

MARKING NOTES

May 2002

ENGLISH A1

Standard 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.

COMMENTARY – GENERAL

Can candidates score well if they address the guiding questions as a “walk-through?” A perfunctory approach cannot score all 5s. However, if the candidate uses them as a starting point to produce an answer, developing them at a sophisticated level, the use of guiding questions is very good.

The poem is uniquely difficult and will challenge the better candidate. The last four lines are problematic. Candidates may or may not recognise the biblical story.

Some candidates are told to write an introduction on the first page, or to leave the first page and then return to it after the essay is written to write their introduction, which accounts for unusual spacing.

In the poem, the examiner may credit a range of possible interpretations.

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:

- the approaching death
- the perspective of the narrative voice
- the role of feet /shoes
- social class
- the presence of metaphor and **some** analysis of that.

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

- a supported view of the implications of Una's death for the various characters
- use of sentence structure to underscore perspective, use of imagery
- the personality of the boy
- the role of memory.

The better commentaries (approximate achievement level 5) **might** additionally touch on:

- colour imagery
- a perceptive appreciation of recollection
- an understanding of the boy's response.

These last should be rewarded if appropriately discussed, although inaccurate interpretation or absence of such details should not be penalised.

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 (Poetry)

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

- show understanding of the situation and attitude of the speaker/observer
- comment on diction and imagery
- include relevant discussion of the river and its role in the poem.

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

- how the speaker's/observer's attitude is conveyed
- the river and its role and the effect on the argument
- time (past floods, eg "...sudden/Histories to them that would never get told" ll. 12–13
- the **effects** created in the poem by images: of sounds ("A sea gull creaked..."), sights ("an old coat hanging...", "Exotic looking dark foliage stretched/Cross-wise...")
- the versification, eg line lengths, enjambement.

The better commentaries (approximate achievement level 5) **might** additionally touch on:

- the conversational tone
- the role of history and memory
- an astute reading of the last sentence.

These last should be rewarded if appropriately discussed, although inaccurate interpretation or absence of such details should not be penalised.

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.