

**MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2012 question paper  
for the guidance of teachers**

**9782 PRINCIPAL COURSE RUSSIAN**

**9782/04**

Paper 1 (Topics and Texts), maximum raw mark 60

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

- Cambridge will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2012 question papers for most IGCSE, Pre-U, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.

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### Part I: Topics

Candidates are to attempt one question from Part I: Topics and will write their answers in the Target Language as these texts/films are to be studied primarily in cultural context (be it historical, political, social) as well as a literary/cinematic one.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 20 for Content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 10 marks]
- 10 for Language [AO3]

This paper is intended to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of a topic and their ability to use this knowledge to answer questions in a clear and focused manner. A sophisticated literary approach is not expected (although at the highest levels it is sometimes seen), but great value is placed on evidence of a firsthand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have studied. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotations: quotation for its own sake is not useful, though it will not be undervalued if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. This applies to films as well as literary texts. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh up all these at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and especially any signs of understanding and careful organisation. In the marking of these questions, specific guidelines will be given for each question, agreed by the examination team.

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<b>Part I: Topics – Content</b>		
<b>18–20</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive knowledge of both texts/films. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show good understanding of underlying themes.
<b>15–17</b>	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Thorough knowledge of both texts/films. Detailed understanding and illustration of thematic and comparative issues.
<b>12–14</b>	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Equally sound knowledge of both texts/films. Good understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues.
<b>9–11</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge of texts/films. Some understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues AND/OR good understanding of texts/films, but lacking detail. Stronger on one text/film than the other.
<b>5–8</b>	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
<b>1–4</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Poor knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Insubstantial with very little relevance.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable content.

<b>Part I: Topics – Language</b>		
<b>10</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Almost flawless. Excellent range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Good sense of idiom.
<b>8–9</b>	<i>Very good</i>	Highly accurate. Wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Some sense of idiom.
<b>6–7</b>	<i>Good</i>	Generally accurate. Good range of vocabulary and some complex sentence patterns.
<b>4–5</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Predominantly simple patterns correctly used and/or some complex language attempted, but with variable success. Adequate range of vocabulary, but some repetition.
<b>2–3</b>	<i>Weak</i>	Persistent errors. Simple and repetitive sentence patterns. Limited vocabulary.
<b>1</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Very limited vocabulary.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable language.

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### Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

## 1 ДЕТСТВО

### A Оцените роль отца или отчима в жизни детей в выбранных вами произведениях. По-вашему, являются ли эти мужчины хорошими родителями?

Candidates should first describe and evaluate the role of fathers and step-fathers in the lives of the children in the chosen works before assessing whether or to what extent these men are good parents. Answers will need to make reference to the temporal, historical and social context of each work since this will have some bearing on the behaviour and attitudes of the characters. Readers of *Детство* are likely to conclude that the relationship between Petr Aleksandrych and his children (particularly his sons) is a good one, despite the physical and emotional distance between them, typical among the gentry of early nineteenth-century Russia. The narrator as a child observes him dealing in a business-like manner with the steward and other servants, becoming angry at those taken in by the God's fool and receives instruction from him in hunting. Strong-willed and controlling, but amiable, emotional and in his own way caring, the narrator's father wishes his sons to acquire a knowledge of the Moscow society he loves so much. Thus he sets about bringing his sons to the capital, leaving his daughters with his unhappy wife on the estate. He is, however, capable of kindness, deciding to bring the boys' tutor to Moscow instead of dismissing him and saving Nikolay from complete embarrassment when he fails miserably to dance a mazurka. When he returns with his sons to his dying wife, a loving woman who has for long suffered from depression, perhaps brought on by her husband's gambling and philandering, he displays genuine grief. Candidates are likely to conclude, that though not perfect, the narrator's father does serve as a positive male role model for a man of his day. In *Серёжа*, Korostelev, Serezha's step-father, a kind, intelligent and even-tempered man, quickly assumes a much larger role in the boy's life than his mother. Dmitriy Korneevich takes on the role of the positive (male) hero of Socialist Realist fiction, in charge of the family unit, ever ready with the correct solution to practical and emotional problems. For a teacher, Serezha's mother displays poor insight into the emotional and intellectual needs of the young child. Though loving and physically affectionate, she sees discipline, good behaviour and unquestioning obedience as paramount. It is the pedagogically inexperienced Korostelev who provides the understanding the little boy requires, talking to him as an equal and answering his questions truthfully, thus providing the child with a sense of self-worth and dignity, frequently denied by the imperious adult. Korostelev's function is not merely to buy Serezha presents and deal with his broken bicycle. He also takes away the boy's fear of death and tries to persuade him why it would be better for him not to go with them to Kholmogory and that he should not cry; it is bad for him, it upsets his mother and it is not manly. Korostelev appears to be virtually faultless as a father-figure and role model, and thus some might find the 'father-son' relationship contrived and unrealistic. *Возвращение* provides a complete contrast to the texts in terms of the nature of the role of the father of Andrey and Vanya in their lives and the desirability of this brutal parent as a role model. The boys are apparently content living in reasonable circumstances with their mother and grandmother, protected from any knowledge of their father's past. They have friends and are to a degree streetwise, being part of a group of lads who typically ostracise the younger boy, Vanya, when he fails to jump from a high tower into water. The close and loving relationship between Vanya and his mother is demonstrated when she rescues him from the tower after his panic attack. When the boys' father unexpectedly turns up, Andrey is attracted to his powerful physique and is flattered at being offered and given alcohol, while Vanya is still too young to find his father's macho qualities attractive. The trip proves to be a learning experience for them in many ways as their parent, brutalised by his own experience of life, controls their behaviour in a determined and sometimes violent manner, probably because for him the trip has an additional

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purpose behind it other than fishing. The father tries in vain to make the boys beat up a young thief who has made off with his wallet. He punishes Vanya, who is reluctant to call him "Dad", for grumbling by abandoning him on a road in the middle of nowhere. When Andrey and Vanya fail to return on time from a boat trip, the father punishes Andrey by beating him several times. Vanya, who has stolen a knife for protection, threatens to kill him, then runs off, taking refuge on a high tower despite his fear of heights. Their father tries to catch Vanya, climbs the tower and falls to his death on the ground below. Despite their father's violent behaviour towards them, both boys are affected by his death. Though it could be argued that the boys, particularly the younger one, are slightly spoiled and lacking in certain life-skills, their parent fails to bond with them because his value-system is just too different from that which his sons regard as normal. He makes no allowances for getting to know two virtual strangers, instead simply assuming he can force his value-system on them as he attempts to make up for twelve years of lost parenting. As the boys are already teenagers, it is clearly too late: the relationship is doomed from the start. It is impossible for the father to exert his influence on his sons who are most unlikely to use him ever as a role model.

**В «Независимо от века, независимо от социального слоя, ребёнок реагирует на кризис одинаково». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, авторы / режиссёр реалистично изображают реакции детей?**

Candidates should show, by detailed reference to the events of the set works, how they depict children encountering real and imaginary crises in their lives. See above (Q1A) for detail of key events. Likely scenes for discussion might be: in *Детство* the narrator's sense of incipient loss and foreboding at parting with relatives, servants and his dog, his embarrassment at making a fool of himself at a ball, his grief at the death of his mother: in *Серёжа* the little boy's fear of death and of being abandoned: in *Возвращение* Vanya's fear at diving from a great height or any of the many incidents when his father attempts to make him behave differently from his intrinsic nature, culminating in his drawing of a knife on his parent. Answers should contain an analysis of the children's reactions to these crises and an opinion about whether and to what extent the reactions of particular children are realistically depicted with regard to their chronological ages, the temporal and social context and the circumstances in which they live. The best answers will discuss, in addition to the content, which artistic methods are used to convey to us the emotions and thoughts of the young. Examples of these include: Tolstoy's use of an older narrator to comment on the deeds, thoughts and emotions of his younger self as revealed in direct speech and thought, Panova's use of interior monologue with short sentences, uncomplicated syntax, colloquialisms, incorrect spellings indicating a young child's mispronunciations to evoke the naïve and egocentric perspective of the young child, Zvyagintsev's focusing on the facial expressions and body language of the boys to show a range of emotions (particularly fear, defiance and hatred in the case of the younger boy) as well as their conversations.

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## 2 ПЕРЕМЕНЫ В РОССИИ 1890–1905

- A** Какими аспектами социальной истории периода между 1890 и 1905 годами интересуются создатели выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, эти произведения считаются правдивыми историческими документами, изображающими общество того времени?

Candidates should identify which aspects of social history in the period 1890–1905 the creators of the studied works are interested in and feature in their creations. They should then provide an opinion as to whether and to what extent these works may be considered accurate historical documents depicting society at this time. Answers are likely to focus on social tensions and conflicts, the beginnings of social change and the general depiction of different social classes and groups. In *Жена*, Chekhov uses as the background to his story about a troubled marriage the famine of 1891. We learn of the enormity of the peasants' poverty and the apparent failure of any meaningful attempt at poor relief through the ineptitude and corruption of officialdom and those setting up private trusts to aid the starving and destitute. The former civil servant, Pavel Andreevich, continuously warns his wife against trusting those who might appear willing to help on her committee, but who are unprincipled and only interested in money. The wealthier classes are depicted as callous, self-interested, motivated by reasons other than genuine compassion and resigned to tolerating the suffering in their midst. As the problem is so huge, there seems little point in making a serious attempt at correcting it. Candidates are likely to conclude that this text portrays a realistic but rather negative picture of society which suffers from tensions between different social groups. In particular, Chekhov highlights the gulf between the peasants and the rest of society, the plight of the emancipated peasantry whose allocated land was often too small to support it, even when the crops did not fail and also the unequal relationships between husbands and wives. Natalie is refused a passport on the basis of law and morality by her husband and therefore cannot travel. The main characters in this story are all from the middle classes, however, and the plight of the peasantry is therefore not shown directly through the perspective of peasant heroes. Apart from the brief appearance of Nikanor, the drunken coachman, we only really acquire a sanitised view of the lower orders. Some may conclude that their plight may therefore not be properly represented. In *Челкаш*, Gorky strives to portray the eponymous hero, a drunken petty thief from the Lumpenproletariat of Odessa, in a better light than his hired assistant, a young peasant called Gavrila. The boy is depicted as cowardly and barely able to carry out his role as oarsman as he is terrified of getting caught. Answers should describe the differing points of view about the desirable nature of peasant life or otherwise as expressed by the two characters. Gavrila appears to become obsessed with money and begs Chelkash to give him the entire proceeds of the crime as he believes he can put it to good use and the professional thief can easily obtain more. Chelkash finds Gavrila greedy and self-degrading. The quarrel ends with a violent struggle during which Chelkash is knocked out. The peasant is unable to steal from him, not wishing to have sin on his soul, and ultimately will only take the money if he is forgiven. Neither Chelkash nor Gavrila is portrayed in positive terms. Their value-systems, living conditions and prospects are dismal in the extreme, and Gorky appears to understand and convey to us their world-views which candidates will probably consider to be accurate and representative of their social groups. Eisenstein's film *Броненосец «Потёмкин»* depicts the 1905 mutiny on the Potemkin in a manner which affirms the victorious strength of revolutionary ideas and the inevitable victory of the people. Society, led by the working classes, is depicted in revolt. Answers should mention the reasons behind the mutiny as shown in the film: the cruel discipline of the oppressive officer class, the cramped accommodation and poor food as exemplified by the soup made from the maggot-infested meat which the crew refuse to eat. However, the film was made in 1925 after the establishment of Soviet power. Candidates should, therefore, discuss how the film serves as a tool of Bolshevik propaganda and show how Eisenstein treats historical events selectively or distorts them to achieve his political aims rather than provide us with a faithful depiction of the various social groups involved in one particular event. This depiction of the 1905 mutiny is to a great extent an account of how the Bolsheviks wished it to be rather than an accurate account since that would have been less glamorous and

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less politically correct in Bolshevik terms. In ten distinct sequences the mutiny gathers pace, spreading from the agitators, Vakulinchuk and Matyushenko, to part of the crew, to the remainder of them, to a cosmopolitan selection of the population of Odessa and finally to other ships in the navy. Representatives of the establishment are depicted negatively in exaggerated terms: the first mate whips a sleeping sailor; the captain orders the execution of those refusing to eat the soup made with rotten meat; the priest is old and ugly. General support for Bolshevism is indicated by the cross-section of the population who view Vakulinchuk's body lying in state. The film's ending with the cheering of triumphant sailors and an absence of shots from the "enemy" makes no reference to the eventual exile and imprisonment of the mutineers.

