

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/11
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- answer the question that has been set
- substantiate their arguments with relevant textual references
- explore sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- do not focus clearly on the question set
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely label or list writers' techniques
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poetry and prose texts they had studied. There were few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. There were, however, instances of some candidates using solely the extract when answering general essay questions on the Prose texts; this approach was self-penalising as there was insufficient material to draw upon for their answers.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question. Candidates selected relevant material from the text to address the question that had been set. Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text but needed to tailor their material more explicitly to the specific demands of the question. Some candidates embarked on a description or sketch of characters or an explanation of themes regardless of what the question asked for. Similarly, some answers to extract questions began by listing themes present in the extract without direct consideration of the question. Candidates should be informed that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward. Less successful poetry responses often worked their way, sometimes exhaustively, through the poem without selecting relevant material, thereby losing focus on the question.

Textual knowledge

The strongest answers showed a detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating both concise quotation and indirect textual references to support their ideas. In answers to poetry and extract questions, these candidates selected relevant detail from the printed poem or extract to support their ideas and to explore the ways in which the writer achieves their effects. The strongest responses to general essay questions showed evidence of an extensive knowledge and included much direct textual reference to support ideas. Less successful responses were often characterised by an uncertain grasp of the detail of the text, with little direct reference to enable them to explore a writer's use of language. Candidates should recognise the importance of revising in detail over a period of time short sections of their set prose text.

Writers' effects

The most convincing responses sustained a critical engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects. In responses to poetry and extract questions, these candidates were successful in integrating much well-selected reference from the text printed in the question paper. Less successful responses often bore little evidence of direct quotation from the text supplied in the question paper and were, consequently, less able to analyse writers' effects closely. By contrast, those who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were better able to produce more successful general prose essays. Some less successful responses commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to the ways in which the words were used in the text; these responses sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, anaphora and enjambment in poetry essays. There was increasing evidence this session of a confusion about form. Some answers on prose texts used the words 'poem', 'novel' and 'play' interchangeably. This had a detrimental effect when it came to exploring the ways in which prose writers use narration, description and dialogue to convey meanings.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all, preferring instead to embark on a list of pre-learned themes or character traits.

Comments on specific questions

The entry for this paper was relatively low.

Section A

Question 1

The more successful responses understood the speaker's remorse, as he looks back at his childhood, at not having appreciated his father's selflessness and hard work; they explored the evidence in the poem of the father's love and care. There was an awareness in the effects of the phrases 'chronic angers' and 'banked fires blaze'. Less successful responses needed to focus more closely on the detail of the words used in the poem in relation to the key words in the question 'powerfully conveys'.

Question 2

The surface meaning of the poem was understood by almost all candidates, and most were aware of the sub-text and how the poem reflects Angelou's thoughts about racism. They were able to identify the free bird as white and the caged bird as black. The more successful responses explored the implications of white power and entitlement, with close analysis of specific words and images that supported their interpretations. Less convincing responses were overly dependent on assertions and required more careful use of supporting references.

Question 3

Less confident answers found it difficult to define the atmosphere, relying on simple references to the night and darkness. More successful responses found it ominous and threatening, citing the 'repercussive roar' of the sea and the ways in which the darkness hinted at the confusions and difficulties of life. Only the strongest responses attempted to comment on the ship-lights and the implications of the reference to the Pilgrim.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to identify with Cowper's nostalgia and regret for the felling of the trees. The strongest responses understood the theme of the transience of human life and the way in which the felling of the trees reminds us of that, with some genuine attempts to respond to what is 'moving' about the poem. There was much evidence of careful analysis of the sensuous imagery describing the former idyllic landscape and the imagery relating to the passage of time.

Question 5

Most candidates understood the mother's desire to protect her child, with the most successful responses suggesting that she wants a sort of symbiotic relationship with her and is almost frustrated that the child can sleep without her participation. They saw that the mother regards her child as pure and holy and uncorrupted, 'wordlessly good'. Some perceptive responses commented on the dark outside the room, the dangers that the child might eventually be subjected to, and the moon as a symbol of the mother watching over the child.

Question 6

Candidates generally understood the impact of being removed from one's home as a child and were able to relate to it. Some responses focused on emigration or being a refugee; some thought that it was an autobiographical account of Duffy's move from Scotland to England; one candidate thought that it was about growing up in general. Successful answers explored the language, picking up on significant details like the blind toy, the 'wrong' accent and the snake skin – and how these affect how the reader feels for the speaker. The strongest answers commented on the last line and the speaker's confusion about her real identity.

Section B

Question 7

Responses generally showed only a limited understanding of how the extract fitted in to the novel as a whole. There needed to be a more detailed knowledge of the character of Helen and of her significance to Jane. There were some general remarks about how this is a bildungsroman and is about how Jane achieves self-determination, but with little reference to the extract. Only a few candidates were able to make meaningful comment about the hypocrisy and cruelty of Brocklehurst. There was in some response a little awareness of Jane's troubled time with the Reeds and of Helen's imminent death, but without essential background knowledge, candidates were unable to make much of why the passage is moving.

Question 8

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 10

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

Candidate generally understood the context (that Janie is on trial on the same day that she has shot Tea Cake) or were able to get enough out of the extract to make a reasonable attempt to comment on why it was so dramatic and moving. There was some awareness of Janie's determination to make them understand her love for Tea Cake and the effect her testimony has on the court.

Question 12

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 14

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Less confident responses needed a clearer understanding about what had happened to Finny, with some not even mentioning the fall from the tree and others asserting that Gene had pushed Finny from the tree. More careful readings commented that Gene 'jounced' the branch and Finny lost his balance. Many commented on Gene's sense of guilt and his fear that someone might suspect him, but only the strongest answers were able to make meaningful supported reference to his dressing up as Finny and wanting to be him, and to his jealousy of Finny's charisma and popularity.

Question 16

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 17

There were many detailed explorations of the extract. The significance was readily identified with the appearance of the rats and how they feature in Room 101, but the most successful responses went on to explore the significance for the relationship between Winston and Julia. The key word 'memorable' was often ignored, though some of the strongest answers explored some of the detail, such as the image of the sinking sun and the fast boiling of the water in the pan, both showing the swift passage of time and the temporary quality of this moment of bliss.

Question 18

There were a few sound answers to this question. Candidates showed knowledge of the Party's methods: the telescreens, the spying, the rewriting of history, the elimination of anyone who poses a threat. Often answers would have been lifted to the higher levels if they had included specific references to the text to support responses.

Question 19

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 20

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 21

There were only a few answers to this question which showed little knowledge of the story as a whole. Candidates managed to draw one or two obvious points from the first paragraph but there was generally little indication that they understood the relationship between the narrator and his mother or her relationship with her employer and what they were doing in the apartment.

