

**CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**

Pre-U Certificate

**MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2013 series**

**9782 PRINCIPAL COURSE RUSSIAN**

**9782/04**

Paper 4 (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 should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2013 series for most IGCSE, Pre-U, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level components and some Ordinary Level components.

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### **Part I: Topics**

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

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

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

This paper tests 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 first-hand 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 Какими аспектами детства интересуются создатели выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, кто из создателей этих произведений лучше понимает что такое быть молодым?

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe those aspects of childhood which the creators of the chosen works have selected to study and present to us in different social, temporal and historical contexts. The focus varies in each, but all contain, in various proportions, aspects of the following: learning how to make relationships, dealing with a range of adult personalities, finding out about the world, life and its mysteries (sex, death etc.), growing up and establishing one's identity and functioning in a world controlled by adults. In *Детство* we are given a semi-autobiographical account of the childhood of a member of the landed gentry in the late 1830s. Events are narrated from the point of view of the ten year old Nikolay filtered through the perspective of an older and wiser first-person narrator who, from the perspective of a mature adult, analyses the feelings and reactions of the child to a series of exciting and traumatic events. These cause the child to experience a range of strong emotions: intense sadness at possible and actual partings from beloved servants, relatives and animals, fear and grief due to the illness and death of his mother, joy and sorrow caused by the first stirrings and experiences of love and learning how to behave as an adult in various situations – when hunting, meeting new people in Moscow society, attending a ball. In *Воп* we are shown the story of six year old Sanya, whose father had died in WW2, six months before his birth. His mother takes up with a handsome, strong soldier with whom she has a sexual encounter on a train. Tolyan, Katya and Sanya pass themselves off as a family, conning their way into communal accommodation and into the trust of their fellow residents. Katya soon learns that her lover is a selfish, violent brute, a calculating thief who feels no guilt in stealing from those who have accepted him into their communities. Sanya, who longs for a father figure and admires Tolyan's muscles and tattoos, is treated roughly by Tolyan, especially when the little boy gets in the way of sex with Katya. Like his mother, however, Sanya remains in awe of his surrogate parent as he is able deal with any situation either by charm or violence. Tolyan attempts to teach Sanya how to stand up for himself against bullies, how to wash in a banya, and shows him how to bluff one's way out of many a difficult situation, but at the same time uses him shamelessly as a prop in his subterfuge and as a reluctant aid to break into buildings. Eventually, Tolyan's luck runs out when he and Sanya are heard stealing from a flat. Police are called, and the whole "family" has to flee. Tolyan is arrested as he and Katya prepare to go their separate ways by train. Despite Katya's heroic efforts to bribe officials to save her lover from punishment, Tolyan is sentenced to seven years in an inhospitable region. Sanya, encouraged by his mother, feels he has betrayed his "father" as his behaviour at the time of the arrest might have contributed to it. Katya contracts blood-poisoning from a botched abortion and dies. Her son is placed in an orphanage where he treasures his memories along with his mother's watch and Tolyan's gun. He dreams that Tolyan will one day be free and come for him. Years later, Sanya encounters Tolyan who has degenerated further as a drunk and womaniser. Tolyan initially fails to recognise Sanya and has difficulty even remembering who Katya was. He wants nothing to do with his former protégé. Sanya feels Tolyan has betrayed him and his mother, follows him as he is getting onto a train at night and shoots him dead, thus liberating himself from feelings of hero worship and a desire to emulate his surrogate parent. *Возвращение* tells the story of two young teenage boys taken on a fishing trip by their father who has returned after a mysterious absence of twelve years. Set in the present over a short time

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space, the film provides limited insight into the lives of the two boys. We see them as part of a gang of friends who ostracise the younger boy, Vanya, when he fails to jump from a high tower into water. This causes him to experience a great deal of fear and misery. Apparently content living with their mother and grandmother, they know only what they have been told about their father. 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, perhaps because for him the trip has another purpose behind it other than fishing. Despite this behaviour towards them which causes particularly the younger son to be terrified and traumatised, both boys are affected by the accidental death of their father as the result of a fall from a great height.

In the second part of the question, candidates should discuss which author or director of the chosen works is able to show best what it is to be young. All of the set works display insight into the minds of children and are brilliantly successful at revealing their eternal qualities: the psychology of the child's mind at different ages, how children form and sustain relationships with parents, siblings and others, how they react to new situations of various types. The best answers will discuss which artistic methods are used to convey to us the emotions and feelings 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, Chukhray's and Zvyagintsev's use of close-up shots and their focusing on the facial expressions and body language of the boys to show a range of emotions as well as the language and intonation patterns of their conversations.

**В «Самые страшные или самые смешные моменты в детстве иногда являются самыми важными в жизни детей». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, какие сцены самые страшные или самые смешные в выбранных вами произведениях?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe a range of terrible or comic moments which happen to the children featured in the set works, assessing whether these are important ones in their lives. See above (Q1A) for detail of key events. In the second part of the question, candidates should provide an opinion with reasons as to which scenes are most touching or comic. The best answers will discuss, in addition to the content, which artistic methods are used to render these scenes particularly terrible or amusing.

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## 2 РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ И ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ ВОЙНА

- A Сравните по одной сцене из каждого выбранного вами произведения, которые ясно показывают мужество или страх во время Революции или Гражданской войны. По-вашему, создатели этих произведений рисуют убедительный психологический портрет людей в опасных ситуациях?**

Candidates should compare two scenes in which courage and/or fear are displayed by people during the Revolution or Civil War. They should then discuss whether or to what extent the creators of these works convey to us a convincing psychological portrait of people in dangerous situations. (For detail, see Q2B).

- В «Годы Революции и Гражданской войны были тяжёлым временем в истории России и СССР». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, это время идеализировано в этих произведениях?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should show, by detailed reference to the studied works, whether or to what extent the years of the Revolution and Civil War were a difficult time in Russian and Soviet history. They should then go on to assess whether or to what extent the events depicted are idealised by the authors and filmmaker. *Белая гвардия* follows the activities of the comfortably-off, intellectual, Tsarist Turbin family, caught up in turbulent events which befell Kiev between May 1918 and February 1919. In particular, the novel focuses on two brothers (Aleksey, a doctor, and seventeen year old Nikolka) and their sister, Elena, abandoned by her Baltic German husband, Tal'berg who has to flee for having publically criticised Petlyura. Aleksey with his friend, Myshlaevsky, join Karas in his Mortar Regiment, while Nikolka serves as an Infantry Cadet. We are shown the men in a variety of difficult and dangerous situations as they try to defend their city from the encroaching forces of the Social-Democrat, Petlyura. Eventually, Aleksey is shot and wounded, but manages to return to his home, aided by the woman who had first tended to his wounds. Here his sister nurses him to a miraculous recovery from typhus. Though there is an unexpected happy ending for the main character, the text explicitly reveals the horrors of war and the mental and physical suffering of those participating in the confused struggles of the various competing military and political factions (monarchist, nationalist, bolshevik, German allies etc.). Among those aspects of often gritty realism which could be mentioned are: frost-bite, lice and cold suffered by Myshlaevsky and others, lack of equipment and proper clothing, inadequate training (e.g. the Mortar Regiment), inept commanders who abandon their troops, blackmarketeers, food shortages, wild rumours concerning the fate of the Tsar and the identity of Petlyura, people changing sides, violent anti-Semitism, fear of spies and violence against them, disloyalty and betrayal (the withdrawal of the Germans, themselves horrified at the fate of their Kaiser), the cowardly flight of the Hetman and reactions to this, fear of foreign invasion, elation of victories and despair in defeat, violent death (e.g. the decapitation of Fel'dman, the army contractor), the gore of the mortuary (sight and smell) where the body of Nay-Turs has been kept, theft of property by errant soldiers (e.g. from Vasilisa) et al. Though Bulgakov gives us insight chiefly into the thought processes of the Turbins and their friends on the same side, we are also made to realise that the enemy shares the same emotions and instincts as the Whites, as we are given limited insight into some enemy characters (e.g. Colonel Kozyr'-Leshko). Despite some theatrical moments (e.g. the ornate service in St Sophia's Cathedral), candidates will probably argue that the text does not idealise the period. *Разгром* is set in the summer and autumn of 1919. A detachment of Bolshevik partisans fighting in the Far East are forced to retreat in the face of superior forces. Though they are initially successful in extricating themselves from a virtually impassable swamp, they fall victim to a Cossack ambush as a result of which only nineteen of them survive. Living conditions for the partisans are primitive. These are not depicted through rose-tinted glasses, and the reality of death in wartime is never concealed. It is shown to affect many of the major

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and minor characters to whom the reader becomes sympathetic: Florov is given a fatal dose of “bromide” because his condition is considered hopeless; Metelitsa is shot in captivity by his Cossack guard; Stashinsky, the doctor, is shot and dragged behind his horse; Morozka, trying to warn his comrades about the ambush, fires three warning shots when surprised by some Cossacks who promptly finish him off. If anything is idealised in the novel, it is the portrayal of characters according to Socialist Realist principles, although the term was not officially coined till 1932, some five years after the text was written. Fadeev presents to us a variety of types whose intrinsic nature, motivation and behaviour are meant to reflect the reality of Socialist society, predominantly in a positive manner. This does not mean that “negative” character traits are absent from minor characters, and they are even present in some of the major ones whom we are meant to consider positive. Hard drinking and womanising are pretty much omnipresent among the partisans. Varya, though married to Morozka, is generous with her sexual favours, and even Levinson, the model leader, is depicted around a campfire telling bawdy stories with his men. The faults of the proletarian heroes are excused, however, because of their overriding Socialist virtues – their willingness to risk their all for the good of society, their altruism and sense of duty and responsibility. Examples of this include: Morozka’s rescuing of Mechik under fire, his suicidal warning shots to his comrades in the end; Levinson’s apparently calm and considered leadership, even when he really has little idea what is best to do next, his determination to go on no matter what happens, even when he himself is ill and in pain, his need to go on living and do his duty; the troops fighting the enemy who, according to Levinson, are motivated not only by a desire for self-preservation, but by some higher instinct for which they would suffer anything, even death. Such superior proletarian attitudes are contrasted with those of Mechik, the petty bourgeois who feels out of place among his rough, uneducated comrades and quickly longs to return to his former comfortable life in the town. Never accepted because of his social origins and Maximalist connections, he acquires the reputation of an arrogant idler, failing to care for his horse and generally pull his weight. His desertion to save his own life at the end of the novel epitomises his selfishness and individualism. Candidates can comment on whether and to what extent these characters are credible or idealised.

