

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCSE English Literature 5ET2H 01

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## Introduction

In this series there were a number of responses where the candidates showed a very positive appreciation and analysis of poetry. This was particularly evident for the unseen poem, where examiners professed themselves pleased with the quality of response and variety of interpretation. There were also many good responses to the Anthology poems. On both the (a) questions on the named poem and the (b) questions that looked for comparative points, some thoughtful candidates revealed careful preparation of their chosen Collection. On the (b) questions, there were some excellent comparisons, but a minority of candidates struggled to compare poems effectively. Rather than occasional links, integrated comparisons throughout would have greatly improved their answers, as many candidates had a thorough understanding of each text. Centres might like to consider ways of helping candidates find and comment on similarities and differences between two poems, especially in their handling of similar thematic material.

Centres had clearly taken heed of the advice in previous reports, which stressed the need for candidates to answer one whole question from Section B, with a separate part (a) on the given poem and the comparative part (b)(i) or (b)(ii)- either a second prescribed poem or one of their own choice from the relevant Collection. It still remains essential for candidates to label their responses clearly, so that examiners can see clearly where one question ends and the other begins.

Overall, the responses of candidates had many strong features, demonstrating their enjoyment and engagement with the study of poetry. Examiners noted:

- The many refreshing and independent responses to the unseen poem
- Evidence that candidates understood the ideas presented in the chosen poems
- The capacity to select apt examples of the way a poet's language expressed feelings and attitudes and to comment on how these related to the themes.

The less successful responses:

- Did not demonstrate clearly a full grasp of the poems' meaning and ideas
- Sometimes made unsubstantiated or over-general points, without supporting them with appropriate textual evidence
- When writing about two poems, treated them too separately, without making the required connections.

## Question 1

The poem selected was *Bats* by Randall Jarell. This poem proved accessible to all candidates at all levels of ability and the majority of candidates handled the task well. The less confident candidates were able to understand the narrative, taking a more literal reading of the poem, commenting on how the bat was joyous and ecstatic following the birth of her baby, making reference to the movements 'looping' and 'dancing'. Nearly all responses recognised the parallels between bats and humans - this universal experience of being born into the world, being loved and nurtured. Most candidates also commented on the fascination the poet had for these frequently maligned animals and noted how the poet challenged/inverted the preconceived ideas of bats being vicious creatures, dark and dangerous with associations with vampires. Content was therefore a strong point in most responses.

The best responses showed how theme, language, tone and form worked together to reveal the beauty of the mother bat and her baby. Comments on the use of such language features as listing: 'Doubling and looping, soaring, somersaulting...' to describe the sheer delight of the mother bat were both sensitive and mature.

Where candidates revealed a lack of insight, and struggled to achieve little above band 2, was when they fell down on their ability to locate techniques employed by the poet and how these affected the reader. There were also instances where candidates 'could see' the technique, but did not know how to refer to it appropriately. Excessive focus (feature spotting) on such aspects as the use of particular parts of speech sometimes meant that candidates failed to make convincing connections between these points and the presentation of the poet's ideas. To be able to do so was something that differentiated between the successful and the less successful responses.

These are the opening and closing sections of a candidate's response to the Unseen Poem.

The poet feels that bats are interesting, dramatic creatures and does not hold the usual stereotypical belief that they are vicious, ominous, gothic creatures.

The poet first presents the newborn bat as seeming innocent and vulnerable. The adjectives he uses, 'naked and blind and pale', could also be used to describe a newborn human baby. This leads the reader to see the bat as something sweet and natural, unlike the usual belief that bats are dark and eerie animals.

The vulnerability of the bat is further conveyed by the poet's description of its Mother. Jarell uses the metaphor 'makes a pocket of her tail' to make it appear that the bat is motherly and to create a sense that the mother bat is protecting the vulnerable baby from the world.

At the end of the poem, the poet directly names the stereotype of bats using the repetition and assonance in 'sharp ears, their sharp teeth and their quick sharp faces' to create juxtapose this with the last line, 'she folds her wings about her sleeping child'. While the 'sharp ears' line creates a sense of a wicked, aggressive animal, the image of the bats silently sleeping, baby protected by mother is the one that remains with the reader and the softness of this line means it



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response is perceptive and focused on the task throughout. There are some convincing and carefully chosen textual references. The candidate has offered some excellent consideration of the response of the reader. Overall this is a confident and sustained response which meets all the criteria for a top band 5. This response was awarded the mark of 20 - band 5.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate's strong introduction helps focus the response on the requirements of the question. The final paragraph sums up the candidate's arguments and presents a rounded response.

These are the middle paragraphs of a candidate's response to the Unseen Poem.