Question 22

There were too few answers to this question to make meaningful comment.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/12
Poetry and Prose

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Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question. Candidates selected relevant material from the text to address the question that had been set. Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text but needed to tailor their material more explicitly to the specific demands of the question. Some candidates embarked on a description or sketch of characters or an explanation of themes regardless of what the question asked for. Similarly, some answers to extract questions began by listing themes present in the extract without direct consideration of the question. Candidates should be informed that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward. Less successful poetry responses often worked their way, sometimes exhaustively, through the poem without selecting relevant material, thereby losing focus on the question.

Textual knowledge

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Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all, preferring instead to embark on a list of pre-learned themes or character traits.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most responses addressed the question with enthusiasm, focusing first on the child and then on the father. The most successful responses contrasted the different perspectives: the fairy-tale world of the child in which the father is an ogre and the father's understandable desire to teach his son a lesson. Many answers balanced sympathy for the child and the father. The strongest responses explored the detail of the poem, such as the hyperbole used to describe the father and the implications of the use of the word 'mask'. Less successful responses narrated what happens in the 'story' of the poem without analysis.

Question 2

Many responses understood the gradual unfolding of what happens in the poem towards the revelation that the speaker's four-year-old brother had died in a car accident. The most successful responses explored the significance of the title, the words and images relating to grief, the contrasts between the reactions of different people, and the impact of the final line – all explored in relation to the actual question: 'How does Heaney make you feel so sorry for the speaker...?' Less successful responses worked through the poem, explaining content, though without tailoring their points to the demands of the question.

Question 3

The more successful responses focused on the key words 'convey his wonder', commenting on the size of the whales, the precision and deliberateness of their actions, and the mysteriousness of their disappearance. The most successful responses explored closely the effects created by Reading's use of language relating to size, shape and movement of the whales. Less successful responses offered narrative accounts, without referring to 'wonder' and/or offered very general assertions about the structure of the poem.

Question 4

Most answers showed at least some awareness of the poet's celebration of individuality and uniqueness ('one bird', 'one flash'), with an understanding of the cycle of life and a recognition of order in the universe. The most successful answers explored Jennings' use of light and dark imagery, the imagery of movement, the cryptic quality of the language, and the impact of 'Man with his mind ajar'. Less confident answers dealt with only a very few discrete features of the poem without seeing their significance in the poem as a whole.

Question 5

More successful responses focused on the key word 'powerful' and engaged with the notion of unconventional love, exploring the central metaphor of the onion and how it challenged popular and clichéd Valentine's gifts. The strongest responses showed a sensitive appreciation of the contrast between more optimistic language ('promises light' and 'love') and more unsettling language ('fierce kiss', 'lethal', 'knife'). Less successful responses worked through the poem explaining its content, without relating their points to the key words 'powerful expression'.

Question 6

The more successful answers focused clearly on the key words 'movingly convey' and on 'how' Duffy achieves her effects. They appreciated the impact of the teacher on the speaker, instilling in her a love of poetry. The most successful responses explored the ways in which Duffy presented both the death of the teacher and her charisma and unconventionality. Less effective responses revealed a basic understanding of the situation, giving a flat narrative explanation of the memories, with little focus on the specific demands of the question.

Section B

Question 7

The most successful responses kept the key word 'dramatic' in their sights, exploring the ways in which Brontë portrays Jane's fear and the unsettling chaos, marked by the many exclamations and questions. They compared this with the presentation of Rochester's apparent calmness. Some made reference to the way in which Rochester later elicits Jane's help in dealing with Mason. Less successful responses, whilst showing awareness of the heightened mood, tended to explain what is happening within the extract, but with little evidence of how it connects with the rest of the novel.

Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

In the few responses seen to this question, candidates tended to work their way through the extract, occasionally with an imperfect knowledge of the situation being described. Some did not realise that the old father being referred to in line 21 of the extract is Nur. The lack of a detailed knowledge of the plot and characters meant that it was difficult for candidates to focus on what is 'disturbing' in the extract.

Question 10

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 12

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

Most answers showed an understanding of Catherine's unhappiness and of Morris trying to force the pace by suggesting they marry. The more successful responses expressed Catherine's predicament very well: she is reluctant to cast herself off from her father, asking for time from Morris who is applying undue pressure on her by accusing her of insincerity. Less effective response picked on discrete features of the extract, without showing an appreciation of the nuances of the exchange between the two characters.

Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Successful responses focused on the key words 'powerfully dramatic', analysing the ways in which Knowles builds tension, and showing an appreciation of structure and form. The strongest responses evaluated the Brinker/Gene dynamic through the use of language relating to a trial ('charge', 'ranked treachery', 'fratricide', 'arresting hand', 'court', 'confession', 'scene of the crime'). Less successful responses offered narrative rather than analytical approaches and misread the tone, for example, of Gene's responses. More exploration of form, in particular the use of dialogue, could have lifted answers.

Question 16

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 17

Most candidates showed an awareness of the significance of this moment in relation to the wider novel. They commented on the theme of power and totalitarianism, with some relating the figure of Big Brother to Hitler and Stalin. They were aware of the fate awaiting Winston and understood the significance of O'Brien and Room 101. The strongest responses explored the ways in which Orwell presents Winston's thoughts and feelings at this key moment in the novel, with his recognition that he will be shot and his admission that he hates Big Brother. Less effective responses worked through the extract explaining its content but without tailoring their material to an analysis of how Orwell makes this such a powerful moment.

Question 18

The most successful responses maintained a focus on the key word 'intriguing'. They noted Julia's mental and emotional strength, her promiscuity, her deals with the black market, her initiating the relationship with Winston. They focused on Orwell's use of her as a foil to Winston: more confident and rebellious than him. They commented on the significant change in her character in her final appearance in the novel. Less successful responses offered only surface knowledge of the character; there was a lack of textual detail to support general responses.

Question 19

Most responses showed an understanding of this moment's position within the wider novel: Stephen's distress that his search for Absalom has ended in this way; his disappointment in Absalom; Absalom's inability to communicate. The strongest responses explored the forbidding setting (the great gate in the grim high wall), the brief questions and answers, the sequence of rhetorical questions in the final paragraph and what they reveal of Absalom's emotional turmoil. Less effective responses narrated or paraphrased parts of the extract, digressed into long discussion of extraneous context and/or lacked a focus on the key word 'powerful'.

Question 20

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 21

Only the most successful responses focused closely on the question, selecting just those details from the extract and the wider story that addressed the question. They explored the significance of references to Pygmalion, the tone of voice attributed to Claydon and the narrative viewpoint in shaping readers' response to Claydon. Less effective responses confused Claydon and the narrator, showing an insecure knowledge of the story. Some responses started with a statement about the themes present in the story, but with little (if any) attempt to make their material relevant to the question.

Question 22

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/13
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

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- answer the question that has been set
- substantiate their arguments with relevant textual references
- explore sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- do not focus clearly on the question set
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely label and list writers' techniques
- refer to 'structure', without linking to the question
- include excessively long quotations with inadequate explanation
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poetry and prose texts they had studied. There were few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. There were, however, instances of some candidates using solely the extract when answering general essay questions on the Prose texts; this approach was self-penalising as there was insufficient material to draw upon for their answers.