*Адмираль* deals with the rise and fall of Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak from 1916 until his execution in 1920. Made in 2008, its aim was not only to chronicle the period but to help to rehabilitate an anti-Bolshevik and present him as a true hero of Russia, regardless of his political beliefs. The film contains, for some, an excessively romantic portrayal of his adulterous affair with Anna Timireva, the wife of a fellow officer and friend as well as some historical inaccuracies (e.g. the Friedrich Carl was, in fact, sunk by mines in November 1914 rather than November 1916, and most of the crew were rescued). Nevertheless, there are many scenes which accurately depict the violence, blood, guts, noise, confusion and general horror of war on land and sea. The naval battles in the Baltic in 1916 are particularly graphic as is the scene which shows the disarming and execution by rifle and bayonet of terrified officers at Kronstadt following the February Revolution in 1917. The non-violent disarming of Kolchak and his officers in Sevastopol due to the compliance of the respected now Vice-Admiral is shown in contrast. Kerensky summons Kolchak to Petrograd with the offer of being appointed Minister of Defence, but Kolchak criticises Kerensky for allowing indiscipline to flourish in the armed services. Angered by the Vice-Admiral’s desire to impose strict order once again, Kerensky exiles him to the USA, calling him a counter-revolutionary. After the October Revolution, Kolchak is seen to have returned. He is leading part of the White Army at Omsk. His former friend, Timirev, has changed sides and is now a Red Commissar on his way with his wife to the Far East. On hearing the news about the whereabouts of Kolchak, Anna leaves her husband to follow her lover. She arrives on the Eastern Front in November 1918 in time to see Kolchak sworn in as Supreme Ruler of Russia in a highly romanticised scene complete with triumphant music, religious trappings and many subordinates on their knees to show their loyalty. Anna becomes a nurse and works tirelessly to save lives amid the gore of the battles. With the arrival of General Janin, disagreements about the function and duties of various interventionist forces begin to emerge. Kolchak is depicted as a wise and beloved leader, though just as he is seen accepting presents for saving Omsk, news

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comes of Red victories. The city must be evacuated, and the capital moved to Irkutsk. As the trains are loaded, Kolchak and Anna are reunited. He will never leave her again. Kolchak tells Anna that he has asked his wife for a divorce. Though at first reluctant, Anna eventually consents to marriage. From this point, Kolchak appears more caught up in his personal happiness than in dealing with the reality of his army's collapsing forces. General Kappel is simply ordered to Irkutsk to put down a rebellion as the Czechs begin to move out their equipment, having declared neutrality. Kappel's army is lacking in supplies and ammunition, and this results in the needless slaughter of its soldiers in a gruesome battle sequence. Janin agrees to hand over Kolchak to the Reds as this will secure the interventionists' safe passage out of the country. Kolchak still appears to be in a world of his own with Anna as they approach Irkutsk. Many of the White officers have already abandoned him before his arrest, trial and execution. In captivity, Kolchak is brave and stoical, sustained by his love for Anna who, we learn, subsequently spent thirty years in the Gulag. Candidates may well conclude that though the film depicts much of the physical and mental suffering of people in wartime and is broadly accurate in terms of the events shown, the documented cruelty and reactionary nature of Kolchak's regime has been omitted in the film, the personality of the hero is idealised and the importance of the love affair exaggerated.



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### 3 СТАЛИНИЗМ

**A Что мы узнаём о режиме Сталина в выбранных вами произведениях? По-вашему, создатели этих произведений преувеличивают жестокость советского общества в это время?**

Candidates should discuss what we learn about Stalin's regime by examining the depiction of the lives and fates of one or more of the characters living under it from each of their chosen works. They should then go on to assess from their background knowledge whether or to what extent the author or film-maker is exaggerating the cruelty of Soviet society at this time. 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 and that the regime caused this to happen or failed to stop it. 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. Though this, 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, it nevertheless shows Soviet society to be cold, hard, heartless and generally lacking in altruism. The daily lives of all the characters, even the schoolteacher-narrator, are bleak by any standards. The eponymous heroine of Chukovskaya's text is a more obvious victim of Stalin's regime. 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 naïve, 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 and that society has made even her appear cruel. *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,

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a respected military hero of the Revolution, now happily married and the father of a charming, 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 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. Even those who accidentally witness things the authorities wish to be kept secret, meet an untimely end (e.g. the lost driver who witnesses Kotov being taken away by car).

**В «В этих произведениях показаны самые хорошие и самые плохие аспекты человеческой природы». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, создатели этих произведений оптимистично относятся к человеческой природе во время трудных времён?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should assess the nature and behaviour of the characters in the chosen works and decide which aspects of this could be considered to represent the best and worst aspects of human nature. When discussing Solzhenitsyn's story, candidates could contrast Matrena's intrinsic goodheartedness in the face of poverty and adversity, her willingness to help on the collective farm for no pay, her gift of the timber of her outhouse and help to transport it with the many injustices done to her and others, particularly by those in authority. Specific examples might include: the denial of Matrena's 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 her pension, the uncaring attitude of the well-provided-for chairman of the collective farm towards those without fuel, 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 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, candidates might contrast Sof'ya's initial belief that the State is essentially just, her diligence at work as a typist in the publishing house, the devotion she shows to raising her son and the persistence she shows in her efforts to locate him and prove him innocent with the many acts of unfairness, spite and cruelty done to her and other characters (e.g. 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 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, and perhaps Sof'ya's final "betrayal" of her son to save herself. When discussing the film, candidates might contrast Kotov's intervention on

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the part of the farmworkers when their crops are about to be destroyed by the army's tanks, his love and affection for his wife and daughter, the patriotism and civic duty of the civil defence people and the Pioneers with Mitya's callous strategy to punish Kotov for previously forcing him to go abroad to spy on White émigrés. He attempts to seduce Kotov's 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. Mention might also be made of the shooting of the lost driver who recognises Kotov as he is being taken away and the arrest of Kotov's wife and exile of their daughter due to being related to Kotov. In the second part of the question, candidates are required to provide an opinion as to whether the creators of the chosen works appear to have a positive attitude to human nature during difficult times. Candidates will disagree about how damning the authors and the director are being about human nature since, despite the tragic fates of the main characters, goodness, altruism, loyalty and love are nevertheless present even in the darkest of days.

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#### 4 СОВЕТСКИЙ БЫТ ПРИ ХРУЩЁВЕ И БРЕЖНЕВЕ

- A Какую картину повседневной жизни в СССР в это время рисуют создатели выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, создатели этих произведений позитивно относятся к советскому обществу?**

Candidates should discuss the depiction of everyday life in the USSR given in the selected works. They should then provide an opinion as to whether or to what extent the creators of these works are displaying a positive attitude to Soviet society. Answers might discuss the ideological messages resulting from the plots (See Q4B). In addition, they could feature some of the following: discussion relating to the improving living and working conditions in town and country over the period, the growth of technology and science in society; topical references to Soviet culture (books, poetry, song), references to the West whether cultural or political, references to policies and role of the government of the USSR; references to social problems (alcoholism, domestic violence, loneliness, the demographic crisis); attitudes to sex, marriage, abortion, divorce, bribery and corruption in daily life with specific examples of this; references to the housing crisis, education, employment, wages, the economy; personal happiness and success.