He then continues on describing the mother ~~staying~~ personifying the bat by saying that she "dances through the night". We get the impression that Jarrell may have heard a bat's scream as he is able to provide us with vivid imagery of her "high sharp cries" as Jarrell describes them as "shining needlepoints of sound" and these screams are showing the mother's happiness of having her child.

Jarrell describes to us how skilled that he thinks these bats are as he says "she lives by hearing" and also that she is able to drink water from the pond that "she skims across" we see by his adding in of these details in the poem that Jarrell ~~is~~ might be or is amazed or astounded as to how these animals are able to do these things.

Jarrell uses the verb "fluttering" to describe the bat's movement almost if he is trying to say that he thinks these bats are indeed as elegant and swift in movements as butterflies may be.

We see a turning point at line 26, after everything that has happened that day the "tired mother flaps home to her rafters" the mother has finally come home after a long tiring day. In ~~this last~~ these last lines of the poem Jarrell is telling us how these creatures as he describes as "sharp" repeating it three times "Their sharp ears, their sharp teeth, their quick sharp faces" he is telling us that even though these creature may seem scary he thinks that they now become "dull and slow and mild" - he is telling us that bats may not be so different from us as the mother protects her child as she "folds her wings about her sleeping child"



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a brisk and assured response which is well structured with some assured comments. There is an awareness of possible reader reaction. There is some clear and assured comment on the language and some on the structure of the poem. This response was awarded the mark of 14 - band 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate looks closely at the language and has made good use of embedded examples to support points made.

This is the first page of a candidate's response to the Unseen Poem.

1. The thoughts gathered from Randall Jarrell's poem about bat's is that he admires how the mother takes care of her child. This is displayed in the simple sentence "She folds her wings about her sleeping child". Randall Jarrell uses the verb folds within this sentence to portray the mother protecting her child, this implies Jarrell ~~is~~ admires the creature as he's able to pick up on the mother protecting her new born by sheltering him with her wings. I also believe Jarrell uses this sentence to present his admiration as the wings of the bat foreshadow the mother covering up her baby with a blanket, just like human mothers do before they sleep themselves. Finally, I believe Jarrell uses this simple sentence to conclude the mother's day of looking after her son, she feeds him and takes care of him; now it's the end of the day and she's putting him to bed. To me I believe Jarrell has used this to also conclude his narrative ~~of~~ ~~the mother's day~~, again showing his admiration as he has taken the time to simply write about the day a mother bat and her child's share together.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a thoughtful if unsophisticated approach to the poem. The candidate comments on the poem's meaning and there is some personal response. There is some comment on figures of speech (simile) but the range of comments on language and form is limited. Overall there is enough to put this response into band 3. The response was awarded the mark of 10 - band 3.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

When discussing language and effects make sure your comments are precise and thorough.



## Question 2

2(a): The chosen poem offered for analysis was *04/01/07* by Ian McMillan. Many candidates recognised the form as a starting point and discussed this in relation to the traditional sonnet, explaining that this gave the poem an overriding feeling of love. Many candidates recognised the separation of stanzas and the final two lines with the two metaphors of ‘...stream dried up’ and ‘...smashed glass clear’, interpreting this in two ways: to signal a moment of realisation and acceptance; or how the son will be forever connected to his mother.

2(b)(i): *Nettles* by Vernon Scannell was the prescribed poem for comparison, which produced satisfactory to perceptive responses. This was by far the most popular choice. Most candidates noted how one poem focused on the grief of an adult son for a lost parent, whilst the other on a father’s passionate desire to protect his son from physical harm and were able to identify the lasting implications of both. The less confident candidates were able to distinguish between the two types of relationships, whilst for the stronger the pairing made for some insightful discussion on the nuances of the language of grief in *04/01/07* and the harsh militaristic metaphors of *Nettles*. Many showed an insightful understanding of the nettles themselves as being a metaphor for the dangers of the world and the smashed glass in *04/01/07* as a symbol of permanent change and closure.

2(b)(ii): This was a much less popular choice. Other poems from this collection which were offered for comparison included *Sonnet 116*, *The Habit of Light* and *One Flesh*, which proved to be the more popular. All these choices made valid comparisons as the different contexts allowed candidates to consider relationships from a variety of perspectives. Most candidates appeared comfortable with their choice of text. *The Habit of Light* was also a popular choice which allowed for significant comparisons - one a celebration of a mother’s life, the other an expression of sudden loss and shock. Another popular choice was *One Flesh* where the death of a loved one is compared to the death of a relationship. Sound and thorough responses offered straightforward comparisons while more discriminating responses often used one poem to illustrate the other; such as the language and images of raw grief in *04/01/07* with the gentle reminiscence of the daughter about her later mother in *The Habit of Light*.

