a spinney' would never experience a true fulfilling relationship with Angel, her ideal of masculine perfection.

The following conclusion shows the ability to succinctly and perceptively draw the issues and question together:

The crucial moment of *Emma* therefore, at the point where Mr Knightley reveals his feelings for Emma is crucial to the reader's understanding of the novel's sequence, the misperception and true nature of character and the crucial nature of Mr Knightley's role in Emma's world. The crucial moment for the reader in *Tess of the d'Urberville's* confirms for the reader the sense of tragic circumstance, the understanding that Tess is a victim of society, the reason why Tess too readily accepts death and the reason for the foreboding nature of the narrative.

Average Responses (C Range)

Candidates in this range identified and attempted to explore the crucial moments in both texts. The responses tended to focus on plot, character or a listing of the themes, rather than on the reader. In their attempt to justify the importance of their chosen moment, the C Range candidate focussed on recount rather than on analysis. The chosen moment was less precise and appropriate than the A / B range.

The following introduction illustrates this point:

In every work of fiction there is a crucial moment of understanding for the reader. Maestro and The Great Gatsby both adequately demonstrate this point. The crucial moment in Maestro is when Paul visits Henisch in Vienna, while the crucial moment in The Great Gatsby is the death of Myrtle Wilson. Both of these incidents help the reader to gain an understanding of all of the happenings leading up to the crucial moment. Essays often discussed the plot and characters without making a sustained link to the crucial moment.

Below Average Responses (D and E Range)

The D Range script was characterised by a poor conception of what were two crucial moments. Students often depended on storytelling or prepared responses on characterisation or themes with no link to the question. Responses were frequently confused and were unable to adapt their knowledge of the text to the question. The reader was either ignored or mentioned briefly as an afterthought.

The introduction to this D range response typically fails to clearly identify moments and come to terms with the specific nature of the question as in the following introduction:

In the two fictions that I studied this year it was the crucial moments that not only did you understand the story itself but you understood the characters for what they truly were.

‘The Colour Purple’ and the ‘Great Gatsby’ both have the very important turning points to the novel. It was the crucial moments that help me understand the relationships and interaction of the main characters with characters around them.

Question 3. Drama

'The characters in plays have to be interesting to the audience'.

Choose two plays that you have studied from the list below. What techniques do you think the playwrights have used to catch and hold our interest in the characters?

2 Unit General Text List:

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

General Comments

This was a demanding question which required candidates to relate dramatic techniques to the presentation of characters in two plays. It also required the candidates to demonstrate an understanding of a sense of audience.

Candidates' Responses

Most candidates showed a sound understanding of texts and were able to address at least some elements of the question. Only the more capable candidates were able to integrate their knowledge of techniques and relate this to the 'catch and hold' aspect of the question. Weaker candidates tended towards character studies with only tenuous links to the focus of the question. A significant number of students discussed how the play captured the audience's interest rather than focusing on the character. Some students seemed to have prepared answers, particularly on 'conflict' and 'themes'.

There was a wide range of dramatic techniques that was accepted (see the guidelines). It was disappointing that even capable candidates who were able to articulate perceptive comments on the thematic concerns of the plays struggled with addressing the theatrical requirements of this question.

Texts Studied

Fewer students attempted the Common Drama question in both the 2 Unit (Related) and 2 Unit (General) courses than the other options.

The most popular (2 Unit (Related)) texts were a combination of *Così* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. *The Man from Mukinupin* was represented in relatively few responses.

In 2 Unit (General) the most popular texts were *Death of a Salesman*, *Macbeth*, and *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. A significant number of candidates also wrote on *Strictly Ballroom*. *Women of the Sun* was represented in relatively few responses.

Some texts, particularly those which are ‘ideas’ driven (eg *Pygmalion* and *Measure For Measure*) were more difficult to successfully relate to the question.

Overall

A number of candidates exhibited elementary written expression problems in both courses. The correct spelling of titles and characters’ names is considered essential! There was evidence of misquoting and overly long quotations. Handwriting must be legible if candidates are to gain due credit for their work.

1998 Common Question Criteria Guidelines – Drama

A Range 15, 14, 13 — Well Above Average

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- sophisticated language and argument
- excellent understanding of texts
- appropriate and extensive use of quotation
- explicit discussion of techniques in relation to characters
- links techniques, character and overall purpose of play
- sense of audience response and theatricality
- fluent, relevant, coherent and/or succinct
- deals with ‘catch and hold’

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- articulate and competent in use of language
- very good knowledge and understanding of text

- adheres to the question
- makes some points implicitly
- relates techniques to characters through a discussion of themes and issues
- confident control of argument
- selective in choice of support material
- broader definition of 'technique'
- laboured and/or lacking in flair and style

C Range 9, 8, 7 — Average

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- competent expression (conveys their message)
- some structure evident
- addresses the question — not merely storytelling
- simplistic in argument
- lacks selectivity even if lengthy
- deals with how the play holds attention rather than specific aspects of character
- problems with integrating 'technique' with audience response to character
- focus may drift
- shows sense of audience
- presents character study as a way of getting to importance of character
- lack of balance
- mechanical
- ill defined definition of the term 'technique'

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- simplistic / mechanical language
- superficial / awkward / tortured
- attempts question initially but gets lost along the way
- storytelling

- text inaccuracy or limited understanding of the text
- reconstructs own question and does not answer question set
- limited understanding of dramatic technique
- tenuous link between character, technique and audience
- listing
- unbalanced

E Range 3, 2, 1, 0 — Well Below Average

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
- deals with only one text, poorly
- no selectivity or focus
- tries to identify technique but struggles to do so
- poor understanding of dramatic technique
- poor or limited knowledge of the text
- brevity

Some dramatic techniques mentioned by students:

- issues
- conflict
- suspense
- movement
- comedy /humour
- audience response
- dialogue
- play within a play
- lighting
- symbolism / imagery / figurative language

- sound effects
- flashbacks
- climax
- structure
- contrast
- setting
- relationships
- change / growth / learning in characteristics
- soliloquy
- motive
- fourth wall effect
- dramatic irony
- language

Film Techniques:

- camera angles
- lighting
- colour
- scenery
- dance
- costume
- satire
- gesture

Typical 'A' Range Response

Both Dylan Thomas and Tom Stoppard create interesting and endearing characters by use of language and by exploiting their mediums. Thomas uses a range of devices to create caricatures of the inhabitants of Llareggub in 'Under Milk Wood'. He shows the incongruity of their desires and their lives and thus gives his characters more of a semblance of reality. Stoppard's characters in 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead' are similarly endearing and life-like, but they serve Stoppard's purpose of expounding the existentialist philosophies. Stoppard uses comedy to show the way in which both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern suffer the existentialist crisis. However, his characters are more than tools, the empathy between the audience and the two central characters is such that their deaths are sad in a very real sense.

Thomas employs novel language devices to convey the eccentricity of this diverse range of characters. Very vivid similes, such as Polly Garter's 'body like a wardrobe' and the Floyds, 'like two old kippers in a box', effectively and economically create caricatures of these characters. Since Thomas creates so many different characters it is necessary to use such vivid images in order to make them memorable in the stream of aural scenes. Other images of characters such as Mr Pugh who 'foxes' and 'minces' in the 'hissing laboratory of his wishes', create comical characters by use of evocative language to create unconventional descriptions, like Mrs Dai Bread Two who is 'gypsied to kill'. Another device Thomas employs is the use of language to create original settings for his characters that help in their characterisation. The Pugh's 'dining room in a vault' gives the morbidity of their existence, and Polly Garter's garden, growing only 'washing and babies' conveys her sensuality. Meanwhile, Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard's 'dust-defying bedroom' gives a sense of her obsession with hygiene and self-control. Through his use of unconventional characterisation, Thomas encourages his audience to disregard conventional modes of judgement. The guide-book notes the 'two-storied' aspect of the town, giving a hint of the complexity of the characters.

By way of his medium, the radio play, Thomas can contrast the dreams and desires of his characters with their reality, and thus gives his characters a more complex dimension. Thomas gives his audience special privileges – they can 'hear the dreams' and go 'behind the eyes' of the inhabitants of the town and access the 'hidden sea' of their desires. Many of the characters have dreams that conflict with their reality. Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard, in her 'holily laundered crinoline nightgown' and 'rinsed sleep', commands her husbands to 'take them off' (their pyjamas) – revealing her sensuality which she takes such care to repress in her day-to-day life. Similarly, Mr Pugh expresses his contempt for his wife in the 'hissing laboratory of his wishes' among 'bad vats and jeroboams' to use against her, while to her he is civil and subservient – 'hows the tea, dear?'. Both Myfanwy Price and Gossamer Beynon are used by Thomas to help express his ideas on sensuality. Both girls have fantasies and desires, Gossamer's is 'all cucumber and hooves' while Myfanwy dreams of a lover 'like a Sunday roast'. However neither express these desires to their respective partners, Gossamer is an 'ice-maiden' while Myfanwy and Mog are 'happily apart'. Through his exploitation of the radio medium, Thomas allows his audience to gain a deeper insight into his endearing and comical characters.

Stoppard creates two distinctly comic characters that are disjointed from the world by his use of language. The very first coin-tossing scene establishes that 'we are in un-, sub-, or supernatural forces' and shows how these two characters are out of order with their world. As part of the existentialist dilemma that Stoppard presents these characters are looking for their identity – 'give us this day our daily mask'. They rely upon others for this identity, interpreting their task, 'glean what afflicts him' – as their path. This however, is futile because they do not understand the

language of the Shakespearean characters, Stoppard presents to us these characters that do not know their place in society; 'we have not been picked out...simply to be abandoned...set loose to find our own way...we are entitled to some direction'. The two characters are even isolated from each other, as Stoppard demonstrates in their misunderstandings. During the 'question game' they have a conversation as follows:

G: 'Are you deaf?'

R: 'Am I dead?'

G: 'Yes or No?'

R: 'Is there a choice?'

G: 'Is there a God?'

This quick conversation is typical of their position – they fail to comprehend each other; they end up in metaphysical conversations that give the audience further clues to their character. These uses of language to convey the isolation and confusion of Stoppard's characters are effective not only in characterisation, but in conveying his ideas on existentialism.