- В «При Хрущёве и Брежневе отношения между мужчинами и женщинами были неравными и несправедливыми». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? Насколько советские женщины феминистки в этих произведениях?**

Candidates should first express an opinion as to whether or to what extent the relationships between men and women are portrayed as being unequal and unfair. They should then discuss to what extent the women portrayed might be considered feminists. 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 for many it contains much that is unfair to the woman. Candidates will probably conclude that Ol'ga's

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gentle questioning of the failures and weaknesses of the system are articulated not because she is a radical feminist, but simply because she feels her life and work would be of better quality if things were differently arranged. When writing about *Обмен*, candidates will probably mainly focus on the relationship between Dmitriev and Lena, showing how this extremely strong woman comes to dominate her husband, gradually pushing out of him the values of the intellectual, Socialist, idealist Dmitrievs and replacing them with those of the materialistic, insensitive and philistine Lukyanovs. Though Lena is an intelligent woman, a translator of English with a prestigious job, she has demonstrated during her 14 years of marriage to Dmitriev that she lacks all scruples. She is a natural survivor with the necessary determination to succeed in a fundamentally corrupt society where the ability to use contacts to obtain goods, services and favours is vital. Described as a bulldog gripping her wishes firmly between her teeth until they have become a reality, Lena uses her skills to obtain a good job in an institute near the best shops, get a place for her daughter in a prestigious specialist language school, make her husband appropriate his friend's job and use her terminally-ill mother-in-law, whom she dislikes, as a tool to acquire a larger flat. By legally moving the old lady in, the young couple will inherit her living space on her death. Always ready to monopolise and manipulate weaker, more sensitive and morally upright individuals, Lena is depicted as a corrupting influence on her husband whom she pushes to the point of moral bankruptcy. Sexually enslaved by Lena, he is gradually infected by her materialism, insensitivity and determination to feather her own nest at the expense of others. Candidates will probably conclude that in this text we see a powerful woman dominating a man. The relationship is unequal and unfair in that Dmitriev's essential nature is progressively stifled. That Lena could be described as a feminist is doubtful, however. She clearly loves her husband and daughter, and is motivated by a desire to further the interests of her family as a unit rather than the desire to further the rights of women in a male dominated society. Men'shov's film shows the differing fortunes of Tonya, Lyuda and Katya, three provincial girls living together in a women's residence in Moscow. Katya takes the opportunity to house-sit for a relative, a professor with a sumptuous flat where she and Lyuda, posing as the professor's daughters, entertain a range of intellectual men. Lyuda is attracted to Gurin, a famous ice-hockey player, while Katya falls for Rudol'f, a cameraman who believes that TV will become the most important art form and change the world. After meeting Rudol'f's pretentious mother and being filmed on TV, Katya reluctantly has sex, as a result of which she becomes pregnant, a fact revealed at the wedding of Tonya to the solid Kolya. When Rudol'f discovers Katya is a mere factory worker, he abandons her, blaming her for her pregnancy and saying she has deceived him. His mother offers Katya money to keep away, but this she firmly refuses: she can earn her own living. Twenty years later, Katya is shown waking up in a nice flat where her daughter, Aleksandra, lives with her. She is now the director of a large factory where she is shown firmly in charge of a range of male subordinates. Lyuda, lonely and searching for a partner, has been divorced from Gurin for seven years. He has become an alcoholic and still bothers her for money to feed his habit. Tonya is still happily married to Kolya with whom she has several children. Katya is having an affair with Volodya, a married man, but is really still searching for the right man to come along. One day, as she is returning from Tonya's dacha, she meets a man whose dirty shoes lead to a conversation and a new relationship. Katya is impressed by the tributes made to him by his friends at a picnic, his willingness to cook and his general demeanour, though she ignores his traditional views: men should always earn more than women and a marriage cannot work if the woman is in a position of superiority. When Rudol'f turns up to film an interview with Katya at the factory, neither at first recognises the other. When they do become aware of their identities, both remain cool during the filming. Later Rudol'f pesters Katya into meeting her. He is twice divorced, has no children and wants to see his daughter. Katya tells him it is too late for him to help bring up their child. His leaving had made her stronger. He should not contact her again. Meanwhile, Gosha helps Aleksandra's boyfriend to chase off a group of young men led by her jealous ex. Later at dinner, Katya thanks Gosha, but says he should not have done it: Words are better than fists. In future he should respect her wishes when it comes to her daughter. Gosha informs her that if ever she uses

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that tone of voice to him again, he will never again set foot in the house. From now on *he* will make the decisions, for he is the man. As Katya apologises, the bell rings. It is Rudol'f, come to see his daughter. He praises Katya's interview and tells her that they want to make a documentary about her rise from worker to director. Gosha is shocked and decides to leave. Katya is distraught, but now tells Aleksandra who Rudol'f really is. A week later, Kolya tracks down Gosha in a communal flat. He is drinking. After a drunken discussion, Kolya brings Gosha back to a dejected and submissive Katya. Candidates can comment on the anti-feminist message that though women can apparently get on in their careers, traditional roles must be assumed in the home. Men and women must know their place, and happiness can only be achieved with the man in charge. Women can be single, strong and successful, but this state is no match for the stable nuclear family, led by a father figure.

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## 5 ПОСЛЕВОЕННАЯ ЖЕНСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА 20-го ВЕКА

- A Сравните по одной сцене из каждого выбранного вами произведения, которые ясно показывают храбрость, решительность, мудрость или прощение советских женщин. По-вашему, как создатели выбранных вами произведений относятся к поведению своих героинь?**

From their chosen works, candidates should compare two scenes which clearly illustrate the bravery, decisiveness, wisdom or forgiveness of Soviet women. See Q5B for detail below. In the second part of the question, they should provide an opinion as to the authors' attitudes to the behaviour of their characters, looking for evidence as to whether the narrators approve or disapprove of it or simply describe it objectively. From this, candidates should deduce whether and to what extent the authors are praising or criticising the characters and society in general.

- В «В послевоенной женской литературе мужчины часто показаны злыми грешниками, а женщины святыми». Прочитав выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, создатели этих текстов правдиво описывают характеры советских мужчин и женщин?**

Candidates should discuss the nature and behaviour of the male and female characters in the studied works, evaluating their positive and negative characteristics in order to establish whether and to what extent the appellations "sinners" and "saints" are appropriate. In the second part of the question, an assessment of whether the depiction of Soviet men and women in the set texts is a true-to-life one should be given. It is likely that candidates will be divided about this. *Свой круг* is an account of an unnamed, first-person, female narrator suffering from a terminal kidney disease and starting to go blind. The narrator, the mother of little Alesha, recalls the personalities and antics of those in her crowd, the friends who have been meeting up on Fridays over many years to relieve the stresses and strains of professional and everyday late-Soviet life through alcohol, sex and intellectual conversation. We are presented with a description of a range of male and female characters with positive and negative characteristics. Alcohol often sexually disinhibits the men (e.g. Zhora who is easily aroused and acts on it). The women often snipe at one another as they make advances at each other's husbands or partners (e.g. when Lenka sits on Kolya's lap, the narrator remarks that Marisha is jealous on account of her [the narrator's] husband). We are provided with information about what has happened to various people over time (e.g. the once debauched Zhora has become a senior researcher with a brilliant career ahead of him and now has three children, but is still in love with Marisha). At the time of the main action, the narrator's husband Kolya has just married Serzh's wife Marisha. The narrator's parents have both died in a single winter and she herself is contemplating her own mortality. She invites her crowd to her and her ex-husband's place for an Easter celebration. In the past her parents would have taken Alesha to the dacha. Now they are dead, she tells the "grown-up" seven year old he will have to go and spend the night there himself. His father appears to dislike him, rarely visiting and when doing so criticising the boy and shouting at him for messy eating and smacking him for wetting the bed. Because of her illness, the narrator seems indifferent to the rough treatment her son is suffering from his father. The guests arrive, and all drink large amounts. The narrator makes a number of tactless and pointed remarks to some of the guests, including Marisha, even suggesting she move into her flat while she and Alesha can live where Marisha tells them to. She shows the guests forms of application to have Alesha put in an orphanage. Kolya reads them, then tears them up. The narrator claims not to know where the boy is, though it is after midnight. As some of the drunken guests take their leave, Alesha is found sitting asleep outside on the stairs. The narrator shouts at him, smacking him and giving him a bleeding nose. Reproaching the boy for being there, she continues to hit him blindly so that the others grab and restrain her. Kolya takes his son away with him. We learn that the narrator had calculated perfectly:

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though the guests could do terrible things to each other, none of them could stand seeing child-abuse as children were sacred to them. She tells the reader that the whole crowd will now look after Alesha and love him, showering him with treats and ensuring his successful path through life. Kolya and Marisha will be ideal parents and Alesha will even live in his old flat since she will soon be dead. Thus the narrator is seen to have tricked her “friends” into looking after her son and providing him with a far better life than he would otherwise have had after her death. Her apparent cruelty has, in fact, been a great kindness. The sinner has turned out to be, in fact, a saint. *Вдовий пароход* 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 stoicism, heroism and devotion to duty 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 volunteering as a nurse and subsequent grim experiences 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, the effects of their work there, 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. Grekova’s female characters, despite being generally mentally and spiritually robust, often appear to expect and condone selfish and antisocial behaviour. When Anfisa’s husband drinks too much, the narrator remarks that there is nothing to forgive. He is only a man, after all. Anfisa’s real love for Vadim’s father is not reciprocated. He simply uses her for casual sex in the same way as Vadim uses his classmate and the nurse in the virgin lands. Domestic violence is considered normal. Kapa thinks Anfisa’s husband will beat her when he learns about the baby. Vadim hits Svetka, claiming he loves her. Men are even excused a sloppy appearance. When talking to Vadim about her first husband, Ada says that being stout does not harm a man, whereas a woman has to watch her figure. Later, Ada weeps, remembering her past which contained no love, only men and abortions. However, though the male characters in *Вдовий пароход* commit many terrible acts, few are essentially complete monsters. 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 once when he wants money from her for more drink, an action she regards as better than she deserves. Vadim, the epitome of the selfish, ungrateful spoiled child, atones to a large extent for his monstrous behaviour by caring for his mother during her last illness and seeing to her every need. 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



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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. Most of the discussion will centre around the credibility of Robert's apparently sudden transformation from loving, supportive spouse to sinful adulterer and around Sonya's acceptance of the ménage à trois and her forsaking the chance to emigrate after her husband's death. For some, all of this behaviour may be puzzling, while others may find it normal within the Soviet, Russian or wider context. Candidates will be divided about the rights and wrongs of Tanya's promiscuity and disagree about the intrinsic goodness or badness of Yasya who exploits her sexual attractiveness for material and social gain. Many will agree that the wayward characters in this text, both men and women, are essentially good people with minor character flaws which occasionally make them appear worse than they are in reality. For some, Sonya will be extremely liberal and tolerant, perhaps even a saint. For others, however, she will be simply stupid.