This is the final paragraph of a candidate's response to the set poem Question 2(a) 04/01/07 in which the candidate discusses the structure of the poem.

'hit' and 'dark' also shows the cycle of a day and the idea light comes to an end at some point; which is how he feels about his mother.

This poem is a sonnet, ~~which~~ of which implies it has a sense of love; which it does. Love between a mother and son. Almost throughout the poem, there is an AB rhyme scheme. In this poem it represents the poet's conflict with himself and coming to terms with what has happened in his life. The rhyme scheme is very structured until the final stanza where there are two rhyming couplets; these two couplets symbolise the closure he feels and the peace he gets especially as the last word is 'clear' which implies he is seeing things in a more positive way. As the rhyme structure changes from AB to couplets, this suggests that the poet has rid his negative attitude in the beginning and has become more positive by the end.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This is a confident response with sustained perceptive comments. The candidate looks at language, stylistic features in some depth and detail and demonstrates how they are used to effect. There is an interesting comment on the structure and how that links to the idea of closure and moving on. The response was awarded the mark of 15 - band 5.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Note how the candidate has finished off with a conclusion that shows a firm grasp of the poem, in this case the importance of its structure.

These are the first three paragraphs of a candidate's response for Question 2(a), the set text 04/01/07.

2a) 04/01/07 is a sonnet. MacMillan shows ~~the~~ ~~frustrates~~ love for his mother was present by using the structure of a sonnet which is associated with love or romance.

He shows ~~his~~ that love in a family is exclusive & by saying that amidst the news of his mother's death, a milk float clinks and shines and a lit plane drones in the night's dark blue. This shows that only he ~~is~~ is affected because the world outside does not change or stop; it goes on.

He shows what could be described as devastation at his mother's death by saying "The telephone shatters the night's dark glass." The ~~adjective~~ verb

'shatters' is very violent, and is a connotation of damage or hard impact. The call which will give him the news is not a small crack which is easily fixed; it will shatter his world and may never be completely repaired. Through this, ~~the~~ ~~the~~ McMillan shows that it is an event that was devastating and affected him deeply.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate has met all the criteria for a band 3 response. There is some thorough explanation of how the writer creates effect. The response moved into Band 4 for its focus. It was awarded the mark of 10 - band 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate focuses closely on the actual language used by the poet.

This is the middle section of a candidate's response to Question 2(a).

The McMillan has also separated the last stanza, this could be to show the ~~st~~ slight change the reader might feel if they had the experience of losing someone so close to them and how you may want to give up "feeling that the story ends just here," this implies that the speaker can't bare to care on and that's why the last stanza is separate and shorter.

McMillan has used onomatopoeia to "shatter" "smashed" with which create the image of a broken family after finding out about their mother. The use of the word "slap" when talking about crying emphasises the fact the speaker is going through very painful ~~at~~ time.

The <sup>repetition</sup> ~~used~~ of words like "I" and "I'm" ~~give~~ could also be said to give the impression that the speaker want the attention for a moment because ~~it~~ they make you only feel sympathy for the speaker as they are the only person really spoken about in the poem. But one could argue that the repetition of the words is because <sup>the speaker and mother had</sup> they had a closer relationship than other family members.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate offers some explanation of how the writer's attitude is conveyed. There is some attempt to look at stylistic and linguistic features. Ideas and comments are supported by text, but there is little development and the response is rather list-like. It was awarded the mark of 5 - band 2.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

When referring to a poetic or language feature make sure it has been fully explained and your comments are precise and thorough.

The candidate has chosen *Song for Last Year's Wife* as the poem for comparison - Question 2(b)(ii). This is the opening paragraph.

ii) In both *04/01/07* and *Song for Last Year's Wife*, there is the theme of loss of a loved one. McMillan, poet for *04/01/07* includes the theme of inevitability: 'Give me the news I already knew' implies he knew ~~she~~<sup>his mother</sup> was going to pass. This may be because he knew she was terminally ill, despite this inevitability, there is a sense of it being surreal due to 'you float' which is surreal. The poet did this to imply even when you know someone's going to die, it doesn't stop the pain. In *Song for Last Year's Wife* the persona, I believe, is a husband who has obviously lost his wife. Unlike *04/01/07*, there is a theme of bitterness: 'I have had not the right to walk out of me' this implies the husband is hurt and is surprised by his loss, this was unexpected which contrasts with the theme of inevitability in *04/01/07*. The husband's bitterness is from the shock of his loss as he isn't sure how to deal with it; he is in an unfit state and is finding it very hard to cope. ~~This is my first~~ Each poem relates to the theme of love. McMillan portrays the love as family love; 'your mother die