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Less successful responses often commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to the ways in which the words were used in the text; these responses sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, anaphora and enjambment in poetry essays.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all, preferring instead to embark on a list of pre-learned themes or character traits.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was generally answered well. Candidates showed clear understanding of the central theme of the attempt to amend the damage to earth by humanity. Stronger answers paid careful attention to the ways in which effects were created and provided well-developed personal responses which showed a clear appreciation of the power of the moonlight. Many of these explored the significance of the title and commented on the movement and progression of the moonlight. They also noted the tone change and the move from nature to man-made in the poem.

Less successful answers did not explore the writing effects in detail and missed the significance of language features such as the personification of the night or the use of repetition.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular poetry question. Answers were generally well done, engaged and focused on the question. There were some very good personal responses which probed beyond surface meaning and were sensitive to the mother's predicament and behaviour. The best answers recognised the narrator's double voice of past and present and explored the adult's emotions looking back. Stronger candidates focused on the recurring image of the mouth and the link to mood and struggle. There were some particularly successful conclusions which recognised the irony of having 'plenty' now but lacking family bonds.

Less successful responses were tempted to write about any language feature, whether or not it was linked to the focus of the question. There were many comments on asyndetic listing and enjambement which did not explain clearly enough how these features work. Some candidates focused on the general autobiographical account of the poet's childhood with the odd reference to the mother and did not explore the despair of the mother struggling to make ends meet.

Question 3

Although most candidates responded to the sense of mystery in this poem, the quality of answers varied across all mark bands. The most successful answers understood the primordial nature of the Kraken and effectively explored the language of darkness, the depths and strangeness of the ocean.

Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase the poem with quotations overflowing but little explanation.

Some candidates mistook the flora and fauna around the Kraken for the Kraken itself. There were quite a few responses that assumed the Kraken was a metaphor for man's destruction of nature or the evil inside man – but these were not very convincing or rooted in evidence.

Question 4

This was a less popular question. Successful answers appreciated the allusions and metaphors and showed an impressive understanding of how Keats portrays melancholy. They explored, with sensitivity, the range of imagery to do with the underworld, death, love and beauty.

Some less successful responses did not fully understand the meaning of melancholy and considered only the first stanza in their response. A few focused for too long on the imagery of the underworld, giving detailed accounts of the Greek mythological figures and the symbols of the underworld.

Question 5

This question was quite popular and generated many heart-felt responses which reflected on the confusion of feelings experienced by the poet. A number of responses offered a very personal and modern interpretation but needed to keep the context in mind. For example, 'What are you wearing' often resulted in a response about control. Successful answers clearly focused on the significance of the letters and their effect. These answers recognised the change of tone between the present narrator and that of the past and the threatening and violent language that appeared as the poem progressed. These also paid close attention to language and were able to clearly explain the significance of the metaphors.

Less successful answers offered straightforward explanations without a detailed response to the writing effects. Some candidates did not recognise that the phrases in italics were quotations from the letters.

Question 6

Although this was not a popular choice, there were some perceptive answers which responded to the question with detailed analysis of imagery and language. Most candidates recognised the different ways in which people pray and that prayer is not necessarily connected with organised religion. Personal responses were strong and engaged with the notion of reminiscing on youth, despair and loss. There was an impressive number of candidates who understood the radio shipping areas and the impact of the last line.

Less successful answers struggled with the abstract notions of the poem and responded on a literal level.

Section B

Question 7

Responses to this question were varied although there was usually some focus on the 'disturbing' aspects of the passage and some recognition of the gothic qualities of the scene. Stronger answers responded in detail to the rich imagery, in particular the description of Bertha, and were able to comment on the subtext – that Rochester's stilted responses revealed he knows more than he is saying. Some stronger answers made valid links to incidents outside of the passage, for example, the similarities of this moment and the red room scene.

Less effective answers tended to offer narrative accounts with little contact with the passage. A few responses started with very long introductions to set the scene, and did not link these to the question.

Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 10

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

A small number of candidates attempted this question and most showed some understanding of the passage and wider novel. The best responses looked mainly at the three areas – dreams and ships, the porch sitters then Janie. They explored what was powerful about this opening and provided strong personal responses in which they expressed empathy for the porch sitters and then their poor behaviour towards Janie. They provided some perceptive comments about Janie's situation, and responded in detail to the imagery in the passage, for example, the imagery used to describe Janie's physical features and the references to the sun.

Weaker responses tended to run through the passage in a descriptive or explanatory manner without much reference to the imagery used or focus on the question. There was a tendency to explain at length what happened in the rest of the novel. Some candidates missed the opportunity to comment on Janie's recent experiences – that she had witnessed violent deaths and been through a trial.

Question 12

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

Very few candidates chose this question. Those who did responded in varying degrees to the tension in the scene. The strongest responses explored the language between the two men and were aware of how they revealed themselves through the dialogue. Many candidates highlighted the way Catherine's father disrespects her.

Weaker responses were limited in their range of points and offered a narrative account with little appreciation of the language and structure.

Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Most responses focused with some success on the tension in the scene. The most successful responses accurately placed the scene in context and noted details such as Brinker's significance within the school community. They evaluated the implications of Brinker's 'light-hearted' comments and understood the deeper implications about his apparent pleasantness and Gene's agitation. Some of the stronger answers picked up on the symbolism of the rivers and the clothes.

Weaker responses lacked focus and some interpreted the passage literally, not understanding the implications of Brinker's veiled comments.

Question 16

A very small number attempted this question mostly with limited success suggesting they either did not know the text well or were unable to draw out the relevant information from the text.

Question 17

This was by far the most popular question and there were many strong answers. Most candidates were able to respond to the question, identifying some of Winston's mixed thoughts and feelings. The image of Winston as a 'monster' and his vision of himself as a 'dead man' were addressed well and most candidates were able to comment on the loneliness, fear and confusion that Winston felt. Stronger answers recognised the symbolism in the extract and the change of Winston's feelings from beginning to end.

Less successful answers wavered in their focus and some candidates got caught up in their general comments about totalitarianism rather than its effect on Winston. Some candidates neglected to mention Winston's changing feelings embracing hope and determination. A few weaker responses either misunderstood the text or included extraneous details in their argument.

Question 18

Responses to this question were less successful than the extract question. Many of these responses relied entirely on the extract (**Question 17**) as their source and as a result their answers were self-penalising as there was insufficient material to draw upon. Teachers should alert candidates not to do this. There was much in the text that candidates could have included, such as Winston's work and role at the Ministry of Truth, the descriptions of the grim buildings, or the unpleasant surroundings and the canteen.

Question 19

Stronger responses to this question recognised the significance of this moment and appreciated the bond between the two men because of their loss. They focused on how the moment was 'moving' and explored the nuances in the dialogue and descriptions of the physical responses of the two men. They commented with sensitivity on the writing features such as repetition of phrases, authorial comment and the impact of the last line.

Less successful answers did not provide enough close textual analysis and commented more on the event taking place. Some responses tended to be narrative or a straightforward run through of the passage. Candidates did not address the dialogue or authorial comment and there was little response to the way in which effects were achieved.