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## Part II: Texts

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

Answers are 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 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:** The end of Section 3, the conclusion. The nose, recently returned by the police to Collegiate Assessor Kovalev, has mysteriously become re-attached to his face. Kovalev has been shaved by an incredulous Ivan Yakovlevich, then gone off to a café, a government department, met another collegiate assessor and encountered Podtochina and her daughter. Nowhere has anyone indicated that anything is now amiss with his nose. Kovalev is consequently delighted and reassured.

**Content:** The *skaz* narrator reports that Kovalev has resumed his former lifestyle as though nothing had ever happened; chasing women and, by buying ribbon for a medal to which he is not entitled, showing once again his strong desire to advance in society and be recognised by his rank and distinctions. In the last paragraph, the narrator appears to doubt the veracity and plausibility of the facts of the story he has told, even claiming the strangest thing of all is that an author would write about such things. Finally, the narrator suggests that most of the events are absurd, before contradicting himself, claiming that such things actually do happen.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** Candidates should define *skaz* narration (See Q6B), quoting examples of features of this narrative technique contained within the extract. Among these are: apparent naïvety (not knowing why Kovalev was buying a ribbon), a sense of gravitas created by the repetition of *И* and its positioning at the start of sentences which is then undermined by the narrator's new assertion that the story is far-fetched (*bathos*), his descent into rambling incoherence towards the end, the use of exclamation marks to show emotion and personal feelings rather than omniscient, controlled and detached narration, the narrator undermining himself by suggesting that he thinks it strange that authors should write about such matters.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the character of Kovalev, the events of the plot and the possible significance of the loss and reappearance of the nose in the context of various interpretations of the text's possible meaning (See Q6C).

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**B Describe and analyse the function of the *skaz* narrator and the effect of this device on our understanding of *Hoc*.**

Candidates should describe what is meant by *skaz* narration, then discuss Gogol's innovative use of this technique in the story, showing how effective the device is at various points of the narration as a tool to convey or obscure meaning. Gogol's hallmark is the *skaz* narrator whose unreliability, naïvety and lack of omniscience, shifting narratorial focus, generalisations, circumlocution, digressions and ambiguous comments serve to confuse and entertain the reader. The best answers will show how the narrator, who is really a character in his own right, is instrumental in the creation of multiple meanings for the text (see Q6C) as well as the achievement of comic effects. Specific narrative techniques and literary devices appearing to belong to the narrator's discourse – word play (e.g. место, нос), negative comparison, the use of direct speech, the balance between this and first-person narration, irony, symbolism etc. may be mentioned.

**C '*Hoc* is complete and utter nonsense.' Do you agree?**

An opportunity for candidates to ascribe meaning to the story by pursuing a particular interpretation as far as it will go or to prove the quotation correct by showing that no single interpretation is wholly convincing unless one ignores inconvenient textual evidence. The story 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, a surrealist dream in which conscious and sub-conscious perceptions of reality merge and, perhaps most credibly, as a literary joke. The joke is directed at the reader as none of the above meanings can be consistently followed through with success. As we read the text, we are fooled by the *skaz* narrator into pursuing various paths which lead only to dead ends or mists. The best answers are likely to feature a discussion of some of these interpretations with illustrations of where particular interpretations work or break down.

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## 7 М Лермонтов, *Герой нашего времени*

- 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 *Тамань*, the first section of Pechorin's journal. Forced to stay in insalubrious accommodation while awaiting a ship for Gelendzhik, the young ensign has become infatuated with a beautiful mermaid-like girl whom he thinks he has seen with smugglers on the beach. She has hung around him all day, tempting him with her mysterious behaviour and enigmatic answers to his questions. When Pechorin tells her what he has witnessed, she says he should keep it to himself. After dark, she visits Pechorin again, gazing at him with tenderness and a heaving bosom. She throws herself at him, but slips away just as his passion is rising, telling him to go to the beach at night. Two hours later, she waits for him at the edge of a cliff, then leads him down a steep path to the shore.

**Content:** Though Pechorin is usually in complete control of the situations in which he finds himself, in this episode he appears to have fallen completely under the girl's spell. Despite arranging a danger signal with his batman before leaving, his need for sexual satisfaction results in his taking risks. He ignores the stars shining like lighthouses warning of danger, subconsciously being influenced by the rhythmic motion of the waves which prefigure sex. He accepts the girl's invitation to get into the boat. Her sexual overtures and declaration of love make him careless, and she is able to remove his pistol from his belt and throw it overboard before he suspects he has been lured into danger. This causes the blood to surge in his head as he realises he is 50 sazhen from land and cannot swim. The girl tries to push him overboard, and a struggle begins. Fury and survival instinct give him extra strength, but his adversary is equally strongly motivated by her fear that he will report the activities of the smugglers.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** Candidates might question whether the inclusion of marked direct speech by Pechorin and the girl within first-person narrative containing Pechorin's emotive exclamations enhances the credibility of the diary device or not. Similarly, though the references to the moon, stars and waves add to the Romantic atmosphere of the extract, they might be said to detract from the realism of the diary because of their very literary nature. The extract appears to be too organised by a literary mind to be wholly credible. The switch to the present tense in Pechorin's discourse allows the reader to experience with a sense of immediacy the feeling of danger and full force of the encounter between the young officer and the girl. Both speak in an educated Russian register. While this is appropriate for Pechorin, its use by the girl adds to the sense of mystery surrounding her. The colloquial use of *хватать* by Pechorin reinforces the suddenness and speed of the actions described. The reference to the girl as a cat and the mentioning of her serpent-like nature suggest supernatural qualities in line with her superhuman strength and miraculous survival.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the outcome of the struggle, the fate of the girl and the blind boy and their treatment by Yanko. Pechorin's apparent weakness or even foolishness here can be contrasted with his strength in manipulating characters in other sections of the novel, particularly women such as Vera and Knyazhna Meri whom he plays off against each other. The episode serves to provide a more rounded view of Pechorin as it reveals a vulnerable side to his character, making him more credible to the reader.

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**B Describe and analyse Lermontov’s narrative techniques and the narrative structure of *Герой нашего времени*, evaluating their effects.**

The novel has a complicated narrative structure which was experimental and innovative in its day. It consists of a framed cycle of five stories, all featuring Pechorin, the central character of the novel as a whole. The stories are presented by a variety of narrators, each of whom sheds progressively more light on Pechorin’s character and the events of the plot. The stories are, however, not presented in chronological order, so that the reader is required to reconstruct the time-line of the plot and re-evaluate his perception of Pechorin from the first two stories in the light of the more intimate first-person narrative of his journals with their confessional episodes. This poses a considerable challenge for the reader, and some may find it too hard a task. Thus the artistic success of the text may be called into question. After a preface, the frame narrator of Бэла encounters a captain (Максим Максимыч) whose first-person account of Bela and Pechorin is reproduced by the frame narrator, complete with dialogue. In Максим Максимыч, the frame narrator tells of a later meeting with the captain during which he himself encounters Pechorin and comments on his character. At the end of this story, the author acquires Pechorin’s journals. In the Предисловие [to Pechorin’s Journals], the frame narrator justifies their publication as their writer has now died. The reader is now presented with a first-person account by Pechorin of an adventure in a sea port (Тамань), an intimate diary with dated entries by Pechorin (Княжна Мери), chronicling his manipulation of the emotions of two women and the events leading up to a fatal duel after which Pechorin is exiled to the fortress commanded by Максим Максимыч, and a short first-person account by Pechorin of an incident perhaps clarifying his relationship with fate (Фаталист). Candidates can discuss the merits of this technique as a means of presenting Pechorin to the reader, the credibility of the presentation of direct speech of various characters within the discourse of the different narrators, the degree to which each narrator’s discourse is individualised, the use of Tatar (Бэла), Caucasian vocabulary (Максим Максимыч), Ukrainian (Тамань) and French (Княжна Мери) to add local colour and define social types, the use of the device of the frame narrator who disclaims authorship of the rest of the text, and the effects of numerous intertextual references throughout the work.