and 'that empty space' whereas Patten portrays the love to be more intimate 'tell me your body's as firm'. Patten is more intimate due to the purpose of their relationship which was 'in love' ~~to~~ unlike 04/01/07 which was more of family love.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate's own choice of poem lends itself to some interesting points of comparison. The candidate compares the feelings of inevitability with those of surprise and comments on how each persona deals with loss. Features, such as metaphors, hyperboles, are considered as well as the structure of both poems and how that adds to the overall tone. However, the clarity of the argument is not always consistent. The response was awarded the mark of 13 - Band 5.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate has used two opposing emotions, comparing and contrasting them to build an argument linking the two poems together.

The candidate has chosen the second set poem *Nettles* to compare with 04/01/07 Question 2(b)(i). This is the opening section of the response.

25. In both poems, ~~the~~ both poems portray feelings of denial. In *Nettles*, Scannell tries to deny he can't protect his son by unleashing his fury upon Nettles, which represent the evil of the world, and kills them all. In 04/01/07, ~~the~~ McMillan discusses a space or void he finds in amidst his grief. A 'Space' suggests emptiness, so he does not feel anything and nor does he accept his Mother's death. Both poems also feature acceptance, Scannell accepts there will always be evil to hurt his son and McMillan accepts his Mother's death. It is obvious that despite the similarities the poems are expressing different emotions as seen through the language used. Scannell uses words such as 'fury' and 'fierce' to express his ~~ang~~ denial through anger whereas McMillan's usage of adjectives such as 'empty' and 'dark' to express his denial through lack of emotion, and tells us he is ~~also~~ 'trapped' by it.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate has used PEE to effect. Some interesting and sustained comparisons are offered, particularly regarding tone and mood. This is an assured response with pertinent evaluation. It was awarded the mark of 12 - band 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate is immediately focused on the differences and similarities between the two poems. This avoids the impression that the question is being approached in a rather general way.

This is the closing paragraph to Question 2(b)(i) where the second set text was *Nettles*.

In 'Nettles' there is lots of  
marshall imagery "green spears"  
"tall recruits" ~~this shows that~~  
Scabnet could of chosen  
these to emphasise the fact  
he won't always be able to protect  
his son "my son would often feel  
this is opposite to "the dark  
imagery used in '04/01/2007"  
which indicates the sons  
depression and sadness at losing  
the his mother "dark glass"  
"I'm trapped inside that empty  
space" these quotes emphasise  
the fact ~~scabnet~~ Mcmullan ~~to~~  
could be trying to show  
the importance of to which a  
mother own and that when  
she died the son was left feeling  
as though he had nothing.

Both poems use onomatopoeia in '04/01/07' McMullan's use of "shatters" and "smashed" create the image of a broken family due to their ~~loss~~ loss but in 'Nettles' the use of "slashed" creates an image of violence which Seal Scannon might use to embed the fact you should do whatever you can to protect and look after your family.

To conclude both poems show different ideas about the relationship within families but they both emphasise the importance the poets believe about family bonds.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is quite a focused response. The candidate offers some comments about linguistic features and imagery neither of which are developed. There are some specific and detailed comparisons and a relevant selection of examples. This response was awarded the mark of 8 - band 3.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

All points and comments in this response are supported by short and relevant quotations.

### Question 3

3(a): The chosen poem from this Collection was *Belfast Confetti* by Ciaran Carson. This was the most popular question for Section B and also offered the most mixed responses. A lack of appreciation of the socio-political context of the poem meant that some candidates treated the text as a description of 'some kind of war' rather than of an urban riot. Among the less confident candidates there was a tendency to narrate the action in the poem. Many noted the irony of the title: 'The title *Belfast Confetti*' makes the poem sound like a happy, jolly one. It is however, quite the opposite. It is about riots taking place...and the damage and destruction and the confusion of the writer experiencing it.' Many candidates drew links between the poet's overt use of punctuation marks and the conflict itself. The more able discussed how this reflected the internal conflict in the poet's mind, displaying emotions of bewilderment and terror. Some candidates explored how the references to punctuation reflected a fragmented society. Band 4/5 responses sensitively commented on how occupation and conflict can destroy one's being, and how the innocent ultimately pay the price.

(b)(i): The prescribed text for comparison was *Exposure* by Wilfred Owen. This was the overwhelmingly popular choice offered from this Collection. Some of the less confident responses were narrative and context heavy. However, the key point was made by most candidates: one persona is caught in the action and trying to escape, whilst the other is anticipating action that does not come. The confused states of mind and the desire to escape from both situations were noted. Another common thread was how the poets presented the futility of war and many candidates made comparisons about how destructive different conflicts are to those caught in the middle be they civilians or soldiers.