Question 20

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 21

Most candidates who answered this question showed some understanding of the old man, his journey and his thoughts and actions but there very few who achieved the higher band marks. A few of the stronger answers commented on writing features such as the dialogue, cultural details and stream of consciousness narration but most did not pick up on the 'striking' elements of the passage. There was a tendency to run through the passage, giving a straightforward narrative account. A few of the weaker scripts showed excessive empathy or moralising at the expense of close reading of text and struggled to provide points that were relevant.

Question 22

A small number of candidates chose this question and generally showed understanding of the story. Most were able to provide relevant points to answer the question and there were some engaged and empathic answers with a focus on the key word, 'admirable'. Less successful answers were largely descriptive or narrative. A few did not fully understand the passage and their responses were on a literal level.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/21
Drama

Key messages

- The most successful answers referred to the question in a brief introduction and avoided lists of the writer's techniques to be addressed.
- Responses to passage-based questions which understood the context of the passage in the play, but also explored passage itself, in some detail, were the most successful.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
- Identifying technical literary terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and dramatic impact on the audience is an unproductive approach.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage was a feature of the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the questions, to choose their material effectively. They engaged with the characters and themes, conveying their enjoyment of the texts studied. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material drawing close links to the question throughout.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, and formulaic approaches, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulted in unnecessary repetition and valuable examination time being wasted. Though many candidates seemed to know their texts, characters and themes, they had not developed the skills required to analyse; they should be encouraged to move beyond the 'Point plus evidence' approach and to spend time analysing the effects achieved by the writer's choices of language, before moving on to their next point.

Successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as drama, referring to the 'audience', rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', as well as exploring the author's methods to convey the text's main concerns. Perhaps as a consequence of the lack of opportunity to see live performances during the pandemic, many candidates struggled to explore the dramatic impact of texts. The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language' or 'diction' to convey ideas.

The most popular texts were *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. There was an increase in candidates answering on *The Crucible* this series. However, candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text. There were two new texts, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and R C Sherriff's *Journey's End*, but there were too few responses to these to make meaningful comment in this report.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as

these responses were self-penalising. Rubric infringements were infrequent and though there were some brief answers, very few candidates appeared to run out of time.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular choice of text and question. Candidates knew the text and its themes and responded to the passage with understanding and a knowledge of its context in the play. The most successful responses referenced Walter's loss of the insurance money to Willy Harris and his call to Lindner to accept his offer of the money. The dramatic opposition to his plans by Mama, Ruth and Beneatha was explored with some close detail to the clash between Beneatha and Walter. There was some sympathetic response to the characters; the pathos created by Walter's words and desire to have some of the material benefits he sees others enjoy but particularly to Mama, who: '...always held her head up, showing her dignity. She has 'never been that dead inside', to accept an offer that will completely destroy her as head of the Younger family ...' Although some response to the writer's use of 'dead' here could have been explored, it is obvious that the candidate has an appreciation of the dramatic impact of Mama's words. Only the best responses analysed Walter's words, 'I am a *man*' and the dramatic impact of his faltering speech, punctuated by dashes.

Less successful responses lacked focus on the phrase 'powerfully dramatic' in the question, with candidates opting to work through the passage, providing a general commentary on it without fully understanding the pivotal moment for Walter and the family.

- (b) The basic ambitions of various characters were identified: Beneatha's dream of becoming a doctor; Walter's dream of owning a liquor store and Mama's dream of owning her own house. Less successful answers did not develop these points further. More successful responses went on to consider the dreams and aspirations of the characters in more detail with some well-supported ideas. Beneatha is a woman who hopes to succeed in a man's world; she aspires towards social mobility through education, as evidenced through her speech style. She seeks a more valid cultural/racial identity and rejects assimilation. Walter's dreams are more materialistic and perhaps naïve and wrapped up in notions of 'manhood', but ultimately, he wants the best for his family. Mama dreams of escaping the cycle of poverty, without compromising her core values was explored in the best responses. Very few candidates mentioned Ruth or Travis in any detail.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates recognised how Miller presents Parris as controlling and his self-centred concern with his status and financial welfare. There was understanding of the context and his fear of discovery of the girls dancing in the forest. There were some strong personal responses, exploring his behaviour and greed as a minister, in contrast to what might be expected of a man in his position. The most successful candidates explored Miller's use of language, seeing the humour in Giles's words that Parish was '*well instructed in arithmetic*' and Proctor's continuation on the theme of money that after Parish's lengthy discourse on '*deeds and mortgages*', he '*thought it were an auction*' and not a church meeting. These candidates contrasted this to Parish's idea that free speech is an attack on the authority of the church and any opinion, contrary to his, being the work of the devil supported by: '*There is either obedience or the church will burn as hell is burning!*' There was some perceptive analysis of the language, for example: 'Obedience' is an uncompromising word, just like Parris himself who views himself as the guardian of moral standards and religious piety in the community.' It was understood that the imagery of burning hellfire is frightening to the uneducated populace of Salem who would have a strong belief in a literal hell, making Parris's words threatening and terrifying. Knowing that he had sent for Hale, and his grievances against some of the inhabitants of Salem, the best candidates could see that there was trouble ahead.

Weaker responses focused on his greed and dislike of Proctor with some understanding of his anger at this moment but tended to paraphrase the text rather than support ideas with quotation and detail to the language.

- (b) For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Danforth, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, directing candidates towards a personal response to how Miller makes 'you feel' towards his control of the witch trials. Danforth's concern with his reputation, rather than with actual justice, was grasped, together with his speed to condemn people to death with little evidence. There was some understanding of how his portrayal reflected the absurdity of the witch trials and how shocking the consequences were. Feelings of anger and frustration at his inability to listen to Proctor and Hale, whilst believing Abigail and the girls wholeheartedly, were expressed.

Less successful responses narrated a little of his role in the play finding little to say about him, so these tended to be brief.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) The passage proved to be an effective choice, with the question about the upsetting nature of the scene allowing candidates to engage well. There was a lot of effective personal engagement and understanding of the dramatic irony to varying degrees, with the stronger responses fully engaging with the frustration and horror the audience feels. Some of the best answers started with a point on the structure of the passage, noting that the positive nature of Romeo's dream, even though it contained foreshadowing of his eventual doom, only served to highlight the depths of his despair on receiving Balthasar's news, making its impact more forceful. Most candidates understood the context of this moment commenting on how the audience's knowledge of the outcome of the play, and their consequent feelings of helplessness as the tragedy unfolds, was upsetting. Comments about bearing witness to Romeo's collapse without being able to do anything about it displayed a sense of the candidates' immersion in the emotional life of the play, which was pleasing to see. Those candidates who spent some time examining the writer's use of language were well-rewarded. For example, the verb 'reviv'd' was explored as being particularly powerful as it clearly displays the idolisation of Juliet by Romeo as if she were a goddess or divine; the only explanation as to how he could be brought back from the death in his dream. Though anticipated from the start, the imminent deaths of Romeo and Juliet, the 'star crossed lovers' was very upsetting for candidates.