**B «В этих произведениях отражён целый ряд скрытых и очевидных конфликтов в обществе того времени». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, создатели этих произведений предлагают читателям и зрителям решения этим проблемам?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should discuss, with detailed reference to the studied works, the range of social tensions and conflicts which feature in them either centrally or peripherally. All three works feature difficult conditions experienced by workers, peasants and others of lower social classes during the years 1890–1905, conditions which result in hidden social tensions and more open conflicts. In the second part of the question, candidates should assess whether and to what extent the creators of the studied works appear to be offering solutions to the problems depicted. In *Жена*, we are shown a number of aspects of difficult conditions arising out of the famine: homelessness, roofs being stripped to feed cattle, hunger, begging and theft, the spread of diseases such as typhoid and the incidence of drunkenness among the despondent peasantry. The peasants are seen to be sometimes harassed and thus alienated by the authorities when their houses are searched following thefts. The upper classes are shown to be comfortable, well fed and often complacent, though not necessarily happy for all their wealth. Their attitude appears to be that the problem is so great that there is little point in trying to make an impression on it. In making his first-person narrator experience a moral transformation, expressed by his giving away much of his property to help those starving and in so doing attaining a state of happiness, Chekhov seems to be criticising the usual behaviour of richer people and advocating their greater involvement in alleviating the distress of the peasantry, thus suggesting that change is both necessary and desirable for the good of society as a whole. In *Челкаш*, we see the consequences of the famine on the economy. The availability of starving workers clamouring for jobs has forced wages down to inadequate levels for all. Drunkenness and violence are shown to be ugly and the norm among the social groups presented. Neither of the characters in the story is depicted in attractive terms by the omniscient third-person narrator who presents them as victims of social circumstances. Near the beginning, the workers at the port are described as being enslaved by the things they have created and robbed of their personality. The peasant boy is portrayed as being cowardly, greedy for money, a beggar with no self-respect and a slave to a conscience created by religion. Chelkash is depicted as a drunken thief whose lot has been bettered a little by his transformation from peasant to member of the Lumpenproletariat. His comments about peasant life are often ironic as the narrator describes it as 'poison' towards the end of Section II. Because Gorky's depiction of his characters and their situation is so negative, there is an implicit suggestion that change is both necessary and desirable, though no specific solution to the problems appears to be offered, unless one interprets the reference to the tense impatience ready to explode, clear the air and allow people to breathe (in the opening section) as a portent from 1894 of future revolution. Candidates are likely to suggest that because *Броненосец «Потёмкин»* is a selective interpretation of events supporting the cause of Bolshevik propaganda, it is a justification of the changes brought about in society by 1925 when the film was made. Thus, through his depiction of the victorious strength of revolutionary ideas and the inevitable victory of the people, Eisenstein is confirming Bolshevism as the solution to the problems of the downtrodden.

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### 3 1917 И РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ

#### A Что создатели выбранных вами произведений хотят передать читателям и зрителям о Революции? По-вашему, жанры, которые они используют, эффективны и подходят для их целей?

In the first part of the question, candidates should discuss what message Blok, Mayakovsky and Eisenstein wish to convey about the Revolution. They should then go on to assess whether and to what extent the genres employed by the creators of the works selected are effective and appropriate for their aims. Blok's poem soon became regarded throughout the world as the essential expression of the Revolution, a justification and acceptance of Bolshevism, celebrating passion, excitement, elemental violence, raw emotion and heightened sexuality because of constant danger. Despite its relative shortness, the poem presents us with a variety of social types (Red Guards, priests, prostitutes, the bourgeoisie etc.) and their attitudes to the Revolution. Each of the twelve sections has its own rhythm and mood, and Blok exploits a fascinating variety of popular poetry and song types as well as parodied liturgical forms, slogans and invective of the time. Some of the references to Christ and religion lend themselves to multiple interpretation, however, and the reader can interpret the work as a less than wholehearted endorsement of the Revolution. It can equally be argued that Blok's view is consistent in that the practices of organised religion had become a far cry from Christ's teachings about equality. Seen in the wider context of Blok's writing and that of other pro-revolutionary writers, the image of Christ at the very end of the text can be shown to be not incongruous and indicative of one of many points of view represented within the work. Candidates are likely to agree that the poem is effective and will demonstrate this by discussing and analysing various aspects of the author's rich and varied poetic techniques and verse forms. They will be divided, however, as to whether esoteric poetry of this type is an appropriate medium for conveying the author's views on the Revolution. While some may feel that it is perfect for presenting the poet's ambiguous and contradictory views, others may criticise Blok for his intellectual elitism and the fact that he can only engage with a limited audience. *Клоп*, a brilliant comic satire, was written in 1928 as part of the author's struggle against philistinism. Mayakovsky criticises those who have made elements of pre-revolutionary life a part of their everyday existence in the USSR through the character of Prisyppkin, the embodiment of a number of bourgeois traits, tastes and values. The former Party member styles himself Pièrre Skripkin, has a penchant for fashionable clothes and hair, likes to wear a tie, dances the foxtrot and sees it as his right to have the good life since he has fought for it. The writer abandons his pregnant girlfriend, Zoya, to marry El'zevira, the cashier of a beauty parlour, failing to react when Zoya attempts to shoot herself. During the wedding speeches a grotesque fight develops, ending with a fire from which there are apparently no survivors. However, Prisyppkin does survive, frozen in a cellar. In 1979, when he is discovered, a democratic vote is taken about whether to unfreeze him or not. Despite the reservations of many that there is a danger of the arrogance and sycophancy of the late 1920s being spread, the majority vote for him to be brought back to life. But Prisyppkin *does* spread the feared diseases along with a liking for alcohol, cigarettes, decadent music, dancing and love. Ultimately, he is exhibited in a zoo together with the bedbug which was unfrozen with him, two parasites sharing a cage and highlighting the 'horrors' of a bygone age. The zoo director announces that the mammal was wrongly classified as belonging to the highest group of humanity, the workers, and suggests he is more dangerous than the bedbug, being able to lure his victims with his pre-revolutionary behaviour and tastes, disguised as those of the new society. In a final twist, reminiscent of Gogol's *Ревизор*, Prisyppkin addresses those come to view him, hailing them as his brothers and inviting them to join him. Candidates are likely to suggest that the satire on the vices of late 1920s society successfully restates the basic principles of the Revolution and that it is funny, memorable and therefore effective. As a satirical comedy with elements of visual humour, topical references, music, songs and dance, it is accessible to a relatively wide audience. *Октябрь* was commissioned for the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution with the intention of displaying to the masses the Bolsheviks' version of that event. Historical accuracy is modified to the advantage of the victorious faction by distorting incidents and the roles and deeds of



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important participants. It should therefore be in no way astonishing that Trotsky, who appears in only one scene, the Provisional Government, Kerensky, Kornilov, the Mensheviks and other revolutionary groups are all portrayed negatively. These distortions, along with the accurate depiction of events and participants of the October Revolution, successfully convey the excitement and revolutionary spirit of the time, clearly restating the aims of the Bolsheviks in a wholly unambiguous manner. Candidates are likely to suggest that the film is highly effective due to Eisenstein's largely innovative artistic methods ie his rapid pace of action, grand-scale production, especially in the storming of the Winter Palace, his featuring of large demonstrations and marches, the use of actual settings rather than scenery, the use of synaesthesia, use of parody for comic effects and the synchronisation of a powerful musical score to the film. Equally, as a means of influencing the masses about the "truth" of the events of 1917, the use of film can generally be regarded as highly effective, though Eisenstein was criticised by some quarters for the use of excessively esoteric montage, the meaning of which not being comprehensible to all.

**В «Создатели произведений о Революции и послереволюционном периоде всегда показывают нам картину того времени с великим энтузиазмом». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, кто из создателей этих произведений является самым великим сторонником Революции?**

Candidates should first describe the picture of the Revolution created by Blok, Mayakovsky and Eisenstein (See Q3A above), deciding whether and to what extent the creators of the works are presenting their material with enthusiasm. Candidates should consider whether and to what extent the overall message of each work is positive and whether and to what extent individual scenes within each work are presented positively. They should assess the balance of positive and negative material within each work and the overriding attitude of the author or film-maker to the Revolution. In the second part of the question, candidates can make a value-judgement as to who appears to be the greatest advocate of the Revolution and its cause. The best candidates will make a judgement based on detailed evidence from the selected works relating to the techniques of poet, dramatist and film-maker as well as the content of each work.

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#### 4 СТАЛИНИЗМ

- A Объясните, как характер и политика Сталина влияют на жизни героев в выбранных вами произведениях. По-вашему, являются ли герои просто жертвами Сталинизма, или они до некоторой степени сами виноваты в своих проблемах?**

Candidates should explain how the ruthless character and policies of Stalin influence the lives of the characters in the chosen works. They should then go on to assess whether they are simply victims of Stalinism or whether and to what extent they might have contributed to their own problems. The main character of Solzhenitsyn's story, a snapshot of country life and a hymn of praise to good heartedness in the face of poverty and adversity, is Matrena, an elderly peasant woman living in squalid conditions in a remote area of Russia in the summer of 1953. She has endured personal misfortune and poverty all her life, losing all six of her children at a young age and a husband in WW2. Initially deprived of a pension, Matrena has little money for food or clothes, and her house is badly in need of repair. She is often coerced into helping out at the collective farm for no pay and appears to be neglected by most of her extended family. When Matrena is persuaded to give the timber of her outhouse to Kira, her adopted daughter, so she can build on a plot of land, thereby validating her tenure, the old woman agrees to help with the transporting of the wood. After one of the sledges used to move the timber becomes stuck on a railway track due to the snapping of a tow-rope, Matrena attempts to mend it, but sadly meets a horrible violent death when a train smashes into the vehicles and people still on the track. Answers will probably suggest that the poor economic state of the countryside, the inept and corrupt management of the collective farm, the failure of the railway management to guard the level crossing and stop two coupled engines travelling without lights, are all the results of the policies of Stalin. However, the fatal accident can also be attributed to human greed, personal errors of judgement and general drunkenness, all of which can occur in any society. Certainly, the squabbling over Matrena's possessions and the mercenary attitude of Ilya and others towards her could occur in practically any temporal and historical context. While most will find that Matrena is indeed a victim of Stalinism, some may consider her partly to blame for her own situation, arguing that she was foolish to work for others for no reward and should have done more to acquire possessions which would have given her a more comfortable life. The eponymous heroine of Chukovskaya's text is a more obvious victim of Stalinism, but also could be accused of political naivety and a failure to apply common sense in her struggle to deal with the authorities and maintain a decent life. Set in Leningrad during the 1930s, the work chronicles the everyday life of Sof'ya Petrovna, a doctor's widow who finds employment as a typist in a publishing house. Sof'ya is industrious and able and, as a result, is quickly promoted. She is politically innocent, however, and prefers to devote her attention to raising her son, Kolya, than to taking note of goings-on around her and in the wider world. When her brilliant and hitherto successful and politically educated son is arrested, her world is shattered. Sof'ya believes his arrest to be a misunderstanding, for nothing bad can happen to an honest man in the USSR. We see her queuing in vain for information about the fate of her son in terrible conditions. Gradually, as others around her are arrested, Sof'ya becomes more and more isolated. Some of her fellow workers and inhabitants of her communal flat turn against her until she is forced to resign. All her efforts to help Kolya prove fruitless, and she starts to inhabit a world of fantasy and delusion. Finally, she is dissuaded from continuing her campaign to secure her son's release as it is made clear to her by a friend that she herself has not been deported purely out of error on the part of the authorities. Candidates will be divided as to whether this is the ultimate betrayal of a mother for her son or whether it is simply common sense in the light of the inescapable conditions to which she is subjected, or a change of mentality resulting from the impact of Stalinism. All will agree that any ideas she had prior to the arrest of her son that life could be good under Stalin were nothing but a delusion. *Утомлённые солнцем* is the story of one man's revenge on the man whom he believes to be responsible for the loss of his personal happiness. A happy, cultured and relatively well-off household in the Russian countryside in the summer of 1936 is destroyed as the result of an unexpected visit by the former lover of the wife of Sergey Kotov, a respected military hero of the Revolution, now happily married and the father of a charming,