(b)(ii) This was a much less popular choice with a wide range of texts offered: *Half-Caste*, *Invasion*, *The Drum*, *Hitcher*, *August 6, 1945*. The more successful choices were the ones which dealt with the obviously physical aspects of conflict. *August 6, 1945* was such a choice. Candidates explored the differences in perspectives, one from the viewpoint of a victim, and the attacker in the other. Stronger responses compared the poet's use of imagery with the pilot's descriptions when the reality is very disturbing. Another popular choice was *Hitcher*, which offered similarities in which the person feels ostracised from society, with the more discerning candidates recognising the conflict between the individual and the wider community. Comparisons to *The Drum* were interesting especially when focussing on the imagery.

This is the middle part of a candidate's response to the set poem on conflict, *Belfast Confetti*.

happening. This infers that Carson believed the initial riot to be a flood of randomness - full of noise and people taking every direction: chaos. It later states ~~that~~ 'an asterisk on the map' suggesting that the asterisk is a star used to represent where a bomb's gone off on a map, depersonalising the situation and showing that Carson thought that the riot was very much

generalised, not seen as any different from the rest. Additionally, 'the alleyways and side streets blocked with stops and exclamation marks' emphasises quite how bad the lack of communication and understanding in Belfast had become. Full stops represent the end of something, perhaps bluntness - in which showing how one side were refusing to listen and accept the other sides reasoning or explanation whereas a colon would suggest ~~the start of a list~~ the start of a long list of other issues - being a constant stream of problems. To Carson, this would have seemed an ongoing continuation of various issues and disagreements - almost seeming never ending, hence why they've been represented with punctuation.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A detailed discussion is offered focusing on how some of the features like punctuation and rhetorical questions are used to illustrate the writer's emotions, fear and a sense of excitement. Comments are quite developed and supported by well chosen quotations. The response was awarded the mark of 13 - band 5.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate builds a convincing argument around some of the features of poem - in this case some of the punctuation - showing the overall effect of the technique used by the poet.

This is part of the candidate's response to the set poem *Belfast Confetti*. The extract is the final paragraph of the response.

Carson presents conflict as creating suspense. The use of ellipsis and caesura helps to convey this: "This hyperated line, a burst/of rapid fire...", which describes a burst of gun fire. The use of the ellipsis leaves the reader waiting to see what will happen on the next line, without a definite ending, so the reader is not sure if the persona will survive. This shows that the conflict creates a suspense as this is how the writer conveys this to the reader. Furthermore, the use of the caesura has the effect of breaking up the action, making the reader wait which creates suspense. ~~Also~~<sup>similarly,</sup> the use of the adjective 'hyperated' suggests that the conflict is separated out into pieces, which also helps to create suspense as the reader has to wait.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a succinct and confident response. The candidate has got to grips with the language and imagery. However its brevity means that the comments are not fully developed and that keeps the response in band 4. It was awarded the mark of 12 - band 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate does more than just 'feature spot' when discussing some of the features of the poem - in this case the ellipsis and caesura.

This is the middle part of a candidate's response to the set poem *Belfast Confetti*.

I feel the title is extremely ~~important~~ and significant to understanding the poem. Confetti is normally ~~is~~ associated with happy occasions; weddings, anniversaries etc. However, I think that Liam Carson uses sarcasm to describe the weapons and objects which were used at the time. The word makes the reader imagine small light pieces of paper or petals falling down on people, ~~now~~ however as they begin to read the <sup>poem</sup> ~~paper~~ they realise the confetti is ~~is~~ actually dangerous metal objects, ~~is~~ used to inflict serious ~~is~~ injury to many people. I think Carson did this intentionally to ~~put~~ put the reader in a certain mindset before they read the poem, ~~is~~ and then used <sup>quite</sup> ~~quite~~ aggressive, violent language as the poem starts to contrast it and make the conflict seem ~~is~~ a lot more ~~is~~ vicious in the reader's mind.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate has offered a thorough and thoughtful response which covers all the band 3 criteria. There is focus on structure, punctuation and a discussion on the extended metaphor. There is also some discussion about the mental turmoil of the writer and comments are supported by textual references. The response was awarded the mark of 9 - band 3.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate has made a comment, and developed it, about Carson being sarcastic in using the idea of confetti in his poem. When you make a comment make sure you develop your ideas fully and explain why you think the point you have chosen is important.



The poem chosen for comparison is *The Hitcher* the candidate's own choice Question 3(b) (ii). This is the complete response.