Very few responses commented on the final section regarding the Apothecary and the description of his shop. Of those that did mention this section, none discussed the language and imagery used in any detail. Many misunderstood the use of 'sharp misery', thinking this refers to Romeo. Weaker responses were narrative and speculative in approach, focusing on the 'if only', for example: Friar Lawrence's letter had reached Romeo, or if Balthazar had not arrived so soon or if on reaching the Capulet crypt Romeo had waited.

- (b) Candidates were able to identify Benvolio as a peacekeeper, with some explaining the root of the name as 'goodwill', though, surprisingly, no one seemed to connect 'Mercutio' with 'mercurial'. They did see him as hot-headed and impulsive, at times violent. Only a cursory attempt to 'contrast' the characters as the question demanded was made, candidates preferring to analyse the characters separately; the contrast, however, was implicit in their judgements. Those candidates who did try to hold the characters up against each other at times did so successfully, for example: '... Benvolio wishes to avoid any potential threat of conflict whereas Mercutio would rather stay and cause an outburst of violence ...'

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22

Drama

Key messages

- The most successful answers referred to the question in a brief introduction and avoided lists of the writer's techniques to be addressed.
- Responses to passage-based questions which understood the context of the passage in the play, but also explored passage itself, in some detail, were the most successful.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
- Identifying technical literary terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and dramatic impact on the audience is an unproductive approach.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage was a feature of the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the question, choosing their material effectively. They engaged with the characters and themes, conveying their enjoyment of the texts studied. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material, drawing close links to the question throughout. There was a notable improvement in the use of quotations to support ideas, in the discursive responses this year, an indication perhaps, that more candidates are attempting to learn specific detail for use in the closed book examination.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, and formulaic approaches, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulted in unnecessary repetition and valuable examination time being wasted. Though many candidates seemed to know their texts, characters and themes, they had not developed the skills required to analyse; they should be encouraged to move beyond the 'Point plus evidence' approach and to spend time analysing the effects achieved by the writer's choices of language, before moving on to their next point.

Successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as drama, referring to the 'audience', rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', as well as exploring the author's methods to convey the texts' main concerns. Perhaps as a consequence of the lack of opportunity to see live performances during the pandemic, many candidates struggled to explore the dramatic impact of texts. The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language' or 'diction' to convey ideas.

The most popular texts were *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Crucible*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. There was an increase in candidates answering on *The Crucible* this series. However, candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text. There were two new texts, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and R C Sherriff's *Journey's End*, but there were very few responses to either text.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as these responses were self-penalising. There were several rubric infringements where candidates either answered two questions on the same text or, did not answer one passage-based and one discursive essay. Though there were some brief answers, very few candidates appeared to run out of time.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular choice of text and question. It was pleasing that the candidates engaged with what was 'striking' here. The most successful responses engaged with the idea of Beneatha as an ambitious, strong-willed, modern woman who pushes the boundaries, and seemed to enjoy her sarcasm and feisty nature. Her strong presence in the scene was well understood as well as what she represents in the play. This latter element led some candidates a little astray as they wanted to write about Beneatha mainly as a symbol of the fight against racism and sexism which sometimes meant that the material in the passage was disregarded. Better responses developed the subtleties of Beneatha defending Mama's right to the money whilst hoping that she will pay for her tuition. Beneatha's relationship with Walter is key here and the bickering between them was explored by most responses. The sarcastic tone and amusing insults gave plenty of opportunity to look at language. The best answers tended to regard the bickering as an example of a long familiar mode of address, based on sibling rivalry, rather than real antipathy; to say that she 'hated' her brother is to overstate. Similarly, to say that Beneatha 'pitied' the family or 'despised' Walter and/or Ruth, as some did, is not supported by the text. Some candidates did not react at all positively to Beneatha here, seeing her as arrogant, selfish, even cruel, as opposed to wilful or immature, though the conversation about the money shows her as fundamentally honest and fair. The big section of stage direction at the start caused a few problems; and many spent less profitable time paraphrasing, particularly the information about her accent.

Less successful responses worked through the passage with little focus on the question and made straightforward comments about Beneatha and aspects of her personality. Weaker answers wrote about her in the play and paid little attention to the details of the passage, missing the description of her appearance and behaviour here completely.

- (b) Fewer candidates answered this question, and many struggled with the idea of the family as 'victims', working through the text, and listing their many problems in a narrative based manner. More successful responses cited some key ideas: the Youngers as victims of poverty, racial prejudice and fraud, and balanced it against the fact that they were better off than many and, in the end, they were able to stand up to Lindner. Very few were able to frame their ideas into the shape of an argument and to illustrate them closely from the text. Surprisingly, few mentioned the loss of the money.

Less successful responses dealt vaguely with racism and being poor but with little textual detail or link to the question: these worked through examples of their poverty, or the discrimination they suffered, without even mentioning the word 'victim' and often reinterpreting the question as 'deserving sympathy'.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) This was a popular text and question. A successful response to passage-based question requires the passage to be briefly contextualised. To answer this question, some sense of the context was essential; the dramatic irony that we know Proctor has confessed his adultery and Elizabeth does not is crucial to the tension. As this is the climactic moment in the play it was disappointing that so many candidates did not seem to be able to place it. The best considered the earlier scene and Elizabeth's seemingly unforgiving nature and how this positions the audience to expect a truthful answer which is not given. Many candidates of all abilities did not deal with Elizabeth's answer or its significance. As always, candidates needed to comment on what is in the scene but also how it relates to the wider presentation of the character/themes. The understanding of dramatic irony

varied, with some candidates struggling to make this explicit, but the more successful responses were able to fully engage with the audience's feeling of unbearable tension and anticipation. Many responses mentioned the contextual link to Miller's experience of McCarthyism, however few expanded on this or linked it to the scene in a way that could be rewarded. This question stimulated some strong personal responses with much sympathy for John's and especially Elizabeth's predicament.

All candidates recognised that there is tension in the extract. Better answers put the passage in context and therefore could examine how the tension builds until Elizabeth's answer. There was a real opportunity to comment in detail on language and the way the writer created effects in this question. Danforth's increasing verbal and physical aggression was well handled as were Elizabeth's nervousness and her attempts to protect John. Candidates referred to the stage directions effectively here though there was some misunderstanding of the stage direction '*faintly*', where several candidates thought Elizabeth was on the verge of fainting, rather than speaking quietly, as she pronounced the fateful lie.

Less successful responses often did not know that Proctor had already confessed and worked through the passage paraphrasing the action with little understanding of what was at stake here. There was some misunderstanding of the relationship between Proctor, Abigail and Elizabeth, with weaker responses referring to a 'love triangle' and Elizabeth's attempt to protect all, rather than her husband.

- (b) Fewer candidates attempted this question. For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Mary Warren, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, her 'dramatic impact' on the play. Better responses recognised her weakness and changing testimony and analysed her role in the play in relation to Abigail and Elizabeth. Only the best commented on the intense drama of the court scene; how Mary's change of heart signifies the loss of hope for an ending to the witch trials and condemns John Proctor.

