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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 9695/03
Poetry and Prose

General comments

Overall, candidates seem increasingly well prepared for the nature of the examination. While there were candidates who struggled to answer questions, the general level of competence is improving. Candidates are demonstrating awareness that a simple recounting of narrative, while it might show their knowledge, will not earn them high marks. They show an increasing appreciation that the thrust of questions is a focus on authorial technique and effect. Those candidates who concentrated on *how* the authors presented character or theme, giving appropriate examples, achieved marks in the higher bands. At a simple level, candidates should recognise the difference between, for example, writing 'Okonkwo is cruel' and writing 'Achebe presents Okonkwo as a cruel character, describing him as one who "ruled his household with a heavy hand."' Further discussion of the author's choice of language would improve this kind of comment even further.

Those candidates who answered the passage-based questions using plenty of detail from the extract printed on the Examination Paper, also did well. The passages give candidates a real opportunity to demonstrate their analytical skills, using close comment on language, imagery and structure to inform their answers to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

William Blake: *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

- (a) Answers on Blake, which was an immensely popular text again, were equally divided between the two questions. There were some very good answers relating the lines from 'London' to other poems in 'Songs of Innocence and Experience', often acknowledging Blake's role as a social commentator and critic, demonstrating considerable contextual knowledge. Those candidates who used this selectively, maintaining a focus on the poems themselves, were the most successful. Less assured answers tended to include all the candidates' knowledge about Blake without selectivity, or concentrated on themes without considering poetic style or tone. There were some essays of knowledgeable generalisations about Blake and his historical context without close attention to his poetry and these scored only a few marks.
- (b) There were some very interesting, informed and personal responses to 'The Tyger'. Interpretations were often informed by 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell', suggesting that without contraries, there can be no progression: reason and energy, love and hate are all necessary to human existence. In some essays the Tyger was seen simply as a representative of evil, but many answers explored the ambiguity of the poem, seeing in the tiger a symbol of the God of energy, a dual being with the gentler God of 'The Lamb'. Those candidates who followed the progress of the poem carefully, noting its structure, language and imagery, wrote the most persuasive answers, some noting, for example, metaphors drawn from the Industrial Revolution. A few candidates discussed the Biblical allusions; the stars were variously interpreted, either in the light of Revelations or Blake's theories about their hostile influence.

Ed. Hydes: *Touched with Fire*:

- (a) Answers on two poems relating to childhood tended to be straightforward accounts of the poems, sometimes supported by quotation; discussion of the ways in which poets approached the subject often proved more difficult. The most popular choices for poems about children were 'Nursery Rhyme' of Innocence and Experience, 'Rising Five', 'The Early Purges', 'Little Boy Crying' and 'The Toys'. Candidates discussed such matters as the problems of parenting as well as growing up and the pains of sensitivity in childhood.
- (b) Examiners read some very interesting answers on 'Ozymandias', which discussed the enduring truth of art and nature's superiority to man as well as the futility of human ambition in the face of time. Some candidates saw the poem as a means of criticising contemporary politicians, pointing to its implied warning; others linked it with the Romantics' use of mythology which, they believed, embodied eternal truths. Shelley's use of the sonnet form was surprisingly seldom discussed, but candidates were alert to his use of irony. There were one or two very sophisticated answers about the poem as narrative, noting the route by which the story of Ozymandias' statue reaches the reader.

Question 3

Sylvia Plath: *Ariel*

- (a) In answer to the question on Plath's use of colour, those candidates able to select and comment on specific references from a detailed knowledge of the poetry, wrote the most successful answers. There were some good answers which commented on the frequent use of red, black and white in the poetry, which also noted that the colours' suggestions and effects vary according to the context of individual poems. Some well-prepared candidates were able to contrast the 'meaning' and effect of Plath's use of red, for example, in 'Tulips', 'Cut', 'Poppies in October' and 'Poppies in July'. Some candidates used the poems they knew best without careful selection and drifted from the question.
- (b) Many answers on 'You're' appreciated its humour and enthusiasm for life, in contrast with much of the poetry in the selection. Most successful in answering the question were those candidates who showed some knowledge of the pre-natal child and were sensitive to the playful visual imagery employed by Plath. Almost all made useful references to other poems about children and the lighter tone displayed in these poems, while some compared this poem with others which explore the burden of the responsibilities of motherhood. Essays which concentrated on Plath's life and suicide were clearly ill-directed.

Question 4

Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

- (a) This text was again enormously popular, and again produced some very good work. In answer to this question, many candidates showed detailed knowledge of the novel and appreciation of the cultural influences on Okonkwo. They linked his relationship with, and treatment of, Ikemefuna to events in other parts of the novel. Most candidates were sympathetic to Okonkwo, regarding him as a tragic hero. However, in their defence of Okonkwo, some candidates ignored Achebe's balanced and dispassionate narration and in defending Okonkwo's every action against criticism, they ignored or dismissed textual evidence which reveals his psychological complexity. Most answers noted the effects which Ikemefuna has on Okonkwo's household, including Nwoye in particular, and noted that his death is a turning point of the narrative, foreshadowing Okonkwo's downfall and the disintegration of the clan.
- (b) Unfortunately, quite a number of answers here summarised the content of the passage, overlooking the instruction to comment on 'the content and style of Uchendu's advice'. Successful answers took careful note of Uchendu's role as an elder, who dispenses careful advice through simple eloquence, rhetorical questions, proverbs and other features which indicate an oral tradition. They also noted the various strategies which Uchendu employs, such as chiding, encouraging, challenging and warning Okonkwo. Strong answers noted that the content of Uchendu's speech explores the duality of masculine and feminine influences in Ibo society and argues for a balance which Okonkwo finds difficult to accept. Answers which commented on the importance of Uchendu's advice for Okonkwo's exile in Mbanta were able to assess its effect on him using references to the text, such as the names he gave his children, in support of their views. Some commented on the foreshadowing of his eventual fate in Uchendu's comment that he did not hang himself.