These comic characters, are, however, almost tragic in their deaths because Stoppard creates empathy between them and his audience. Stoppard's means is his message, and he uses the theatricality of his play to place the audience in the same confused and uncertain state as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Stoppard breaks theatre conventions firstly by setting them up: 'audiences know what to expect and that is all they are prepared to believe in'. However, he challenges the proposition that 'we're spectators – keep back!' by having Rosencrantz yell 'fire!' into the audience that will not respond. Stoppard's ultimate overtly theatrical device is the use of the dumbshow here his audience watches the 'onstage' characters view their own deaths and he thus demonstrates how his audience is watching themselves in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Therefore, in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's 'little deaths' the audience sees the tragedy of their own death. But, this tragedy is diminished by the dramatic irony that, from the title they 'Are Dead'. Also, the theatricality of the play reminds us that they will 'come back in a different hat' and Guildenstern claims that we'll know better next times'. Thus, the deaths of these two characters are pathetic and poignant because of Stoppard's effective use of his medium.

Both Thomas and Stoppard create interesting characters that are the focus of their plays and succeed in captivating the audience. Beyond this the characters offer the audience something that they can recognise within their own lives and relate to.'

Examiner's Comments

This script demonstrates an excellent understanding of both texts. The candidate is able to articulate a strong discussion of dramatic techniques and how these are used by the playwright to 'catch' and 'hold' audience interest.

Typical 'B' Range Response

'The characters in the play have to be interesting'. The plays 'Strictly Ballroom' and 'Death of a Salesman' use such techniques as makeup/costume, flashbacks, setting as well as lighting, in order to grasp and hold interest in its characters for the audience.

Within the play 'Strictly Ballroom', those characters who are to be depicted as 'baddies' are given grotesque physical features through the use of 'tacky' fruity outfits and overdone 'tacky' makeup. Colloquial and slang language has also been used in order to give these characters a humorous, revolting but interesting character. In some cases, the character such as Barry Fife who is seen as the God of the federation is intended to be frowned upon. As like his ugly appearance and fake hair piece, he too is fake. Manipulating minor characters for his own pleasures. Shirley Hastings entails a revolting 1960's overdone use of makeup, used to shield her revolting nature from the audience, making the audience more interested as Shirley and Barry Fife create conflict within the play. Through the spectacular sparkling outfits of the dancers, glitz and glamour is demonstrated, appealing to the interests of the audience which immediately catch your attention. The opening scene begins with an almost fairytale beginning, while dancers gracefully dance in their stunning outfits while the huge red velvet curtains open to the dance floor. The stunning performances by the dancers, evoke tremendous feeling of the audience as it is so entertaining, comical and expressive. This entertaining play uses the vernacular Australian language to exaggerate particular characters, as well as making those more withdrawn characters like Doug Hastings seem more intriguing. With his Cedal breath freshener, a comical, mocking approach is made, but it becomes more serious when the audience witnesses his mysterious shuffling and crying. It evokes the curiosity of the audience, thus keeping them focussed on the plot.

The use of flashbacks in 'Death of a Salesman', is extremely evident as the audience witness Willy's reminiscing of the past. With these flashbacks of the Lomans' past, the audience is able to see and understand Willy's concerns as they entail the generally good financially stable times of the family. This emphasises more greatly on the problems they now face, financially and the relationships of the family. Faint flutes are played when Willy is reminiscing, which creates a much more dramatic, melancholy, depressing attitude enlightening the audience to his distress and personal suffering. While in 'Strictly Ballroom', music is used to display the fairytale, colourful, comedy of the tone of the movie appealing to a more lighthearted audience. 'Death of a Salesman', creates great emphasis on success, which has been denied by Willy and his two sons, Biff and Happy. Willy had always boosted his sons morale as children even when stealing and other dishonest behaviour was going on. This is evident in the flashbacks, thus enabling the audience to understand the disheartenment and disillusionment felt by Happy and Biff. They are living in a world of illusions and dreams. Biff comes to this realisation when Willy's kills himself in the expectation that insurance money will help his sons. The audience is saddened greatly when they acknowledge this can't be, and although Willy always had good intentions and high expectations, he had created a world of false hopes 'phony dreams'. Within 'Strictly Ballroom', old movie flashbacks are used in order to enlighten the audience to the understanding of Doug's past. Barry Fife being the commentator tries to reveal the 'truth', but is later established, he was ironically lying for his own means. This comical, stage production of past memories is very entertaining, grasping the humorous side of the audience. Thus though flashbacks both plays keep the audience interested.

Lighting is an extremely important stage technique, especially in 'Death of a Salesman'. The dull and daunting blue light surrounding Willy when planting his seeds so late at night displays the sadness, traumatised mind of Willy. This evokes the inner feelings of the audience, enabling them to understand and feel the emotions of Willy. The café scene is also important where lighting is evolved, as it depicts the frustration and anger felt by Biff when trying to explain the truth to his father. The red lights demonstrate rage, anger and sex, evoking the audience to understand Biff's frustration. The illuminated lights in the Pan Pacific Stadium in 'Strictly Ballroom', depicts the excitement, celebration and competitiveness of the dance. It also highlights Doug's courage and initiative when he commences clapping for Scott's glory (dancing his own steps). It is here that under the illuminated lights, that reconciliation is established. By Doug conquering his life long fear, he and his wife end the play with 'Shall we dance', and indication to the romance faced. It is also here, in the huge stadium, that many characters reconcile with each other, while the 'baddies', have been gotten rid of, thus portraying an inspirational and uplifting experience to the audience, about particular characters.

The setting in both plays enables the audience to grasp the reasons behind each character's circumstance. Willy's home, being of unstable conditions, and little furnishing, cold and impersonal reflects the financial disabilities of Willy. While in 'Strictly Ballroom', the Hastings' home is of comfort, although clustered with furnishings, it is lavish with evidence of family success. Trophies, photographs, medals, etc. While the Hastings place so much emphasis on success, Scott is thus seen to be a star while his father is an indirect hero, as he enables his son to carry out his life long dream, going against the conformities of the dance federation. 'Death of a Salesman', although they placed most emphasis on success, it is evident through lack of evidence and decoration that they have not succeeded, thus evoking sad emotions by the audience.

The plays 'Death of a Salesman' and 'Strictly Ballroom', use techniques including makeup/costume, flashbacks, lighting and setting in order to keep the audience interested in particular characters. It enables the audience to understand the successes and hardships of both families.'

Examiner's Comments

This script shows an above average understanding of both plays. It adheres to the focus of the question, remaining on task throughout. A wide range of examples from the texts are used to substantiate the points raised. It has a clear understanding of the theatricality of both plays in performance.

Typical 'C' Range Response

'The writer of a drama must consider his audience when writing a piece. People who see plays are often interested in all aspects of a script, especially interaction between characters. Moviegoers, on the other hand, are a more diverse audience and the emphasis of film script writers is often on plot. Dramatists such as Ray Lawler however have been known to voice their opinion that a play should not be about plot, but rather characters within the play. This opinion can also be seen in George Bernard Shaw's work, and by analysis of Lawler's 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' and Shaw's 'Pygmalion', we can see techniques used to work towards this statement.

The characters of 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' are colourful and unique, the type of characters to catch and hold a viewer's interest in a drama. Lawler has picked the period of his play well, as by introducing us to the 'Lay-off' after Nancy's departure, he is able to use the somewhat demure Pearl as a foil to the other, less restrained characters of the play. In fact, the opening dialogue between Pearl and Olive, who are somewhat opposite in character with Olive happy about the lay-off and Pearl pointing out that 'no-one would say it was a respectable way to live' arouses the audience's interest immediately, as by the foil technique both Pearl's disapproval and Olive's tense anticipation are drawn out to maximum effect.

Another effective technique Lawler uses regarding character is to create anticipation in the audience by building expectations of a character up, an example being Olive talking of Roo and Barney as a 'couple of Kings' however when they appear, with the audience anticipating their arrival, they are not kings but tired, middle-aged men with greying hair. This is surprising to the viewer, whose interest is then held to see what other surprises are in store.

'Pygmalion' also builds up anticipation in the audience due to character, but in a different style. After seeing Liza as a flower girl, and meeting Higgins who ponders whether he should 'ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out the window' the audience becomes interested in the drama unfolding as the wish to see Liza's character develop. Shaw enjoys making his characters realistic and, in an ironic twist to the legend 'Pygmalion' refers to, his characters fight and disagree, hardly the quality of the 'duchess at a garden party' Liza is meant to be, but far more realistic and easier for the viewer to relate to.

Another technique to provoke though and therefore create interest is the introduction of satirical characters. Alfred Doolittle is liked by audiences as he is a send-up of 'middle class morality', with his version of being that he wishes to stay poor, a turn around to usual thinking, such a colourful character captivates the audiences attention and creates anticipation to see how he will fit in with other characters. Another example is Clara Eynsford-Hill, a parody of young girls wishing to be fashionable. Though Mrs Higgins observes that Liza is 'a triumph of (Higgins') art, and her dressmakers', Clara is blissfully unaware of any sly plans, and is delighted to be in fashion by sprouting 'such bloody nonsense' inappropriately as she leaves. Such a satire again brings a character to life and holds a viewer's interest.

By structuring their dramas so that characters are the main focus, rather than the plot, Lawler and Shaw create colourful scenes of varying depth which audiences like to interpret, and ponder over what happens next. Such techniques, when used by playwrights, will ensure that they can catch and hold viewers interest in the characters, and therefore the play.'

Examiner's Comments

This script addresses the question, dealing with two basic techniques for each play. It is expressed competently. It lacks, however, the depth and development of ideas which is a feature of the 'A' and 'B' range scripts in both the General and Related courses.

SECTION II

PART A — POETRY

Question 4. Kenneth Slessor

‘Slessor’s poetry finds the unusual in the ordinary experiences of life.’

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This question discriminated well. It required candidates to argue and support a case and to show understanding of the poems. Generally, students focussed well on the question. Unlike most other questions, there was no specific direction to discuss ‘how’ Slessor finds or presents the unusual, but the great majority of responses had a strong language focus. However, there were also some impressive thematic approaches with less concentration on the techniques. Candidates usually maintained awareness of the overall meanings of the poems, rather than the ‘piecemeal’ treatment which characterised many Dawe, Wright and Burns responses.

There was a variety of approaches: some showing the ‘unusual’ by discussing the intensity of feeling; others concentrated on imagery and its effects; and others made a case for the ‘unusual’ being the themes.

Some candidates found it difficult to adapt their (apparently) prepared ‘language answers’ to suit the question, and consequently were unable to mount and sustain an argument. Some argued that there was nothing ‘unusual’, usually discussing ‘Country Towns’. ‘Sleep’, ‘Wild Grapes’, and ‘North Country’ provided most responses, with very few (often the best) prepared to tackle ‘Captain Dobbin’.

Question 5. Judith Wright

‘The achievement of Judith Wright’s poetry is that it shows how we learn from others.’

