

'Taking a Stand' Anthology question
Higher Tier

The purpose of this pack is to provide centres with the question paper, mark scheme and a set of exemplar materials with commentaries.

The individual documents can be found on our website at www.edexcel.com

Included in this pack:

- Question and extract from Summer 2012 Paper
- Marked scripts with the mark and band
- Examiner commentary and mark scheme

Section B – Taking a Stand – Higher Tier.

- 5 (a) Explore how the writer presents his thoughts and feelings about the modern world in 'The world is a beautiful place'.

Use **evidence** from the poem to support your answer.

(15)

Script 1 response to Q5 (a)

Band 3 – 8 marks

a) The title 'The world is a beautiful place' is rare as the poem is about how the world and society is flawed and that no matter how much fun you can have, death can also always claim you. Ferlinghetti takes a cynical approach towards attitudes on Earth. "Happiness not always being so very much fun."

Ferlinghetti has taken a stand against the clockwork of our world through a persona. "Just when everything is fine." The writer has even taken a stand against the most basic things of human life. "Some people dying." Ferlinghetti is saying, through the use of personal pronouns, that no matter how much fun you have, you will never be safe from death. This is a slightly different stand being taken from the beginning of the poem due to a turning point on line 40.

Ferlinghetti uses a few 'light' words next to

very serious subjects. "touch of hell" and "some people dying". This adds to the irony and cynicism of the poem. The repetition of 'the world is a beautiful place' sounds like Ferlinghetti is experienced and wise to the matter. The poet uses no punctuation to capitalize on the fact that it is an almost cynical and patronising statement rather than a poem.

There is no Rhyme scheme to lower the tone and mood of the poem. Ferlinghetti uses no strict stanza structures so the reader has to interpret the poem in their own way. The literal content of the poem is mainly negative connotations with modern life. "A few dead minds in higher places." But after the turning point on line 40, Ferlinghetti, shows the reader that modern life does contain fun. But Ferlinghetti quickly says that death is never far behind.

Examiner summary:

This is a sustained interpretation. The candidate immediately picks up on irony as a key feature of the poet's approach to his subject-matter, beginning with the title. The word 'cynical' is also an appropriate one. The candidate selects examples where the poet undercuts the initially positive impression.

Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 3 | 7-9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thorough explanation of how the writer conveys his attitudes to create effect.• Sustained, relevant connection made between attitudes and the presentation of ideas.• Sustained, relevant textual reference to support response. |
|---|-----|--|

To move up to the next band: This response requires fuller and more assured development with more assured use of textual reference to support the response.

Script 2 response to Q5 (a)

Band 5 – 15 marks

2) 'The World is a beautiful place' explores how foolish and selfish it is to believe that the title is correct. Ferlinghetti installs this title with implicative of heavy irony, as the reader discovers after reading the poem that, in fact, the world is not a beautiful place to live in; it is full of breachery, misery and suffering, though the audience of the poem are being mocked and confronted about ~~how~~ their attitudes to modern society. Ferlinghetti launches his torrent of mockery straight away, conveying his irony through the keyword 'if': he states at the beginning of ~~the~~ each stanza that "the world is a beautiful place to be born into" and then follows this with ~~it~~ to highlight how actually the reader does mind the terrible aspects of life: "some people dying", "a few dead minds in the higher places", "or a bomb or two". ~~Ferlinghetti~~

Ferlinghetti adopts an angry, ~~but~~ questioning persona which addresses the reader or "you" so that "if you don't mind"

that they understand the full ^{impact} ~~restoration~~ of
Ferlinghetti's suggestions - he indirectly blames the
reader (but more on a wider spectrum, humanity) for
allowing the corruption, hypocrisy, ignorance and selfishness
that plagues the world.

The poem can be divided up into 4 stanzas
followed by a more positive outlook on life - here
the poet describes the mindless frivolity that the
~~has~~ Western world especially engulfs itself in:

"making the fun scene," "having inspirations", "smelling
flowers" and "kissing people" to enable ourselves to
temporarily forget the rest of the bleak and chaotic
world. However at the end of this stanza,

Ferlinghetti uses a shift in the tone of the poem
to convey an important metaphor for the inevitable
death everyone must face - this arrives in the
middle of nowhere when people (& the reader) least
expect it, in the form of the "smiling mortician".

The point I believe Ferlinghetti is taking his stand
upon, is that the world is indeed a beautiful
place, if one can overlook the brutal & negative aspects
that are plentiful in life which is difficult to
do but must be done in order to achieve any sense
of happiness.

Examiner summary:

This is a perceptive response, aware of the irony in the poet's voice and the way his ideas are expressed in 'The World is a Beautiful Place'. There is strong personal comment evident, and the ideas are supported by relevant references.

Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:

| | | |
|---|-------|---|
| 5 | 13-15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceptive explanation of how the writer uses attitudes to create effect.• Discriminating, relevant connection made between attitudes and the presentation of ideas.• Convincing, relevant textual reference to support response. |
|---|-------|---|

This response received full marks.