Question 5Elizabeth Gaskell: *North and South*

- (a) The question on the title of the novel provoked some very interesting and personal essays. Many candidates seemed to relish the opportunity to debate the issue. Certainly there were some essays which paraphrased the plot, and were therefore unsuccessful, but very successful were those candidates who argued from a position of secure knowledge, with an ability to select appropriate references. The balance of the arguments opted for *North and South*, suggesting that the novel hinges on the geographical differences and their effects on the heroine. Those who preferred Margaret Hale argued that the novel in essence concerns one character's growth through experience, a genre of the 19th century novel which includes *Mary Barton* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, for example.
- (b) There were fewer answers to the passage question, despite its wealth of detail. Those candidates who did opt for it, perhaps the more confident with close textual reading, tended to do rather well. They noted the extract's position at the beginning of the novel and the way it prepares the reader for Margaret's decisiveness combined with compassion, picking out her dialogue, authorial comment and details of her hands. Many candidates compared Henry Lennox with John Thornton, both as individuals and as representatives of the South and the North respectively.

Question 6Doris Lessing: *Martha Quest*

- (a) There were very few answers to this question, but a number of points featured in those answers which were offered, such as the influence of the Cohen boys and their books, Martha's disillusionment with her parents and their values, her idealism and disillusionment. Key references were made to the van Rensbergs, the Left Book Club and Martha's observation on the escorted group of prisoners.
- (b) Most candidates answering on this text chose the passage question. They often made astute comments on what the extract reveals about the disparity between Martha's intentions and achievements. The descriptions of her typing attempts and the language of humiliation after her visit to the Zambesi News were noted. More sophisticated answers examined Lessing's narrative tone in the excerpt, observing a wry and possibly indulgent sense of humour which pervades the description of Martha's dawning realisation of her incompetence.

Paper 9695/04

Drama

General comments

Most candidates knew the texts well, with few having difficulty recalling the most obvious features of plot and character. Shakespeare, Williams and Churchill proved the most popular writers, with tiny numbers of candidates ranging beyond to Wycherley and Synge.

Candidates across the range need to be constantly reminded that this is a Paper about Drama. Discussions about themes and characters are not enough; to rise up through the mark scheme, it is important that there is discussion of dramatic techniques, both in terms of dynamic human exchange and also in terms of how a play might work on the stage. The questions quite often give a clue about what is expected through an expression such as 'dramatic significance', and candidates should make sure that they pick up on such obvious prompts in a question. A running concern throughout all questions was that candidates are not willing enough to deal with detail, to focus on specific events or moments in order to work outwards to a big idea. In the (b) questions in particular candidates too often see the passage given as a starting point for a wider discussion rather than the central focus of their response.

In a number of instances, candidates seem to have taken the scatter gun approach to their writing, putting down everything they know in the hope that some of it is on target. Sadly, this approach tends to move candidates towards lengthy plot summary or paraphrase and it is therefore to be avoided. Wiser candidates choose to write less but focus more precisely on exactly on the demands of the question. A carefully planned but briefer answer is more likely to result in a higher mark.

The greatest lament of the Examiners is that candidates know the plays in outline, not in detail. To qualify for the highest end of the mark scheme, candidates need to show both coverage and detail. It is clear that many candidates could benefit from being taught how to read an extract in greater detail. They could then apply those techniques even to passages that are, perhaps, less familiar. Even when writing general essays, candidates should ensure that there are at least a couple of moments where they get their hands dirty by exploring a particular scene or moment in great detail. Conversely, candidates should be discouraged from taking a chronological approach to essay writing: all too often beginnings of texts are exhaustively explored and then the rest of the play is given short shrift, thus ensuring a strong sense of imbalance in answers.

Comments on specific questions

Caryl Churchill: *Top Girls*

Top Girls continues to be one of the most popular texts on the Paper. **Question 1 (a)** elicited much interesting discussion of the reactions of the women to each other, but there was a noticeable reluctance to actually deal with the structure of the play as a way of creating meaning. Some candidates simply focused on the way that conversations are often interrupted by other speakers, but that was to miss the principal aim of the question. A number of candidates contented themselves with a narrative account.

Answers on **Question 1 (b)** often looked at the interruptions but few were willing to speculate about the motivation for a character's intervention, though in the passage they range from egotism to an over-eager keenness to correct someone else and to an obvious example of a character's gross insensitivity. Some candidates had the impression that the passage given was merely a starting point, and they then went on to write lengthily without further reference to the given material. This is a major error.

William Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

The question on the role and function of Touchstone (**Question 2 (a)**) elicited a small number of strong answers, though many others simply concentrated on his character and his part in the plot. There was a general sense of his roles as protector, cynic, jester, exploiter, humorist, but few of the candidates managed to anchor their responses into the text with sufficient authority.

Answers on the passage often showed a strong general sense of the relationship between Celia and Rosalind but closely argued and detailed responses were few and far between. Candidates wrote of the vibrancy of their engagement with each other, of the wit they show but all too often this was asserted not demonstrated. Closer focus on the register of the passage would, for example, have proved fertile. All too often candidates focused on pointing out the background to the scene, contextualising with plot detail rather than offering analysis. In a slightly different vein, there was a significant amount of paraphrase masquerading as analysis in some responses. Where links were made with Rosalind and Celia's subsequent approaches to love, reverses of fortune and pastoral ordeals, then answers quickly moved into the upper mark bands.

William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

Both questions proved popular. In **Question 3 (a)**, candidates who were willing to engage with the exact nature of the witches' interventions tended to do well, seeing that there is a real tension between whether they damn Macbeth or simply, through equivocation, allow him to damn himself. Many candidates took the question to imply that they had to plod through the plot of the play pointing out the various influences upon Macbeth and the extent to which they were responsible. A number of candidates took an extremely high moral line, indicting Macbeth for all he did, no matter what the circumstance. Responses like this simplify, as did responses that failed to respond to Macbeth's internal debates on chance and the vividness of his imagination.

Question 3 (b) inspired some acute analysis of the way Lady Macbeth is both successful in covering up a crisis and also less powerful in her sexist bullying of Macbeth than she was previously. There were, however, far too many simple summaries of events that had led to this particular moment. As always detail was central: all too few candidates were willing to engage with the brutality of the language here, the grotesque movements, the rapid changes of register.

J M Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*

A few Centres tackled this text, usually with success. Candidates who responded to (a) by recognising the opposition of fantasy with reality tended to do well; others failed to see how Synge uses the situation of the characters to point out the romance of their fantasies. As always, a word like 'present' is loaded in such a question, suggesting to candidates that they ought to be thinking about the dramatic situation and tensions that confront the characters. Candidates tackling (b) usually recognised that both characters are falling in love with a fantasy, feeding off each other in its creation. More detailed analysis of the flirting between the two, their increasing confidence in each others' company would not have come amiss in most answers.