Weaker candidates adopted a narrative based approach to Mary and her role in the play but finding little to say about her, so these tended to be brief.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) Candidates who answered on this text tended to know it very well and focused on why, and how, this was both a striking and revealing moment. This question yielded several high-level responses, as candidates were able to reflect on issues of class, hypocrisy and the 'stiff upper lip' attitude that permeates the text. There was some pleasing focus on language specifically on Stanhope's derogatory comments about Hibbert. Most felt that Hibbert was a coward trying to avoid the 'final push': a few sensitive explorations of the text argued that his reaction to war revealed the mental stress that soldiers were under and equated his attempts to get sympathy with Stanhope's seeking refuge in drink. Most could comment on the different dynamic between the three men and the terrible toll the war had taken on them.

Less successful responses adopted the narrative summary approach and tended to focus less on the passage in question and more on war in general. These responses tended to view Hibbert in a particularly harsh light, whereas better responses were more even-handed in their assessment of his behaviour. A few responses incorrectly suggested that Osborne was Stanhope's uncle and misread the nickname.

- (b) Too few seen to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular text and question. The word 'entertaining' was generally interpreted as being comical or amusing, and successful responses identified the humour in the passage, understood what the Nurse is saying in her long speech, and explored how this is entertaining for the audience. They knew the context; the subject of marriage with Paris was to be introduced, and recognised Lady Capulet's awkwardness because of her lack of closeness with Juliet, and her wish to have the

Nurse present for their talk. Most understood her vulgarity, talkativeness and tendency towards anecdote, but only the strongest responses were able to engage with how Shakespeare demonstrated this to show critical understanding of her as a dramatic device to relieve tension in the scene. The Nurse's position as a mother figure to Juliet was understood by all but some candidates who then became distracted by these emotional connections as opposed to focusing on the entertaining moments in this scene. Better candidates explored the rambling nature of her comments and how Lady Capulet had had '*Enough of this*'.

Weaker candidates were unable to move past general descriptions of her behaviour as being inherently entertaining, for example the fact that she 'talks a lot' or 'rambles'. They struggled with the language and simply paraphrased the passage ignoring the question of how Shakespeare made this an entertaining introduction. There were many misconceptions including that '*earthquake*' had a sexual connotation and that it was unusual to have a wet nurse. Very few candidates understood the reference to '*wormwood*' or to her '*teeth*' and what they contributed to make this entertaining. These simply stated that the Nurse was 'entertaining' but without exploring how.

- (b) This was a popular question and should have been straightforward, but it proved to be problematic for many candidates leading many to simply retell the story. Most candidates chose to answer the question by explaining what Romeo and Juliet did rather than what they said and how Shakespeare's use of language and stagecraft conveyed their powerful feelings. The most successful responses focused on key moments that illustrated the couple's feelings for each other, for example, the balcony scene, Romeo's banishment and their double suicide. This was a fair question which required basic exam technique to respond successfully. Better candidates explored the depth of feelings which Romeo and Juliet had for each other. Although many better answers did adopt a semi-narrative approach, they selected key scenes to focus on in detail. Popular choices were, the Prologue, the Capulet ball, the balcony scene and the final scene of their double suicide. Many included detailed textual references especially the comparison of Juliet with the sun and stars and the religious language of their first meeting.

Less successful responses relied on retelling the entire play, often losing sight of the task and making very generalised comments about their powerful feelings of love.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 5

- (a) Many responses simply ignored the key words 'such a dramatic moment' and provided a narrative commentary with paraphrase. Better responses placed the passage in context and contrasted Malvolio's pomposity with the revellers, also recognising how his behaviour here leads to the trick being played on him. Most candidates understood that the characters were making fun of Malvolio but seemed unable to take this further. The best responses recognised and explored Malvolio's anger/pomposity/threats and commented on the impact on Sir Toby, who is so drunk he effectively ignores them and carries on singing, deliberately mocking Malvolio. Most were able to recognise the meaning of what Sir Toby says '*rub your chain with crumbs*' but only the strongest candidates commented on his deliberate provocation which is then picked up and continued by Maria. Sir Andrew's line tended to be ignored by most, though a few did manage to make the link to the later challenge. Very few responses commented on how Maria's more 'restrained' reaction was setting up the plot for Malvolio's being gulled.

Weaker answers recognised that the revellers were annoyed with Malvolio, but often overlooked the contributions of the Clown and Maria. Some overstated the fact that Malvolio was of a lower class than Sir Toby but did not take this further and follow the relationship between them through the passage. This would be a very visually entertaining scene but not many appeared to enjoy the humour. Most candidates understood that the characters were making fun of Malvolio but seemed unable to take this further. Feste and Maria were not always mentioned but good candidates saw the importance of Maria's last speech.

- (b) Candidates who answered ended up with a list of the different love matches and types of love, and an explanatory narrative about them without really focusing on any specific moments or language detail. Better answers considered various aspects of love depicted and whether they were real or self-indulgent in some cases, like Orsino. Malvolio's self-love was often effectively examined.

Weaker answers often focused on the love triangle, not always accurately, or got side-tracked by the role of disguise in the play. These were very narrative in approach and lacked relevant textual detail to support ideas.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/23
Drama

Key messages

Good answers focused on the question from the start without a general introduction.

Successful answers were planned to cover three or four points, which were well-developed and explicitly addressed the question.

All strong answers made a response to the text in performance and analysed dramatic effects where they were relevant, such as: interaction between characters, movement, sound, dramatic irony and likely audience reaction.

Better answers to passage-based questions analysed the effect of the writing in detail, often selecting words and phrases for analysis where relevant, and considered the author's intentions.

Answers to discursive questions were stronger when candidates used a sound knowledge of the text to select the most appropriate material with which to address the question, and analysed some brief, direct quotation.

General comments

There were first-rate answers on all five plays this session, showing candidates' sustained engagement with their text as a performance and with the playwright's concerns. Many candidates made perceptive personal responses to the complexity of the characters and their situations. Along with Mama, candidates often sympathised with Ruth having to work despite her tiredness due to her pregnancy in *A Raisin in the Sun*; whereas in *The Crucible*, candidates were split between sympathising with Proctor because his wife does not understand him, or with Elizabeth as she finds it hard to trust her husband after his affair. Candidates showed universal empathy for the soldiers in *Journey's End* as they obey orders to fight in the knowledge that they are going to be killed. Many candidates could loosely put themselves in Juliet's situation of disagreeing with her father in *Romeo and Juliet*, and others often revelled in selecting their personal amusing moments from the play. The drama of the passage near the end of *Twelfth Night* has been building from early in the play, with its dramatic irony ensuring the audience and candidates are fully engaged with the action. A clearly stated personal response boosted answers.

A clear response to the text as performance on stage characterised the best answers. When it is difficult for candidates to see plays in performance, then watching a film of a production on stage is a good substitute. Even a cinema film of the play will help to bring the text alive, so long as differences in plot and setting are recognised. Some candidates referred to the plays as 'novels' and to 'readers', rather than 'audiences'. They needed to consider the effects of staging, including movement, sound, dramatic irony and audience reaction.