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**C 'Pechorin is a thoroughly nasty piece of work with no redeeming features.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with the first half of this statement, but might well find some examples of positive behaviour or attitudes to disagree with the second. Some may discuss Pechorin's self-analytical statements made to characters or written in his diary about his nature and how others have treated him badly in the past as justification for his actions in the timeframe of the text. The young officer's character is revealed both through the eyes of third person narrators who are themselves part of the action of the novel and through the words of Pechorin himself in his diary. A detailed psychological portrait of a "superfluous man" is thus created. Pechorin is confident, courageous, charming and can display good taste in manners and dress. He is highly intelligent, strong willed and individualistic, but, due to the nature of Russian society, doomed to inactivity and thwarted ambition. Deprived of a focus for using his undoubted talents, he becomes bored, bitter, aimless and thoroughly dissatisfied with life. Alienated and isolated from society, Pechorin ruthlessly pursues his own goals and pleasures, delighting in his skilful manipulation of those around him and ruthlessly pushing aside those who get in his way. In *Бэла* we see him manipulate Azamat into abducting his sister for Pechorin in exchange for the opportunity to steal a wonderful horse. Bela is a reluctant bride and must be craftily wooed over a period of time before she finally gives herself to him. Once the challenge is over, however, Pechorin grows cold to the girl, spending more and more time away hunting. After her terrible death, he reacts by laughing, though we are told he was unwell for a long time and lost weight. In *Максим Максимыч* we see another example of the young man's cold and self-centred nature when he fails to acknowledge his friendship with his former fellow officer, politely refusing to stay for dinner to catch up and claiming to be in a hurry to get away. In *Тамань* we see Pechorin become sexually infatuated with a teenage beauty. He shows himself to be vulnerable and, by getting into a boat when he cannot swim, not always to be in control of himself. He also falls victim to robbery by a blind boy, thus appearing to be a fool. His lack of concern about what befalls the old woman and blind boy again illustrates his callousness. *Княжна Мери* especially illustrates Pechorin's skill at manipulating people for his own pleasure regardless of their own distress. Through the use of cunning psychology, he successfully woos Mary away from the cadet, Grushnitsky, at the same time resuming his relationship with a former lover, Vera, who is now married. Eventually, Vera becomes jealous of the younger woman and later ruins her own life by admitting her love for Pechorin to her husband. Pechorin ends up killing his younger rival in a duel, though he offers Grushnitsky the opportunity to save his life by admitting he has acted wrongly. Some may argue that, though Pechorin clearly enjoys playing games with people and their emotions, he occasionally shows himself capable of feeling guilt (e.g. towards Meri at the ball on 4 June), pity (towards Vera on the same occasion), depression at how he cannot help spoil things for others (5 June), scorn for himself (14 June), regret at killing Grushnitsky (16 June) and deep sorrow when he realises he has lost Vera for ever (16 June). Others may question the sincerity of his journals since in *Фаталист* we are shown contradictory attitudes to predestination from Pechorin which might cause the reader to doubt the veracity of what he says elsewhere.



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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 near the beginning of Chapter 4. The young narrator, Vladimir Petrovich, has been asked by his mother to visit their new neighbours to invite the old princess to call round. Vladimir, having recently seen the young princess in her garden and been instantly attracted to her, has just delivered his mother's message to the old princess who then introduces him to her daughter. Zinaida acknowledges that she has already noticed the young visitor, but, when asked by her mother, does not reveal where.

**Content:** Zinaida asks Vladimir to help her wind her wool. This can be seen as symbolic of the youth immediately becoming emotionally enslaved by the young woman. Vladimir is at once thrown into a state of dreamlike ecstasy so that he is barely aware of his surroundings. He is drawn to her facial expression, her sly smile, slightly parted lips and radiant gaze which causes him to lower his eyes for an instant. The youth feels that when her eyes are fully opened, they flood her face with light. Here, at their first encounter, Zinaida sets the terms for their relationship: she is five years his senior and so he must always tell her the truth and do what she tells him. Vladimir obeys her and looks at her directly once more. Zinaida's statement that she feels they will be friends is prophetic.

**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 filtered through the organising voice of his older self. This allows us to experience with the youth a range of new adult emotions, but put into context and interpreted from middle age. Here, the power of his instant infatuation with Zinaida and the mental confusion this causes is well conveyed through his short, rambling utterances in broken syntax, while Zinaida's more mature, flowing and controlled discourse reflects the fact that she is already in charge in this relationship. The use of standard Russian by both characters is indicative of their social class and education.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the characters of Zinaida and Vladimir, outlining their development with regard to the events of the plot, in particular the love triangle of Vladimir, his father and Zinaida and its poignant conclusion. Mention can be made of how all three deal with their emotions when the affair between Zinaida and Petr Vasil'evich is discovered. Vladimir suffers, but does not break with his father who chooses to remain with his wife despite Zinaida's request that he should leave her. Zinaida is abandoned, but eventually marries, only to die suddenly in childbirth. 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 Consider the view that Zinaida is a thoroughly immoral woman, the ruin of honest men.**

A chance to describe the character and actions of the tall, slender, beautiful and flirtatious 21 year old Princess Zinaida Aleksandrovna Zasekin and to assess whether it is fair to describe her as immoral. The young narrator, 16 year old Vladimir Petrovich, falls under the spell of his new neighbour during the May and June of 1833 in an idyllic, lush setting on the outskirts of Moscow. Dreamy, melancholic and full of Romantic literature and ideas, the youth is ready to have his feelings brought to life and experience love for the first time as he reluctantly and slowly prepares for University. He is at once attracted to Zinaida's large grey eyes, lashes, long, curly, fair hair and silver voice. The young princess lives in straightened circumstances with her somewhat vulgar semi-literate and grasping mother and holds court to a string of admirers whom she teases, humiliates and controls like a cat playing with a mouse. When playing forfeits, for example, Nirmatsky is made to be the base of a statue and drink salt water, while Vladimir Petrovich is allowed to sit under a scarf with her and experience the touch of her hair and the warmth of her breath. For all of them, including the narrator, her word is law. He dresses fashionably for her, but lacks confidence, stutters, blushes and is generally gauche in her presence. He dreams of rescuing her from her enemies and dying at her feet. He even jumps off a dangerously high wall at her command to show his love, briefly losing consciousness. Zinaida can speak French with a good accent, a sign of education, and clearly enjoys the poetry read to her and composed by her admirers. She is also able to describe her own Romantic images and settings to these men, though her knowledge of literature and the Arts is not as strong as theirs. For example, she can make an analogy between clouds and the sails on the golden ship on which Cleopatra sailed to meet Antony, but seems ignorant about Spanish question marks and appears not to want to hear another argument about Classicism and Romanticism. During the course of the narrative, Zinaida's character is described in a number of ways. To Lushin she describes herself as a flirt with no heart and as having an actor's nature, and when it is clear that the narrator has found out about her relationship with his father, she acknowledges her guilt, saying that there is much in her that is dark, evil and wicked. The narrator's mother thinks she has a "*mine de grisette*". Lushin sees her entire nature in terms of caprice and independence, but she points out to him that he is wrong. As she earlier told the narrator when discussing her feelings towards Malevsky, Zinaida cannot love those she looks down upon. She needs someone to master her, though she feels it unlikely she will encounter such a man. Thus, it is not surprising that she falls for the handsome, independently-minded father of the narrator, a man with a horse that no other can ride and a wife whom he did not marry for love. This relationship brings about a profound change in Zinaida's attitude and behaviour. She becomes cold to her admirers, stops flirting with them, and enters a state of emotional trauma, melancholy and tears. When her lover's wife discovers their secret through Malevsky's betrayal, Zinaida is quickly abandoned, and the narrator's whole family returns to Moscow. Later the narrator witnesses a meeting between Zinaida and his father when she appears to ask him to leave his wife about whom she appears to be somewhat rude. In response, her former lover hits her with his riding-crop, but she kisses the scar this has caused on her arm. When the narrator's father dies from a stroke, partly brought on by a letter from her some eight months later, his widow sends her money. In time she marries, but dies in childbirth shortly before the narrator has a chance to see her again. While some may admire a strong, intelligent cultured woman, able to manipulate men in a male-dominated society, others may criticise her for the hurt she causes to a range of men and the wife of her lover. For the present-day reader she is a tease rather than a sexually promiscuous woman, but in the historical and cultural context of the text, Zinaida would be judged by the bulk of her contemporaries as wholly immoral. Candidates will also have to decide whether "honest" is an appropriate description of Vladimir and his father. While most will argue that it is appropriate for the young, inexperienced and single narrator who, probably as a result of his encounter with Zinaida, subsequently never marries, many will feel that his father, an experienced, older married man, is simply a dishonest cheat and thus deserves to be punished for his sins.

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**C 'Turgenev's prose in *Первая любовь* is as poetic as it is dramatic.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first discuss the poetic qualities of the text, then outline the dramatic features of the plot (See Q8B) before assessing whether and to what extent these aspects are equal in their effects. Alternatively, candidates might outline the dramatic high-points of the plot, showing how these are frequently presented in a lyrical manner using images, symbols, metaphors and other poetic devices linked to the natural world. 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 beautiful 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.) Throughout the text, 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. However candidates approach this question, they are likely to conclude that the prose of this tale of illicit passion and unrequited love is indeed both poetic and dramatic, though they may disagree on which aspect is the more dominant.

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## 9 А 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 near the middle of Act 3. It is the day of the sale of the cherry orchard. Lyubov Andreevna has been giving a party while she and the others who will be affected by this wait anxiously for news. As a result of the tension among the characters, there has been some upset. Trofimov has been teasing Varya, calling her *Мадам Лопухина*. Lyubov has been trying to dampen her anger, but also suggests she marry Lopakhin. Varya has pointed out it is not for her to make a proposal and that Lopakhin is only interested in his business. Were she able, she would move away. Lyubov, unable to stand not knowing the outcome of the sale any longer, has just asked Trofimov to talk to her to take her mind off things.