Discuss how Judith Wright’s poetry does this. In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

This question was effective in assessing candidates’ knowledge and understanding of the poems. Superior candidates used the question well and were able to discuss it fully, showing clear understanding of the thematic issues and the ways in which ‘we learn from others’ in Wright’s poetry. Well prepared candidates presented clear and thoroughly supported responses. The ability to use and discuss technique relevantly was an important discriminator. A significant number of students seemed to be limited by their choice of poems.

There was a variety of approaches, but sometimes a lack of confidence in whom ‘we’ refers to. Candidates argued for one or more of these as ‘learners’: Judith Wright or the persona; the reader; or the character in the poems.

Weaker responses were often more concerned with ‘what’ is learnt, rather than ‘how’, or wasted time on moralising or generalising.

Overall, responses in this section showed candidates understand and appreciate Wright’s poetry.

Question 6. Bruce Dawe

‘Poetry is, first and last, real live experience — not something out of the refrigerator.’

How does Bruce Dawe make experience real in his poetry? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Generally, examiners found this to be a fair question which allowed students to write confidently, and which permitted a range of approaches and poems to be used. It was an appropriate question, allowing students to use their awareness of the poetry (with varying degrees of sophistication), and it discriminated well. Responses showed, again, that students respond well to Dawe’s themes and style. The focus of the question on ‘how’ stimulated discussion of themes, issues, and techniques, but many candidates lost sight of the overall meaning of the poems as they explained, or just identified, individual images or stylistic devices: those who were able to show Dawe’s themes as they discussed ‘how’ Dawe makes his poetry ‘real live experience’ were often the most successful. Some weaker students concentrated on ‘real events’, including irrelevant biographical detail to try to make a case, rather than concentrating on the poems. Most students ignored the refrigerator metaphor and interpreted the question as ‘real life’ rather than ‘real live’ experience and so ignored the dramatic elements. Many candidates seemed unaware of the satire, for example, discussing ‘Life Cycle’ only as a literal portrait of ‘real life’.

There was a good understanding of the effects of techniques, and many interestingly fresh and personal responses. There was also a significant number of responses which appeared to be mechanically using regurgitated material without really showing understanding as they tried to make it relevant.

Question 7. Robert Gray

‘A sense of promise lies under the despairing world of Robert Gray’s poetry.’

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Candidates seemed to enjoy writing about Gray and were familiar with key images, his style, and the themes of his poetry, but not always in a sophisticated way. However, the proposition in the question seemed to be new territory for some students, and these often struggled to discuss ‘a sense of promise’ — a few saw ‘promise’ as ‘agreement’ rather than ‘hope’, and others agreed with the statement but were unable to support it, as if they had pre-selected poems which they then could not relate to the question, or they made claims they could not justify (for example, seeing ‘promise’ in the last image of ‘North Coast Town’), or contradicted themselves as they tried to reach an understanding.

However, there were also some good responses demonstrating thorough knowledge of two poems, and which were pertinent, sophisticated and sustained arguments. These students’ understanding enabled them to choose appropriate poems, to show how the imagery creates or suggests themes and tone, and to discuss the issues raised by the question. Such confident students may have agreed or disagreed with the proposition, or argued it was true of one poem but not the other, or advocated ‘acceptance’ rather than ‘promise’.

Question 8. Mark O'Connor

Show how Mark O'Connor builds imaginative experience out of the facts of natural history.

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

This question proved to be an effective discriminator across the full range of marks. The better responses showed an immediate understanding of the question and went on to prove it. Where students did answer the question as written, and were able to select poems to suit, they were able to explore all the interesting, original, quirky, imaginative ideas available to them and produce very exciting responses, showing good understanding of O'Connor's methods. However, the invitation to write on the creation of imaginative experiences through the facts of natural history was largely ignored. Many candidates found the term 'natural history' difficult.

Question 9. Joanne Burns

'Joanne Burns describes everyday events in everyday language so as to produce fresh insights.'

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Candidates who attempted this question did so with varying degrees of success. Most were able to explore the idea of 'everyday events' with at least some understanding, although the weaker candidates tended to rely on the 'storytelling' approach. 'Everyday language' was discussed with depth and sophistication by the more able and better prepared candidates who explored a wide range of relevant techniques integrating the discussion of their impact with well chosen quotations. Less successful candidates tended to rely on the more obvious and superficial of the language features such as punctuation and lack of capitalisation, with little real understanding of their effect. Coming to grips in a meaningful way with 'fresh insights' presented difficulties to some candidates as their understanding of the poems was often superficial and fragmented — often candidates could discuss the language but were unsure what new perspectives Burns offers. This limited understanding was not infrequently accompanied in the responses of weaker candidates by reliance on stock phrases from commercial cribs. The fragmentation was reflected in a proportion of the responses which did not see the poems as coherent wholes.

2 UNIT GENERAL POETRY GUIDELINES

The different ranges may be characterised by some of 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
- Not necessarily perfect
- Superior analysis of language

B Range 12, 11, 10 — Above Average

- In response to question, relates material to argument
- A sustained response
- Better than average expression, more sophisticated style
- Detailed understanding of the ideas in the poem
- Logical structure
- Deals with more than simply content
- Appropriate quotation
- Makes points clearly
- Relevant discussion of the aspects of 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

- Weaker C may rely on storytelling but shows some understanding of the poems — perhaps superficially
- May be stronger on one poem than another
- Generally accurate interpretation, but pedestrian or fragmented approach
- May deal with only one major aspect of technique or theme
- Expression may be laboured; may have some language problems
- A candidate who deals with only one poem can receive no higher than a C-8

D Range 6, 5, 4 — Below Average

- Limited understanding of question and/or poems
- Simplistic ideas with little substantiation
- Over-reliance on recounting content, storytelling, paraphrasing
- Misinterpretation of question and/or poem
- 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 misreadings of the poems
- Failure to address the question adequately
- Problems with expression
- May be brief
- Lack of specific knowledge of the poems
- Irrelevant discussion
- Says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the poems or the question
- Not attempted: blank page or words 'Not Attempted' or only title of poem

General Comments

Bruce Dawe was by far the most popular choice of poet, with Slessor and Wright retaining their relative popularity. Significantly more students responded to the Gray question than last year while Burns and O'Connor were attempted by relatively few candidates.

Almost all students tackled the set question, had at least some knowledge of the poems, and used appropriate language and structures. Good responses maintained a consistent argument in answer to the question, showed sound knowledge and understanding of two poems, and were lucid, detailed and well-supported responses which used and integrated brief quotes and textual references aptly. There were many examples of impressive skill in discussing the relevance and importance of the poet's language as well as the ideas. The best scripts were written with flair and mature perception, usually suggesting that these candidates engaged with and enjoyed the poetry.

Often weaker candidates did not seem to choose the best poems or had not prepared enough of the poems to make the most productive choice. Some candidates did not go beyond developing one or two points in each poem, and may not be accustomed to writing the necessary detail, or they fell back on paraphrasing or storytelling approaches rather than answering the set question. Often students listed techniques without explaining their significance in relation to meaning, images, themes, ideas or feelings. Idiosyncratic and illegible handwriting is a small but significant problem.

Literacy levels are good, even in those scripts awarded below average grades. However, it is also evident that many students have considerable difficulty with expression when they need to create their own sentences and paragraphs to try to link learnt-by-heart material to the question, and this weakens their ability to argue a case. The dependent over-use of commercial study guides is another problem.

An Example of an Above Average Response (A Range)

Question 4. Kenneth Slessor

'Slessor's poetry finds the unusual in the ordinary experiences of life.'

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

Slessor's superior manipulation of poetic devices presents to us ordinary experiences of life as extraordinary occurrences. This is relevant in 'Captain Dobbin' where we learn of the ordinary paralysis of old age, but through a more insightful view of wonder. The combination of Dobbin's present disabilities with his extraordinary past is highly commendable. Another of Slessor's poems – 'Sleep' does exactly the same thing. We are presented with the nightly surrender of oneself to the power of sleep, as being compared to the foetus in the mother's womb. In both cases, Slessor is able to present ordinary aspects that make up life, as extraordinary wonders.²²

²² Introduction clearly establishes a case in answer to question and also indicates central issues in the two poems.

'Captain Dobbin' is written in a free-verse flow (under influence of T. S. Elliot) that seems to parallel with the flow of the sea. We are presented with this man, with a 'sad and fine white face', with his obsession with the sea. He 'sails the street in his brick villa'. Slessor's love of the sea is seen with the ocean connotation and nautical references he creates. The poem goes on to present the magnificent harbour as Dobbin sees it – 'Golden and smokey, or stoned with a white glitter'. This serves to demonstrate the illusionary way in which Dobbin still perceives his beloved sea. The extraordinariness is seen in the reference to ships 'like sea-beasts taken alive' and the consequent 'like fog against a glass'. The latter serves to demonstrate Dobbin's present nostalgia, disillusionment – he cannot let go of the sea as he notes down 'particulars' on 'ledgers sticky with ink'. Slessor's presentation of Dobbin's disillusionment is indeed an extraordinary way of presenting the paralysis of old age.²³

The imagery that is further created in 'Captain Dobbin' demonstrates Dobbin's past adventures in the 19th century – 'for he keeps bits of it like old letters'. We see references to exotic places as aspects of wonder to the reader 'traced in faint ink as fine as Chinese hairs' (this reference to exotic places is seen, also, in references to Turks and other sea vessels). But, we as the reader, are jerked back into reality as Dobbin's 'reading glass trembles'. Hence, we are brought back to the ordinary present in the 1900's. The transition to the past is Slessor's attempt at presenting Dobbin's nostalgia as an extraordinary thing in his past.

Stanza three serves to present marvellous images of wonder. Our senses are targeted to portray Dobbin's far-faring adventures as romantic as possible. 'Sandlewood' and 'birds-nest' targets our smell; whilst 'by the sun, yellow' and the 'golden candleabras, mildewed swords' are brilliant in their colour. The magnificence of the images of Dobbin's past is excessively romanticized by Slessor because this is how Dobbin so nostalgically remembers it.²⁴

The final stanzas bring the reader back to the mundane present. We see the permanence of memory questioned 'remembered by no more / Than a scratch on a dry chart'. The pathetic state of the Captain, as Slessor satirisingly still calls him, demonstrates this typical theme of the paralysis of old age. 'In his little cemetery of sweet essences' is a juxtaposed way of winding down into inevitable oblivion. The reality of Dobbin's presence is made more sad via Slessor's superior use of imagery. Although we know Dobbin's condition is a typical condition of people his age, we still feel saddened at his present state. His paralysis is unusually hurtful as is his extraordinary past.