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naïve six year old girl. Mitya charms Kotov's daughter and begins to rekindle feelings for him in Kotov's wife. The full horror of Mitya's intention is revealed, however, when he tells Kotov that a car is coming to take him away. Kotov believes he cannot be touched because of his past and because of his connections with Stalin. (He knows his private phone number.) Before Kotov is collected, the two men reveal much about the sordid and violent nature of post-revolutionary politics. Since 1923, Mitya has been working in counter-espionage and has been responsible for the executions without trial of eight former generals, though he had once been on their side. Kotov accuses him of having been bought, though Mitya claims the Bolsheviks failed to honour their promise to allow him to return to his lover in return for his betrayal of former comrades. In the end, Kotov is beaten up in the car by those taking him to Moscow, and we learn that soon after that he is shot. His wife and daughter are both arrested. Mitya is last depicted having slit his wrists in his bath, presumably because of guilt or because he still cannot have the woman he has always desired. The film clearly shows the destruction of the lives of four individuals due to Stalin's repressive and cruel regime. Though Kotov's daughter is clearly a wholly innocent victim, it could be argued that she is really the only one of the four, for his wife has changed her loyalty, Kotov is implicated in the destruction of Mitya's earlier life and Mitya himself has a long history of evil deeds.

**B «Замечательные авторы и кинематографисты успешно передают нам дух времени своих героев». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны, что их создателям удалось это сделать? По-вашему, мораль и этика индивидуума и общества Сталинских времён удивляют среднего человека нашего века?**

Candidates are likely to agree that all three works convey to the reader an excellent idea of what it was like to live in the USSR during the Stalin period. They should show, by detailed reference to the chosen works (See Q4A above) and some reference to the historical background, which aspects of life under Stalin each work emphasises, thereby conveying the spirit of the age. Mention may be made of specific details of the plots, the nature of characters, references to real historical events, people and places, aspects of every-day life and living conditions, descriptions or depictions of clothing, fashion, music, the elements of society depicted, family structures, social, political and military institutions, examples of bureaucratic structures and practices etc. Answers are likely to highlight the difficult relationship of the individual with the authorities in times of crisis and the fear this often causes in the characters. In the second part of the question, candidates should provide examples of individual and collective morality of the times of Stalin and express an opinion as to whether and what extent this morality may astonish the reader or viewer of today. When discussing Solzhenitsyn's story, candidates might mention the various inequalities in the peasant community between those with some degree of authority and those who have none and show how the individual is largely powerless in the face of the authority of the State and its representatives. Specific examples of unfairness, injustice, selfishness, greed etc. might include: Matrena's lack of a pension because she was not directly engaged in production on the collective farm, her exploitation on it, her sacking due to illness, the problems she has with bureaucracy before she finally obtains a pension, the uncaring attitude of the well-provided-for chairman of the collective farm towards those without fuel, the need for some people to steal peat, the decision by the chairman of the collective farm to reduce the size of the allotments of disabled ex-members, the aggressive attitude of the men in uniform who visit the narrator in the night after the accident, the narrator as a returnee from exile, the efforts of the railway management to pin the blame for the accident on those who had suffered because of it in order to deflect attention from their own failings. When writing about Chukovskaya's text, mention might be made of: the discrimination against Natasha whose father had been a colonel and property-owner when she applies to join the Komsomol, the arrests of "class enemies" who have no opportunity to defend themselves – former upper-class people following the murder of Kirov, the arrests of doctors including Kolya's godfather, the arrest of Gerasimov simply for being related to someone arrested, the arrest of Zakharov, the publishing house director, though he had been a prominent Party man, the arrest of Kolya, despite his model behaviour, Sof'ya's inhumane

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treatment at the prison when trying to obtain information about her son, the persecution of minority nationalities (Latvians, Jews, Poles etc.), the difficulties she and Natasha experience at work following the arrest of the director and Kolya, leading to Natasha's dismissal and Sof'ya's resignation, the expulsion of Alik from the Komsomol for being associated with Kolya, the failure of all associated with Kolya to find new jobs, the denouncing of Sof'ya, the arrest of Alik, Natasha's suicide through despair, the powerlessness of lawyers to help intervene with the authorities, the lack of response to Sof'ya's letters to Stalin, her final 'betrayal' of her son (see above) to save herself. When discussing the film, mention might be made of: the destruction of the crops by the army's tanks until the influential Kotov can intervene, Mitya's callous strategy to punish Kotov for previously forcing him to go abroad to spy on White emigrés by attempting to seduce his wife and charm his daughter while knowing that Kotov is to be taken away and ruthlessly dealt with by the NKVD on false charges of spying for the Germans and Japanese, Kotov's belief that his personal relationship with Stalin protects him, Kotov being beaten up by those arresting him, the shooting of the lost driver who recognises Kotov as he is being taken away, the arrest of Kotov's wife and exile of their daughter due to being related to Kotov. It is likely that candidates will conclude that the public moral code and the private ones of many individuals, as shown in the works, are shocking to people of today.

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## 5 ПОСЛЕВОЕННАЯ ЖЕНСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА 20-го ВЕКА

### A Что мы узнаём о браке в СССР из выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, советский коммунизм помогает или мешает счастью супругов в этих текстах?

By describing the relationships between husbands and wives in the chosen texts, candidates should discuss and analyse what we learn about marriage in the USSR. They should then provide an opinion as to whether Soviet communism helps or hinders the happiness of couples. If candidates define husbands and wives as encompassing those in *de facto* marriages, it will be possible to include a broader range of examples for analysis and comparison. It is important to take account of the subjective nature of the narrative in certain texts where the narrative perspective is that of one of the female characters. This could result in a distorted account of events, especially because at no point in the three texts does a male character appear as first-person narrator. The narrator of *Неделя как неделя* is 26 year old Ol'ga Voronkova, a junior research scientist in 1960s Moscow. Married to the loving, but slightly lazy Dima, the young woman struggles with the double burden of doing an intellectually demanding job and performing the role of housewife and mother to two very young children. Over the typical week described in her diary, Ol'ga is frequently exhausted, occasionally tearful and often hassled by menial domestic concerns, her children's tantrums and apparently meaningless political duties which have no direct bearing on her work in a laboratory with inadequate facilities and looming deadlines. However, when contrasted with the lives of her female colleagues, Ol'ga's life is good. Her husband is faithful, loving, and supportive, they inhabit a comfortable modern flat, and for all its ups and downs, the family unit functions well. Candidates are likely to conclude that although Dima has an obvious lazy streak or a greater acceptance of child-instigated household disorder, he is as near to a model Soviet husband as one could imagine. Though the lion's share of domestic tasks falls on Baranskaya's heroine, Dima is prepared to help with some of the childcare and minor domestic tasks and is always ready to step in when it is clear that his wife cannot cope. Candidates should point out that it was the general expectation of Soviet society that women worked both inside and outside the home, whereas men were not really expected to do very much to help after a day's work. Dima further grows in stature when compared with the partners of Ol'ga's colleagues, for he is sober, never violent and, though there are sometimes quarrels, these are never really damaging to the couple's relationship or happiness. Dima is at first in favour of his wife having an abortion when the couple, with one child already, find themselves struggling to make ends meet, but once Ol'ga has decided she wants to have the baby, he quickly accepts her point of view and assumes his responsibilities in a positive manner. On the other hand, Shura's husband drinks, Lyusya Markoyan's husband has been nagging her for five years to stop work to care for her child and have yet another and the partner of Blonde Lyusya had returned to his original family on hearing his girlfriend was pregnant. Baranskaya would appear to be saying that Soviet marriage can be a positive experience for both men and women, though some have it better than others. *Вдовий пароход* provides us with an account of the lives of five women sharing a communal flat in Moscow from the time of WW2 into the Brezhnev era. The story is mainly told from the points of view of Anfisa and Ol'ga, yet we learn also of the lives of Kapa, Pan'ka and Ada. The text well illustrates the women's general suffering at the hands of their husbands and lovers who die, abandon them, beat them up, mistreat them when drunk and generally expect to be placed on a pedestal. The relationship at the centre of the text is the marriage between Anfisa and Fedor. The couple live happily for eight years with an amicable division of labour: he works hard outside the home while she deals with domestic matters in an exemplary fashion. When her husband is called up, Anfisa returns to factory work, but soon chooses to become a nurse at the front. Having become pregnant as the result of a casual affair, Anfisa fears her husband's reaction, should he return. Though he has now taken to drink and been emotionally and physically damaged by his experiences at the front, Fedor not only accepts Vadim as his son, but even forms a strong emotional bond with him and forgives his wife for her transgressions. He beats Anfisa only once when he wants money from her for more drink, an action she regards as better than she deserves. Fedor finds that his wife's obliging attitude to him as the result of her sin is suffocating him, and he starts to look for emotional

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reciprocity in other women in the flat. When Ol'ga breaks off their relationship before it has taken a physical direction, Fedor turns more to drink, loses his job and one day falls under a tram. Candidates are likely to conclude that the author of this text is largely pessimistic about the institution of marriage in the USSR. Communism appears to be wanting in that, not only does the State fail to provide adequate housing for family units to live separately, it has, more importantly, failed to correct outdated chauvinistic attitudes in men and allowed women largely to believe that these are still acceptable. In *Сонечка* we are presented with the life-story of the eponymous heroine from childhood until old age. Sonya, a bookish librarian, is proposed to by a disgraced artist, some twenty years her senior, two days after encountering him in her place of work. Sonya is content to follow Robert Viktorovich, a fellow Jew, to his place of exile, a primitive village in Bashkiria, where the couple live out WW2 in wedded bliss, despite the privations of his assigned environment. In the late 1940s and 1950s they move around with their daughter, Tanya, gradually getting closer to Moscow and a civilised way of life. Their spacious Moscow house is near an artists' colony, and Robert quickly establishes himself as a central figure. Tanya, now a melancholic teenager, develops an excessive interest in boys. Her school work suffers, and her father transfers her to night school. Here she makes friends with Yasya, an abused Polish orphan who since the age of twelve had made her way in life by giving men sex. Invited to a New Year party at Tanya's, Yasya spends the night and in the morning offers herself to her host. Thus begins a passionate affair. Eventually Sonya realises what is going on, yet does not break from her husband who continues to do up the new flat they are forced by the local Housing Department to move into. Though initially devastated, Sonya comes to accept the situation, admiring Yasya's beauty and glad that this young woman has revived Robert's interest in painting. After Robert's sudden death, his wife and lover are united in grief. Both Tanya and Yasya end up living comfortable and interesting lives abroad, but Sonya remains in Russia to tend her husband's grave. Candidates may be divided as to the attitude of Ulitskaya to marriage. Some may consider Sonya's acceptance of her situation magnanimous, while others will see Robert's act of betrayal as just a slightly less callous version of the behaviour exhibited by other male characters towards women, particularly Yasya. Some may consider that promiscuity has been encouraged by the absence of a religious base to communist society, while others may consider that this very absence fosters greater tolerance of some inevitable aspects of human nature which in other societies would cause greater pain.