**Content:** Trofimov (one of the younger generation with a practical attitude to problem-solving and change) urges Lyubov to face reality. Regardless of the outcome of the sale today, the estate will have to go in the end to pay off her debts. Lyubov suggests Trofimov settles his problems boldly because he is young and has never had to suffer: She was born on the estate. It is part of her family history and she cannot conceive of life without it. It is also the place where her son drowned. Here, Lyubov dissolves into tears. Trofimov's words of comfort sound hollow to her (probably because of his youth and lack of tragedy in his life). She shows herself to be emotionally very fragile, afraid to be quiet and alone. She urges Trofimov not to be hard on her and suggests he could marry her daughter (Anya) if he finished his degree. She reproaches him for what seems to her a strange, idle existence of study and thought.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The characters use a register appropriate to their social station. The degree of intimacy in their relationship is indicated by the use of polite forms. Nevertheless, Trofimov addresses Lyubov as “дорогая” while she calls him “голубчик” and uses a diminutive form of his first name (Petya). Trofimov's discourse is controlled while Lyubov's increasingly emotional state is conveyed by a progressive use of short phrases and broken syntax. Her affection for her dead son's former tutor is shown in the stage directions: she embraces him and kisses him on the forehead. The emotional mood comes to an end with a jolt at the conclusion of the extract with Lyubov's comment about the weak state of Trofimov's beard and her laughter at him. This allows Lyubov, after the extract, to recover enough to go into detail about the telegram from her lover which she drops when taking out her handkerchief. There is much scope for making the audience feel for her suffering by exploiting a slower pace of delivery for her emotional utterances, particularly where small pauses are indicated with the marks of broken syntax.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** The extract provides us with an example of Lyubov's impractical and emotional reaction to the necessary sale. She has consistently refused to entertain Lopakhin's helpful suggestion: if the cherry orchard were cut down and the land along the river bank cut up into building plots and leased for dachas, then a solid income of 25,000 roubles a year would result. Candidates can discuss her character and behaviour throughout the play, her personal history, i.e. the problem of having had a drunken, spendthrift husband followed by a philandering lover who has robbed her, but who is apparently now ill and needing her. Mention can be made of the consequences of her failure to do the sensible thing with regard to developing her estate, her subsequent return to her lover in Paris, Lopakhin's purchase of the estate and exploitation of it. Trofimov, the former tutor of Lyubov's son, an idealist and representative of reformist political opinion, can be described along with the significance of his ideas (See Q9C) and his relationship with Anya.

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**B To what extent do you consider *комедия* to be an appropriate subtitle for *Вишнёвый сад*?**

Candidates should first define what is meant by comedy, then decide whether and to what extent we are meant to laugh at the efforts of the characters to come to terms with the past, become practical and pragmatic and move forward in their lives. Candidates may well suggest that the prevailing mood of the play is actually one of sadness brightened by occasional comic moments or that the text could be described as a comedy of manners. Answers should contain an analysis of the different types of comedy within the play. There is comedy of character (Gaev with his sentimental outpourings in inappropriate situations [addresses to bookcase and nature], his obsession with billiards; the aged Firs), situation comedy (the saucy behaviour of Dunyasha and Yasha and of Charlotta and Lopakhin in Act 1, the misunderstandings of Firs due to deafness, Charlotta's tricks), numerous examples of comic exchanges between characters, black humour and slapstick (Sharlotta's reaction to Epikhodov talking about shooting himself, the general reaction to Trofimov falling downstairs, Varya nearly hitting Lopakhin by accident). Mention will likely be made about the many moments of sadness in the play. Tears are evident throughout: Act 1 – Varya on hearing about Anya's meeting with her mother in Paris and when discussing the likely sale, Lyubov on arriving home, then later meeting Trofimov who also cries with Varya; Act 2 – Lyubov recalling her tragic past; Act 3 – Varya as she dances at the beginning, Gaev as he is about to tell his sister about the sale, Lyubov on hearing the news and taking it in; Act 4 – Dunyasha when Yasha departs, Varya as she prepares to leave and because Lopakhin is not interested in her, Epikhodov at this point too, followed by Lyubov and Gaev at the very end. The play's sad moments may be played up or down, depending on the director. Nevertheless, even if these are made as light as possible, the audience will have shared so many poignant and unfunny moments that in the end the best interpretation of the word *комедия* might well be "comedy of manners".

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**C** *‘Вишнёвый сад is as much about ideas as it is about people.’ Do you agree?*

Candidates should discuss the range of ideas articulated by the various characters in the play, considering whether or to what extent these are as significant as the human dramas presented to the audience. In this play we see Lyubov Andreevna struggling to deal with personal tragedy and the financial problems of her family, the rise of the entrepreneurial Lopakhin, a series of love stories with varying outcomes (Varya and Lopakhin, Epikhodov and Dunyasha, Dunyasha and Yasha, Anya and Trofimov, Lyubov and her feckless lover). The audience can readily sympathise with Chekhov’s characters since he endows them with a subtle blend of positive and negative attributes. No individual is wholly good or bad as in real life. In this play the servant classes also figure sufficiently prominently for the audience to sympathise with them and to take an interest in their fates. Thus we feel for Charlotta, an orphan adopted by a German woman, in Act 4 when she faces an uncertain future, and the feeble, elderly manservant, Firs, who is forgotten by his former masters at the very end of the play. The audience is confronted with a number of major ideas in addition to the human dramas, however. These are sometimes ideas which figure in other plays by Chekhov. The main plot scenario (the circumstances of the sale of the cherry orchard), and the actions, reactions, inactions, views and opinions of the various characters about it, allow us to infer an authorial view that social change, symbolised by the sale of the estate, is both inevitable and desirable. For example: Act 1 concludes with the voices of the younger generation (Anya, Varya, Trofimov) and a reference by Trofimov, the advocate of social progress, to Anya and spring, implying that she and her nature embody the desirable future. In Act 4 Gaev states that once the estate was sold, they all felt calm and even cheerful. The younger characters all look forward in various ways to a new future. At the very end of the play, the sound of the axe on the cherry trees is heard as aged Firs, the symbol of the old order, breathes his last. It is in the speeches of Trofimov that many recognisably Chekhovian ideas are voiced: criticism of the lazy, inert state of the aristocracy and intelligentsia as well as the savage, drunken primitivism of the peasantry, the lack of and need for concrete social reform, the enormous potential Russia has, if only people will work hard to create it (this idea is shared by Lopakhin and Anya), that work now is worthwhile if it results in happiness for others inhabiting a better, future, non-materialistic world. Some may argue that the ideas expressed by characters are often vital aspects of their personalities and that their significance rises and falls with the fates of the characters in the play.

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## 10 Е 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 the first entry in D-503's diary, the opening page of the novel.

**Content:** D-503 quotes verbatim an item from the *State Gazette*. This reports that in 120 days the Integral will be completed. This is the vessel which will bring the philosophy and regime of the One State to other worlds. Words will first be tried before weapons to enforce reason, a mathematically infallible happiness, on savages living in a state of freedom. All are obliged to compose poems and other genres on the beauty and grandeur of the thousand year old One State. These will be the first cargo of the Integral. D-503 appears to be proud of this aim. He introduces himself as the builder of the Integral, one of the mathematicians of the One State. His diary will be a record of the mathematically perfect life of the One State, a record of what *We* think, and therefore this will be a poem. Candidates can comment on the character of D-503, the nature of the partially dehumanised and deindividualised One State ruled by The Benefactor, the life of its citizens (numbers) and their daily lives. The function of the Integral in the plot might be mentioned and the significance of the title of the diary (and the novel).

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** In the extract are two distinct voices: the rather grandiose, formal, rhetorical style of the writer of the announcement in the *Gazette* (Близок великий ... От имени Благодетеля ... Да здравствует ...) and the slightly less formal style of D-503 whose syntax is occasionally broken and whose personal enthusiasm is indicated by the use of mathematical imagery. Candidates can discuss the effects of the first-person narration presented as a diary for the whole text: it contains the intimate thoughts and impressions of the writer as well as a subjective third-person account of events and other characters, but does not allow for objective reporting on the character and behaviour of the writer himself. The language of the diary is that of an educated person. His use of mathematical imagery lends credibility to his voice as D-503 is a senior mathematician. His claim that his pen is unable to create the music of assonances and rhymes might be disputed (See Q10B below).

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can give a brief account of the plot of the novel in relation to the main character, D-503, and his journey from pillar of the establishment of the One State to rebel as a result of his spiritual awakening caused by his relationships with O-90 and I-330. As a result of the rebellion's failure, he is forcibly remade into a loyal citizen through having the Great Operation.

- B Examine Zamyatin's use of imagery in *Мы* and its contribution to the novel's artistic success.**

Answers are likely to suggest that Zamyatin's imagery in the novel is highly effective, though for some readers its subjective nature might prove confusing and not immediately accessible. Candidates should analyse the imagery which permeates D-503's diary entries, showing to what extent this enhances our understanding of the overall meaning of the text, characters, the nature of the One State and the events of the plot. 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

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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 serpent. Human beings are often reduced to inanimate pieces of machinery or vice versa. Whatever the opinion about the accessibility of the imagery, candidates will agree that it is complex, highly original and one of the text's most distinctive features. As such, it makes a huge contribution to the novel's artistic success.