Tennessee Williams: *The Glass Menagerie*

The best answers to **Question 5 (a)** put down a marker at the start, identifying the words 'need' and 'celebrates' as central in a play where so many dreams lead to disillusion. Some candidates made an attempt to link the themes to the staging of the play, often to good effect. There were a significant number of answers where candidates fell into the trap of feeling that they could offer the Wingfield family useful advice for the future. Most candidates were comfortable locating the need to dream; fewer had speculated about whether many of the dreams were realistic. Oddly, most candidates were perfectly happy to accept Amanda's view of her past unquestioningly.

Answers to **Question 5 (b)** often lacked detail. There was a general sense of the thrust of the exchange, but few were willing to see that the match here is even. It is easy to assert that Amanda is overbearing, but Tom gives as good as he gets. Few candidates were willing to engage with the text sufficiently to see how the intensity of the scene is achieved through vivid imagery, overlaps, excited tone, fragmenting rhythms, almost like the development of a piece of music.

With a play like *Glass Menagerie* candidates should be discouraged from loose, biographical speculation. The play's the thing, not the writer's life or the historical circumstance of the play's production.

William Wycherley: *The Country Wife*

A small number of Centres tackled the Wycherley. Answers on **Question 6 (a)** were confident about the dynamics of the various marriages, but few were willing to investigate hypocrisy and satire by locating and analysing either the behaviour of the women or Horner's cunning plan. Responses to **Question 6 (b)** were usually competent, though with such a richly humorous scene, both in terms of action and dialogue, it was a shame that candidates did not comment more closely.

Paper 9695/05

Shakespeare and other Pre-Twentieth Century Texts

General comments

Examiners report that the general standard of candidates' work in the examination was thoroughly satisfactory, with few failing to reach the required basic pass level and, at the other end of the scale, several with full marks and a suitable proportion with work in the two highest mark bands. The best work showed a sophisticated appreciation of literary discourse and the ability to articulate complex critical concepts in an appropriate style. Examiners found this work exciting and very enjoyable. Inevitably there was also a substantial body of work in mark bands 3, 4 and 5, showing in varying degrees sound knowledge of the texts, understanding of theme and character and the ability to apply knowledge and understanding in a sensible and relevant way to the issues raised by the questions.

It is pleasing to note that all the available texts for study on the Paper were addressed this session, though the favourites were clearly *Othello* and *Sense and Sensibility*, with *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* also widely taken.

Common errors seen in a range of Centres, and indeed from year to year, included a tendency to tell the story when writing on novels in particular; falling back on paraphrase of printed poems rather than analysis; and writing too generally – in other words having a sound general argument but failing to substantiate it by close reference to the text. More detail of how these shortcomings were evinced in particular questions will be given in the second section of this report.

Comments on specific questions

Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale*

- (a) This was a minority choice, but one which did see a range of responses, the overall standard being sound but rather narrative based. There was a good deal of plot summary detailing Leontes' misdeeds and their short, medium and longer term consequences. Few attempted to interrogate the terms 'loss and grief' or to evaluate Paulina's advice, but those who did wrote with sensitivity and, often, maturity.
- (b) Few candidates answered the passage question, and of these, only a handful gave sufficient weight to the debate between Perdita and Polixenes about art and nature, which is so central to the final phase of the play. More often, those candidates who did answer here gave a paraphrase of the speeches.

Shakespeare: *Othello*

- (a) Overwhelmingly the favourite text on the Paper, both questions were answered with relish. In this option, less able candidates moved rather too quickly from Iago's stated reasons for hating the Moor to generalised character sketches of Iago. Better approaches explored the nature of his malignity as an expression of evil per se that needed no explicit motivation. It is obvious that candidates have a great deal to say about Iago, not surprisingly as he is an endlessly fascinating character, but they need by and large to be more discriminating in their deployment of the material they do have. Useful textual detail was also a discriminator. Although many referred to Iago's anger that Cassio was promoted over him, few referred to the 'daily beauty' in Cassio's life that makes Iago 'ugly' – a telling admission.
- (b) Answers here were generally more sure-footed. Candidates were contextually very aware and relished the dramatic irony of the passage, Othello intently pursuing an agenda of his own, his wife innocently unaware of its sinister potential. There was plenty of perceptive comment on tone and nuance and some detailed analyses of the handkerchief speech. Candidates who paid close attention to detail were rewarded, as always, with higher marks.

Shakespeare: *Much Ado about Nothing*

- (a) As yet the text is still gaining in popularity, but those Centres who studied it fared well. There were some sparkling analyses of men's insecurities in the play (sometimes from all-girl Centres!) and Claudio and Leonato in particular were castigated for their behaviour towards Hero. The military background of the play was utilised helpfully here too (as it so often is in discussion of *Othello*).
- (b) Only a few answers, but they were well prepared on the role of Beatrice in the play. If there was a fault, it lay in not using this passage closely enough, a passage rich in material for the analysis of Beatrice's characterisation (and incidentally for answering (a) if Benedick's shaving of his beard is recalled, for example). Beatrice's quick wit and liveliness were clearly appreciated by all candidates.

Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

This and the Chaucer were the favourite choices in **Section B**. Many Centres across the world studied *Othello* and Austen.

- (a) For the most part answers to this recognised the narrow social focus of the novel on the plight of young women brought up to expect a certain quality of life but unable to ensure its continuance by their own unaided efforts, a situation brought about by the inheritance laws and the disbarment of young women from professional employment. This focus was sometimes discussed with too general and historical/sociological a slant, drawing examples from the text too infrequently to support the valid observations made. Many candidates argued with the proposition, suggesting that for men too material security was an important consideration in the marriage game, as the example of Willoughby shows clearly. Another valid approach was to argue that this is not the main concern of the novel, which resides in the contrast between the Dashwood sisters and their widely differing but equally strong prioritising of love as the necessary basis for any lasting relationship.