**B «По традиции женщины – слабый пол». Прочитав выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, являются ли женщины в этих текстах хорошим примером другим советским женщинам?**

Candidates should relate the life stories of individual women or groups of women from the studied texts, providing an opinion as to whether and to what extent the female characters reflect the stereotypical view of women being the weaker sex. Answers should then contain an assessment of whether and to what extent the female characters can be considered good role models for other Soviet women. The narrator of *Неделя как неделя* is 26 year old Ol'ga Voronkova, a junior research scientist in 1960s Moscow. Married to the loving, but slightly lazy Dima, the young woman struggles with the double burden of doing an intellectually demanding job and performing the role of housewife and mother to two very young children. Over the typical week described in her diary, Ol'ga is frequently exhausted, occasionally tearful and often hassled by menial domestic concerns, her children's tantrums and apparently meaningless political duties which have no direct bearing on her work in a laboratory with inadequate facilities and looming deadlines. However, when contrasted with the lives of her female colleagues, Ol'ga's life is good. Her husband is faithful, loving, sober and supportive, they inhabit a comfortable modern flat, and for all its ups and downs, the family unit functions well. The best answers will mention the situations of Ol'ga's colleagues, especially that of Mar'ya Matveevna, the elderly idealist who has sacrificed her personal happiness for the sake of communism and the Soviet state. Their lives contain more obvious difficulties than Ol'ga's, yet they too are not completely sad, and the women in question appear to be able to deal with their problems in a more than adequate

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manner. Each in her own way could serve as a positive role model for Soviet womanhood, though some, like Ol'ga, may question whether the sacrifices made by Mar'ya Matveevna in her personal life for the common good were appropriate for emulation in the late Soviet period. For some, Ol'ga's gentle, apparently spontaneous questioning of the fairness of everyday life for women and of some Soviet practices and values may be interpreted as the stirrings of feminism, a timely challenge to a controlling, male-dominated order, while others, like some Soviet critics and politicians of the time, may see this as a dangerous and unwelcome threat to the status quo. *Вдовий параход* provides us with an account of the lives of five women sharing a communal flat in Moscow from the time of World War 2 into the Brezhnev era. The story is mainly told from the points of view of Anfisa and Ol'ga, yet we learn also of the lives of Kapa, Pan'ka and Ada. Candidates should point out the individual and common experiences of the characters in the many difficult routine situations and dangerous predicaments which Soviet women of that time had to endure: Ol'ga's family being wiped out in an air-raid, Anfisa's grim experiences as a nurse at the front, the inevitable squabbles resulting from life in cramped conditions, the limitations placed on Ol'ga and Anfisa by their new director, determined to manage the orphanage in accordance with official rules, poor working and living conditions, primitive medical care, numerous abortions, but, above all, the women's general suffering because of their husbands and lovers who die, abandon them, beat them up, mistreat them when drunk and generally expect to be placed on a pedestal. Anfisa's illegitimate son, Vadim, also inflicts worry and unhappiness on his mother and other members of the household through his selfish and ungrateful behaviour to those who dote on him. Yet, despite everything, the women accept their lot, make the most of their opportunities and forge meaningful relationships in their communal home. Contrasts can be made between the women who perform particularly heroic acts, such as Anfisa serving at the front, and some of her male patients who fuss like children and need comforting like babies, the struggle of various women to run a household and hold down a job while men are only expected to work outside the home, the women who always face up to their responsibilities and those men who shirk them or succumb to drink and depression. While most candidates will argue that in terms of strength of character, the female characters almost all serve as positive role models, some will be critical of their acceptance of male attitudes and behaviour (domestic violence, excessive drinking, expecting women to be slim and attractive and subservient to them). In *Сонечка* we are presented with the life-story of the eponymous heroine from childhood until old age. Sonya, a bookish librarian, is proposed to by a disgraced artist, some twenty years her senior, two days after encountering him in her place of work. Sonya is content to follow Robert Viktorovich, a fellow Jew, to his place of exile, a primitive village in Bashkiria, where the couple live out World War 2 in wedded bliss, despite the privations of his assigned environment. In the late 1940s and 1950s they move around with their daughter, Tanya, gradually getting closer to Moscow and a civilised way of life. Their spacious Moscow house is near an artists' colony, and Robert quickly establishes himself as a central figure. Tanya, now a melancholic teenager, develops an excessive interest in boys. Her school work suffers, and her father transfers her to night school. Here she makes friends with Yasya, an abused Polish orphan who since the age of twelve had made her way in life by giving men sex. Invited to a New Year party at Tanya's, Yasya spends the night and in the morning offers herself to her host. Thus begins a passionate affair. Eventually Sonya realises what is going on, yet does not break from her husband who continues to do up the new flat they are forced by the local Housing Department to move into. Though initially devastated, Sonya comes to accept the situation, admiring Yasya's beauty and glad that this young woman has revived Robert's interest in painting. After Robert's sudden death, the two women are united in grief. Both Tanya and Yasya end up living comfortable and interesting lives abroad, but Sonya remains in Russia to tend her husband's grave. The best answers will mention the three main female characters and the ups and downs of their lives during the various political regimes they live through with their concomitant social conditions. While some candidates will find nothing but praise for the women's ability not just to survive, but to make the best of their situations, others will once again be critical of the women's acceptance of their treatment by men and suggest that they are perhaps not the best role models for a society where all are theoretically equal.

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## Part II: Texts

Candidates are to attempt **one** question from Part II: Texts and will write their answers in English as these texts are to be studied primarily from a literary point of view.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 25 for content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 15 marks]
- 5 for structure [AO3]

Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to engage with literary texts and to produce answers which show knowledge, understanding and close analysis of the text. A more sophisticated literary approach is expected than for answers to Part I. Great value is placed on detailed knowledge and understanding of the text; on the construction of an argument which engages the terms of the question and on a close and sophisticated analysis of sections of the text pertinent to the terms of the question. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotation: quotation for its own sake is not useful, although it will gain credit if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered in the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and understanding and especially any signs of analysis and organisation.

In the marking of these questions specific guidelines will be given for each essay, agreed by the examination team.



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<b>Part II: Texts – Content</b>		
<b>23-25</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
<b>19-22</b>	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points, well illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the text.
<b>15-18</b>	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
<b>11-14</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes a fair number of relevant points not always linked and/or developed.
<b>6-10</b>	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
<b>1-5</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the text. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated. OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the text.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable content.

<b>Part II: Texts – Structure</b>		
<b>5</b>	<i>Very Good</i>	A well structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
<b>4</b>	<i>Good</i>	A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
<b>3</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
<b>2</b>	<i>Weak</i>	Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
<b>1</b>	<i>Poor</i>	No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable structure

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### Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

#### 6 A. Пушкин, Медный всадник

**A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the poetic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From Part 2. St Petersburg has suffered from severe flooding resulting in loss of life and property. Evgeny has taken a boat across the still swollen river to the island where Parasha lives. Having witnessed the dreadful effects of the flooding and having failed to find a trace of his girlfriend or her house, the young man has started to descend into madness.

**Content:** Night falls, but the citizens have trouble sleeping and instead talk about what has befallen them. In the morning, it seems that there is little trace of the calamity and life has returned to normal. Officials are going about their business as before, traders are making good their losses. The disaster is already commemorated in poetry. Evgeny, however, has been strongly affected by his personal tragedy and has been wandering the streets for over a month in torment. His abode is rented out to another. He neglects his appearance and becomes oblivious to all around him, a victim of bullying urchins and coachmen into whose paths he strays in his inhuman state.

**Use of Language and Poetic Techniques:** Among points for discussion are: the evocation and presence of the narratorial voice and its differing tones (the objective description of the first 21 lines, the irony in the lines relating to Graf Khvostov and the poignant sympathetic description of the main character in the rest of the extract); the intention and effects of the personification of the Neva; the effects created by differences in rhyme and rhythm patterns; the effects of varied lengths of phrases and sentences and the use of enjambement and caesura to reflect Evgeny's mental confusion and turmoil; the use of punctuation marks, alliteration, assonance, word order, onomatopoeia etc.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can show how the extract relates to earlier events in the poem and to its ending, briefly describe the content of the work as a whole, in particular the story of how Evgeny's hopes are dashed by the flood. They might elaborate on the development of the poetic 'I' and its ambiguous ideological stance, on the one hand taking the part of the 'little man' as represented by Evgeny while on the other celebrating the creation of Petersburg and the power and glory of its rulers.

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**B Describe and analyse the poet's attitude to the tsars and autocracy in *Медный всадник*.**

Candidates should provide a description and analysis of the attitude of the poetic voice to the tsars and autocracy. Answers are likely to focus on the question of the text's ambiguous nature. To achieve the highest marks, it will be necessary to provide a coherent argument supported by appropriate and detailed quotations. Throughout the text the narrator's stance vacillates, providing an intriguing puzzle for the reader as he attempts to disentangle the conflicting and contradictory messages thrown up by the stance of the narratorial voice. The general conflict between the individual and the State is played out, using Evgeny, a humble civil servant, and Peter the Great, the man responsible for building St Petersburg in such a fateful location, as adversaries. We are shown how the interests of the individual are sacrificed to those of the State as the flood claims the lives and property of those who have no choice but to live there. The reader is made to sympathise with the little man, yet we are also allowed to share the narrator's admiration for Peter's glorious and daring achievement in constructing a city when and where he did. As well as being shown how tragedy can result in destitution, madness and death, we are also made to see that the end may justify the means, that historical necessity may demand sacrifices from ordinary people on a grand scale, that historical progress may have rules and a morality of its own. Though the earthly power of the tsars seems to be great and admirable, it is also made clear to us that they are no match for the power of the elements. Candidates may or may not make a case for there being a dominant ideological stance when it comes to a final interpretation of the text.

**C 'Above all else, it is the technical brilliance of the poet which the reader admires.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should mainly or exclusively offer a discussion of Pushkin's poetic techniques used in the text. Answers should contain appropriate quotation with detailed explanations of the striking effects of particular phenomena on the reader as he concretises the meaning of the poem. Discussions might include: rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, simile, metaphor, imagery, personification, word order, use of enjambement and caesura, length of sentence etc. as well as some consideration of the poem's overall structure. The best answers will show the text to be a *tour de force* of poetic skills used to puzzle, intrigue, manipulate and touch the reader as well as to tell a story and make an ambiguous political point. The phrase 'above all else' will allow candidates, if they wish, to discuss in detail other potentially admirable aspects of the text (e.g. the poet's ambiguous attitude to autocracy, his, albeit limited, creation of characters, his ability to tell a poignant story) and to relativise their importance in relation to the poet's technical brilliance.

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## 7 Н. Гоголь, *Нос*

- A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From the end of Section 1. The *skaz* narrator has introduced the reader to Ivan Yakovlevich, a St Petersburg barber, who finds a nose in a roll freshly baked by his wife, Praskov'ya Osipovna. The barber recognises the nose as that of one of his customers, Collegiate Assessor Kovalev, whom he shaves on Wednesdays and Sundays. Forced by his wife's angry reaction and his own fears of what the police might do, the barber wraps up the nose and goes out to dispose of it by throwing it off a bridge. The narrator has interrupted his account of events and begun a digression outlining certain grotesque aspects of the barber's character: his drunkenness, his unshaven face and his stained and tattered clothing.