(b) (ii) 'Hitcher' is a poem written by Simon Armitage, which is about a stressed driver who picks up a hitch hiker, only to attack him violently and leave him on the side of the road. However, 'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson describes the aftermath of a bomb being set off. Both poems include different ideas about conflict in 'Belfast Confetti', conflict is presented as threatening and confusing. Whereas, in 'Hitcher' conflict is presented as deliberate and as something to be proud of.

In 'Belfast Confetti', conflict is presented as threatening. This can be seen through the structure of the poem, ~~as~~ where each pair of lines resembles a gun. This could convey the persona's feelings of being threatened as they feel as if a gun is being pointed directly at them, which is very threatening. Moreover, the difference in the length between each pair suggests that the persona stops what he is doing in the second line as he is apprehensive because there may be danger ahead. This shows that the conflict is threatening as the persona is in danger.

In 'Hitcher', conflict is presented as something to be proud of. This is shown by the use of enjambement and punctuation in this quote: "in the face - and didn't even ~~swave~~ / I dropped it into kind / and kept across". The use of enjambement shows that the persona gets carried away with his action and cannot help showing off, which implies that he is proud of his action. On the other hand, in 'Belfast Confetti' the persona is trying to escape the conflict desperately. ~~But~~ The use of a dash shows that the persona is adding extra information that is not necessary, as if he wants to show how successful his attack was. Whereas, in 'Belfast Confetti' there are no added details, because the persona is desperate to escape so cannot afford to waste time. Furthermore, punctuation in 'Belfast Confetti' is used to separate the persona's thoughts and feelings, instead of adding detail.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate has offered their own choice of poem, which although unusual does lend itself to some comparisons about the contrasting types of conflict. There is some assured comment on the features of both poems. The response was awarded the mark of 11 - band 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

When choosing your own text for comparison, make sure you have enough points to offer some sound comparisons and links.

The candidate has chosen *Half-caste* as the poem of choice for comparison. The extract is in the middle section of the response.

However, they again differ when studying the tone, with *Half-caste* being much more of a witty, sarcastic tone, ~~the~~ as opposed to the much more serious, negative tone in *Belfast Longetti* - despite them both being of the same level of importance. This may be as a result of the persona - in which John Agard is struggling to see the problem/difference from his point of view - therefore explaining that there's difference everywhere & life would be boring without it. Agard explores the importance of difference and identifies areas in which it's necessary and a requirement to make something that's better.

Another difference is in the language they use, with John Agard being very informal and speaking within his dialect - linking to the idea of having pride in who he is.

Although, on the other hand, Carson has used a far more formal choice of language - linking to how serious she finds the issue, using much caesura too to show

how compact is breaking everything up,  
differing to that of the ongoing flow of  
ideas in half-caste.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate's own choice of poem was offered. The choice does lend itself to some interesting and meaningful comparisons. However, there is little in the way of direct reference to both texts. This unfortunately keeps the response in the top range of band 3 and not higher. It was awarded the mark of 9 - band 3.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Make sure that all points you make are supported by relevant textual references.

The candidate has chosen the second set poem *Exposure* to compare with *Belfast Confetti* - Question 3(b)(i). These are the two closing paragraphs of the response.

The format of ~~the~~ ~~set~~ Belfast Confetti differs a lot to that of Exposure. Belfast Confetti has a messy, disorganised structure to represent the chaos going on at the time, which is completely the opposite to that of Exposure which is in organised <sup>stanzas</sup> paragraphs of the same ~~long~~ length and depth. This could be to ~~represent~~ represent the strict, tidy ~~form~~ requirements that he was he participated in whilst.

In Exposure, there is a dominant theme of the weather being their ~~strong~~ enemy no more than ~~is~~ their rival is. Similarly, ~~at~~ at the end of Belfast Confetti when ~~the~~ Carson is ~~being~~ being asked of his identity, the enemy ~~now~~ appears to be the police, rather than the rival.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate has written a brief and undeveloped response. Some interesting contrast between metaphorical weapons is offered. However, the brevity of the response keeps it out of band 3. It was awarded a mark of 6 - band 2.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the two poems are not treated in isolation, but linked throughout the response.

## Question 4

4(a): This was the least popular choice of question. The chosen poem for analysis was *City Blues* by Mike Hayhoe. The less confident candidates failed to note the subtleties of the language, falling into generalisations and summaries of what the poet was describing. However, there were some very strong responses analysing the unusual structure with its alternative vocabulary to good effect. Candidates performed especially well when exploring the images as metaphors against capitalism and lack of choice. Candidates who viewed the poem holistically rather than as a series of images did better.