- (b) The passage was also soundly argued, though weaker candidates missed the satirical portrait of Lady Middleton. Those who quoted and analysed the irony successfully showed a critical stance of the writer, some even citing the essay 'Regulated Hatred', which was impressive. Most enjoyed the wit and humour. Although the behaviour of the sisters in this extract is characteristic, too many candidates launched off into a sense/sensibility essay, forgetting that a critical appreciation of the language of the passage must remain the main focus for discussion.

Chaucer: *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*

- (a) This was another widely popular choice. The best answers explored the teasing paradox at the heart of the text: an immoral teller telling a moral tale. Most argued, in some cases very subtly, that the Pardoner's personal failings do not detract from the moral lessons of the *Tale*. Below this sophisticated conceptual approach were many worthy answers setting the character of the teller against the truths of his tale in a sensible and relevant way.
- (b) The overall standard here was very encouraging. Candidates wrote copiously on the Pardoner's acquisitiveness and his cynical manipulation of his audience, using the text to support their points, often sensibly and in more detail than usual. The passage seemed popular and well known and understood.

Defoe: *Moll Flanders*

Examiners were delighted to report that the text had been studied and studied with enthusiasm: it had been feared that this would be a minority choice: in the event few studied it but it had been thoroughly appreciated.

- (a) There was a strong personal response to the thrust of this question: some candidates evinced a good deal of sympathy for Moll, whereas others disapproved of some or all of her behaviour. In either case, a lively argument was presented. With a novel such as this, there is always a danger that the story will be retold, and candidates need to ensure that they use the narrative for an analytical purpose: there is no point in just telling the story.
- (b) Although few attempted this question, there was some close attention to the details of the passage, though only the most accomplished engaged the issue of fictional methods. Candidates were prepared to look with some sympathy at Moll's financial opportunism but found her moral sermonising at the end of the passage hard to bear.

A Choice of Emily Dickinson's Poems

- (a) Few Centres attempted this text, but those who did were clearly trying very hard to engage with the distinctive language. This first option was less popular than the printed poem in (b), but still engaged candidates, who mostly referred to the same well known poems in their answers.
- (b) 'I dreaded that first Robin' was more widely discussed, though some candidates offered a paraphrase of the poem, making few analytical comments on language and in some cases obviously struggling with its meaning. Many answers failed to comment on the final stanza at all. There were a handful of excellent answers, perceptive and sensitive to the text and to other poems in the selection.

John Donne: *The Metaphysical Poets*

- (a) Centres differed widely in their ability to engage with the complex and subtle poetry of Donne. Of those who chose this question, the most competent answers were those focused on a selection of the religious poems and the expression of their ideas. It was not appropriate to try to make this into a 'love poems' essay, as some did.
- (b) More popular (perhaps not surprisingly given the closed book nature of the Paper) was 'The Anniversary', which candidates analysed in more or less detail and with greater or lesser sensitivity to its language and tone. There were some excellent answers, and a good range of reference to other poems in the selection.

George Elliot: *Middlemarch*

This was a minority choice, but one that candidates handled well and apparently enjoyed. All answers were well written and focused on the text, with most candidates choosing to the (a) option.

There were some good answers here, with candidates teasing out the relevant links between the two narratives and focusing on the similarities of character and situation between Lydgate and Dorothea. Interestingly, Dorothea was usually viewed with more sympathy than Lydgate.

Ben Jonson: *Volpone*

Again, there were very few answers here, but it was clearly a favourite for those Centres who had chosen it. Candidates answered well and knowledgeably, and in the passage question showed awareness of Volpone and Mosca working very successfully as a team. The text was used well in support.

Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*

A strictly minority choice, and one that revealed a sound rather than exciting standard of answers on the passage (b). Most found enough for relevant and useful comment on poetic themes and concerns, but there was little on Pope's poetic methods, regrettably. Some candidates tended to tell the story of the background to the poem and say too little of the poem itself.

Paper 9695/06

Twentieth Century Writing

General comments

Most candidates addressed the tasks with determination and enthusiasm: there were few poor scripts and hardly any which did not provide full answers to both questions. The best answers were refreshing for their presentation and lucidity, their clarity of organisation and their critical engagement with the questions and tasks. Although there were some seriously flawed answers, most candidates were able to demonstrate at least a basic level of knowledge and understanding, and to relate these to the questions.

In a number of scripts the quality of written communication was very poor. Direct quotation was used with varying degrees of success, good candidates could merge the point and accompanying quotation in a seamless sentence, other candidates either dropped quotation into the discussion without a proper explanation for its use, or quoted at disproportionate length to the point being made. Candidates who had been prepared for both the Stoppard and Pinter plays with a lot of material on Theatre of the Absurd and who adopted a theoretical approach to the questions tended to repeat themselves. Prose and poetry passages were often well done in terms of theme, though the drama continued to present problems in dealing with dramatic effect, and candidates seemed to lack the vocabulary/resource to discuss "methods" or stylistic features in all texts except *Cat's Eye*. There is a strong tendency to have prepared general statements on texts, but most candidates are able to get beyond these into focused areas. Work on poetry tends to be formulaic, working through a list of themes or poems, sometimes lacking relevance to the question. Critical commentary on individual poems is often therefore a weak area – this weakness is also evident in responses to extract-based questions, where answers are often too general, sometimes paying virtually no attention to the extract set for discussion.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Margaret Atwood: *Cat's Eye*

On **(a)** most candidates were able to consider Stephen's contribution to the development of Elaine's character, some considered his contribution to the novel's thematic concerns; only a few discussed both of these aspects of this character's "significance" in the novel. His influence on Elaine's childhood, in the nomadic circumstances of their upbringing, was seen as both positive (as friend, educator, support resource) but also as potentially damaging, in that her familiarity with and preference for the company of boys help to cause the problems she has later in establishing relationships with girls. Thematically, Stephen's principal contribution is to articulate the novel's concern with the nature and effects of time, which is embodied in the structure of the narrative (many candidates noted that he shares a first name with Stephen Hawking, who provides the novel's epigraph). The fullest answers explored the siblings' contrasting attitudes to experience and relationships – one as artist, the other scientist – and also considered Elaine's response to his death in her painting.