'Sleep' is a bizarre insight into Freud's synthesis that we surrender ourselves to sleep because we yearn to return to the foetal state. In Slessor's extraordinary poem he compares this daily occurrence as similar to a baby in the amniotic fluid. The imagery present is this narcotic experiment at trying to lull the reader to sleep.²⁵ The relationship between sleep and sleeper/mother and child begins with the approach 'Yes utterly'. The mind and body surrenders – 'body and no body, flesh and no flesh'.

23 Effective use of vocabulary.

24 A good sense of the power of the imagery.

25 Conveys the sense and feeling succinctly.

What continues this narcotic effect is the use of assonance. ‘Carry you, ferry you’ and ‘take you’ ‘receive you’ creates this cooing lulling sound. Slessor over-romanticizes the power of sleep and he presents it to us in the most unusual of ways. The repetition of ‘u’ is itself extremely lulling, as is the free-verse flow of ‘Captain Dobbin’. The use of alliteration is seen in the repetition of ‘d’ – ‘Delve in my flesh, dissolve and bedding’. The repetition is extremely affective in its attempt to transform the reader. Sleep is also presented as a mother – ‘beat with my blood’s beat’. We almost hear the beating sound and, hence, such an onomatopoeic device is affective in this narcotic affect.

We also see the water image as it relates to amniotic fluid. ‘Lave you’ and ‘with huger waves continually’ – this serves to take the reader of a journey. We see the dominance of sleep/mother in ‘hear my heart move’ and the consequent ‘bones that ride above you’. Sleep which is otherwise, ordinary, is presented as extraordinary. The final antithesis of the ‘riving’ and ‘driving’ jerks the reader out of the sleepful state. This is Slessor’s attempt at questioning the permanence of memory – an extraordinary insight into an ordinary occurrence.²⁶

Both ‘Captain Dobbin’ and ‘Sleep’ serves to portray aspects of life that are completely ordinary, as extraordinary and unusual features that we take for granted. The superior use of imagery on Slessor’s behalf is the reason for this extraordinary insight. Both poems serve to portray the very ordinary aspect of life in remarkable ways.’

Examiner’s Comments

This is a good ‘A’ script. It is a well sustained discussion of two poems with a strong focus on the question. It demonstrates well above average insight, and superior language control. The language discussion is effectively used to help answer the question, and the quotes are skilfully integrated. It consistently relates answer to question without labouring, and uses terminology appropriately to clearly show the effect as relevant to the question.

²⁶ Final stage of treatment of ‘Sleep’ is a little abrupt.

An Example of an Above Average Response (B Range)

Question 5. Judith Wright

'The achievement of Judith Wright's poetry is that it shows how we learn from others.'

Discuss how Judith Wright's poetry does this. In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

'Judith Wright's poems is very much about learning. She presents admirable characters like Old Dan in 'South of My Days' and disgraceful situations like in 'Eve to her Daughters' to enable us to learn from her poetry. Her various poetic techniques also help to achieve her purpose.²⁷

In 'South of My Days', Judith Wright presents the character Old Dan, and his admirable attitude towards life, for the people to learn from. Here, Judith Wright uses imagery devices to describe the harshness and toughness of the land Old Dan lives on. She describes 'the high delicate outline of bony slopes, wincing under the winter'. The emotive word 'wincing', especially conveys the feeling of harshness to the reader. Judith Wright then goes on to adapt Old Dan's voice, and tells the reader of his many heroic life experiences. Old Dan describes a time, when he mustered up the cattle in the blizzard, and drove a thousand cattle in a drought. 'We brought them down, brought them down, what aren't there yet'. Here in Old Dan's story, Judith Wright develops Old Dan's character by his language. It's simple, clear and straightforward. There is also some incorrect grammar, 'it was the flies we seen first'.²⁸ By presenting the casual and understated tone of Old Dan, Wright strengthens the impact on the reader as it emphasises the ability of Old Dan to endure hardship.²⁹ The reader admires this characteristic in Old Dan and learns the greatness of his attitude always to succeed against the odds. By idolising men like Old Dan, and perpetuating his legend, Wright makes sure that these great values in Old Dan will not die with him.³⁰

In 'Eve to Her Daughters', Wright presents an egotistic Adam (which symbolises all men), and a passive Eve (symbolising all women) to try to mach us not to follow in their mistakes.³¹

In the poem, Eve learns from Adam that being egotistic and arrogant will bring disaster to this world. Wright shows Adam's pride and ego in his inventions by listing down his achievements, 'the Earth must be made a new Eden, with central heating, combustion engine ... refridgerators...' This intense listing also ridicules Adam's achievements and the last line 'you see how he's pride has been hurt' devalues Adam's creation.⁶

Wright also conveys the message that although men claim credit for the development of thought and technology, judging from where they've led us, they have not done a very good job. Eve complains, 'there was none of this fall out'. The clever technique of adopting Adam's voice and turning his arguments against him also aids in conveying the message to the reader effectively. Eve says sarcastically 'Yes, he got to the very centre of everything ... and clearly he doesn't exist'.³²

27 Vague introduction.

28 Good understanding here; quotes effectively.

29 Brings two strands of paragraph together and thus helps answer the question.

30 Perceptive summing up.

31 Second poem clearly introduced, and relevance to question strongly made.

32 Shows understanding and effect of some techniques in creating both meaning and feeling.

The passive tone and depressing moral created by Wright, criticises the woman for being too submissive and knowing things are wrong but does not stand up to change it. Eve says, 'I would suggest for the sake of the children, it's time you took over ... but you are my daughters, you inherit my faults of character ... you are submissive'. A sense of despair and hopelessness is also created by the lines 'Perhaps nothing exists but our faults...' Here, Wright uses black humour to create impact in the reader's mind. Wright's last effort to encourage women to get involved in the society, is the bitter statement, 'You follow Adam, even beyond existence'. The harshness and extreme of the statements creates impact in the reader's minds especially women.⁶

Therefore, Judith Wright shows us how we learn from others by presenting admirable characters, emphasising their great values and also, presenting disgraceful characteristics in man-kind and uses sarcasm to warn us not to follow their foot-steps.'

Examiner's Comments

A comfortable 'B' script. It clearly shows 'how' (we can learn from others), by using the ideas, feeling and, to some extent, the language of the poems. Knowledge and understanding is used to sustain a logical and supported answer to the question, although one poem is used less effectively than the other. There is a sense of personal engagement, especially with the second poem.

Better scripts are more comprehensive and often have more sophisticated expression. This response is more perceptive in its understanding than scripts in the average range.

An Example of an Average Response (C Range)

Question 6. Bruce Dawe

'Poetry is, first and last, real live experience — not something out of the refrigerator.'

How does Bruce Dawe make experience real in his poetry? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

'Poetry is, first and last, real live experience – not something out of the refrigerator. Bruce Dawe makes experiences real in his poetry, and this can be seen in both his poems 'Life Cycle', and 'And a good Friday was had by all'. Bruce Dawe uses his ability to make the experiences in his poetry real through the use of topics that we, as Australians, are all familiar with, his use of lang, as we as Australians can understand and his style in which he writes his poems.

In Life Cycle the use of a familiar topic, something that most people can relate to, helps make the experience real. AFL or even footy in general most people have in some way or another, as it is an Australian way of life. As it is a topic that we all know something about and have experienced, the reader can relate to the noise, excitement and rush of the game. It makes it easy to vision sights, sounds and smells as the reader relates to the football experiences they have had.³³

The language Dawe uses also helps to make the experience of football real. The use of colloquial Australian language, such as the word 'bludgers' that is used in the poem. The use of AFL jargon or even footy jargon, which most people can relate to and even experienced themselves, such as the word 'carn' mentioned on several occasions. Dawes use of methaphors and similes also liven up the experience. Phases from the poem such as 'like a Tiger' and 'little monsters', helps the reader experience the excitement and the dedication of football fans in barraking for their side. As part of his style Dawe uses imagery that we are familiar with to help the reader experience real life.³⁴

Images such as religion, 'the covant is sealed', 'ladder to heaven' helps the reader to experience and realised the dedication of the footy fans to their team. Dawe describes this fanaticism of the football fans like a religion and that they are as dedicated to their dreams as some are dedicated to going to church regularly.³⁵

The topic used in 'And a good Friday was had by all' is another example of Dawe using a topic that most people know about or have come into contact with. This helps to make the experience real as most people know the story and already have fixed feelings and emotions towards the topic. This poem being from the point of view of a solider, is not a usual way for people to look at the crufixation, and enables the reader to see it in a new light bringing about a new set of feelings and emotions.

Dawe also uses in this poem the type of language that the reader can associate with and understand. He uses colloquial Australian lang, with a bit of Australian slang interwoven in the poem. Although some would feel, it's not the most appropriate, it conveys the message, story and emotions in away most can understand, help the reader experience the situation. An example of this language from the poem is 'the whole damed creation'.³⁶

33 Some repetition. Not closely related to poem.

34 Quotations help to show 'real' experience.

35 Abrupt ending. No mention of Dawe's tone.

36 An important point; but subtlety not explained.

Use of metaphors, similes and alliteration also helps the reader to see and feel the sights and emotions of the situation. For example, 'like a diver', 'womens wailing' releases emotions in the reader.³⁷ Dawes use of a dramatic monologue in this poem helps the reader experience the view, feelings and sights conveyed by the soldier, for example 'the down swing of the hammer'.³⁸

Dawes use of imagery also helps to create a real experience, such as the image of the diver, the down swing of the hammer and pain and sorrow of the people watching and standing around.³⁹

Through his use of language, style and the various topics Dawe chooses, he is able to create real life experiences in his poems, which the reader can relate to and enjoy.'

Examiner's Comments

This is typical of the quality of a C answer script. It engages the question, showing reasonable knowledge and is able to use the knowledge to show that Dawe is making the poems 'real', but the awareness is superficial. The answer includes some specific references to support an argument. The candidate is aware of some technical devices but makes only limited use of them. The expression is adequate. The content makes it better than D scripts. It lacks the depth and sophistication of B scripts, particularly in its treatment of the language.

37 Technical terms not made relevant.

38 Reference not explained.

39 No mention of theme, or what the experience is.

An Example of an Above Average Response (B Range)

Question 7. Robert Gray

'A sense of promise lies under the despairing world of Robert Gray's poetry.'

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to TWO of the poems set for study.