**C 'As well as containing a stark political message, *M<sub>1</sub>* boasts many elements of the traditional love-story.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first discuss the political message of the novel before considering it as a love-story. Zamyatin's dystopian novel describes a nightmare state where everything is 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 sexual act, and death is meaningless. The citizens of the One State live in a sterile, climatically controlled zone, protected from the savages outside by the Green Wall. 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 who is elected annually but without any permitted opposition. The loss of liberty is justified by the absence of crime. Most candidates will agree that the society depicted in Zamyatin's text and the fates of many of the characters serve as a sharp warning to the dangers of any (not just Bolshevik) totalitarian state in which personal choice is virtually eliminated and dissent is socially unacceptable and practically impossible. However, the conclusion of the novel offers a grain of hope as to the ability of the individual to assert himself in the face of massive odds. Though the One State seeks total control over its population, it has not quite managed it, and over the course of the novel an opposition movement gains in strength. Though the One State finally eliminates I-330 and brings D-503 back under its control and into line by giving him the Great Operation, the novel ends with a small degree of optimism, for the Green Wall has been blown up, and many have gone over to the other side. Given the emotionally sterile society in which the novel is set, it is perhaps surprising that elements of the traditional love-story exist. However, the characters experience a range of emotions recognisable by us: love, lust, envy, jealousy and hate, even if they are unable to give their feelings a name. D-503 is in a stable, legal, sexual relationship with O-90. She is more in love with him than he is with her, desperate for the illegal sex which will lead to her having his baby although, in becoming pregnant, she is risking being punished by death. D-503 is gradually lured away from O by I-330, a rebel who is simply using him for her own political ends. I introduces D to a range of new and interesting, forbidden ideas and experiences, as a result of which he transfers his affections to her. Nevertheless, when I has him registered to her, D feels guilt towards O. Sex between D and O is never the same. Later, D also experiences jealous feelings towards R-13, another registered partner of I-330. He is also pursued by Yu, who despite or perhaps because of her loyalty to the regime, takes a protective interest in him which appears to turn into love, though this is not returned. When D discovers he has been used by I, he is devastated and rendered unable to write. Candidates may well conclude that beneath the political allegory lies a real human love-story in which the characters are shown to wrestle poignantly with their feelings.



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## 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 the middle of Chapter 7. Professor Preobrazhensky, Bormental' and Sharik have been having lunch during which Sharikov has drunk rather too much vodka. The professor has been irritated by Sharikov's drinking, table manners, his refusal to go to the theatre and his belief in the redistribution of wealth acquired from his reading of *Engels' Correspondence with Kautsky*. The professor, thinking Sharikov is suggesting he should lose some of his luxuries, has suddenly got angry, demanding money from Sharikov to compensate for the income lost the previous day when patients had to be turned away while the mess caused by Sharikov was being cleared up. Sharikov had chased a cat into the bathroom where he had been unable to turn off the tap or unlock the door. This had resulted in the flat being flooded.

**Content:** The professor is scolding Sharikov for his recent bad behaviour (the incident in the bathroom). Bormental' joins in with a superficially comic account of Sharikov biting a woman because she smacked him after he pinched her breast. Sharikov appears to have no sense of morality. Later in the text, he will commit a further sexual assault. The professor tells Sharikov (symbolising new Soviet man and his value-systems) that he is in the lowest stage of the development, (intellectually weak and bestial in actions) and that he should not dare to offer stupid advice on the redistribution of wealth to those who have had a good higher education. He is to learn to behave as a marginally acceptable member of society. Sharikov, apparently cowed by the verbal attack from the two men, can only offer a nervous objection in his defence: the professor should not keep referring to people as scoundrels (негодяи). The exemplary socialist text has been lent to him so he can be educated by Shvonder, Chairman of the House Management Committee, who, as an example of new Soviet officialdom, serves as a role model for Sharikov. The professor summons Zina so she can fetch the offending book and Sharikov in desperation himself suggests she should burn it.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract consists of lively dialogue reported by the omniscient third-person narrator whose presence is really noticeable only in the range of language used to attribute the words to the various characters and describe how they say them. The direct speech is rapid, often broken, apparently very loud and therefore comic given the descriptions of Sharikov's behaviour and his muted response to it. In the extract, all characters use standard Russian forms, but there is some differentiation in register. The professor's *Ну, вот-с* is ironic as it suggests a false showing of respect to Sharikov. In general, Preobrazhensky's language reflects his educated status while that of Sharikov suggests someone less clever, less educated, subordinate and forced into obedience: *Переписка – называется, как его ... Энгельса с этим чёртом ... В печку её!*

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the characters of the professor, Bormental', Sharikov and Shvonder as well as the events of the plot which arise as a result of the professor's experiment on the dog. 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 Sharikov has denounced Preobrazhensky and his assistant, Bormental', to the authorities, these two medics set about reversing the experiment which they perceive as a failure. It is, however, after this extract when Sharikov has gone with Bormental' to the circus, that the professor appears to contemplate reversing the operation.

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**B What is Bulgakov telling us by providing *Собачьё сердце* with a “happy ending”?**

In order to discuss the ending, candidates will need to provide a brief summary of the plot and its significance. The story is an allegory about the failure of the Communist experiment and the attempts of the new ruling class to force evolution instead of taking a gradualist approach. The result is a society composed of revolting and amoral people such as Sharikov who are prepared to turn on those who have empowered them (Preobrazhensky and potentially Shvonder) in the pursuit of their own selfish interests. Having, as the result of his operation, acquired the worst elements of Chugunkin’s personality (the surname is an oblique reference to Stalin), Sharikov becomes foul-mouthed, insolent and vulgar, spitting and urinating on the floor. He becomes a sexual predator, steals from the hand that feeds him and develops a liking for excessive drinking. Having fallen under the influence of Shvonder and the House Management Committee, Sharikov asserts his rights in an increasingly militant way. Eventually he starts to prove his sinister potential, obtains a job strangling cats, acquires a fiancée whom he bullies and threatens to get sacked, denounces the professor and his assistant to the authorities and finally pulls a gun on Bormental’. Preobrazhensky comes to the conclusion that his experiment is the worst mistake of his career and that it will be necessary for the good of all to reverse it, thereby eliminating the physical representation of new Soviet man and his abhorrent value-systems. The story has a “happy ending”: after the second operation, the dog reverts to his primitive state and considers himself lucky to have as his master a great benefactor of dogs. Bulgakov appears to be saying: that the Revolution *per se* has failed, that its product (new Soviet man) is both disgusting and dangerous and should be once again tamed by a civilising and cultured authority (the professor has tamed Sharikov and put Shvonder firmly in his place), that new Soviet man would himself be content were this to happen, and that the chaos which existed in the professor’s own life and environment has been restored to order. The reader is thus left in no doubt that the Revolution and the society it has produced is being thoroughly condemned.

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**C ‘Собацьє сердце is a brilliant comic masterpiece which has lost very little over time.’  
Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with the first part of this statement, but may well take issue with the second. Some of the humour specifically used to undermine the Bolshevik Revolution, its ideals, institutions and officials may be less obvious to the present-day reader, able only to understand the joke from an intellectual point of view, than, say, the hyperbole and distortion used to satirise human nature in general. Some comic techniques employed (e.g. irony) may be judged to create humour without specifically being linked to either set of targets. Candidates should discuss the various types of humour used in the text, deciding whether they are as effective now as they were when the text was first written. Mention should be made of a range of the following: the exaggerated, caricature-like characters with whom we cannot fully sympathise because no character is fully drawn, the basic plot scenario in which a dog is gradually transformed into a human, while retaining negative aspects of its former incarnation (hatred of cats, base sexual instinct etc.), individual farcical episodes where violence and sexual violence appear comic because the reader’s empathy has been switched off due to our perception that we are reading an allegory rather than a realist work, the naïve point of view of the dog conveyed by unmarked direct thought and direct speech, irony created by the interplay of narrative perspectives [all mainly general and not losing effect over time], the satiric attack by means of hyperbole and distortion on human nature through illustrations of grotesque human behaviour (drunkenness, the antics of the professor’s sexually rejuvenated middle-aged patients) or highly exaggerated specific character traits (Preobrazhensky’s arrogance when dealing with Shvonder and the House Management Committee, his greed in continuing to live in a seven-roomed flat, Sharikov’s ready acceptance of a privileged life-style in his new master’s flat and his desire to extract all he can from him, his spoiled teenager tantrums and lascivious behaviour when drunk [all mainly standing the test of time], the sending-up of specific aspects of post-revolutionary society (the Food Rationing Organisation, the quality of Soviet food, shortages, NEP, the inept House Management Committee with its many useless meetings, newspapers, Soviet bureaucracy exemplified by the need to have ID to live in Moscow, the requirement to be registered for military service, ridiculous Soviet names), linguistic humour (comical Soviet names, use of Soviet bureaucratic and political jargon by Shvonder, the tone and language of newspaper articles and official documents) [possible loss of effect over time]. Answers are likely to conclude that Bulgakov’s text remains a brilliant comic masterpiece even if the full force of some aspects of the humour has been diminished.

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**12 B Некрасов, Кира Георгиевна**

- 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 is practically the whole of Chapter 17. Having received a telegram informing her that Nikolay Ivanovich has had a heart attack and is seriously ill, Kira has returned early from Kiev to visit her elderly husband in hospital in Moscow.

**Content:** Kira at once sees that her husband is very ill. He is unshaven, has a swollen face and speaks with a feeble and strange voice. He is not allowed to move. Kira is shocked at his appearance and struggles to maintain a calm voice when talking to him. Since she has just spent some time with her first husband in an attempt to live as they had years before, she now appears to feel guilty. Her kneeling position can be seen as a form of begging forgiveness as much as a practical position for talking to a patient. When her husband asks her if she has had a good holiday, she acknowledges to herself that whatever she answers will be a lie. She has not yet told him about her real purpose in spending several weeks away from home. As she notices her husband's joy in his eyes on seeing her again, her guilty feelings get the better of her and she bursts into tears. Nikolay Ivanovich interprets this as pure concern for his wellbeing, telling her not to cry and that everything will be all right.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The arrangement of voices within the extract is complicated. There is a mixture of omniscient third-person narration, dialogue between Kira and her husband and between each with the nurse. In addition, there are sections of what can be called interior monologue or free indirect thought where Kira's voice is united with the narrator's to shed further light on her thoughts beyond the level of insight provided by the third-person narration. The exclamation marks in these sections belong to Kira's emotionally charged perspective rather than that of the more objective narrator. (Бог ты мой, как он выглядит! and Господи ... спрашивает!) The words following this last example, with their broken syntax and rapid rhetorical questions, indicate her troubled and confused thought processes. The last line of the extract belongs also to Kira's perspective as it appears random and unorganised, especially compared to the carefully crafted sentence with its repetition of не выдержала for emphasis. The Russian of the narrator and characters is typical of the educated Soviet middle-class of the 1960s - grammatically accurate with occasional colloquialisms (Ну вот и молодец).