On **(b)** answers acknowledged the significance of this episode as a turning point for Elaine, as she transforms herself from victim to tormentor, accepts the significance of memories, and moves on. There was some interesting discussion of the Virgin Mary, in relation to Elaine's development, both psychological (noting Mrs Smeath's influence on the way Elaine thinks about religious matters) and as an artist, exploring her representation of the Virgin in her painting; motifs such as the ravine, the stream and the bridge and Elaine's mother's and father's behaviour were sensitively discussed by some. A number of answers indicated understanding of the novel, with some well developed discussion of Elaine's relationship with Cordelia, but allowed very little attention at all to the passage.

Question 2

Kazuo Ishiguro: *An Artist of the Floating World*

There were some really impressive answers on **(a)**, exploring the implications of the novel's title on several related levels. In these answers "the floating world" was associated with the ephemeral experience of the pleasure district, object of artistic representation by Ono's teacher and his father's criticism; with the disturbed, transitional condition of Japanese culture and society, cut adrift from the past by the physical and moral devastation of the war and subsequent (re-)constructions; and also with the structure and narrative method of the novel itself, drifting between past and present and subject to the uncertainties/insecurities of Ono's memory/consciousness. Ono's role as artist in reflecting/contributing to the stages of Japanese experience was also thoughtfully considered in some scripts. Most answers considered a selection of these aspects of the title, often sensitively and thoroughly.

On **(b)** similarly, there was some excellent discussion of the set passage, exploring concerns such as the teacher/student relationship and principles of both personal and aesthetic loyalty and responsibility. Correspondences/contrasts with other episodes (e.g. Ono's encounters with his father and Kuroda) were well observed. On stylistic features, there was some really sensitive discussion of the effects of light in the passage, and some thoughtful analysis of the hesitations of Ono's memory as well as the rendered dialogue between him and Mori-san: these features were seen to reflect the novel's characteristic investment in narrative uncertainty/unreliability, ambivalence, double-meaning, under-statement, time shifts, delicacy of suggestion and sensibility.

Question 3

Elizabeth Jennings: *Selected Poems*

Very few Centres/candidates attempted questions on this text. On **(a)** poems often drawn on were 'Night Sister', 'A Depression', 'Father to Son', 'Family Affairs'. Most responses concentrated on the nature of Jennings's personal suffering, physical, emotional, psychological, and outcomes in loss of identity/hope, depression, fear, alienation, anger. Some answers also acknowledged intimations of hope, optimism, survival. There was almost no consideration of poetic features.

In **(b)** the set poem generated some very good answers discussing the admiration, awe and wonder that Jennings expresses for the cyclical order and harmony of Nature's processes, the animal kingdom and life in general. Some answers explored effects of structure and technical features such as stanza form, rhyme scheme, repetition, imagery ("the tiger trapped in the cage of his skin" generated some resourceful interpretations). There was very little reference to any other poems. On both questions, some candidates seemed at a loss on how to deal with Jennings in particular and poetry in general.

Question 4

Harold Pinter: *The Caretaker*

Most candidates attempting **(a)** offered at least a reasonable descriptive account of Davies, though deal with “significance” caused some candidates more difficulty. Qualities identified as characteristic were aggression; bitterness; loneliness; greed; self-delusion; unpredictability. Amidst all these, many noted his capacity for survival. Fuller, more analytical answers explored his role in the play’s triangle of relationships, each character involved in some form of struggle for power, survival and/or self-definition. Some answers explored comic aspects of the play and Davies’s presentation; some saw the play as a kind of allegory of social relationships, based on self-seeking, hypocrisy, class divisions.

On **(b)** candidates were often quite insecure about “dramatic effectiveness”, offering line-by-line commentary on/paraphrase of the passage, with more or less successful attempts to explain how an audience might be reacting. There was some more developed discussion of effects of silence, suggestiveness of body language and the carefully delineated stage directions. The dramatic use of space and suggestiveness of the objects/junk in the room produced some enterprising discussion. Surprisingly, a number of candidates neglected to discuss the concluding encounter with Mick, though most were alive to this manifestation of the menace and violence, physical, verbal, remembered or threatened, that is endemic in the play. On both options there were some helpful references to Theatre of the Absurd, though in some answers this kind of input was marginal to any substantive discussion.

Question 5

Wole Soyinka: *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero’s Metamorphosis*

A popular text. For the candidates who had information and understanding to draw on, **(a)** was a profitable question. Issues relating to corruption, hypocrisy, manipulation, exploitation (physical, moral and financial), political control and opportunism were identified and explored by analysis of characters and relationships in both plays, sometimes carefully located in the Nigerian historical and cultural context, and even related to Soyinka’s other writings and personal position/experience. The best answers were alert to character motivation and dramatic presentation: some interesting writing on the ambiguous charm/irrepressible buoyancy of Soyinka’s characterisation of Jero himself. Conversely, some candidates found this a difficult question, with little to relate the quotation to; answers of this kind were usually confined to *The Trials of Brother Jero*.

On the more popular **(b)** most candidates considered the aspects of Jero’s character/presentation developed in the set passage, noting his dexterity in opportunistic manipulation, his ruthless, hypocritical arrogance, his rhetorical eloquence, and his clever psychological exploitation of weakness and motive in Chume. Verbal ironies were picked up by some candidates; there was some consideration of gender issues in the passage and the play as a whole, and some reference to relevant contextual material.

Question 6

Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

While some answers on **(a)** offered simple descriptive notes on the two characters, fuller responses discriminated effectively between them, in terms of intelligence, disposition and language, noting also that in some circumstances they are virtually interchangeable. The existential isolation and uncertainties of their shared experience were quite often carefully considered, in relation to the “effect of the play as a whole”. On both options, a powerful discriminator between answers was the level of awareness of the play’s relationship with *Hamlet*: some candidates seemed unaware of this connection, while others were able to consider its effects, economically and sensitively.

Those who knew Shakespeare’s play to some extent recognised the ironic, bathetic accuracy of the diagnosis of Hamlet’s condition offered in the extract set for **(b)** and were alive to the comic effects of this account of his experience – particularly of line 38 – and other dramatic devices such as the stichomythic dialogue, colloquial language, circularity of discourse, repetition, dramatic minimalism regarded as characteristic of the play as a whole. As with the Pinter, discussion of the play as an example of Theatre of the Absurd was effective where it was relevant to and integrated into the candidate’s argument on either option.