**Content:** The digression continues with a reference to the barber's phlegmatic nature and his controlled reaction to Kovalev's insulting remark about the stench of his hands. He asks his customer why his hands stink, takes a pinch of snuff and retaliates by liberally applying lather to his customer's face. The digression comes to an end, and we learn that the barber manages to throw the nose surreptitiously over St Isak's Bridge. It is as if a great weight has been lifted from him, and the barber decides to celebrate by going off for a glass of punch. However, his cheerful mood is broken when a policeman beckons to him, then asks him what he has been doing on the bridge. The policeman does not believe the barber's explanation and refuses the offer of free shaves, presumably in return for leaving him alone. As the policeman asks the barber once more to explain what he has been up to, the barber turns pale. The narrator leaves the reader confused and guessing as to what happens next by claiming a sudden loss of omniscience. Mention should be made of the themes of the importance of rank in the story-world, the class-based structure of society and the corrupt nature of officialdom. The dream-like fusion of reality with fantastical happenings is also evident here.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** Candidates should describe and analyse the presence of the *skaz* narrator in the extract, showing how he becomes a character in his own right through the selection of material in his digression, his use of irony (Этот почтенный гражданин) and his feigned lack of omniscience at the end of the extract when the narration dissolves into Sternean mists with a clear example of self-conscious narration. The effects of the balance between narration and dialogue in the extract can be examined along with the sense of immediacy created by the incorporation of dialogue, the sycophantic expressions of the barber when addressing the policeman, the potentially homoerotic symbolism of the nose, sideburns and the barber's application of shaving soap.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe Kovalev's adventures in the rest of the story as he tries to recover his missing nose, the final outcome and the possible interpretations of the text. The nose could be standing for Kovalev's soul (religious / philosophical interpretation), his penis (Freudian interpretation) or it could actually be his nose if the events described are really only a dream. Mention should be made of the reappearance of the barber in Section 3. After Kovalev's nose has been fixed back on his face, the barber pops by to shave him. Ivan Yakovlevich is surprised to see the nose in its rightful place, examines it carefully and is frightened and embarrassed when his customer tells him to mind his nose while shaving him.

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**B Do you consider *Hoc* to contain a clear moral message or meaning?**

Candidates should examine the various possible interpretations of the story, assessing whether and to what extent any of them can be considered wholly consistent and credible. The text may be read as a socially critical exposé of corruption in officialdom and the bureaucracy, a satire on the mores of various social classes, an allegory of sexual conflict in an evil world where women assume male roles and men are emasculated, a Freudian castration fantasy dealing with the loss of sexual identity and function, an allegory relating to the central character's Angst about his status and role in public and private life, a religious allegory about the loss of the soul as punishment for sinful behaviour or as a surrealist dream in which conscious and sub-conscious perceptions of reality merge. Answers should illustrate both where the moral message or meaning is clear and logical and where it is inconsistent or breaks down on close analysis. This text, which has puzzled and fooled critics and the wider reading-public for generations, may perhaps be most credibly seen as a literary joke. The joke is directed at the reader as none of the above meanings can be attributed to the whole text, though each may appear to fit part or parts of it. The best answers will also illustrate how Gogol's narrative techniques are used to manipulate and dupe the reader into false perceptions, interpretations and conclusions. This is done principally through the creation of a *skaz* narrator, a character in his own right who is unreliable, naïve, lacking in omniscience, often digresses, generalises, obscures the point through circumlocution and makes ambiguous comments which confuse us. Answers might also discuss the shifting narratorial focus, the fusion of elements of the real and supernatural worlds, the creation of caricature-like characters, the fundamentally bizarre scenario, the sequence of ridiculous scenes involving the main characters, and the lacunae in the plot.

**C '*Hoc* is a veritable triumph of comic techniques.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement. Answers should mention and analyse a number of comic techniques used by the author to create the story's comedy. The best answers will contain some attempt to evaluate which elements are more significant and effective in imbuing the text with humour. In creating his characters, Gogol exaggerates certain features of their personalities and appearances so that they become grotesque, caricature-like and largely unlovable. Although we can observe some of Kovalev's distress, we are never tempted to sympathise with him in the proper sense of the word. Secondary characters feature only minimally in the story and are consequently inadequately developed for the reader to form any meaningful degree of feeling for them, and it is therefore easy to laugh at them. Answers will also focus on the creation of a fundamentally bizarre scenario, the building-up of a series of ridiculous scenes involving the nose as a person in his own right, Kovalev and others (e.g. the police inspector or the newspaper clerk), but the main thrust is likely to be about Gogol's use of narrative techniques. Fundamental to Gogolian prose is the *skaz* narrator whose unreliability, naivety and lack of omniscience, shifting narratorial focus, generalisations, circumlocution, digressions and ambiguous comments serve to confuse and entertain. Among other features which achieve comic effect are: word play (e.g. место, нос), irony (e.g. the descriptions of items in the newspaper advertisements) and the use of different registers within the letters contained in the text. Appropriate quotation is essential for effectively discussing the text's linguistic humour.

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## 8 И. Тургенев, *Первая любовь*

- A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From Chapter 19. The young narrator, Vladimir Petrovich, has been struggling with his emotions after witnessing a secret meeting between Zinaida and her lover who has turned out to be the boy's own father. Vladimir has been avoiding Petr Vasil'evich, but has continued to seek the company of Zinaida with whom he is still in love. Despite her apparent betrayal of his devotion, Vladimir remains under her spell, deluding himself that he has not witnessed the lovers together and refusing to accept that the young princess does not love him in the way he would like her to.

**Content:** The narrator's state of torment is at last broken when one day, on coming home to dinner, he discovers that his father has gone away and his mother appears to be unwell. Vladimir realises that something unusual has taken place and subsequently learns from one of the servants that his parents have had a serious quarrel: his mother had accused his father of having an affair with Zinaida, his father had responded by stating his wife was too old to be attractive, his mother had brought up a loan allegedly made to the old princess and made disparaging remarks about her and Zinaida after which Petr Vasil'evich had threatened her. Filipp makes reference to an anonymous letter (written by Malevsky) which has been the catalyst for this terrible scene. The servant's matter-of-fact description of events and the implied role of servants in the practicalities of the affair seem to make Vladimir accept what he has already seen, but refused to properly acknowledge. The best candidates will be able to describe in detail how Vladimir reacts once Filipp has been dismissed: the sudden revelation is too much for him to manage. He is crushed, and all seems to be over.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract, like the rest of the text apart from the introduction, is narrated in the first person from the point of view of the young Vladimir Petrovich. This allows us throughout the text to experience with him a range of new adult emotions. Here, the pivotal quarrel between Petr Vasil'evich and his wife is described in the indirect and direct speech of an emotionally detached servant. This assists the reader in forming an unbiased judgement about events. We are thus more inclined to believe that the scene was indeed страшная, that Petr Vasil'evich used a жесткое слово and threatened his wife. The broken syntax of Filipp's discourse creates a feeling of immediacy and tension as the servant attempts to convey information without causing more upset than necessary. The use by him of some colloquial forms (ихних, делов, батюшка) contrasts with the standard Russian used by Vladimir. This is indicative of their respective social classes and educational levels.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the characters of Vladimir, his parents and Zinaida in the context of their interweaving relationships. The character of Malevsky and his role in the plot should be mentioned as well as how he is dealt with by Petr Vasil'evich. Mention can be made of how the main characters deal with their emotions after the affair is admitted and what happens to each subsequently. Vladimir suffers, but does not break with his father who chooses to remain with his wife despite Zinaida's request that he leave her. Zinaida is abandoned, but eventually marries, only to die suddenly in child-birth. The intensity of Vladimir's love for Zinaida is shown by the fact that he attempts to see her some years after their encounter and through his apparent failure to fall in love with anyone else.

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**B Describe and analyse how Turgenev's use of nature helps our understanding of the characters and events depicted in *Первая любовь*.**

Candidates should describe and analyse how Turgenev uses nature to assist the reader in making sense of the characters and events of the story-world. Answers should refer to specific episodes within the text to illustrate how nature is used in the telling of the story of the narrator's unrequited love for Zinaida and her unsatisfactory relationship with his father. In the final chapter the narrator describes his first love as a brief storm that quickly passed in spring (May and June when nature is bursting forth with new life and the spring of a 16 year old's life). Much of the action is centred around the gardens of the neighbouring houses where the narrator and Zinaida are temporarily living. The flora and fauna are described not simply to add colour and realism to the setting, but often to either reflect the emotions and psychological state of the main characters or to contrast with these. Turgenev makes use of the pathetic fallacy at key points in the narrative (e.g. C.7 – to reflect the stirrings of love in the narrator after the game of forfeits – storm, thunder muttering angrily, restless wind, forks of silent lightning which seem to answer to mute and secret fires within him; C.16 – the setting for Zinaida's story which mirrors her own hopes and desire for the narrator's father. In the garden of a palace on a summer night beside a splashing fountain the man whose slave she is awaits her.) At other times the natural world is contrasted with the feelings of the characters and sets their tragedies in relief. It is portrayed as a constant phenomenon which highlights the ephemerality and accidental nature of human existence, hopes and feelings (e.g. C.9 – During 3 weeks of seeing Zinaida, the love-struck narrator takes to sitting on a wall at the end of the garden, staring at nothing for hours amid fluttering butterflies, chirping sparrows and cawing crows. He is aware of the gentle sun and wind and tranquil monastery bells, but cannot understand the feelings within him which are at odds with the tranquillity of his environment. Later in C.9, the love-sick and miserable Zinaida is depicted in a setting which is bright and green, with murmuring leaves, cooing doves, buzzing bees and blue sky. The environment around her remains detached from her state of mind, ironically beautiful and impassive.) Candidates might also point out that the nature description adds much to the pleasure of the text as it is in itself beautiful and a noteworthy component of Turgenev's prose. Passages are composed of carefully selected details describing the sounds, sights and scents of the environment in a realistic manner, but this realism is selective in order to achieve the desired artistic effect. Unpleasant images are avoided in the same way that anything banal or sordid is glossed over in the actions of the narrative (poetic realism). Throughout the text Turgenev uses isolated symbols and images which link the natural world to the characters and events of the story: (When first introduced to Zinaida (C.4), the narrator is as happy as a fish in water. In C.7, when in love, he sees Zinaida as a swan rising from the grasses of the marsh and hovering over his soul. In C.9 Zinaida's varied feelings succeed each other like shadows of clouds on a wintery summer day and later (C.9) the narrator sticks to Zinaida's house like a beetle tied by the leg. In C. 19 the major row between the narrator's parents and what follows is described as a thunderbolt which blasts away his sweet longing.) There are some more overt symbols with erotic overtones which have links to the characters: In C.13 Zinaida requests a strong horse because she wants to gallop. The narrator's father (C.21) has a horse which no other can ride. In C.4 Zinaida is brought a kitten by an admirer and draws attention to its little pink tongue as it laps up milk. In C.17 when the narrator waits to catch Zinaida's lover, he is standing under a solitary pine. At its foot is a mysterious path which winds its way like a serpent up to and beyond the fence into Zinaida's garden. The reference to the serpent links the setting to the Garden of Eden and mankind's choices between good and evil.