Strong answers to passage-based questions analysed in detail the effects of interaction between characters and staging. The best answers came from candidates who carefully selected the most appropriate parts of the passage with which to support their answer. In contrast, some answers gave an account of events instead of analysing dramatic effects. Strong answers began by briefly placing the passage firmly in its context, so that a full understanding of the content could be shown. Others focused on the mechanics of writing, such as exclamation marks and full stops, without relating their effects to the meaning of the passage. For example, this was sometimes shown in answers to **Question 2(a)** on *The Crucible*, where the couple's strained relationship is conveyed in contrived questions and monosyllabic replies; but a full understanding of their awkwardness is only revealed when the context of the husband's affair is established.

Answers to discursive questions often showed a thorough knowledge of the set text. Strong answers developed over three or four main points and selected apt material from the whole play to support their response. Candidates improved their answers by analysing their selected reference to show how it supported their answer and addressed the question. Some candidates developed a more general reply to the question, but the answers were limited because the candidate did not know the text well enough to make detailed reference to the text. Other candidates needed to make sure they addressed the terms of the question explicitly, and to maintain this focus through their answer.

Some candidates needed to number their answers clearly. This includes some of those which were typed. There were very few rubric infringements. A few candidates answered two passage-based or two discursive answers on component 23. In this case, only the higher marked answer was credited.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) Good answers placed the passage briefly in its context: that Walter and Beneatha have been arguing about the insurance money, and after this moment Mama reveals her intention to buy a house. Candidates commented on the way that Mama's Christian beliefs are revealed as guiding her life; she does not want the sale of liquor to weigh against her on her 'ledger'. Her Christianity causes later conflict with the younger generation. Candidates also said that Mama's care for her family is revealed: she is concerned about Ruth's health, tiredness and determination to go to work. Some linked Ruth's tiredness to her pregnancy, while others considered the deeper implications of her reluctance to take the day off work, as evidence of the racist society the family live in: Mama suggests that it would be easier for Ruth to pretend to have the 'flu, an illness white people recognise, rather than risk the racist assumptions of her living in a ghetto – racist attitudes are shown by Ruth's mimicking of the way her employer will complain about her. The family's poverty is revealed when Ruth insists on going to work because they 'need the money'. Ruth's uneasiness about the state of her marriage to Walter is revealed when she supports his pitch for money for the liquor store despite her reservations. Perceptive candidates evaluated Ruth's assertion that the insurance cheque belongs solely to Mama; this may be her view, but we already know that Walter is asking Mama for finance, and surely Beneatha will not turn down money for her education.

Stronger answers often ended by giving an overview of the significance of the passage, such as that the cheque is needed to alleviate the family's poverty; or that the passage reveals the future conflict over how the cheque is to be spent. Other answers needed to focus on the passage rather than narrating events from later in the play; some needed to include more detailed reference, such as brief quotation, to support points.

- (b) There were strong personal responses to Joseph Asagai; candidates found him very memorable and liked how he respects Beneatha and helps her to appreciate her African heritage, and many candidates responded to how he forms a contrast to the shallow and assimilationist George Murchison. Stronger answers explored Asagai's role as a Nigerian and Yoruba candidate proud of his home country, and keen to share his culture with African-Americans whom he thinks are too assimilated. Most candidates were able to refer in detail to the drama and fun of Beneatha's African dancing dressed in Nigerian robes. Some perceptive candidates explored Asagai's romantic idealism and his own dreams of returning home to make a difference to his people through teaching and politics, to the point of sacrificing his life if required. Asagai changes Beneatha's perspective by encouraging her not to depend on others to achieve her goals.

The best answers directly addressed the question on 'memorable' with well-reasoned personal responses to Asagai. Strong answers used aptly-selected, detailed textual support, in the form of brief, memorised quotations. Some candidates focused more on Beneatha than Asagai and so missed a sense of his wider role. Others incorrectly described Asagai as African-American, which minimised his cultural significance to the play, or made assertions about him with some very general textual reference, or offered no support at all.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Candidates needed to place the passage briefly in its context to show understanding of the relationship: Proctor is ridden with guilt over his affair with Abigail, and Elizabeth is finding it hard to forgive and trust him.

Most candidates analysed the stage directions and dialogue well: Elizabeth's suspicious questioning of her husband's late arrival; the dampening effect of her brief replies to Proctor's attempts to draw her out, as well as her lack of response to his kiss, were all seen as evidence of her inability to forgive him. Simpler answers blamed Elizabeth and missed how hard it is for her to trust her husband now; although she is trying, as shown when she blushes at his compliment and is cross at herself for forgetting his cider. Others felt that Proctor was trying too hard, with his flirtatious grin, kissing, and attempted romance over the flowers. Perceptive answers suggested that although both were trying to repair their relationship, Miller made it clear that there was a way to go yet. This was seen in the carefully staged ending to the passage, where both characters surreptitiously watch and judge the other. Strong answers responded explicitly to 'vividly' by analysing the effects of dialogue and staging. There was also some perceptive exploration of imagery, such as the way the blandness of the stew reflects the lack of spice in the marriage and the way it is still 'winter' mirrors its coldness. Some candidates thought Proctor's hopes for renewing his marriage were reflected in his expectation of soon seeing green fields on the farm and in his sensual enjoyment of the abundant flowers.

A common misreading was Proctor's disappointment at Elizabeth's lack of response when he kisses her; some candidates thought it was Elizabeth who was disappointed. Some answers explored the writing in detail, but they needed to explicitly relate their analysis to the content and context of the passage in order to show understanding of the relationship. Others thought Proctor's affair with Abigail was still going on, and Elizabeth did not know. A few brief answers related details of the affair, without much reference to the passage; and a few others tried to link their answers to McCarthyism, without benefit.

- (b) Successful answers had a clear grasp of the events in the play. Most candidates began by stating that Proctor's initial error was the affair with Abigail which provoked Abigail's desire for vengeance on Elizabeth and the start of witchcraft allegations. Some candidates pointed out that if Proctor had exposed Abigail's motives at this early stage, the witchcraft hunt and subsequent deaths may have been avoided. Astute answers blamed Proctor's desire to keep his lechery secret and thus maintain his good reputation for his downfall. Some candidates partly blamed Elizabeth for her initial coldness and then lying in court about Abigail and Proctor's affair. Perceptive candidates explored how such a well-respected man as Proctor could be believed to be guilty of witchcraft; they explored how Proctor's righteous habit of plain speaking created powerful enemies, notably in Parris. Some also considered the part played by Danforth's reluctance to admit that he may have been wrong in believing the girls' claims, and had therefore sentenced innocent people to death. Some candidates focused more on Proctor's final struggle, whether to accept Hale's pleas to falsely confess to witchcraft and save his life. His decision at the end of the play to tell the truth leads him to regain his honesty and good name, but he dies for it.