Question 7Derek Walcott: *Selected Poetry*

In a number of answers on **(a)** there was perceptive understanding of relationships between past and present, in various dimensions (personal, domestic, cultural, historical, political, aesthetic), taking into account both positive manifestations (e.g. continuity of literary tradition) and negative (e.g. colonial exploitation and cultural degeneration). Poems regularly and appropriately used were 'The Almond Trees', 'Homecoming: Anse la Raye', 'To a Painter in England'; most popular of all, 'Ruins of a Great House' also often provided the candidate's conclusion about Walcott's handling of the theme central to the question: "All in compassion ends ...". Weaker answers made no attempt to develop an argument, giving summaries of two poems which dealt, e.g. with slavery or modern exploitation of the islands by tourism.

(b) was less popular, and it was clear that some candidates were not familiar with the poem set, usually working through it sequentially, noting local verbal effects and/or (briefly) correspondences with other Walcott poems. There were, however, some sensitive and well-informed analyses, noting Walcott's (and by inference Roach's) love of island landscape and activities (evidenced by references to a range of poems); the implications of the "swimming to Africa" motif generated some particularly engaged and interesting comment. Some answers were sensitive to elegiac effects of the writing, but generally responses to the poem as *poetry* were few and far between.

Question 8Evelyn Waugh: *Decline and Fall*

Few takers for this text. On **(a)** weaker answers offered lists of characters associated with education who had something to hide. Fuller answers, conscientious rather than penetrating, considered the cynical attitudes/practices associated with privilege at the university and the weary indifference to values, to teaching and learning at the agency and the school. The lack of detail in these accounts was disappointing. Very few answers betrayed any acknowledgement at all of any comic effects anywhere in the novel. Unnervingly, some candidates seemed to regard the novel's presentation as a version of current British educational practices and conditions.

On **(b)** candidates usually concentrated appropriately on the image of the wheel, and how it applied to various characters and social positions in the novel; there was some thoughtful discussion, particularly of the characterisation of Paul and Margot and the relationship between them.

Paper 9695/07

Comment and Appreciation

General comments

There was a good entry for this Paper, and some interesting and thoughtful scripts; the majority of candidates were clearly aware of what is required in critical appreciation, and while there were several aspects of their answers that need to be addressed the general picture was an encouraging one. Centres have evidently encouraged their candidates to look very closely at the passages given, and although many answers relied overmuch upon either simple paraphrase or a sometimes rather lifeless listing of technical devices the broad picture was of candidates wanting and trying to relate each small part of their poem or prose passage to its whole, and to talk about the effects upon a reader of the various techniques being used.

Rather more candidates than usual had apparently found timing a problem, with the result that the second answer – and rather curiously, often the first – was incomplete. Examiners are of course aware that the end of the second answer may occasionally need to be a little more hurried than the rest, but where a candidate is aware that this may be likely it is a good idea to add notes, perhaps in the form of bullet-points, rather than just stopping dead, sometimes in mid-sentence. It is true that in this session the third passage was quite lengthy, but this was not generally the one that caused a timing problem.

There are several general matters relating to the conventions of critical appreciation, such as the use of paraphrase and/or summary, discussion of imagery and technical matters, the best way to quote, and so on. These are of an idea, but these are probably better dealt with in relation to each individual question than in a general overview. Perhaps the most important matters for candidates to think of generally are those relating to the presentation of their work; handwriting is clearly important here, and even given the unavoidable pressure of a timed examination it is surely not unreasonable to require that an answer is easily legible by an Examiner? Closely linked is the need for the most accurate spelling and syntax that a candidate can manage, and again it did seem that some answers were made unnecessarily hard to understand in these ways, again partly perhaps because of haste. The structure of an answer, too, is important; while marks will of course always be awarded for good ideas, the highest will always be reserved for those essays which are planned and ordered in at least a reasonably cogent and thoughtful way. No Examiner minds the odd insertion here and there, or a sentence tacked on the end, when a late thought suddenly comes into a candidate's mind, but it should again be possible – and certainly essential for a high mark – for each idea to follow logically and properly from the one before it, rather than just as far as the Examiner can see being written down as rapidly as possible before it is forgotten, regardless of its context!

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Remember Me and Last Instructions

This was overwhelmingly the most popular question, tackled by virtually every candidate, and there was much thoughtful and sensitive reading of the two poems. Almost all answers saw that while there were many similarities of theme and possibly of tone, there was also much that was different, and there was plenty of good discussion of these comparisons and contrasts.

Not all candidates recognised that Rossetti's poem is a sonnet, though most noted that there is a tight rhyme scheme and rhythmic pattern, perhaps reflective of the rather formal and controlled emotion that she is conveying. The fact that it is a sonnet is by itself of no necessary significance, of course – it is the use made of the form that matters – but one should perhaps expect that A-Level candidates would be aware of its nature. Almost all – whether aware that it is a sonnet or not – noticed the change of mood after the octave, the word 'Yet' in line 9 clearly signalling a change of mood and direction. The tone of the first eight lines was variously seen as nostalgic, gloomy, sad, and even desolate – the repetition of 'remember' and 'gone away' was well discussed, and the utterly bleak emptiness of 'the silent land' was often well addressed. That Rossetti (not, please, Christina!) is speaking to an intimate, whether a friend, lover or husband, was generally noticed in the very personal reflections of lines 5 and 6. Several saw her as half-humorously teasing and even flirtatious in line 4, a nicely perceptive touch in an otherwise largely despondent octave, while many more candidates saw this line as reflective of her unwillingness to accept her death. The apparent change of heart in the sestet, leading to the very touching and moving closing lines was something of a puzzle to some candidates, who saw it as contradictory in the context of earlier sentiments, but by noting the similarity to Garth Tate's openly positive welcoming of death many also recognised Rossetti's acceptance of the reality that she might be forgotten, but that she also wanted her friend(s) to be happy rather than sad after her absence. A subtle emotion, perhaps, but one that should not be beyond the understanding of most eighteen-year-old candidates. It was hard to agree with those candidates – more than a handful – who felt that Rossetti is actually welcoming and even longing for her death; her mood is surely far more sedate and weary than this suggests?