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**C 'Turgenev's depiction of family life and relationships in *Первая Любовь* is fundamentally negative and pessimistic.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should describe and analyse Turgenev's depiction of family life and relationships in the story and assess whether and to what extent the author's attitude to these is essentially negative and pessimistic. Answers are likely to focus on the relationships between the young narrator, Vladimir Petrovich, and his father, Petr Vasil'evich, the young narrator and his mother, the relationship between his parents and the relationship between Zinaida and her mother, Princess Zasekina, though mention will have to be made of the relationship between Petr and Zinaida. Vladimir describes the relationship he has with his father as strange. He sees him initially as the ideal man, loving and admiring him despite the emotional distance his father places between them. Petr Vasil'evich respects his son's feelings and freedom and plays the role of an indulgent mentor, letting go to pursue his own interests when he has had enough of the boy's company. When Vladimir discovers that it is his father who is the real object of his first love's affections, he is understandably shattered. Jealousy turns to misery, but perhaps oddly, bitterness does not result, and the father-son relationship survives. The boy seems to be less close to his mother. She displays the usual concerns of a fussy parent with a teenage son whom she is reluctant to see grow up. She criticises him for his fashionable manner of dress and for staying out so late he cannot say 'goodnight' to her. Candidates will disagree as to whether the apparent disparity between the father-son and mother-son relationships is due to the historical context, the difference in the ages of the parents or in their interests and personalities. The relationship between the narrator's parents is a complex one. Petr Vasil'evich is about 41 and is described as handsome, always well dressed, calm, self-assured and imperious. He had not married for love, and his wife, Mar'ya Nikolaevna, who is ten years his senior, is jealous. It is implied he no longer finds her attractive or sexually accommodating on account of her age. When Mar'ya learns from Malevsky's anonymous letter that her husband is having an affair, she makes him choose between his family and the girl. Petr decides to stay with his wife. When Zinaida appears to ask him to leave his wife, he hits her with his riding crop. Though apparently capable of infidelity and cruelty, he seems to have a sense of moral duty and a genuine love for Zinaida. This seems to continue even when the lovers are separated. His death from a stroke at 42 seems to be brought on by a letter from Zinaida which uncharacteristically upsets him. Eight months after his last encounter with Zinaida, Petr begs a favour from his wife, breaking down in tears. After his death, his widow sends Zinaida a large sum of money, suggesting a sense of moral duty on her part, too. We learn little about the closeness of the relationship between Zinaida and the old princess. However, because of their extreme differences in manners, dress and education, it is implied that they have little in common and, in fact, they often seem to ignore one another. Zinaida does not appear to help her mother with her financial or other problems and simply pursues her own interests. Some candidates might conclude that it is better for the narrator's dysfunctional family to stay together to avoid a public scandal, especially because the relationships between mother and father and father and son have not broken down entirely, while others will take the view that Petr should have defied conventional morality and pursued his genuine relationship with Zinaida, implying that family life is a negative thing, a trap which leads to the destruction of individuals' happiness and even lives (Petr Vasil'evich). It is significant that the adult narrator has never married. Some will say this is because he has been so negatively affected by his experiences as a youth, while others will praise his loyalty to a relationship which has never been surpassed.



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9 A. Чехов, *Вишнёвый сад*

A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From the end of the play (Act 4). The estate has finally been sold, and Lyubov Andreevna with her family and servants must leave it behind for ever. For Lyubov and her brother, this marks a complete break with their past and its poignant memories (her happy childhood, unhappy marriage, and the death of her son). She is returning to Paris, while Lopakhin, the purchaser of the estate is going to Kharkov for work. Trofimov, the former tutor of Lyubov's drowned son, is returning to his studies in Moscow while Anya intends to sit exams, then work for money to help her mother pay the bills.

**Content:** The first two lines of the extract reflect the theme of change not just for these two individuals, but for the estate and society as a whole. Candidates can describe the characters of Anya and Trofimov, explaining how she represents the new progressive gentry while he represents the forward-looking intellectual class. Both embrace a life of constant toil. Their attitudes contrast with the characters of Lyubov and Gaev, members of the old nobility, neither of whom is able to come to terms with the financial realities of the world they now inhabit. It is their failure to compromise with necessity and accept Lopakhin's suggestion that the cherry orchard be cut down and the land developed that has resulted in the loss of the entire estate. Lopakhin represents the new Russia, a self-made man in the ascendancy, financially driven and motivated by the rewards of hard work. Though kind and caring, he appears not to be interested in marriage, failing to take advantage of Lyubov's invitation for him to make the proposal to Varya which all have for long been expecting. The extract concludes with the death of the forgotten elderly manservant, Firs. He has frequently talked nostalgically about the days of serfdom when everyone knew his place and all were deferential to their social superiors. His death represents the end of the old order.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The characters use a register appropriate to their social station. The language of Firs is differentiated from that of his social superiors by the use of colloquialisms, diminutives and particles (небось, силушки, недотёпа, нету, то). The accents of the characters will likewise reflect their social origins. The dialogue is natural. The short sentences or phrases reflect the complex and heightened emotions of the characters as they take leave of the past and set out on a new chapter in their lives. There is a natural mixture of deeply meaningful utterances and references to the banal that is typical of Chekhov's style. The broken utterances of the dying Firs and the short pauses between them play on the emotions of the spectator. The stage directions emphasise the emotional states of the characters. Simple gestures and actions take on immense poignancy depending on their speed and the focus put on them through subtle use of lighting effects. The volume of the characters' discourse and the use of other sounds can be used by directors to achieve a range of powerful dramatic effects. Varya's final glance round the room and unhurried departure, Lyubov and Gaev's tearful embrace and subdued nostalgic comments contrasting with Trofimov's excited cry, the sound of doors being locked, the ominous, relentless thud of the axe felling the trees and the eerie breaking string can all be mentioned.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** As this is the final scene of the play, candidates can briefly outline the main details of the plot which concludes here. Candidates can show how characters and their fortunes have changed over the course of the four acts and how the estate has been affected by the action (or rather inaction) of those who arrived in Act 1 and departed in Act 4. The conclusion of the play is significant not just in terms of the fates of characters, but also in terms of the theme of social change in Russian society. For the younger generation, the sale of the estate means new and exciting possibilities in the future while, for the older one, this future is more uncertain. Gaev attempts to compromise with reality by getting a job, but it is by no means certain whether he or his sister will be able to live happily or comfortably in their new circumstances. For some, like Firs, the felling of the cherry trees reflects the end of their existence completely. The sad moment of the manservant's death might be compared to his other appearances in the play which are mainly comic.

**B Consider the view that the real hero of *Вишнёвый сад* is Lopakhin.**

Candidates should first define the qualities required to be considered the hero of a play, then suggest why one might cast Lopakhin in this role. Ermolay Alekseevich Lopakhin is the son of a peasant shopkeeper. Through serfdom his family has been linked to Gaev's for generations. Despite a lack of sophisticated education, Lopakhin has become rich (almost a millionaire) through business acumen and hard work over long hours. He remembers kindnesses done for him by Lyubov in the past and is eager to show his gratitude in Act 1 by telling her as soon as possible of his plan to save her estate: the property lies near the town and the railway line and, if the cherry orchard is cut down and its land developed with land along the river bank, all will be well. By cutting it up into building plots and leasing them for summer dachas, Lyubov can expect to make 25000 roubles a year and pay off the arrears on her mortgage and other debts. Throughout Acts 1 and 2, Lopakhin tries valiantly to make Lyubov see sense, but fails to persuade her of the need to act fast to prevent the sale of the estate by auction. For Lyubov, summer visitors are vulgar, and she cannot cope with the loss of the memories associated with the cherry orchard. In Act 3, on the day of the auction, Lopakhin comes to a party at the estate. He has bought it, and in an excited, triumphant manner gives his hosts a detailed description of the proceedings. Though he has failed to save the estate for others, he has managed to buy the place where his father and grandfather were slaves. The trees will be felled, houses will be built and a new life will spring up here for future generations. Lopakhin's success can be interpreted as an example of the heroic struggle of a previously oppressed class to assert itself in the early twentieth century. In Act 4 we see him in control and about to begin the building project despite spending the winter in Kharkov. Like Trofimov and Anya, Lopakhin thrives on hard work. His mind is more at ease when occupied, and this, he believes, defines his existence. One aspect of his character which might detract from his being cast in the role of hero is his inability to form a strong personal relationship with a woman. Despite a close friendship with Varya for some years, Lopakhin has never proposed to her. Towards the end of the play he acknowledges to Lyubov that he himself does not understand why he has not proposed. He tells Lyubov he is now ready, but when Varya is called in, he just makes small talk, avoids the issue and appears to welcome a summons from outside, leaving Varya sobbing. The best candidates might well, after discussing the character of Lopakhin, propose another character as being more worthy of the title of hero or heroine or make the case that there is no such thing in a Chekhov play, demonstrating how and why this is so.

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**C 'In *Вишнёвый сад* Chekhov's innovative dramatic techniques reach perfection.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should describe and analyse Chekhov's innovative dramatic techniques, assessing whether and to what extent they may be considered perfect. It is not necessary for candidates to compare this, Chekhov's last main play, with his others to obtain top marks. It is enough to describe his innovative dramatic techniques in the studied text and to consider their effectiveness in the context of the original production and those of the present day. Answers are likely to mention the absence of a traditional hero figure, the broadly equal importance of the main characters and the interweaving plots. In this play the failure of Lyubov to accept the reality of her financial position, sell the cherry orchard and move on in her life is contrasted and interlinked with the success of the rising entrepreneur, Lopakhin, all set against the playing out of unsatisfactory relationships between Dunyasha and Yasha, Anya and the idealistic Trofimov, Varya and Lopakhin, Epikhodov and Dunyasha. The emotions of characters are displayed to touch the audience: the sadness of unrequited love, optimism, hope, nostalgia, laughter, longing, uncertainty and unease. In all these unsatisfactory relationships the conflict is founded on a lack of emotional reciprocity and a failure on the part of one character or both to communicate feelings. For Chekhov, real drama is founded in ordinary human relationships, not in the heightened actions and stylised speeches of the traditional Russian drama. Answers may mention: the creation of realistic characters depicted in shades of grey; the four Act structure; the dialogue – that of natural speech which can be imbued with different levels of emotional intensity at the director's discretion to emphasise or minimise the intensity of serious or comic moments; the use of linguistic differentiation (e.g. Gaev's billiards vocabulary). Pauses are used to reflect the inner conflict of characters, to create suspense or anticipation and to vary the pace of the action. The lengths of these can vary from production to production, altering the audience's perception of scenes and characters. Pauses are numerous: Act 2 has sixteen. A sense of unease and menace is created by the faint outline of the distant town on the set of Act 2, the sound of the breaking string and the appearance of the beggar in the same act, the noise of the breaking string once again in Act 4 and the axe felling the cherry trees at the very end. Music is used to enhance or alter the atmosphere. For example, in Act 2 Epikhodov is heard playing a mournful song on the guitar on three occasions, each with a different effect. In Act 3 the waltz relieves the tension of the exchange between Lyubov and Trofimov about the nature of her lover and the young man's lack of one, while at the end of the act, it reinforces Lopakhin's joy at his purchase and contrasts with Lyubov's tears of despair. Mention might also be made of lighting effects to create atmosphere.

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## 10 E. Замятин, *Мы*

**A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From entry No 19. D-503 has attended a lecture at which O-90 has saved a baby from falling and becoming injured. Returning home, D-503 has been thinking of I-330's recent request that he pretend she is visiting him and that he should therefore lower the blinds, but D-503 is reluctant. He has thought he has been followed home by S, whom he still thinks is an agent of the State rather than one of the rebels.

**Content:** D-503 is surprised to find O in his room. O appears stressed and asks whether D has received her letter in which she tells him she loves him, but as he is now in love with I, she will deregister herself as D's sexual partner and leave him alone for ever. D appears to be unable to give a definite reaction to what she has been saying. He is torn between the two women, but appears to agree they should no longer have any contact. However, when O implies she will leave him if first she can get pregnant by him, D finds it hard to resist her and puts his hands behind his back. O is willing to risk death by the Machine of the Benefactor in order to experience motherhood. For a long time she has been strongly in love and wanting to have D's baby despite being also registered as a sexual partner of the rebel poet, R-13. The best candidates will describe how, immediately after the extract, D hands in I's pink coupon, then has sex with O and how this act of rebellion (the sex is unplanned and therefore illegal) results in his feeling he is falling headlong over a parapet.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The passage is from the nineteenth entry in D-503's diary. It therefore contains his thoughts and impressions as well as a subjective third-person account of events. Most of the extract, however, consists of dialogue between D and O. The language of both characters is that of educated people. The use of short, sometimes incomplete sentences and phrases reflects the emotional tension, unease and mental confusion of both, but particularly of O-90. Despite their intimacy, both characters use formal *вы* forms. Though the events are usually conveyed in past tenses, actions or images particularly significant for D-503 are conveyed in the present, emphasising the vividness of the moment (e.g. улыбкою прикрыта мельчайшая дрожь, но я вижу ; На столе лежит...талон *той*.) D uses a number of interesting images: his scientific background makes him see O as having no springs beneath her dress and her voice is also springless. Her eyes are dark blue, (linked to strong emotion) brimming saucers (water is symbolic of new life as well as sadness here) and her words are like streams coming through dams. D's discourse also contains words which are peculiar to the futuristic setting (под юнифой, Машина Благодетеля). O's maternal instinct is reflected in her use of a diminutive form to describe her baby's wrinkle.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can go into greater detail about the changing relationships of D, O and I throughout the text, describing the ultimate fates of the characters. When O falls pregnant, D offers to take her to I so she can get to safety behind the Green Wall, but O is jealous and proud and therefore refuses. However, later, when O is threatened with the Great Operation which will deprive her of the ability to love her child, she finally agrees to be helped by D and I. Candidates can provide detailed information about the repressive nature of the One State, its laws, practices and institutions. In particular, mention should be made about the organised system for acquiring sexual partners, the use of pink coupons, the absence of choice in having children and the consequences for society of all this. The nature and purpose of D-503's diary should be discussed, showing how his original intention to create a beautiful description of the One State turns out differently. The diary essentially describes a state in meltdown reacting with force and repression to individual and collective rebellion.