(b)(i): The prescribed text for comparison was *Cape Town Morning* by Ingrid de Kok. Whilst some of the less confident candidates did not always notice that the poet was writing about urban poverty, which was emphasised by 'add(ing) fresh blossoms to yesterday's blooms' rather than this being a positive image. The stronger responses focused on the images of poverty and contrast. There were many thoughtful comments about the effect of the image of street children and there were some very interesting comments on how the children's 'eyelids (were) weighted by dreams of gold'.

(b)(ii): *London, City Jungle*, and *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* were the most popular choices for this question and all lent themselves to sound comparisons with the set text. There were some thoughtful comments about *London* especially when comparing images of oppression. There were some excellent links to *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* as this invited very different attitudes towards the city. *Jungle City* worked well and lent itself to plenty of scope for contrast and language analysis with reference to animal imagery, particularly with the less confident candidate. Stronger responses noted the element of intimidation and fear in both texts.

This is part of the candidate's response to the set poem *City Blues* by Mike Hayhoe. The extract consists of three paragraphs from the middle of the response.

Mike <sup>Hayhoe</sup> has used these two verbs seperately, giving the reader the choice to chose which path they follow in order to gain their their own, personal account of the city, allowing them the reader to also interpret his ~~opinio~~ opinions and account of the city into something appropriate to their own views.

The connotations of the two verbs 'followed' and 'chased' ~~are~~ ~~fit~~ can be interpreted as slightly different depending on the readers views. 'Followed' can be associated with a more slow, relaxed pace, eliminating the sense of playfulness linked with the more fast ~~pac~~ paced, energetic verb 'chased' giving the stanza two different tones, reinforcing Hayhoe's intentions of allowing the poem to be personalised by the reader.

The empty, cold and dark tones created by Hayler are presented with the negative tones attached the adjectives and verbs he uses throughout the poem. Adjectives such as 'dark' and 'hard' when relating to the shadows the sun creates, imply the struggle and difficulties faced when living within the city, or acting as an extended metaphor for the miserable and unhappy lives that the city expects from people.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

The candidate has offered a perceptive and confident response which sees the city as an extended metaphor for the lives we live. A compelling overview is presented, but significant detail to support the central argument is considered. The response was awarded the top mark of 15 - band 5.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Note how the candidate has commented in detail on the vocabulary and has offered suggestions to its effect on the reader.

The candidate has chosen the second set poem for comparison. This is the complete response.

4a) Mike Hayhoe presents his view of the city in 'City Blues' as an empty, cold and dark place, by implying that nature and the city ~~fight~~ have to battle with each other to gain ~~a place~~ an important place within the city. The verb 'Be bully' is used when describing the sun wading into the city, to present the difficulty that the sun, ~~is associated~~ which is normally associated with power and control over the world, as it is the source of all life, is having ~~to~~ fighting the man made aspects of the city.

Nature is also overlooked within the poem as when Mike ~~describes~~ Hayhoe describes the waste and rubbish left by the people in the city as being 'chased' and 'followed'. These verbs suggest ~~that the only~~ play have the positive connotations of playfulness and action, ~~normally associated~~ childlike actions and games, therefore suggesting that the only examples of this positive, free behaviour is found within the least respected and least important aspect of the city - the rubbish. Further implying that all sense of happiness and freedom



has been ~ bullied out of the city, leaving the empty cold tone presented by the busy London working life, where people lack emotion.

Mike <sup>Hayhoe</sup> has used these two verbs separately, giving the reader the choice to chose which path they follow in order to gain ~~their~~ their own, personal account of the city, allowing ~~them~~ the reader to also interpret his ~~opinio~~ opinions and account of the city into something appropriate to their own views.

The connotations of the two verbs 'followed' and 'chased' ~~are~~ ~~st~~ can be interpreted as slightly different depending on the readers views. 'Followed' can be associated with a more slow, relaxed pace, eliminating the sense of playfulness linked with the more fast ~~par~~ paced, energetic verb 'chased' giving the stanza two different tones, reinforcing Hayhoe's intentions of allowing the poem to be personalised by the reader.

The empty, cold and dark tones created by Hayhoe are presented with the negative tones attached the adjectives and verbs he uses throughout the poem. Adjectives such as 'dark' and 'hard' when relating to the shadows the sun creates, imply the struggle and difficulties ~~p~~ faced when living within the city, ~~or~~ acting as a ~~te~~ extended metaphor for the miserable and unhappy lives that the city expects from people.