'Robert Gray is an 'imagist', a painter of word pictures. In 'Late Ferry' and 'North Coast Town', Gray depicts the changing values of a society in search of commercialism and urbanisation. It is true to say there is a sense of a 'despairing world' in Gray's poetry in which the 'encroaching' and artificialness of society is trapping nature. However, to say that there is a 'sense of promise' which underlies all these challenging issues in Late Ferry and North Coast Town is certainly not the case. In all, Gray challenges modern society in the spoilation of its environment and hopes for change.⁴⁰

Through vivid images and contrast, Late Ferry portrays a world of danger and despair. From his vantage point, Gray describes in the first person a small ferry leaving a wharf in Sydney Harbour. The images he gives the reader are sensual, vivid images about the world we live. His use of the first person makes the reader the eyes of the poet, the images are more real and in a sense, universal.

The 'small' ferry leaves the safety of the 'small bay' across an 'empty dark'. The vulnerability and fragility expressed by the 'narrow', 'wood' wharf is contrasted against the large, broadness of the harbour. Gray is able to continue this image when he describes the palm trees sounding of 'touches of the brush on a snare drum'. This drum role effectively portrays an image of danger and vulnerability.⁴¹

In fact, Gray is writing an observation of life. He likens the boat to a young individual who must leave this safety of the bay, and cross the 'empty dark' to the city. This urban jungle is conveyed as a dangerous place where 'red neon light trembles in the water, as if into ice'. This image portrays the infiltration of danger and vulnerability in the city. It is through these images, in a wider sense, that Gray depicts an image of a 'despairing world' under the effects of changing human values of urbanisation and commercialism.⁴²

The Late Ferry represents an earlier, more humane world. Gray here contrasts this world with the bigger lights of the 'City'. Gray likens the light in the boat to 'honeycomb', a beautiful, warm, rich image which is contrasted with the cold 'silver blizzard' of light under the bridge. The lights of the city 'feel nervously' and yet draw in this fragile ferry by its luminous artificiality – 'like a moth'. Hence, it is in Grays view that the world is becoming a dangerous place, a 'despairing world' yet not a world with a 'sense of promise' underlying.⁴³

In 'North Coast Town', the negativity in Grays work 'Late Ferry' is amplified and emphasised.

40 Clear introduction links the two poems as it outlines a case.

41 Succinct explanation of imagery.

42 Suggesting a deeper significance than the literal.

43 Has not explained the introduction's 'hopes for change'.

The poem begins with the narrator, once again 'I', coming up from the beach at daybreak. He has 'nothing much in my pockets but sand' which continues this negative tone. He goes to a 'Shell' service station where Gray cleverly contrasts the artificial 'shell' station with its natural beauty. He is able to find a tap, stepping around in 'mud'. From there he can hear, smell and visualise the 'vandal's lavatory' with its familiar 'chill'. Gray's sensual writing of appealing to our senses of sight, sound and smell, portrays a 'despairing' image of the spoilation of our natural world. Gray writes in challenging realism of man's destruction of its world. 'Palm fronds scrape dryly' where, through onomatopoeia, Gray portrays the oppressive nature of man of his natural world.⁴⁴ Whilst waiting for a 'ride', the cars drive past 'like a boxer warming up'. This brutal image of violence and anger and aggression portrays man's feelings and destructive capabilities.

After receiving a ride from boddies; they 'drop their first can', 'rev' up in 'High Street' and 'smoke on' down the road. These images of pollution and destruction of the natural environment are every day occurrences in the eyes of the poet and are emblematic of mass destruction of this intrinsic, beautiful world.

The final image which Gray leaves us in the poem is that of the isolation and purposeless of authentic life today in Australia.

'Pass an abo, not attempting to hitch'. This line subsequently ends the poem and portrays Gray's disgust of his world in decay.⁴⁵

Robert Gray portrays a world of changing values, of commercialism and artificiality which reduces ones freedom. He paints the isolation of individuals and the luminous artificiality of the world we live today. Hence, it is a vivid picture of a 'despairing world' in which he paints, but there is no 'sense of promise'. He may hope and dream of a response to his images of spoilation, however he portrays no 'sense of promise' at the end of the line.'⁴⁶

Examiner's Comments

This script was comfortably above average and was awarded a B+. It is a sustained answer to the question and shows sound understanding of the poems. In developing its argument, it refers effectively to the poetry showing good insight. The essay is fluent, is well organised, and generally has good vocabulary. It is more aware and more sophisticated than average.

An A range answer would be more comprehensive in its treatment of the two poems, and perhaps be more sure-footed in its treatment of 'a sense of promise'.

44 Further explanation needed.

45 Superficial treatment.

46 Effective conclusion.

SECTION II

PART B — FICTION (Unique)

Question 10. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

‘How could Frankenstein create a successful monster when he fails as a human himself?’

Discuss Frankenstein’s failings.

The question allowed for a range of responses and most candidates were able to identify the failings of Dr Victor Frankenstein.

The quote was a springboard for a discussion of Frankenstein’s failings, but students did not necessarily have to address this in responding to the question. Better answers picked up on the moral and ethical failures of Frankenstein and developed this with varying degrees of expertise, and appropriate textual support.

Poorer responses focused on simplistic notions of failure such as the monster is evil, therefore Frankenstein is evil, therefore Frankenstein is a failure.

It was acceptable for Frankenstein to be judged a failure in the eyes of the daemon and for discussion to focus in part on this.

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

‘Gatsby and Daisy are in love, but not in the same way or for the same time’.

Discuss the relationship between these two characters.

The quote offered a springboard for a discussion of Daisy’s and Gatsby’s relationship.

Above average responses were more analytical, and focused on the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. The well above average scripts were more articulate, well sourced from the text, and highly focused on the Gatsby/Daisy relationship, showing clear insights into the nature of this relationship.

Average responses tended to rely on storytelling to support their argument, which often only existed in the introduction and conclusion, with limited linking throughout the response.

Less able candidates tended to focus on the description of the characters rather than the relationship.

Question 12. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

*What is the relevance of the past in *Things Fall Apart*?*

Above average responses were able to articulate the role of the past, drawing on a discussion of such elements as thematic concerns, character analysis, the novel’s structure and language use.

This understanding moved beyond a 'cause and effect' approach. Responses demonstrated excellent textual knowledge and appropriate, close textual references.

Average responses relied on a simple interpretation of the relevance of the past, a reliance on reference to the plot to support the argument, and generally demonstrated sound textual knowledge.

Below average responses relied on recount, often superficially engaging with the question.

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

How does Del's relationship with her parents influence her development as a character?

Generally most students were able to engage with the question and recognised the influences of the mother, Ada, on Del. Some students were aware of the father's existence, although only a few were able to make more than a few points about his influence. Most responses show knowledge of the events in the text.

Above average and well above average students tended to present a sophisticated analysis of Del's parents' influence on her development and referred extensively to examples of the mother's role. They perceived how Del's values and views, especially her development as an artist and 'observer', were modelled on her mother. They also discussed the subtle influence of Del's father. The question allowed better students to shine.

Less able students offered simplistic yet at times valid discussion of the parents' influence; however, they tended to focus on the mother only. They tended to present disorganised arguments and had limited textual references. Many responses degenerated into mere retelling of the story.

Question 14. Alice Walker, *The Colour Purple*

How does Nettie's story contribute to our understanding of the issues of *The Colour Purple*?

Generally, most candidates were aware of Nettie's story but responses varied greatly in terms of what they remembered.

Above average responses made much clearer links to the issues and addressed the 'How' in the question. They were more analytical and drew upon a wide range of interesting examples. They had a very strong knowledge of the whole text. They tended to recognise and explore the parallels between Nettie and Celie in both their lives and experiences.

Average responses tended to describe what happened to Celie and Nettie and mentioned the issues, but at a simple level. They tended to be more descriptive, relying on some recounting and making simple assertions.

Poorer responses had difficulty in clearly linking Nettie's story to the issues of the novel.

Question 15. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

'Growing up is painful, growing old is tragic'.

Is that what Maestro actually shows? What do you think?

This question does not rely on agreement with the quote. The better candidates who challenged the quote attempted to show why 'growing up being painful' or 'growing old being tragic' was not the focus. They then went on to establish their own position on the text. The less able candidates pursued an irrelevant line of argument.

Better responses demonstrated detailed and accurate knowledge of the text. They tended to deal well with pain and tragedy as it affected Paul and / or Keller, and often used other characters to provide more interesting examples in terms of the quote.

Average responses tended to focus on Paul's hardships (pain) learning the piano and learning about love. They sometimes referred to Keller's life as tragic. There was often little real analysis but there was a reliance on storytelling to support ideas about pain and tragedy.

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

'They will remember me. Oh yes, they will remember'.

Why will we remember Harry Lavender?

Candidates interpreted the 'we' variously as the reader, the characters or both the reader and the characters. They generally knew who Harry was, what he did, and his pervasive influences on society. The better responses focused on WHY he is remembered, rather than what he did and selected specific examples from the text, to support their view. Better candidates analysed style to emphasise Lavender's impact on the reader: for example, arguing that the dual narrative reminds us of Harry's invasiveness throughout to emphasise and / or suggest his influence / impact on the characters, the city and the storytelling.

Marking Guidelines for 2 Unit General Fiction — Unique Questions

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

A Range 15, 14, 13 — Well Above Average

- Questions answered clearly (sometimes in an unusual way)
- 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 a 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 in expression, but often only 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 a ‘hit and miss’.
- 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 — Well Below Average

- Little or no attempt to answer the question.
- Little real discussion, and this discussion is probably 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.

Weaker responses retold the story and argued that Harry would be remembered because he is evil and / or corrupt and / or because of Mark Bannister’s book.

General Comments

Overall, candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the fiction texts and wrote about them at length. A majority of candidates demonstrated competent essay writing skills and integrated textual references, including quotations. Levels of literacy were generally satisfactory.

Most candidates tackled the given questions and attempted to relate their understanding of the texts to those questions. A significant proportion of the candidates exhibited a reasonable knowledge of the elements of fiction, in particular character, themes, style and genre, in terms of the question asked. However, some questions proved challenging and revealed those candidates who had only a limited knowledge and a simplistic understanding of the text.

Weaker candidates resorted to mere storytelling with very little analysis.

The most popular texts were *Maestro*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*. Few candidates attempted the question on *Lives of Girls and Women*.

Candidates' Responses

An Example of an Above Average Response

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

'Gatsby and Daisy are in love, but not in the same way or for the same time'.

Discuss the relationship between these two characters.

'F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is the story of the elusive and enigmatic man who 'gives his name to the book' – Gatsby and his idealised love for and obsession with Daisy Buchanan. Told by the unnecessarily ubiquitous narrator Nick Carraway this story is tragic in its inevitable culmination but hopeful in its portrayal of love and hope.⁴⁷

Gatsby's relationship with Daisy is documented by Nick in uneven detail from its beginnings in Louisville five years previous to the time of the novel's occurrence to its conclusion with Gatsby's death and Daisy's return to Tom.