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the characters of Kira and Nikolay Ivanovich and the history of their complex relationship which has been further complicated by the reappearance of Kira's first husband after many years of imprisonment. Mention can be made of how Vadim radically modifies Kira's attitudes to art and to life, making her realise where her true feelings should lie. Kira gives up her attempt to rekindle her relationship with Vadim as he cannot give up his wife and son. She also puts an end to her relationship with Yurochka, her young model, to devote herself to caring for her husband.

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**B Which aspects of *Кира Георгиевна* would have been surprising, or even shocking, to a reader brought up on a diet of Socialist Realist prose?**

The novella was published in 1961, some eight years into the period known as the Thaw during which time writers had become increasingly bold in their explicit and implicit criticisms of Socialist Realist values. Nevertheless, *Кира Георгиевна* contains much which would have been shocking to readers accustomed to texts in which the virtues of the working man are proclaimed, the values of the Party upheld and faith in the inevitable triumphant destiny of the USSR and the infallibility of its leaders is espoused. Candidates should discuss the characters, the plot and the ideas raised in the text, showing how these deviate from the Socialist Realist norms still officially expected if works were to be accepted for publication. The central character is not male, not working class and not morally upright. Recent Soviet history is implicitly criticised, rather than praised, and the values of Socialist Realist art openly attacked. Most of the characters are from the educated, artistic middle-class. Kira is depicted as a self-centred, hedonistic, promiscuous woman whose behaviour, until her moral crisis, shows little that is altruistic. If there is an ideological hero, it is Vadim, her first husband, the rehabilitated enemy of the people, the antithesis of the positive hero of Socialist Realism proclaiming a belief in a happy future. He has an honest attitude to life, accepts his past without bitterness and refuses to forget the tragedy of those with whom he suffered in the camps. Vadim exercises a positive influence on those around him, encouraging honesty and transparency in word and deed. This attitude also applies to art. In the gallery in Kiev, Vadim questions the eternally optimistic celebratory themes of the paintings. They are fundamentally not true to life, though true to the demands of Socialist Realism. Gradually, Kira comes to understand that her art is equally contrived and lifeless. For the reader in the early 1960s, this would have been a shocking conclusion for the main character to make. Mention might also be made about the theme of the need for strong personal relationships. This is brought out in the comments and attitude of the successful but lonely Nikolay Ivanovich and in the remarks made by Vadim to Yurochka. This would also have been seen as very different from the accepted attitudes in Socialist Realist texts. The novella's ending is also out of line with traditional expectations in that it is not particularly positive for anyone, especially for Kira who may have undergone a positive change in her character, but who is without doubt profoundly unhappy.

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**C** ‘The artistic success of *Кира Георгиевна* lies principally in its human interest.’ Do you agree?

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement, discussing in detail the well drawn characters, their complicated and poignant life-stories and their part in the events of the plot. For some, however, the text’s underlying didactic themes and Nekrasov’s style will prove to make a significant contribution to the text’s artistic success. *Кира Георгиевна* explores the thoughts and emotions of its eponymous heroine and the three men in her life; her kind, but dull, ageing husband Nikolay Ivanovich, her model and exciting young lover Yurochka, and Vadim, her first husband whose return after an absence of twenty years simultaneously forces her to confront the past and exclude the present from her life. We observe the reunited couple’s fruitless attempts to restore their past life together as both come to realise that time cannot be reversed. Vadim cannot give up his wife and son, while Kira acknowledges that her present and future lie with Nikolay Ivanovich once he has fallen seriously ill, and that her whole attitude to life has been false and shameful. In the character of Nikolay we observe the pathos of a lonely old man searching for lost human relationships. In Yurochka we see an honest young man uncomfortable in his relationships and searching for answers to many questions, while Vadim epitomises an honest attitude to life and people. Though the text is above all a human drama, the characters are largely thinking, creative individuals who project a range of philosophies of life into their everyday existence and its moral dilemmas. Nekrasov uses his characters to present a number of messages which relate to life in general and the society in which the text is set: material or creative success is no substitute for meaningful human relationships, the tragedy of Russian / Soviet history should be confronted, there is a need for honesty in life and art, Socialist Realism is lifeless and contrived. Those concerned with the technical aspect of writing will mention the carefully crafted structure of *Кира Георгиевна* and the interesting and effective narrative techniques employed (e.g. interior monologue, free indirect speech and thought, dialogue).

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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:** The conclusion of *Милая Шура*. The narrator calls at the flat of Aleksandra Ernestovna, an eccentric elderly lady in her nineties. Shura, who inhabits two rooms of a communal flat in Moscow, is wrinkled, has thinning hair and false teeth and likes to wear dark clothes and an extravagant hat covered in fruit and flowers. She has no relatives and is consequently lonely. She enjoys showing the narrator old photographs over tea and reminiscing about her three husbands and former lovers.

**Content:** The narrator rings Shura's bell, but is told by a stranger that the old lady has died. The narrator is surprised as it is not long since her last visit. Rather than just go, the visitor inspects the rubbish bin area where she finds Shura's precious possessions dumped. She notices the oval portrait of Shura as a young woman which she had admired and which is now damaged, the eyes scratched out as if emphasising the old lady's recent death. Amid the detritus of Shura's wardrobe lies her idiosyncratic hat, its cherries now chipped. The narrator, trying to find a memento of the old lady, can see nothing usable. She notices that Shura's prized album is missing, the velvet likely stolen for the practical purpose of cleaning shoes. The love letters are trampled or scattered. The narrator can do nothing but take her leave, but imagines the old lady, clad in her distinctive clothes, floating southwards to join Ivan, her former lover.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is a complicated mixture of voices: it opens with what appears to be third-person omniscient narration, quickly followed by the direct speech of one of Shura's neighbours. After this comes what could be either the unmarked direct speech or unmarked direct thought of the narrator as she reacts to the sad news of Shura's passing with short, phrases reflecting confusion. The main paragraph consists of the narrator's unmarked direct thought as she observes the remains of the old lady's possessions and reacts to these by having a dialogue with herself. Her sentences are short, often incomplete, suggesting random thoughts and spontaneous reaction. At the end of this paragraph we read the marked direct speech of Ivan Nikolaevich from his letters, pleading with Shura to join him. In the last paragraph, the narrator's unmarked direct thought merges once again into omniscient third-person narration. In the extract there are several references to wind (ветерок, горячий воздух, письмо вертится, ветер гонит пыль), all prefiguring Shura's escaping the reality of death and being reunited with her beloved Ivan in the mind of the narrator. This is reinforced by the repetition of юг and плывёт in the long, flowing final sentence, the rhythms and vowels of which evoke the rushing of wind. Reference might also be made to the lotus flowers, the flowers of oblivion / death.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the character of Shura and her various relationships, especially the one with Ivan Nikolaevich which she regretted choosing to abort so many years previously. The pathos of her final years as perceived by the sympathetic narrator might be mentioned.

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**B Describe and analyse the function of the stylistic features which characterise Tolstaya's prose in the three stories.**

Candidates should describe and analyse the function of the stylistic devices used by Tolstaya in the three set texts, attempting to define what makes her prose unique. Answers are likely to discuss 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. Candidates are likely to conclude that the author's style is highly effective. The reader is drawn to her quirky and idiosyncratic characters, while the themes are successfully illuminated by it. The best answers will mention a number of the literary devices used, but are only likely to discuss a few of these in detail.

**C 'Tolstaya's stories are poignant studies of human failings and ultimate failure.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree that the stories are poignant and that they illustrate a range of human failings, but may well disagree as to whether and to what extent the main characters can be considered failures. Answers should contain detailed descriptions of the main characters in each of the three stories: the effete, socially gauche, pot-bellied and flat-footed librarian, the eponymous hero of *Петерс* 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*). Candidates should analyse the behaviour of these quirky, idiosyncratic, caricature-like characters and assess whether at the end of the stories their lives add up to failure. Though Peters appears to be pathetic in that he is unable to sustain a proper relationship with women in his adult life, he did have a good relationship with his grandmother until he was fifteen and is shown to try repeatedly to court women his own age despite several setbacks. When ultimately his marriage fails, he is able to accept the hand that fate has dealt him and achieve a state of contented resignation. At the end of her life, Shura appears to be a sad and lonely old lady, yet closer analysis reveals she has made much of her opportunities in the past. Her first two husbands had brought her wealth and friends, though her third marriage had been much less pleasant. Her chief regret appears to be her failure to follow her heart and sacrifice her comfortable life for the impecunious Ivan Nikolaevich. Tolstaya presents Shura's life as a sequence of high and low points, something realistic and typical for an ordinary person who lives to a ripe old age, clinging to their most cherished memories. Simeonov appears to be living a largely solitary life, yearning after a relationship with a singer whom he has never met, yet when he eventually confronts reality, he is disappointed and tries to seek solace with another more mundane woman who at least will fulfil his physical needs in every sense. The singer continues to haunt his dreams, however, and her visit at the end of the text leaves open the opportunity of a potential happy ending.