The lack of ~~punctu~~ range of punctuation used by Hayhoe throughout the poem displays that the poem is an ~~is~~ partly unorganised, and is a brief account of his thoughts and views of his surroundings, although he focuses on choosing ~~del~~ various word options, he has neglected the need for structure with the use of punctuation. The lack of punctuation can be interpreted as an extended metaphor - that the city is an unorganised, unstructured environment that is very busy, involving very little time for breaks and pauses, which would be represented as full stops and commas within 'City Blues'. On the other hand the lack of punctuation could be an extended metaphor which ~~expres~~ expresses the poet's interpretation of a city, and that it is a lonely, empty place which lacks in personality and character.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a response with some assured comments. It was awarded a mark of 11 (band 4)



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate, rather than treating each poem separately, moves seamlessly between the two texts, using one poem to illustrate the other.

## Question 5

5(a): The chosen poem for this question was *The Penelopes of my homeland* by Choman Hardi. This was very much a 'minority' choice. Most candidates showed a perceptive understanding of the Greek Myth and made much of it describing it in detail. This sometimes distracted from the actual poem and so prevented candidates from reaching a higher band. However, most candidates understood the parallel tragedy of the women and got quite passionate about the fate of the modern Penelopes. There were some impressive answers that had a mature understanding of impact of 'years and years' and were able to explore the language in a perceptive way, recognising the poet's message. The less confident candidates adopted a linear approach which led to narrative and repetition.

(b)(i): The prescribed text for comparison was *Remember* by Christina Rossetti. Whilst some of the less confident candidates struggled to compare with the set text, getting 'stuck' on the same idea that the loss in this poem was not as hard as that in the other, stronger responses offered a clear focus exploring ideas of acceptance, grief, loss and love.

(b)(ii): The most popular choice for this question was *I Shall Paint My Nails Red* by Carole Satyamurti. Most candidates responded with a good understanding of the content, although the poem did not always yield effective points of comparison for candidates in the lower bands. Stronger candidates focused on the difference between women's lives and drew some developed links between the succinct ideas of the poem with *Penelopes* making the women seem not so different. Some interesting comment on women's rights and freedom was offered.

These are the middle paragraphs, looking at the tone and language from a candidate's response to the set poem *The Penelopes of my homeland*.

The poem also mentions "their colourful future was all in their past." This makes the reader imagine possible good times the widows may have had once upon a time, and gives their current life a very monochrome, black and white kind of vein. Almost like all joyfulness and happiness has been stripped away from them, there is no vibrance left in their lives.

We also see how the widows refuse to give up belief that their loved ones may return one day, this is through things such as "palm readers," and the belief that God

would not "allow such nightmares to continue"  
~~the~~ this makes the poem more mournful,  
because the image of the widows going to  
palm readers shows that they are constantly  
mourning their loved ones, and that they cling  
on to the bleakest of hopes.

The ending of poem does not feature any  
rhymes, as that would make the poem too  
casual, this poem is deadly serious.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Although there is a narrative tendency, the candidate does offer some interesting comments; 'widows now live in monochrome' when comparing the Penelopes previous lives and hopes. Comments are assured and are supported by textual references. The response was awarded the mark of 11 - band 4.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note the way in which the candidate looks at the language used and has made good use of quotation to support comments.

These are two final paragraphs, the first of which looks at one of the aspects of the poem - that of religion - from a candidate's response to the set second poem *Remember*.

Both of the poems also include a religious aspect. *Remember* features words such as "pray" and *The Penelope as my Homeland* features beliefs of a just god ending the struggle. This suggests that often when faced with situations such as death and loneliness, people often turn to a higher existence or being, because it may be the only place left where they might be able to find comfort.

*Remember* is a very caring poem, through it, we get the impression that the writer of the poem wishes the very best for her partner. An example of this would be "Yet if you should forget me for a while and afterwards remember, do not grieve." So the situation may be seen as less bleak, as the <sup>poet</sup> reader is still given the comfort of being able to speak to her partner.

*Remember* is also in regular, traditional sonnet form, and includes rhymes, in a way that does not liven up, and brighten the atmosphere, and the regularity of it is dissimilar to that of *Penelope as my Homeland*, which is kept serious by lack of rhyme, rhythm and structure.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate has offered some specific and detailed comparisons and links between the two poems. There are some interesting comments, but not developed comments on the religious aspects of both poems. The lack of development has kept this response in band 3. It was awarded the mark of 9 - band 3.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

When you make a comment which shows a personal response, make sure you develop your ideas fully and explain why you think the point you have chosen is important.

## **Paper Summary**

Many examiners commented positively on the quality of candidates' responses to the poems, both the Unseen Poem as well as those from the Anthology.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Make sure the particular requirements of the question are focused on
- Use your examples fully, analysing and commenting on them
- Make effective links and comparisons when required
- Keep separate and label both parts of the Section B answers
- Answer in the correct section of the paper.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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