The love that Gatsby has for Daisy is completely idealised to the point where it becomes scarily obsessive. It stems from his desire to 'rise out of his humble origins' and enter the upper class of which Daisy represents. This journey is evident in the 'schedule' which his father Mr Gatz shows Nick after Jay's death. This is proof that he was 'destined to get ahead'.⁴⁸ His ascension to the upper class began in his youth as 'Jimmy Gatz' became 'Jay Gatsby' upon meeting Dan Cody. This 'Platonic conception of himself' culminated in the attainment of Daisy. She was for him the final hurdle to overcome and indeed possess before he could be legitimately part of the upper class. He had already attained a palatial mansion, cars, a hydroplane and the status of a wealthy man but to attain Daisy remained the one elusive dream. In this sense his love which spanned the entirety of their association, some five years, was not love of any emotional kind but the result of his overambitious desires and of 'what a man store upon his ghostly heart'.⁴⁹

His obsessive nature is evident not only in the drastic fact that he bought his house because of direct view of hers and the idea that his lavish parties were only thrown in the hope of her attendance but also in the album of newspaper clippings concerning her and his stalker like trailing of her honeymoon route.⁵⁰ 'Gatsby wanted nothing more than that she should go to Tom and say "I never loved you"' and until he could 'incredulously' 'repeat the past' he would not be satisfied. For Gatsby nothing was too great if it concerned Daisy. Due to gossiping servants he hired a whole new staff despite their incapacities. His selflessness when it came to Daisy reached a pivotal peak in the novel after Myrtle Wilson's death when he guarded Daisy's house all night for fear that Tom would be angry at the previous climactic happenings in the Plaza Hotel. This irrefutable act demonstrated Gatsby's dedication to Daisy and thus to his dream. Even when his dream had been 'crushed by Tom's hard malice' he persisted and sealed his own fate.

Unfortunately for Gatsby Daisy's love for him reached nowhere near the same proportion as his for her, nor did it last as long.⁵¹

47 Opening paragraph introduces the idea of the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. The question is clearly addressed.

48 The ensuing paragraphs develops the idea of Gatsby's relationship/love being idealised. Extensive from text is integrated.

49 Analytical comments reveal engagement with the question.

50 Analysis of Gatsby's love in terms of his behaviour is strongly pursued.

51 Analysis reveals a genuine understanding of the differing natures of Gatsby's and Daisy's love. Argument contrasts their love.

When they met she fell in love with him under the false pretence that he belonged in her social class and lifestyle. Whereas Gatsby 'wed his unutterable vision to her' Daisy merely fell in love. For her it was a matter of 'practicality' but with Jay's absence she returned to keeping numerous appointments with numerous young men until the need to marry 'took form in the shape of Tom Buchanan from Chicago'. Although she insists she loved Gatsby all along she is reluctant to do so and seems to have fallen out of love with him at this point of marriage.⁵²

Her love for Gatsby is rekindled when she sees him at Nick's house and for the three months of their relationship during the time of the novel. This love though seems to be one of convenience and on the assumption that Gatsby is legitimately successful. It can also be viewed as a way of fulfilling the void created by the absence of her husband who is notoriously unfaithful. No matter what sort of love she has for Gatsby, Daisy is horrified when Tom cruelly exposes the source of his wealth in the 'broiling' scene at the Plaza. His bootlegging criminality leads to her and Tom 'retreating into their money or vast carelessness or whatever'.

The love between Gatsby and Daisy is unequal. Gatsby desires Daisy in an almost religious fervency as can be seen by the enchantment he instills in the green light at the end of her dock. His fanaticism is starkly contrasted with her flighty lack of commitment to him. He gave his life for her and she was only able to offer him 'I love you now – isn't that enough?'. Her carelessness allowed her a brief fling with the young officer who 'had no real right to touch her hand' and who dedicated his life to her. Their relationship was tragic.⁵³

Examiner's Comments

The candidate thoroughly analysed the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. The candidate's sophisticated discussion was supported with specific and relevant textual references.

⁵² Analysis of Daisy's behaviour is linked to the question.

⁵³ In the conclusion the candidate skilfully summarises the arguments. Final analysis is strongly linked to the question.

An Example of an Above Average Response

Question 15. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

'Growing up is painful, growing old is tragic'.

*Is that what *Maestro* actually shows? What do you think?*

'The novel *Maestro* shows that 'growing up is painful' and growing old can be tragic. Goldsworthy shows the reader this through presenting two characters, Paul and Eduard Keller, at two different ends of life's spectrum.⁵⁴

Through the development of Paul; both physically and emotionally, the reader is shown his painful fight in the desire to belong and to be loved. Paul immediately seeks his goal through music, and his aim to become a concert pianist.⁵⁵

Paul suffered many knockbacks – something painful at the tender age of adolescence. His musical masterpieces were only seen as an 'excellent forgery' by the 'Nazi' that he so subconsciously admired. The many achievements in his 'Board Examination' were dampened by the knowledge of only leaping over a 'technical hurdle'.

Paul suffered many knockbacks in school also. This was solely due to the idea that he did not quite belong to the 'Rough Stuff' crowd yet and he desired something that could never be his – the 'haloed vision' of Megan Murray. Again, Paul hid his pain by using music as his 'protection'.

Paul also went to the extent of using music to lead him into the 'in crowd' and the band that was 'Rough Stuff'. Paul managed to gain some sense of personal satisfaction whilst 'taming the wild animal' and also even fulfilled 'his long desire of Megan Murray', which he later saw as a 'disappointment'.

Paul's love life was also discovered through the elusive Megan Murray. His 'long awaited first time' was destroyed through her selfishness and lack of love. This is something that Paul later ended up regretting. His heart didn't 'hammer inside of him' as it did with the one who 'worshipped' him ie. Rosie Zollo.⁵⁶

It was not until Paul gradually let go of the world of 'technical perfection' that 'the world of music slowly' lost its 'hold' and 'the world of senses' replaced it. This led up to a less painful experience in growing up, although, every so often the voice of his head interjected and resulted in a most tragic experience.

His eagerness to go to the 'city of show and veneer' – despite Keller's warning, led to a 'faded' enthusiasm, but also made him realise his limits, i.e. that a 'second rate perfection was all' he had 'any hope of attaining'.

It was through becoming aware of his emotional side, that Paul slowly managed to see the world for what it is and stop hiding behind music and beauty.

54 In the opening paragraph the candidate strongly addresses the question.

55 Ensuing paragraphs analyse Paul's experiences in terms of being 'painful'. Thereby the candidate continues to address the question and reveals her/his knowledge and understanding of the text.

56 Close reference to text. Quotations well integrated.

Eduard Keller is exactly what Paul could've turned out to be if he had no realised where he was heading early enough.⁵⁷ His wizened experience and travels through the 'world of music' has evolved into his world of 'folk wisdom' that he had to offer Paul.

Kellers advice of 'be upon our guard against beauty' lead Paul to later realise that Megan Murray was a mistake for him. Although Paul, at the time, was to spoilt and ignorant of the truth to realise it himself.

Keller had 'wasted his life' and lost the things that really meant the most to him; his wife Mathilde and his son Eric. He lacked 'sensitivity' which lead to this great loss. It is through this experience that Paul was determined not to lose what meant most to him as Keller did.

Keller hid behind the beauty of the music world in Vienna and hoped that Paul would not to the same thing. It is for this reason that Paul managed to accept that he would not make it to a professional music career, but still manage to keep what was most dear to him – before he gave up his life to live in a world of beauty.⁵⁸

Keller's life at the Swan was seen as a way of escaping not a place where he could 'examine the heart'. Again, Keller's life and experiences, although tragic, led to Paul's own realisations. Instead of escaping from certain things in his life and facing up to his problems, Paul managed to accept his life in a 'minor music school' – although they may not have pleased him.

Keller had reached his limits and went to extremes trying to accept them. Because he 'didn't finish the job', he ended the 'luxury' of having five fingers, and was ashamed of his efforts. This time, when Paul came to him, Keller saw a way of redeeming himself and almost starting again.⁵⁹

Keller was determined to finish the job which he started on Paul. He was aiming to teach him everything he 'was able to learn', and through this gained a surrogate son who helped him discover love again.

Kellers main aim in life was not to allow Paul to grow old tragically as Keller had done himself. Instead, he would make him realise his faults and help him discover them before making the same mistakes Keller had.

Although Paul was determined to prove Keller wrong, Keller succeeded, even at his death bed. Paul ended up 'morning a great man' who guided him through his life by snippets of 'folk wisdom'.

Maestro, and its story about the 'rites of passage', shows a man who's life in his older years was tragic, and a boy who managed to avoid a tragedy – thus showing his painful adolescence and his overall less painful ending.⁶⁰

Examiner's Comments

The candidate addresses the question and establishes a strong argument which is supported with close textual references.

57 Argument extended to include Keller's tragic experiences.

58 Sophisticated understanding of text revealed in the arguments concerning Keller's education of Paul to prevent him experiencing the tragedy of growing old.

59 Skilled use of topic sentences that develop analysis and link arguments.

60 Conclusion presents a summary of the arguments that are used to address the question.

An Example of an Average Response

Question 15. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

'Growing up is painful, growing old is tragic'.

*Is that what *Maestro* actually shows? What do you think?*

'Growing up is painful, growing old is tragic. This fact is shown in the novel *Maestro*, written by Peter Goldsworthy. The novel traces Paul Crabbe's life, and his development and maturity. It also shows the life of his music teacher, Eduard Keller, who has a large influence on Paul's life. The novel fits into the category of Bildungsroman, that is, it shows the development of the protagonist throughout his/her life. It is also a 'memoir', as Paul says on page 4 of the novel. As Paul grows to maturity in his education, his music, and in his personal life, he encounters many losses and makes many mistakes, which makes it painful. As he grows old, he realises that it is a tragedy that he has lost his youthfulness: 'The present, unchallenged; and all too soon the regretted past'. The fact that growing up is tragic is seen in many instances at the end of the novel. It will now be shown how growing up is painful to not only Paul, but Keller, too, and how growing old is tragic.⁶¹

Paul starts off as an 'arrogant' young boy who thinks he knows more than his teacher, Keller, thinks he does. Keller says he is 'spoiled', and Paul's arrogance is shown in many instances, such as when he thinks he knows more than Keller thinks he does (as already stated), when he thinks 'of course he (Keller) plays better than me, he has the better piano', and when he becomes insensitive towards Keller.

He calls Keller a 'Nazi', and thus has a fight with his father. Here, he loses some of his respect of his father, and this is painful, but when his father comes in and kisses him goodnight, Paul learns the power of forgiveness.