EITHER

- (b) (i) Compare how the writers present different thoughts and feelings about the modern world in 'Those bastards in their mansions' and 'The world is a beautiful place'.

Use **evidence** from the poems to support your answer.

You may include material you used to answer 5(a).

(15)

OR

- (ii) Compare how the writer of **one** poem of your choice from the 'Taking a Stand' collection presents different feelings from those in 'The world is a beautiful place'.

Use **evidence** from the poems to support your answer.

You may include material you used to answer 5(a).

(15)

Script 1 response to Q5 (b)(ii)

Band 4 – 11 marks

11) The title 'Living space' can literally mean the space where you live such as a house, which the rest of the poem alludes to, or the space of time between life and death. 'The world is a beautiful place' mentions that death is always one step behind whereas in living space humans manage to squeeze a living space.

Each poet has created a persona from which they are taking a stand but both stands being taken are different. Dharker is saying that you should squeeze life for all its worth when you can. "Balance crookedly on supports". Whereas Ferlinghetti is more

synical about life and saying you should never take it for granted as death is always behind you. Dharker thinks you should look to life with optimism and Ferlinghetti says you should look to death with pessimism.

In 'Living space' Dharker alludes to a building which reflects life. "Nothing is flat". In 'The world is a beautiful place' Ferlinghetti uses no allusions or extended metaphor just clearly shows the positives and negatives of modern life and shows clearly that Ferlinghetti is taking a stand. Dharker simply sums up life as an egg. "Fragile curves of white." But Ferlinghetti deems human life to be much more complicated and yet still be taken away in a second.

Unlike 'The world is a beautiful place', 'Living space' has a rhyme scheme to make it sound more up-beat and have an optimistic tone and mood. Both poems have no strict stanza structures which could reflect the fragility of human life.

Although both poems are on human life, 'The World is a Beautiful Place' takes a more pessimistic stand and Ferlinghetti's 'The Death of a Moth' tells us that death is never far away whether we are having fun or not. Dharker in 'Living Space' is taking a stand on ~~human life~~ conditions of human life and concentrates on having an optimistic approach on life through allusion to a building. "Nails clutch at open seams" rather than "the smiling mortician".

Examiner summary:

The candidate has chosen, unusually, the poem 'Living Space' to make comment on the differing stances of two poems. The ideas in the two poems are in places juxtaposed rather than compared directly, but that is an acceptable approach, and there is an assured interpretation.

Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:

| | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 4 | 10-12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assured comparisons and links. • Pertinent evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects. • The selection of examples is assured, appropriate and supports the points being made. |
|---|-------|--|

To move up to the next band: This links between the two poems need to be more pertinent with more discriminating examples from the text to support the points being made.

Script 2 response to Q5 (b)(i)

Band 5 – 15 marks

b) (i) Both Ferlinghetti and Armitage use an angry, vindictive tone to address and mock ~~blame~~ the subjects of their anger, but Armitage makes use of an allusion to the Greek myth of Prometheus to convey his stand, whilst Ferlinghetti approaches his stand with a more direct approach; by a listing the problems with the modern world in a colloquial, conversational manner "or a bomb or two, now and then" and "which isn't half so bad if it isn't you", ~~through~~ his serious subject matter might be taken more lightly by his audience especially with an entire stanza reciting off the "great best" aspects of living in the modern world. However Armitage uses a much more violent, aggressive persona, which is heightened in the last, tense line "Me, I stick to the shadows, carry a gun".

Armitage uses channels his passion & anger into mocking the class system, and how the ^{upper} ~~middle~~ classes ~~have~~ deprive the lower classes of the "gift of fire" - a metaphor for education, ~~and~~ aspirations and culture that the speaker of the poem steals and empowers the lower class with. This is contrasting to Ferlinghetti's "the world is a beautiful place";

where Ferlinghetti's contempt is directed at humanity in general, as opposed to just the upper class. He relays his feelings of the modern world in an ironic, throwaway manner that matches the attitudes of those he condemns.

Armitage uses the ~~best~~ derogatory and cursory phrases to mock the ^{upper} middle class, "those bastards" and "those lords and ladies" being the key phrases.

Armitage uses the middle upper class stereotype to exaggerate and make fun of so as to get his point even more effectively across. ~~but~~ On the other hand, Ferlinghetti channels his tone into questioning and mocking the values & concepts of people in the western world, rather than simply name-calling and devaluing the ~~the~~ upper object of his taking a stand.

Thus Ferlinghetti's method of conveying his message & thoughts about the modern world is probably more effective as he uses ^{more} subtlety and sophisticated language to convey his message.

Examiner summary:

This is a confident and perceptive response with an insightful comparison between the two given texts. The candidate is well aware of similarities and links, and also of the differences between the two poems.

Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:

| | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 5 | 13-15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discriminating comparisons and links showing insight.• Perceptive evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.• The selection of examples is discriminating and fully supports the points being made. |
|---|-------|--|

This response received full marks.