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**B To what extent can the reader sympathise with the hero of *Мы*?**

Candidates should first outline those aspects of the text which appear designed to limit our capacity to sympathise with D-503 before discussing those features of the text which encourage us to sympathise with him. Answers should then provide an evaluative judgement based on the evidence cited. Through D-503's diary, the reader is introduced to the nightmarish One State where all aspects of life are organised according to mathematical principles. Almost all the thoughts and actions of its citizens are controlled. Happiness is perceived as the absence of desire, envy and feeling. Love is reduced to a regulated sex act and death is meaningless. Liberty is severely curtailed as every action apart from sex can be observed by everyone else, including the guardians, the upholders of the principles of the State and the rule of the Benefactor. Because the setting is so alien to the reader, it is at first hard to identify with the characters and the everyday situations in which they find themselves. The characters' lack of familiar names and family circumstances immediately place us at an objective distance from them. However, as we read what was supposed to be a description of the perfect society and instead witness D-503's struggle to retain the rational values of his upbringing in the face of continuous emotional and intellectual challenge from three women with different points of view (I-330, O-90 and Yu), our sympathies steadily grow for what turns out to be basically an ordinary man wrestling with his feelings. This is partly due to the diary structure. The first-person narrative is constructed to appear spontaneous with broken syntax and rhetorical questions to indicate doubt or musing, an apparent stream-of-consciousness style interspersed with more logical and carefully crafted sections to indicate the hero's varying moods and vacillating attitudes as he describes and comments on the events of the plot. Candidates should describe what happens in the text, pointing out the places where we sympathise most and least with the hero both in relation to the love-story and in relation to his confrontation with the One State and his quest for freedom and happiness. While some will conclude that we can wholly sympathise with D-503 because he is essentially no different from people today, others will still think that the story-world is fundamentally too dehumanised and alien for us to identify readily with those who inhabit it, even the hero, D-503.

**C «Моё привычное к цифрам перо не в силах создать музыки ассонансов и рифм». Do you agree with the fictional narrator, D503, that the diary is lacking in artistic devices?**

The best candidates will recognise the quotation from the first entry where Zamyatin's fictional narrator, a mathematician of the One State, refers to his work as a поэма. The diary is meant to be a glorious account of the nature of the One State, a record of the lives of its citizens, of what is seen and thought by them. Candidates should describe and analyse the artistic devices in the fictional narrator's writing style. Though the diary is written in prose and therefore, as D-503 rightly points out, does not contain the music of assonances and rhymes, it is heavily permeated with complex and original imagery and symbolism more typical of poetry than of prose. Colour symbolism centres upon red, yellow and blue. Yellow is associated with sunshine and life, but also death and decay. Red is associated with energy, fire, passion and blood, while light blue is linked with entropy and cold rationalism. Dark blue is linked to strong emotion while in the final scene the almost total lack of colour reflects the sterility of D-503's cleansed mind. Green, the middle colour of the spectrum, is the colour of the wall dividing civilization from the savage world beyond, while black is most associated with I-330 (black dress and black piano at the concert, black hat and stockings at the Ancient House). The metal gold, traditionally associated with eternal values and excellence, is the material of the gold badge worn on the citizens' uniforms. The badge is a metaphor for the rational self, removed only for sex during the unstructured personal hours. Cast iron is linked with the crushing inevitability of events and the voice and gestures of the Benefactor. Sunlight is associated with life beyond the wall, while water is linked to sex and the Integral. Images to do with eruption – cosmic, geographical, social, political, sexual-abound. Shape images feature: The description of O-90's body suggests roundness (eyes, mouth, pregnant abdomen), while the sinuous shape of S suggests a satanically evil

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serpent. Human beings are often reduced to inanimate pieces of machinery or vice versa. The idea that the fictional narrator is a mathematician is constantly reinforced by the use of mathematical references and imagery. The best answers will evaluate the effects of the imagery and symbolism employed, showing how this enhances our understanding of characters, the nature of the One State and the events of the plot.

## 11 М. Булгаков, *Собачье сердце*

**A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From near the end of Chapter 3. Sharik, a stray dog, has been adopted by Professor Preobrazhensky and spoiled with food, the quantity and quality of which the animal has never previously experienced. On this occasion, however, Sharik has not been given anything to eat and has been locked in the bathroom, then dragged by the collar into a transformed consulting-room where Preobrazhensky and the other doctor (Bormental) are waiting. The dog has detected something mean and nasty in Bormental's eyes.

**Content:** The dog observes the same look in the eyes of Zina, the maid, as she strokes him prior to removing his collar, an item which Sharik now feels has given him a degree of status. Bormental, urged on by the professor, quickly gives the dog an anaesthetic, probably chloroform, on a pad applied to his muzzle. We read of the dog's thoughts as he experiences the effects of the drug. Candidates can describe the characters of Preobrazhensky, Bormental, Zina and Sharik along with their roles in the plot.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is an interesting mixture of narrative perspectives. The dominant voice is that of the omniscient third-person narrator, but other voices are interspersed, causing a truly polyphonic effect and adding credibility to the characters and events described. The professor's direct speech is followed by a section in which the narrator's voice is blended with the perspective of the dog who sees Bormental's eyes as мерзкие and Zina's stroking of him as явно фальшиво. Bormental is referred to as тяпнутый. There then follow sections of the dog's direct thought interspersed with sections of the narrator's discourse and two instances of brief interjections in direct speech by the professor. The application of the drug is described from a naïve perspective, a kind of остранение. The adjectives describing the smell of the chloroform (скверный, мутнящий) belong to the the dog's perspective, though here this is fused with the narrator's. The narrator provides us with an unusual insight into the dog's state of mind. Under the influence of the drug he sees a boat full of pink dogs and appears to experience synaesthesia when the sound of the professor's words disintegrate into orange streaks. The narrator describes the change in the dog's emotional state from one of fear to one of joy. Candidates can comment on the unusual arrangement of voices in the text as a whole and the effectiveness of this technique on the reader. The comic effects caused by the naïve perspective of the dog in various sections of the text may be mentioned. In the extract, all voices use standard Russian forms.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the events of the plot which arise as a result of the operation. Preobrazhensky implants the pituitary gland and testicles of a common thief into the dog. This causes humanisation rather than rejuvenation and, as a result, the professor creates a being who turns into a revolting specimen of humanity with the characteristics of the donor, an immoral thief with too great a liking for drink. Candidates can describe the trail of havoc which Preobrazhensky's creation leaves behind him and the final outcome when, after he has denounced Preobrazhensky and his assistant, Bormental, to the authorities, the two medics set about reversing the experiment.

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**B What do you consider to be Bulgakov's artistic purpose in writing *Соба́чье се́рдце* and to what extent do you think he has succeeded?**

Candidates are likely to suggest that Bulgakov wrote *Соба́чье се́рдце* in order to satirise and undermine the Bolshevik Revolution, its ideals, theories, institutions and officials and to create a humorous text which would serve as a warning as to what consequences society might suffer in the near and distant future as a result of the creation of Soviet society. The transplant operation is seen to be unnatural, leading to the creation of something ugly, stupid and dangerous which rapidly gets out of control. Sharik in his human incarnation is a selfish, uncultured, mendacious, drunken thief who functions on a bestial level with scant regard to the feelings of others. He is seen to be able to take a job as an exterminator of other creatures and shows no remorse after committing a drunken sexual assault. He allies himself with the House Management Committee against his benefactors and is prepared to denounce those who have created him for his own selfish ends. Thus, when Preobrazhensky and Bormental reverse the experiment, the message is that the experiment (the Revolution) has been a dangerous failure. Answers should refer to specific aspects of post-revolutionary society which are held up for ridicule: the Food Rationing Organisation, the quality of Soviet food, shortages, NEP, the inept House Management Committee with its many useless meetings, newspapers, Soviet bureaucracy (the need to have ID to live in Moscow, the requirement to be registered for military service), ridiculous Soviet names et al. On another level the satire is directed at human nature. Through hyperbole and distortion, Bulgakov shows the vices of humanity, forcing the reader to acknowledge his own failings. Reference might be made to the professor's arrogance when dealing with the House Management Committee, his greed in continuing to live in a seven-roomed apartment, Sharik's ready acceptance of the lavish benefits of living with the professor and his desire to take even more of them, his bad behaviour when drunk, the grotesque behaviour of the professor's sexually rejuvenated middle-aged patients etc. Answers are likely to conclude that Bulgakov is highly successful in his creation of satire and the debunking of humanity.

**C 'It is Bulgakov's distinctive methods of characterisation which allow the reader to believe and at the same time to disbelieve in his creations and their story-world.' Do you agree?**

A chance to examine how the reader of the text is affected by the reading process and investigate the means by which the author makes us accept the fantastic as rational and credible. Bulgakov presents us with caricature-like characters with some features exaggerated and others only thinly sketched or ignored completely. Candidates will provide a range of examples, showing who we can empathise with, to what extent this can be achieved and at which points in the plot this can occur. Those characters whose narrative perspectives form distinct textual zones (Sharik and Bormental) are the most developed because our insight into their inner selves is obtained from a first-person point of view as well as from the 'omniscient' third-person narrator whose omniscience is controlled and limited by the author for artistic effect. We learn about the other characters through a mixture of narration and direct speech. The utterances in direct speech and in the textual zones (the dog's unmarked direct thought and Bormental's case-notes) display evidence of the characters' personalities in terms of their thoughts, manner of thinking and manner of speech. Because no character is fully drawn, we cannot sympathise completely with any of them. Instead, the reader is forced to stand back, be objective and react without empathy when confronted with descriptions of acts of violence, sexual assault, the infliction of pain or lesser disasters such as having one's flat flooded or being refused food. The emotional distance between reader and characters renders such incidents comic, allowing us to concentrate on the bigger picture. We are thus steered into interpreting the characters and events as a satiric parable about the inadequacies of human nature and the failings of the Revolution (see above).

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## 12 Ю. Трифонов, *Обмен*

- A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** The extract comes from the very end of the text. Despite initially refusing to go along with Lena's plan to exchange flats, two days after Dmitriev's visit to Pavlinovo, Kseniya Fedorovna finally agrees. The narrator has been describing the many bureaucratic difficulties encountered before the three-way exchange is finally completed.