It also takes a few painful lessons for Paul to understand that Keller is doing the best for him when he doesn't let him play and that his confusing sayings are also for his benefit. Paul takes many pains before he comes to the realisation that Keller loves him, and that Paul loves Keller. He has many fights with Keller, until he begins to call him 'Maestro', as it 'seemed somehow natural', and before he can honestly say 'I loved him'. This shows that to mature in this way, it is painful for Paul.⁶²

In his personal life, Paul also encounters pains before he matures. He falls in love with Megan Murray, and must be rejected by her and beaten up by her boyfriend, Scotty Mitchell, before he can mature. He finally has sex with Megan, and is disappointed as she was 'too selfish'. He realises that 'the sum of all that beauty was somehow less than its parts'. This disappointment and pain eventually lets Paul understand about love and lust.⁶³

He, at first, hates Rosie because she is too much like him. This is one pain he must get through, before he realises that he loves her, as seen at the outdoor concert. He ends up marrying Rosie, and he must endure pain with her before he can mature.

61 Introduction establishes a link to the question and the candidate's general knowledge of the novel (ie Bildungsroman).

62 Body of essay refers to Paul's painful experiences in learning to play the piano.

63 Paragraph refers to the pain of falling in love and the difference between love and lust.

One of the greatest pains that Paul must endure before he learns and grows is in his music life. Paul is determined to be a concert pianist. This is his ultimate dream, yet he never achieves it. Paul endures many setbacks before he can realise that he can only be a 'second-rate' pianist. These pains include losing the piano competition in Adelaide, and also losing competitions and failing to make a name for himself in Europe. At the end of his memoir, Paul realises that he will never be a concert pianist, and says 'therefore, better second-rate than third': He is merely 'technically perfect', and 'lacks rubato' in his playing.

By the end of his memoir, Paul realises that he did love Keller, he knows the difference between love and lust, and he can accept that he will never be a great pianist. This is tragic for him, as he grows old, yet at least he knows that he is 'greying, dissatisfied', and a second-rate piano player. He, on the last page, asks if he can accept that he has lost his youthfulness, and that he is not a great piano player, and says 'endlessly, effortlessly'. This is his realisation that he has lost his youthful years.⁶⁴

As Keller grows up, he also endures pains before he can grow. He must lose his wife and children, and his identity and greatness in his home country. By the end of the novel, he has learnt how to love again, as seen with his love of Paul.⁶⁵

Therefore, it can be seen that growing up is painful, and growing old is tragic. Paul and Keller both must go through pains as they grow up, and they are forced to accept these. As Paul grows old, he sees that tragedy that he has lost his youthful, carefree days, but he accepts this. Thus this is a tragedy. So, it can clearly be seen that Maestro shows that growing up is painful, and growing old is tragic.⁶⁶

Examiner's Comments

The candidate establishes a link with the question and makes some sound points though discussion is limited. The answer focuses more on Paul's pain but shows little real analysis of the 'tragic' part of the question.

64 In this paragraph the candidate refers to the tragic part of growing old but does not really analyse it.

65 Fleeting reference to Keller 'growing up'.

66 Conclusion refers to both parts of the question even though 'growing old is tragic' has not been explained fully.

SECTION II

PART C — DRAMA

Question 17. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

‘Macbeth refuses to accept things as they are — that is his tragedy’.

What do you think? Give your reasons.

Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the play and supported their view with well chosen textual evidence and relevant quotations.

The question posed a problem for many candidates who found it difficult to address both parts of the quotation. Many concentrated on Macbeth’s ‘refusal to accept things as they are’ and discussed ‘tragedy’ only implicitly. When ‘tragedy’ was discussed, the interpretation varied from sophisticated literary insight to simplistic. Average responses tended to recount the relevant events of the play to support the first part of the quotation and gave only a limited response to the notion of ‘tragedy’.

Superior responses developed a mature line of argument, dealing with both ‘refusal’ and ‘tragedy’ and were able to manipulate their knowledge of the play to engage with all aspects of the question with sophistication, insight and fluency.

Question 18. George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*

‘Pygmalion is about the characters’ inability to change what they really are’.

What do you think? Give your reasons.

The phrase ‘inability to change’ proved to be a key discriminator. Responses that dealt with it successfully tended to be above average.

Able candidates considered Shaw’s purpose(s) and how he used ‘change’ (or the lack of it) to make social comment(s). Some better than average responses discussed in detail characterisation and theatrical impact, at the same time differentiating between characters and discussing a wide range of characters.

Average responses tended to focus on character with a before-and-after approach, many going no further than acknowledging superficial change. Average responses concentrated on Eliza.

Below average responses tended to recount a character’s apparent changes, assert that the changes were not actually real changes, and leave the discussion there.

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

'Relationships fail in *Death of a Salesman* because the characters refuse to look at themselves honestly'.

Is this your view of *Death of a Salesman*?

Generally, candidates attempting this question had a sound understanding of the play and were able to address the question using relevant textual references.

Above average responses dealt with a wide range of relationships, and were able to discuss the role of all members of the Loman family in perpetuating dishonesty. Average and below average responses tended to focus narrowly on Willy's inability to look at himself or his sons honestly.

Better responses revealed a more perceptive understanding of the psychology of relationships and many were able to use Miller's dramatic techniques to support their argument.

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

Does the ending of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* resolve the issues raised in the play? Give your reasons.

Generally, candidates had a secure knowledge and understanding of the play and supported their views with relevant textual evidence.

Above average responses understood and addressed the concept of 'resolve', discussing the ending in terms of the whole play and its themes and often commenting on its dramatic impact on the audience. These candidates also looked at a range of characters and their interaction to explore the issues and their resolution.

Average responses tended to focus on Olive and Roo, and although they had some generalised understanding of the issues and the concept of 'resolve', their arguments lacked depth.

Below average responses often recounted the plot and saw resolution as merely the ending, regretting that it was not a happy one.

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

In such an unjust world, what can be seen as positive in *Women of the Sun (Maydina)*?

As the script focuses on the injustices suffered by Aboriginal people last century, many candidates found it difficult to find and discuss 'positives' in Maydina.

Those who did find such positives as the bond between Maydina and Biri, the love between Maydina and Charlie, the determination of Aboriginal people to hold on to their culture and spiritual beliefs, Maydina's strength of character and the good but misguided intentions of Muller and Mrs McPhee discussed and evaluated them intelligently in the context of negativity. Superior responses also demonstrated how film techniques enhanced the positive aspects of character, culture and lifestyle.

Although average responses demonstrated good textual knowledge, they tended to answer the question only indirectly by recounting the plot and implicitly dealing with positives. While understanding the negativity of the situation, average candidates found it difficult to manipulate their knowledge to engage directly with the question.

Question 22. *Strictly Ballroom*

'It takes two to tango'.

Discuss the conflict between partnership and individual aims in Strictly Ballroom.

The discriminating quality in this question was the understanding and discussion of 'individual aims'. The majority of candidates successfully identified 'the conflict between partnerships', but the more able candidates perceived that individual aims often resulted in internal conflict — especially in Scott and Doug. The more successful responses discussed what individual objectives brought to the partnership, recognising that the pairing was strengthened by the marrying of individual aims to form a partnership.

Better students recognised that partnerships went beyond dance. Candidates recognised that the screenplay as a whole was a metaphor for life's partnerships. For instance, Doug and Shirley's unsuccessful marriage rested upon Shirley's desire to win the Federation Way conflicting with Doug's passion and integrity — the passion Scott ultimately finds in Fran's family.

Average responses dealt with conflicts between the predictable dance partnerships. Below average responses discussed fewer relationships, ignoring the contribution of Fran's family and minor characters. These responses tended to restrict their discussion listing conflicts within the screenplay.

It was pleasing to see the majority of candidates showed an appreciation of theatricality in presenting the message of the screenplay.

Question 23. Katherine Thomson, *Diving for Pearls*

'Thomson shows deep respect for the dignity of ordinary people'.

How true is this in Diving for Pearls?

Many candidates found this question difficult because it required them to respond to three concepts: 'deep respect', 'dignity' and 'ordinary people'.

Although candidates showed knowledge of characterisation and the text as a whole, they were often unable to apply this knowledge to the concept of 'respect'.

Most candidates tried to deal with the concept of 'dignity' where 'dignity' was defined variously as social class, self-respect, self-worth, facing reality, following dreams and goals.

Better responses tried to demonstrate how Thomson showed 'deep respect' by defining 'respect' as empathy, sympathy or a non-judgemental approach.

Weaker responses tended to retell the plot, often criticising Barbara as selfish, in contrast with Den.

In general, candidates tried to come to terms with the demands of the question, with varying levels of success. There were few prepared essays with a thematic approach.

Marking Guidelines (General)

These guidelines are not intended to be used as a checklist.

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 relevant examples from text.
- May have a sense of theatricality, particularly sense of audience.

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. (Or makes implicit reference to question or issues.)
- Answers questions but may be simplistic and/or pedestrian.
- Uses quotations or appropriate incidents, as opposed to irrelevant storytelling.

D Range 4, 5, 6 — Below Average Responses

- Demonstrates some limited knowledge of the play.
- May simply be random lists of aspects of the play without clearly focusing on the question.
- Must come into contact with 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 demonstrated a good knowledge of the drama texts and wrote about them at length. Most candidates had well developed essay writing skills, wrote in the appropriate register and used quotations appropriately. Levels of literacy were generally satisfactory.

In all questions, most candidates showed sound understanding of characters and themes and attempted to answer the question rather than retell the story. However, some questions proved difficult for some candidates who tried to manipulate their knowledge and understanding to meet the demands of the question with varying levels of success.

There was some evidence of prepared answers, especially ones taking a thematic approach; these candidates disadvantaged themselves if they did not engage with the question. Candidates are advised against relying on prepared answers or cribs.

Better candidates understood the texts as scripts for performance and were able to integrate discussion of dramatic techniques in a relevant way. Less able candidates often listed examples of theatrical techniques without relevance or discussion, eg mobile concurrency.

Better candidates tended to look beyond the obvious and respond to a variety of issues and characters, thus providing a holistic response to the question asked. Some less able candidates took a very narrow view, their responses indicating that they had studied a text too difficult for the full appreciation of it.

The most popular texts were *Macbeth*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Strictly Ballroom* and *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. *Pygmalion* was less popular while *Diving for Pearls* and *Women of the Sun (Maydina)* attracted relatively few candidates.

An Above Average Response (A Range)

This well structured response begins strongly with the premise that Macbeth is torn between reality and illusion. It goes on to argue effectively that Macbeth's obsessive ambition blinds him to acceptance of reality and results in his tragedy.