Most were clearly more comfortable with Tate's poem, and many openly expressed a preference for it, and indeed its mood. The freedom that the poet sees as waiting for him and his 'brothers and sisters' after death were well noted, and almost every candidate spoke well of the touchingly evocative image in lines 16 and 17. A very small handful seemed aware of the possible reference in line 18 to the mythological River Styx, though most found the natural and easy image of death as a brief journey a good one, and many contrasted its simplicity and warmth with the barren nature of Rossetti's 'silent land'. The gentle humour of lines 23-26, followed by another easy and natural image ('the sun is still shining/golden'), suggested to many candidates the poet's warm and affectionate humanity. The final lines caused a few problems, though most saw in them Tate's acceptance that his life is in God's hands, and that he must – and indeed wants to – welcome whatever God has in store for him, both immediately and in his next life.

Perhaps because of the very free and relaxed verse form of Tate's poem, many candidates were able to quote easily, and seemed to be entirely unaware that his words are placed where they are very effectively and effectively. It would be most helpful if Centres would stress the importance of quoting exactly as written, and in the same line-format as printed. Incidentally, the poem is not written in blank verse, as suggested; this is quite specifically unrhymed iambic pentameter, whereas Tate is writing in a free verse form. This leads neatly into a quite significant weakness in many answers, where candidates spent a great deal of time and energy simply finding and identifying poetic techniques – rhyme, rhythm, similes, metaphors and so on – but without making reference to their function or effects. Little credit can be given to such 'feature-spotting', unless the candidate broadens the response in order to relate each feature to the whole text and to the effect(s) that are being created by the poet.

A few minor quibbles about the poetry answers: the word 'message' is not really appropriate for a poem – 'theme' or 'idea' are preferable alternatives; candidates should avoid expressions such as 'the poet is trying to say . . .' or 'she seems to be saying . . .', but instead should be bolder about their own responses; neither of these poems is 'narrative'; and the word 'simile' is never spelt in any other way, please.

Question 2

The Arrest

This was the second most popular question, answered by at least three-quarters of candidates, and again it was often managed with great sensitivity and understanding. A small handful found it a dull – and even over-long – tale, but the great majority found its mood and atmosphere attractive and effective, and while many were puzzled by the closing sentence there were few who did not express at least some appreciation of its shock value, even if not appreciating its ghostly suggestions. It is a trivial point, perhaps, but the fact that several candidates thought – despite the rubric – that this was an extract instead of a complete story did lead to some slightly unsatisfactory responses to the conclusion.

Most candidates noted the very bald, matter-of-fact tone of the opening sentences, particularly in comparison to the much more emotive and mood-enhancing sections later; few, however, were quite able to explain why they found this effective, several suggesting that this was in fact a newspaper report rather than a story. More confident answers seemed sensitive to the way in which Bierce (not, please, Ambrose) conveys a slightly sardonic tone towards Brower's escape, leading almost instantly to his becoming lost in the forest; one or two suggested that the writer's intention here is to imply that in making Brower commit this mistake ('he had the folly . . .') Bierce is metaphorically illustrating the folly of trying to escape justice, a view reinforced later by the increasing darkness of the night, and the bitter irony in paragraph 4 of the momentary moonlight which, instead of illuminating his route to freedom, in reality reveals to Brower that he can not escape justice, nor indeed his own conscience. Less metaphorical candidates saw the writer as simply, but effectively, creating both tension and mystery, to enhance the puzzlement that the end of the story creates. The almost complete lack of detailed information that we are given of the mysterious figure, even when later revealed to be the 'white as death' Burton Duff, adds to the mood of ghostliness (as noted by many) and horror/mystery that the closing section gives us.

The final journey – seen by a handful as again metaphorically suggestive of Brower's inability to escape his guilt, and his compulsive need to face up to the truth of what he has done – was understood by most candidates, though quite a few seemed to think that he was being led by the posse of men and bloodhounds, a puzzling misreading of the story. Many found the final sentence impossible to explain, though very few did not find it striking and powerful; quite a large number dealt with the problem by simply ignoring the sentence, which was perhaps not a wise evasion. Many recognised the fact that earlier puzzling references could now be explained, and that Brower was in fact 'arrested' by either a ghost, or a spirit, or perhaps simply by his conscience. There was some good awareness of the writer's apparently ambiguous attitude towards his own character – though it must be said that many candidates appeared to believe that Brower was a real-life person rather than a created fiction; whether Bierce wants us to feel pity for Brower, or distaste, or a mixture, is of course difficult to judge – and perhaps a measure of the success of the tale itself – but most noted that his attitude appears to change through the story, even with some touches of humour and irony. Overall, while it did certainly produce some problems, this was a reasonably well-answered question; there was certainly too much simple narrative and paraphrase, and Centres might like to encourage candidates to avoid just rehearsing the plot as an introduction to their answers – doing this may be a way of comfortably entering the task, and reassuring themselves that they do know that text, but it can simply take up time which would be better spent on engaging closely with critical exploration.

A final thought on this question: the ending of the story is certainly 'climactic', but it is not 'climatic', as far too many wrote.

Question 3*My Children! My Africa!*

As noted earlier, this was the least attempted question, though there were some good answers to it. It was certainly quite long, and this may have put some candidates off, but there is ample material in even a relatively small part of it for thoughtful discussion of the dramatist's portrayal of character, of character clashes, of the exploration of ideas, and of course for identifying and criticising some simple theatrical devices.

Most candidates tackling the passage saw quickly what its background is – the system obtaining in South Africa in the late twentieth century which separated black and white inhabitants – but too many wanted this to be the main thrust of what they said about it, rather than discussing how Fugard (again, please, not Athol) presents the ideas and situation. There is no time in the examination for exploration or discussion of a candidate's own political beliefs, however powerfully and validly held.

The three characters are quickly established by Fugard: Isabel, the confident and possibly slightly bossy white girl (the first word in the extract says that she is 'intervening'); Mr M the rather over-enthusiastic and again perhaps domineering teacher (whether he is or is not black himself is not clear from the extract, and although most answers correctly assumed that he is so, this did not in any way affect Examiners' responses to the work submitted); Thami the initially quiet and apparently shy black student, whose anger and scorn for Mr M, and his perhaps slightly reluctant friendship with Isabel, quickly become apparent as the passage develops. The relationships are all-important here, and there is a good deal to go on, if only in the stage directions, all of which point to at least awkwardness (Isabel is 'sensitive to a change of mood') through irritation verging on anger (there are 'a few seconds of truculent silence between them'), and finally to Thami's barely-contained fury (a 'flash of anger and impatience'). His disdain and anger towards Mr M, counterbalanced by Isabel's arguably naïve attempts to understand the feelings of another race and culture but within a genuine fondness for Thami, is powerfully drawn and expressed, and it is through these moods that Fugard draws a range of views of the apartheid system as it was at the time depicted in the play. Isabel's genuine wish to draw Thami into her own world, mirrored in her invitation to Sunday tea, and her simple conviction that her father's love of cricket must surely appeal to Thami, is delicately and sensitively drawn, and Thami is shown to be seriously torn between his wish to retain their friendship and his determination that there must be serious and real rebellion in South Africa.