**Content:** Candidates can describe Dmitriev, Lora, Lena and Kseniya Fedorovna, the complexities of their relationships, Lena's lack of respect for her mother-in-law (she mocks her English, takes her best cups and moves her husband's picture), the disparity between the world views of the two families and Lena's general pernicious influence over Dmitriev who is drawn away from his natural cultured and idealistic values into his wife's philistine camp. The complicated and often needlessly inhuman nature of Soviet bureaucracy can be commented upon as well as Dmitriev's possibly guilty and certainly telling reaction to his mother's death and the symbolic demolition of the dachas which once belonged to the Red Partisans. This represents for Dmitriev the end of his family's values as well as those of his wider natural community. The significance of the introduction of the narrator as a character in his own right will be discussed.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** In this section the narrator suddenly and without warning becomes a character in his own right. It emerges that all we have read comes from Dmitriev, but filtered through the perspective of his old friend. We are now forced to question the objectiveness of all we have previously read since the narrator can no longer, strictly speaking, be described as a third-person omniscient one. The narrator is, however, close to Dmitriev in terms of education. His language is standard educated Russian, though often coloured by elliptical and colloquial language, sometimes betraying an emotional stance. In the extract the diminutives in the phrase с обмякшими щёками дяденька create a mildly condescending tone. Other parts of the extract which show clearly the narrator's presence are: Ну, и на этот раз... (colloquial), the rhetorical question at the beginning of the last paragraph, and the inverted word order of Выглядел он неважно. (colloquial).

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can go into more detail about the exchange of value-systems, symbolised by the flat exchange, and how Dmitriev has altered during his 14 years of marriage to Lena (See Q12C). As the extract consists of a single narrative voice, mention could be made of the polyphonic nature of other sections of the text (See Q12B).



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**B Describe and analyse Trifonov's narrative techniques and the narrative structure of *Обмен*, evaluating their effects.**

Candidates should describe and analyse Trifonov's narrative techniques and the narrative structure of the text, evaluating the effects of their complicated nature on the reader. There is likely to be a range of opinion as to whether the text's narrative structure and the author's narrative techniques are weaknesses or positive features of the text. The main time-frame of the text is quite short. Most of its events take place over a few days, though the reader is presented through a series of episodic flashbacks with considerable relevant background to characters and their lives covering many years. Making sense of the time-line is difficult as it moves constantly backwards and forwards. The reader must continuously re-evaluate the characters and their motivation in the context of the new information about past events which is being presented, apparently at random. Candidates should illustrate this process with examples. Though there are subsections within the single unit of the text, these are untitled. While this can lead to confusion, it also produces a feeling of natural, spontaneous narration, a kind of stream-of-consciousness which strengthens the realism of the story-world. Mention should be made of the third-person omniscient narration, broken by marked dialogue or recalled dialogue without the full markers of direct speech indicating the originator of the utterance. The latter may be regarded as effective, but may result in the reader having to work at ascribing the words to individual speakers. The metamorphosis of the third-person narrator into a partially defined first-person narrator in the final paragraph comes as a surprise, forcing the reader to re-evaluate the entire text and to look for earlier words which might not be as objective, when describing characters and events, as we first thought. Other contentious points include: the density of the narrator's prose when past events or the lives of secondary characters are summarised, the use of free indirect speech.

**C '*Обмен* is as much about failed human relationships as it is about a failing society.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first decide whether and to what extent the relationships depicted in the text are strained or broken down. They should then go on to discuss the picture of Soviet society presented by Trifonov, pointing out its shortcomings and mentioning its positive aspects, before assessing the relative importance in the text of the human stories and social criticism. Answers will describe the two interlinked family units and the often antagonistic relationships which arise between individuals because of the conflicting value-systems of the intellectual Socialist idealist Dmitrievs (Kseniya Fedorovna, Lora, the grandfather) and the materialistic, insensitive and philistine Lukyanovs (Lena and her parents). While the Dmitrievs are cast in the mould of the revolutionary intelligentsia who sacrificed their own happiness and lives for their cause, the Lukyanovs are motivated by the acquisition of wealth and prestigious position apparently regardless of the means required or the consequences for those they push aside. Lena, with the determination of a bulldog, succeeds in obtaining an ideal job in an institute near the centre of Moscow, makes her husband steal the job of a friend, instigates the exchange of accommodation which will end in her immediate family having a better flat and manages to get her daughter into a specialist English-language school despite living outside the catchment area. Though as an educated linguist she could have moved to the value-system of the Dmitrievs, she retains the one she was brought up with, gradually bringing her husband round to her way of thinking. Mention should be made of the antipathy or coldness between Lena and her mother-in-law, Lena and Lora, Dmitriev and his mother-in-law, both sets of in-laws, Lena's parents and Dmitriev's grandfather. We are also shown squabbles between those on the same side (Lora and Felix over going away to their dig while Kseniya Fedorovna is ill, Lora and Dmitriev in childhood). Despite their ideological and personal differences, the characters often have in common loved relatives, whom they are willing to look after in the best manner they know. Trifonov seems to be saying that despite tensions between individuals, the family unit is important, blood is thicker than water and that the dynamic of relationships is forever changing as individuals modify their outlooks as a result of their life experiences. Candidates will be divided as to whether and to what extent the

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text is a criticism of society *per se* or an indictment of a handful of individuals within it. In general, we are shown an image of Brezhnev's Russia in which people have to contend with many difficulties in every-day life: the State bureaucracy is a nightmare (the three-way exchange), housing is cramped and often communal, privacy and personal space are restricted, transport is crowded, there is domestic violence (even between Dmitriev and Lena), corruption is a fact of life (doctors have to be unofficially paid for, jobs, school places and material possessions are obtained through bribes, sweeteners and favours). Personal savings are very limited so that borrowing in times of crisis is the norm. Those who are most successful in Brezhnev's Russia are those like Lena and her family who have a capacity for moral compromise. On the other hand, despite petty jealousies and squabbling, the family unit is shown to be strong and loving with individuals supporting each other in the best way they can. The trials and tribulations of every-day Soviet life are seen to be overcome with a bit of imagination, skill and energy. There are elements of altruism and genuine concern for the situations of others. Tanya is prepared to lend Dmitriev money though their relationship is over, and his colleagues at work allow him to finish early to visit his mother and accept he cannot go on a business trip for several days. Answers are likely to come to a range of conclusions.

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13 Т. Толстая, *Милая Шура, Петерс, Река Оккервиль*

A Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From about the middle of *Река Оккервиль*. The balding elderly translator, Simeonov, who is obsessed with a once-famous singer, Vera Vasil'evna, has purchased yet another of her old recordings from a dealer. Simeonov learns from him that the singer is still alive and living somewhere in Leningrad in poverty, having lost her diamonds, husband, flat, son, lovers and voice. The translator puts on his new acquisition and conjures up a section of the embankment of the Okkervil' where Vera, with neat hair and an attractive little shoulder, is stumbling in uncomfortable heels. However, the moon refuses to co-operate with his imaginings as real life has now disturbed them.

**Content:** Simeonov's fantasy-setting has been encroached upon by the image of the singer as a real old woman. He listens to the voices of two demons arguing over how he should act: should he discard his fantasy and compromise with life, accepting Tamara and her practical and sexual services while occasionally still longing for Vera or should he actively pursue the singer as she really is now, declaring his eternal love for her and making her aware of the powerful effects she has had on him, her faithful knight? Simeonov imagines her surprised and grateful reaction and the words spoken by both. The extract concludes with the negative reaction of the inner demon advocating accepting Tamara and reality, but Simeonov follows the lead of his youthful, adventurous voice. Candidates should comment on the characters of Simeonov, Vera and Tamara as well as their relationships.

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**Use of Language and Narrative techniques:** The extract contains a mixture of narrative perspectives. It is primarily third-person omniscient narration, but the voices of the demons are provided in reported speech within Simeonov's perspective. Vera's reaction to his imagined declaration of love is presented as a fusion of the perspectives of the narrator and Simeonov but in the unmarked direct speech of the singer. His reply to this is likewise in unmarked direct speech, while the implied reality of the demon is emphasised by placing his words in marked direct speech. Candidates may mention the powerful effects of the long sentences with their complex interweaving narrative perspectives, the frequent use of assonance and alliteration (eg the use of repeated sibilants to evoke sensuality), the repetition of words and use of present gerunds to create a feeling of rhythm and movement and the strong images created by long lists of apparently random but significant nouns. Other points to note include the use of colours, the image of the Peri and the bathos of the inner demon's comment at the end of the extract.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the content of the rest of the story: Simeonov follows the urgings of the wild and youthful demon and visits the singer with a view to declaring his love. The translator is severely disappointed by the sight of Vera. Instead of waiting alone for her sad, balding prince, the lady is happily entertaining numerous guests at her birthday party. Simeonov's illusions are shattered, and he feels betrayed. He tries to replace Vera in his head and in reality with Tamara, but fails to do so. Vera visits him to avail herself of his bath, and thus his passion for her is rekindled, the open ending allowing for the possibility of a happy conclusion. The typicality of the use of language and narrative techniques contained in the extract can be confirmed by quoting other examples from the rest of the text.

## **B Describe and analyse the common features of these three stories.**

A considerable variety of approach is possible with this question. Answers may focus on one or several aspects of communality, though the best responses are likely to develop a number of points. All three stories are centred around eccentric, quirky and idiosyncratic characters: the effete, socially gauche, pot-bellied and flat-footed librarian, the eponymous hero of *Пемперс* who fails in all his relationships with women; the nonagenarian and much married Shura who relives the highs and lows of her life with her various lovers for the narrator of *Милая Шура* in her shabby, Moscow communal flat; Simeonov, the elderly Leningrad translator, still infatuated with Vera Vasil'evna, a once famous singer, now long forgotten by her public (*Река Оккервиль*). All three are essentially presented as loners, though there have been moments of shared happiness for all. All three are shown struggling to reconcile dream with reality in the pursuit of happiness. The stories share to a greater and lesser extent some common themes: love, particularly unrequited love, loyalty, longing for domestic bliss, the effects of time on individuals, spiritual imprisonment, a desire to return to the past or a longing to escape from it and the plight of the eccentric in society. Perhaps the most significant shared aspect of these stories is Tolstaya's unique and effective style. Candidates might show how the author uses the style and language of her various narrators to seduce the reader into believing in the rather thin plots and caricature-like characters through the wide use of literary devices and poetic effects. Mention can be made of any of the following (preferably with appropriate quotation): esoteric vocabulary, variable sentence length, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, onomatopoeia, complex narrative and rhythmic structures, polyphony, the range of narratorial voices, use of free indirect speech, intertextual references, use of imagery (especially relating to water, wind, colours, smells, animals and entrapment), use of punctuation, spatial hyperbole et al.

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**C 'Tolstaya's stories are excellent examples of magic realism.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement. They should first define magic realism before assessing whether and to what extent Tolstaya's stories can be said to correspond to the genre. Magic realism is characterized by the fusion of rational and realistic elements with irrational and fantastic ones. There may exist supernatural or mythological elements, a distorted sense of time and space, the sudden appearance of the unexpected and dream sequences which blend into the conscious experience of the characters. Tolstaya writes in the tradition of Gogol and Bulgakov. The stories are set in a recognisable, realistic urban setting with clear references to cities, geographical features, means of transport, twentieth-century technology and assorted aspects of Russian society and every-day life. Candidates should describe these realistic features, then show how in each story aspects of magic realism manifest themselves, transforming the text into an unusual and memorable reading experience. In *Пемепс* we observe the eponymous hero's interaction with his velvet hare as a child, the coincidence of the breaking of the ice on the Neva on the day of his grandmother's funeral, the affairs he has with attractive women in his imagination and the fantastic content of his dreams as he struggles to deal with rejection, his perceiving of the girl who steals his wallet in the restaurant he visits on the way to his German lesson as a Peri and an angel and generally how nature and the city reflect his various moods. In *Милая Шура* the elderly Shura frequently relives her affair with her true love, Ivan Nikolaevich, and in particular, the events and thinking around her final decision not to leave her husband and join her lover in the Crimea. We also share the narrator's imagined conversation with Ivan in which she urges him to wait, assuring him that Shura will finally come, as well as her concluding vision of the deceased old lady floating off to join her beloved in the south. In *Река Оккервиль* we read of Simeonov's obsession with Vera Vasil'evna, his vision of her as a languorous naiad and his imagined relationship with her. Simeonov listens to the arguing of two demons: one demanding he discard his imaginary lover and embrace reality, the other advocating he actively pursue the real Vera, declaring his love for the Peri. After he has actually met the singer and feels betrayed by her, she appears to him in a dream.