The candidate demonstrates mature insight into Macbeth's psychological make-up. The role of the witches as the external projections of his inordinate ambition is discussed intelligently, with the sophisticated level of language that marks this response as superior.

The two aspects of the question, refusal and tragedy, are both discussed coherently and with detailed, integrated textual evidence. The candidate has a strong sense of audience and presents an interesting and valid interpretation of the play.

Example 1

'Macbeth has been called the 'ultimate dissection of a killer's mind' and upon studying

Macbeth's thoughts and emotions we are able to realise that he is torn between reality and illusion. His vaulting ambition overcomes him and with each murder he is able to suppress his conscience further. The influence of the supernatural is a distinguishing feature in the play and contributes the elimination of reality in Macbeth's mind. Macbeth's 'tragedy' also involves his obsessive ambition which makes him strive for evil.

Act I introduces the audience to the powers of evil lurking beneath the surface of Scotland. 'Fair is foul and foul is fair' and Macbeth's words 'So foul and fair a day I have not seen' immediately establish an unconscious connection between Macbeth and the witches. They are, however, an external projection of Macbeth's own, inordinate ambitions. Their prophecy and its reality merely force his inner ambitions to surface and essentially consider murder.

The witches enigmatic statements, designed to manipulate Macbeth's ambitiousness are the first factor which contributes to Macbeth's refusal to accept reality. Macbeth is drawn to their prophecies of greatness:

'If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair

And cause my seated heart to knock against my ribs...?'

Macbeth is highly superstitious, for example: 'Stones have been known to move and trees to speak'. This characteristic is manipulated by the witches, and Lady Macbeth and create an absence of realism.

Lady Macbeth's euphemisms, optimism and delusion ideas help eliminate reality from the proposed deed. Macbeth begins to have imaginative hallucinations before Duncan's murder and claims:

'It is the bloody business

Which informs thus to mine eyes'.

His previous willingness to wait till the throne is rightfully his is overpowered by his ambitiousness and refusal to accept reality. There are, however, times when Macbeth realises the seriousness of the proposed crime as an act of treachery. Lady Macbeth helps to eliminate this realism and Macbeth decides: 'False face must hide what false heart doth know'. This suggests Macbeth in fact realised the crime he was about to commit, yet chooses to go ahead with it. It could therefore be argued that 'tragedy ambition' is of more significance to his downfall.

As Macbeth progresses we are able to see Macbeth slipping further from sanity and reasoning. The murder of Banquo and Lady Macduff and her children are carried out quickly without previous consultation with his wife. As Lady Macbeth becomes convulsed by conscience, Macbeth grows less dependent on her which is balanced by an increasing dependence on the witches. This may suggest that Macbeth is clinging to the infallibility of the witches and the supernatural world – a sign of his refusal to accept reality.

Macbeth becomes delusional. When his once much-loved and adored wife Lady Macbeth, commits suicide, Macbeth is unable to muster a hint of sympathy, that is:

'She should have died hereafter

There would have been time for such a word'.

This reveals a psychological disturbance. He is a changed man, no longer a noble soldier but a tyrant and merciless killer. His mind is convulsed by hallucinations and insecurity. Although he refuses to accept things as they are – perhaps he is unable to accept things as they are. His mind has been transformed an all that he thinks and does is controlled by a sense of invincibility brought on by the witches. To him, killing has become a monotonous chore:

'I am in blood stepped so far

That should I wade no more

Returning were as tedious as go o'er'.

Macbeth's refusal or inability to accept reality is evident into the very end. Knowing he is doomed, he takes on Macduff saying – 'Lay on Macduff, and damned be him who cries "Hold – enough!"'

Macbeth's conscious state is overcome by ambition, blinding his ability to accept reality. Although his inner being or subconscious self may be convulsed with conscience, he is able to hide it, suppress it deep into the far recesses of his disturbed mind. This results in the tragedy that unfolds – the tragedy of Macbeth.'

Examiner's Comments

This mature, posed response identifies, discusses and goes beyond the obvious issues to link the maturation of Australian society with the play's resolution. The candidate notes and explores the ambiguity of the ending and shows insight into Olive's psychological make-up.

The well structured, thoughtful response begins with clear statement of argument which is explored and discussed perceptively and maturely. Textual knowledge is sound and relevant quotations are integrated into the fluent analysis of the issues.

An Example of a Well Above Average Range

'The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll by Ray Lawler was a successful Australian play in the 1950s and remains so today because of the realistic characters that face issues that are a problem universally. The characters face the anguish of accepting their age and that their unique situation – the 'lay-off' cannot remain a static relationship. The play also discusses the idea of mateship and its breakdown in times of pressure. It has also been suggested that as people grow up, so do countries – metaphorically speaking, and in the case of the Doll it seems to be a significant point in the resolution of the play.

The main character studied in 'The Doll' is the childish and 'curiously unfinished' Olive. She is the one who, in the opening scene 'builds up' Roo and Barney so much as the burly 'eagles' from the bush, that it is almost a disappointment when the balding middle-aged men enter the scene. She gives a cry of absolute rapture when she receives the 17th Doll and her exaggerated behaviour demonstrates her eccentricity to the audience. At the conclusion of Act II scene ii, she is seen 'howling' over the very same doll and the scene is pitiful as Emma describes it. There is forever an impending catastrophe waiting to occur and the felling is that she will be the victim.

The mates from Queensland – Barney and Roo have had a significant strain on their relationship – with Roo walking out through the humiliation of being beaten by the younger Dowd and Barney letting him go. Barney obviously has a bad conscience and is forever trying to mend the tattered relationship. It is his very unskilled intervention that ultimately leads to the climax of the play. He brought Dowd in to 'make up' with Roo, but who unfortunately catches Roo in a vulnerable state in his painting clothes. He looks like he's been 'paintin' the town' as Dowd ignorantly points out. The final confrontation results in some physical 'squaring up' and the violence in Act II, scene ii, also results in the smashing of the 17th Doll.

The former mates are 'poison to each other'. Roo doesn't approve of Barney's suggestion to desert Olive and Pearl to go grape-picking and Barney thinks Roo's 'dirty rotten pride' gets in the way of his normally rational behaviour.

In the denouement of 'The Doll', these two issues reach a kind of resolve, both very different. Roo, with the aid of Emma's wise advice comes to terms with his age and does his best to adjust to the situation – offering to marry Olive. Her reaction is an explosive cry of insane rejection.'

She is still trying to cherish the legend Nancy wisely rejected the year before. She sees all Roo's recent behaviour as the causes for the collapse of the lay-off and in a bewildered state of sorrow, asks him to give back what he's taken. Roo is the tragic figure here – after confronting the problem as none of the other characters could, he is rejected by his true love.

In a line of utter and simple compassion, Barney says ‘Come on, Roo. Come on, boy’ which can be seen as a great achievement for this typically inarticulate Australian male. The mateship between these two is the only victor of the play.

Lawler’s comment about Australia’s coming of age is also resolved in Act III of ‘The Doll’. The heroic image of the ‘eagles coming down out of the sun’ obviously had tenuous foundation and the situation was proven impossible. The wise voice of Emma suggests ‘they were only seasons’ and ‘not for keepin’.’ The image of Roo in a paint suit represented the perhaps more tame suburban life – the life Nancy opted for – tied up to ‘that book-bloke’. Australian legend is romanticised and appealing as is the lay-off. But Australia was reaching a time when it was no longer the young country. Australians had just participated in a world war for the second time and our bush image could no longer hold internationally. Normal, predictable, but stable city life began to be preferred by Australians and is the obvious victor in Lawler’s play.

The resolution of the themes occurs in the last scene, although it seems Olive is headed for ultimate decay. She could not handle the effects of the 17 years and saw herself still as a ‘Bubba’ of 22. Mateship prevailed and left Olive to cry over her dolls and decorations for as long as it would take to ‘take a grown up look at’ herself. Thus the denouement of *The Doll* is successful in its conclusion, as sad and ambiguous as it might be.’

An Example of an Average Response

This response takes the pedestrian approach typical of average answers. It address both parts of the question, discussing them in a simplistic way, with limited textual support.

The candidate recognises Willy's internal struggle and Biff's difference from Happy but fails to explore these issues. Similarly, the candidate gives examples of dishonesty and difficulties in the relationship between Willy, his wife and their sons but fails to discuss them with any depth or insight.

Expression is awkward; quotations and textual support are limited.

'In the play 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller the relationships fail because the characters refuse to look at themselves honestly. Willy and Happy spend their lives deceiving themselves and those around them of who they truly are.

In the play Willy can be seen as a man who fails within his relationships and his life, due to his inability to look at himself honestly. Instead of accepting who he is, Willy continues from the very beginning to the end of the novel, presenting false images to himself and those around him.

Looking at many aspects of Willy life, it can be seen he portrays a false identity to make himself more important than what he really is. 'I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England', is Willy's description of himself in his occupation. By him lying to not only himself but also his wife, it contributes to the failure of their relationship.

Willy lies about his importance and how fantastic his earnings are 'slaughtered them in Providence' and this results in Linda being unable to trust or believe him. Linda wants to simply know what he earns for the week but must pressure Willy, until he finally goes past his original dishonesty to find the truth.

Because Willy continually lies about his popularity, Linda therefore doesn't have any knowledge of the confusion and isolation Willy feels deep down inside. Willy is so tormented he toys with the idea of suicide but because he presents to the world a false identity, they don't realise the struggle he suffers internally.

Another example of dishonesty within characters resulting in a failed relationship is when Biff feels his father has the popularity to change his marks on a school test. Biff travels all the way to Boston thinking his father truly had the ability and power. Because of the false identity Willy expressed to his children of his popularity, he influenced others in agreeing with him. Biff has an opportunity to view Willy for who he really is in Boston 'a fake! A phoney little fake' and this results in their relationship failing from here after.

Happy is another character that refuses to view himself for who he truly is. He believes he can 'outrun, outbox and outlift' everyone else and yet the reader discovers he is a 'one of two assistants to the assistant'. Happy continually lies to himself and to those around, presenting a 'well liked' image and popularity.

At Willy's funeral instead of Happy finally viewing Willy for who he was 'a dime a dozen' he says 'he fought it out to here and this is where I'm going to win it for him'. Happy doesn't realise Willy's false identity and continues to believe he too is a success. It seems that this may contribute to the failing of a relationship as Biff shakes his head, at Happy continuing on the battle.

Biff can see things for what they are and it frustrates him that Happy cannot. This may cause a problem within their relationship.

In the play 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller it appears that many of the relationships that fail, are a result of characters refusing to look at themselves honestly.'

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