Of those who tackled this question, too few saw it as a piece of theatre, and wrote about it as if it were simply a kind of novel or short story, or sometimes as just a political tract, consequently denying themselves any opportunity to make appropriate critical comments. There will not always be a piece of drama in this Paper, but when there is it is vital that candidates do see it as drama, to be acted and experienced in a theatre, in exactly the way that they must write about a poem as poetry, with all that implies.

Paper 9695/08

Coursework

General comments

Although there was once again a small entry, there was some very good work indeed in the folders submitted, and it was very evident that Centres and candidates alike were well aware of the demands and requirements of the syllabus. The texts and tasks set were uniformly appropriate, the work written by candidates was often extremely good, and assessments were made with great care and professionalism, and generally very much in line with CIE's published marking criteria. Examiners would like to take this opportunity of thanking everybody concerned within Centres for the hard and careful work that was undertaken, and which helped to make Moderating not merely relatively straightforward but also frequently very pleasurable.

As mentioned above, the texts set were all fine, and even within the small number of Centres they provided a surprising and interesting range across all three major genres, and also across a good span of time: prose texts were all from the 20th Century – *Brighton Rock*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *High Fidelity*, and *Lord of the Flies* were all perhaps unsurprising, but one Centre presented some excellent work on *The Last Jet Engine Laugh*; plays included *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* and also the perhaps more challenging *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*; while poets ranged from Coleridge to Duffy, via Frost and Larkin.

The tasks set on these texts were similarly appropriate, and while some were arguably rather challenging for the candidates concerned they all made clear that they expected responses that were literary in nature; not all candidates were wholly successful in this respect – some spent more time than they should have either rehearsing the plot or other contents, and some were over-concerned with contextual or background matters, but these were things that Centres noted and managed in their assessing. It is of course essential at any band level, but particularly so for higher marks, that all aspects of the appropriate band are taken into account, and these always open with reference to textual knowledge, followed by (to take the 44-50 band as an example) ‘detailed knowledge of texts, understanding of theme, characterisation, linguistic features and other textual issues, some awareness of literary conventions and contexts, techniques and genre characteristics. . .’; reference to other contextual matters does not appear until the third sentence of the criteria, and such reference does not feature explicitly in any other mark band, where the emphasis is invariably and consistently upon literary and closely critical approaches to the texts.

As last year, it may be interesting to see some examples of tasks that were set in this session, to suggest some possible approaches and wordings; these should not of course be read simply as models to be followed – Centres must always be free to draft their own wording, in the light of their knowledge of the candidates who will be working on the tasks, and these must in turn be sent to CIE for approval before work on them begins.

- How, and how effectively, does Hornby’s unusual narrative style sustain his reader’s interest in *High Fidelity*?
- Larkin has been praised for his ability to combine colloquial thought, feeling and language with a formality of structure within his poetry. How does this ability contribute to the effectiveness of the poems within *The Whitsun Weddings* collection?
- How is *The Handmaid’s Tale* effective as a dystopian novel?
- How, and with what effects, does Atwood use Biblical reference in *The Handmaid’s Tale*?
- Explore how Williams portrays Blanche Dubois throughout *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- Discuss the dramatic devices and techniques that Shakespeare uses to present Romeo and Juliet’s love to the audience.
- Discuss Golding’s uses of symbol and allegory in *Lord of the Flies*.
- Explore the theme of yearning in *The Great Gatsby*.

There are of course no immediate similarities or connections between these few tasks, but what does characterise the best answers is always an ability to explore something of how a writer creates character, situation or effect. In the case of poetry, this will have to include discussion of language but also of verse form and structure; in the case of drama, theatrical impact and effect must be considered; in the case of prose, then language, images, sentence structure, the creation and depiction of character, and perhaps the overall construction of the text as a whole, especially if it has any sort of unconventional manner, will all need to be looked at. Knowledge and understanding of content, and indeed of context, must to a large degree be taken for granted at this level; what matters above all is what the writer does to and with his/her material.

Centres’ assessments were generally very appropriate this session, and while there were few direct references to the wording of the marking criteria it was evident that these had been used. It would, though, be helpful for the Moderator – but surely even more helpful to the Assessors themselves – if these criteria were to be more openly used; annotation in the margins can indicate where a candidate has made good points, or attempted to do so, in relation to some aspect of the criteria, and even more valuably they can be used and quoted in summative comments at the foot of each piece of work and on the cover-sheet. Anything that helps the Moderator must also help the Teacher-Assessor, and in turn of course the candidates themselves.

One quite significant matter does need to be mentioned: folder length. The syllabus booklet states quite unequivocally that folders should contain between 2000 and 3000 words; a worrying number went beyond this range, with several candidates writing more than 5000 words. For more than one reason, this must not be allowed. It is clearly easier for a candidate to waste words and time on matters outside the text, or to be unnecessarily wordy or even irrelevant, if s/he writes too much, and closely argued and tightly focused work will almost always achieve the highest marks. More importantly, perhaps, is the obvious need for all candidates from all Centres to be working within the same parameters, and not to be allowed additional opportunities to write more than others. Where a Centre finds over-long work, the candidate must be told to edit it before it is marked; if this proves impossible for any reason, the Centre should assess only the first 1500 words of each piece, indicate on the cover-sheet that this has been done, and award marks at an appropriately lower level for what is then effectively incomplete work. This is the fairest approach for everybody.

To end on a lighter note, it was pleasing that most Centres used either staples, paper-clips or plastic wallets to keep work together; bulky card or heavier folders are a genuine inconvenience to a Moderator, probably less easy to pack and transport as well!

