



# **MARKING NOTES**

**May 2002**

**ENGLISH A1**

**Higher Level**

**Paper 1**

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### Criteria A and B

The danger of rewarding or penalising the use of illustration/references/quotations twice in both these categories should be avoided.

### Criterion C

“Awareness” and “appreciation” of literary features are the key elements under this criterion. The mere labelling, without appreciation, of literary features will not score the highest marks. However, the candidate who is attentive to literary features and deals with them in a meaningful way, but who does not consistently use the vocabulary of literary criticism can still be awarded the higher achievement levels.

**Reminder:** the term “literary features” is broad and includes elements as basic as plot, character etc, attention to which is valid and must be rewarded as appropriate.

### Criterion D

Any form of structuring to the commentary will be rewarded if it is effective and appropriate. Different conventions are in operation and therefore all approaches (including the linear, line by line analysis) are acceptable and will be judged on the basis of their effectiveness. Examiners should remember that structure does not exist by itself, but any structure must be measured by appropriate reference to the passage or poem and by its capacity to integrate these towards the development of an organised and coherent commentary.

**Reminder:** supporting examples must be evaluated in terms of how fluently they are incorporated/integrated to shape/advance the argument, **not** in terms of their appropriateness or accuracy.

### Criterion E

If you have reservations about awarding a 4, you should ensure that these are well founded before awarding a 3. The broadness of achievement level 3 sometimes makes examiners reluctant to award 4.

Judgement needs to be used when dealing with lapses in grammar, spelling and punctuation, therefore do not unduly penalise.

Mechanical accuracy is only a part of this criterion. Ensure that all the other elements are considered.

These notes to examiners are intended only as guidelines to assist marking. They are not offered as an exhaustive and fixed set of responses or approaches to which all answers must rigidly adhere. Good ideas or angles not offered here should be acknowledged and rewarded as appropriate. Similarly, answers which do not include all the ideas or approaches suggested here should not be so heavily penalised as to distort appreciation of individuality.

## Paper 1 (Prose)

An adequate commentary (approximate achievement level 3) will include attention to most or all of the following:

- comment on setting, desert/town, heat
- discussion of the narrator’s voice; sense of separation
- comment and discussion of the fact that it is an opening (not essential)
- mention of the role of the other characters
- some treatment of dialogue, diction and imagery.

A good commentary (approximate achievement level 4) will include attention to most or all of the following:

- purposeful use of details in establishing the setting
- comment on how the passage is part of an unfolding action, linked to the foreshadowed story made at the end of the passage
- how the writer is using swiftly touched-in characters; how they work in the passage
- comment on the narrator (point of view), addressing (drawing in) the reader; attitude of the narrator
- an appreciation of the skill of the writing, eg laconic, abrupt syntax, short paragraphs, pace.

The best commentaries (approximate achievement level 5) **may** include **critical consideration** of the following ideas. (*These should be rewarded if appropriately discussed, although inaccurate interpretation or absence of such details should not be penalized.*):

- “hard boiled” fiction (not necessarily using the term)
- cinematic possibilities (or the use of cinema) in the text
- crime writing, gun culture, myth.

In principle, candidates can be awarded a 5 in criteria A, B and C, even if they do not mention the qualities listed above, provided the conditions of the details in the descriptors are met.

## Paper 1 (Poem)

There are many interpretations of this poem, and the reader's response to what is a conceit will vary. The move from "adequate" to "good" will be distinguished by the level of investigation and speculation as to the interpretation, and engagement with the poem.

An adequate commentary (approximate achievement level 3) will:

- perceive the analogy between mother and child, author and book
- have a perception of the speaker's attitude
- include some sense of form (couplets, iambic pentameter), imagery, diction.

A good commentary (approximate achievement level 4) may include attention to most or all of the following:

- the poem is an extended series of comparisons: between AB's poems and her children; between herself as a poet and as a mother; between an author and her book, and a mother and her child
- the poet's comparisons involve thought and feeling, as poems should
- they also involve in a more general sense, appearance and reality, eg ll. 11, 17 and 18, dress and worth
- the poem is a set of twelve iambic couplets, but these are handled flexibly, eg a couplet is split by a sentence end at l. 19: the metre is also subtly used, eg, l.16 echoes the alleged uncertainty of a child's running and the verses' scansion
- although the poem is addressed to her "Book", the poet is addressing her readers
- the tone of the poem contains satire and self-mockery
- the poem may be read as a woman's comments on her work as a writer, eg ll. 23, 24
- the ambivalence of words like "rambling brat", "blemishes", "better dress", "homespun cloth", "vulgars", and of l. 20.
- a good interpretation of the four concluding lines of the poem.

The best commentaries (approximate achievement level 5) **may** move into some **critical, constructive discussion** of the following ideas. *(These should be rewarded if appropriately discussed, although inaccurate interpretation or absence of such details should not be penalized.):*

- witty poetry
- women's writing
- the historical context
- the poet's challenge to the reader.

In principle, candidates can be awarded a 5 in criteria A, B and C, even if they do not mention the qualities listed above, provided the conditions of the details in the descriptors are met.