Answers were not expected to be exhaustive; strong responses developed an argument over three or four selected points using detailed textual support, usually in the form of brief, memorised quotations. Other answers showed confusion over some of the events, especially those leading directly to Proctor's death; some needed to support their points by referring to the text, and a few brief answers only considered Proctor's affair with Abigail.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) To make a good response, candidates needed to place the passage into its context: the 'Big Attack' has started and the men know that they are all likely to be killed shortly. Strong answers clearly stated this as the reason for them sympathising with the men. Strong answers also responded well to how the end is suggested by powerful staging, such as the lack of hope indicated by Trotter's disappearance into the dark, the tiny line of dawn being 'vague', the 'steadily increasing' shelling and booms of heavier artillery, and the ominous cries for stretcher bearers.

Most candidates felt sympathy for Stanhope because he drinks tea rather than his numbing whisky and has a 'quivering' hand which shows his fear. Perceptive answers saw that his inability to meet Raleigh's eyes to say goodbye indicates his guilt at sending men to their deaths. There was much sympathy expressed for Hibbert, who delays 'going up' as long as he can, despite Stanhope seeing through his excuses. Astute answers considered the powerful effect of the dramatic contrast between the cook Mason being 'fully dressed for the line', and the prevaricating Hibbert who 'is the picture of misery'. The kindness of Mason is shown in how he asks Hibbert to show him the way, which forces Hibbert to go without further confrontation with Stanhope, who stands firm in insisting Hibbert carries out orders. More perceptive readers commented on the pathos of Raleigh's shy 'Cheero' to Stanhope, of Mason's careful planning for keeping the kitchen fire going, and even of Hibbert's slow ascent of the steps, when they, and the audience, all know they are likely to die.

Some candidates needed to place the passage more firmly in its context; without the acknowledgement that the men will shortly die, sympathy for their plight is diminished. Some made a more general response to sympathy for the poor conditions in the trenches, in which Hibbert's requests for water were incorrectly interpreted as the men running out of drinking water. A few focused on Stanhope's leadership skills rather than answering the question on sympathy for the men.

- (b) Strong answers made clear the circumstances of the raid: it is ordered by the Colonel to gain information about the enemy sited opposite C Company in advance of the 'Big Attack'. Raleigh and Osborne, with ten men, are ordered to go into enemy trenches and bring a German back for questioning. Candidates considered that much of the significance of the raid lies in its obvious danger and loss of life; some pointed out the irony of the raid being seen as successful, even though six men and Osborne were killed. Some candidates focused on the Colonel's initial matter-of-fact meeting with Stanhope when the danger of the raid is pointed out and overridden. Others explored the dramatic build-up of tension between Raleigh and Osborne beforehand, as Osborne ensures the excited Raleigh does not realise the danger. Others considered the ludicrous interrogation of the German captive by the Colonel. Some focused more on the drunken 'celebratory' meal afterwards, while others commented on Raleigh's response after the raid to Osborne's death and to Stanhope. Strong answers selected a few apt references and explored the drama in detail. The significant consequences of the raid were often seen in the change in Raleigh, from naïve enthusiasm to his deadened shock afterwards, and in the loss of Osborne who represented a calm rationality and humanity shown in his nickname 'Uncle'.

Some perceptive answers ended their answers by commenting that the true bravery of soldiers such as Osborne and Stanhope was shown in the way they carried out orders, in the full knowledge of their danger and futility. Some other answers spent too long narrating details of the raid. Some candidates only knew a general outline of the raid and needed to refer to the text in more detail, while others confused the raid with the 'Big Attack' at the end of the play. A few gave general answers on conditions in the trenches.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) Good answers placed the passage in its context: Juliet has just accepted a potion to feign death from the Friar in order to avoid having to marry Paris. Candidates needed to remember that she is already secretly married to Romeo. Some candidates commented on the tension caused by the busy start to the passage, with Capulet bustling about, giving orders for arrangements for the wedding to Paris despite his daughter's refusal. Strong answers commented fully on the dramatic irony throughout the passage, underlined by Capulet's ironic comments in praise of the Friar. They showed how the audience finds tension in Juliet's submission to her father's will, dramatically demonstrated by her prostration in front of him, because we know it is all a lie. Some candidates thought the tension created by Capulet's initial insults to Juliet serves to remind us of his harsh threats towards her if she does not do as he wants. They pointed out that the contrasting expression of his happiness and excitement at her apparent capitulation also creates tension, since it is based on Juliet's lies. Many answers commented on the tension being further compounded by Capulet's sudden whim to bring forward the day of the wedding to the next morning, hastening preparations, with the accompanying implications for Juliet in taking the potion, which is only known by the audience. Perceptive answers pointed out that Capulet's determination to stay up all night to ensure arrangements are made in time is excessive and his emotions are heightened; tensions are raised because the audience knows this is all false and it will all come crashing down.

Most answers explored the use of dramatic irony well. There were a few answers which accepted the surface meaning of the text in Juliet's agreement to marry Paris; some of these wrongly thought Juliet was deciding who to marry, Romeo or Paris, and decided on Paris because of his wealth; they sometimes commented on Capulet's excitement at enforcing his will, but without showing understanding of the tension or irony.

- (b) The most frequently chosen amusing moments were scenes with Mercutio, especially the banter between Mercutio, Romeo and Benvolio on the journey to the ball, and Mercutio's encounter with Tybalt. Scenes featuring the Nurse were also popular, such as her first appearance or the scene where she returns from Romeo and withholds his reply to Juliet. Some candidates chose the conflict between the servants Sampson and Gregory, and Abram and Balthasar at the start of the play, because of the comic banter between the men. Candidates' enjoyment of the text was clear from their responses, which often explored the humour of the context and characters in the selected moments well, and made detailed analysis of use of language, which proved particularly bawdy whenever the Nurse or Mercutio were involved.

Other candidates found different moments amusing, and candidates' personal selection was respected where they explicitly identified what they found comical, and where they explored how Shakespeare achieved his effects. Some wrote about the humour of Juliet defying her father when she refuses to marry Paris, and others explored the effects of dramatic irony, where the audience are amused by knowing something the characters do not, such as the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet where the audience already know the lovers are from opposing families. Others made an answer to what they found 'entertaining'.

There were some purely narrative responses which needed to make a relevant response to 'amusing', and there were some responses where the candidate alleged moments to be 'amusing', but then focused on how sad or upsetting they were, referring to moments such as the lovers' suicides at the end. Some other brief answers only addressed one moment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 5

- (a) To show a clear understanding of the content of the passage, candidates needed to place it firmly in its context towards the climax of the play: Olivia has previously married Sebastian, believing him to be Cesario. Orsino arrives, with Cesario, to repeat his offers of love to Olivia. Olivia believes Cesario to be her husband. Orsino and Cesario (or rather, Viola) are unaware of Olivia's marriage to Sebastian. Strong answers responded fully to the interaction between characters and to the way they are brought together for this powerfully dramatic conflict, with dramatic irony enhancing the audience's enjoyment of the mayhem.

Candidates commented on the abrupt way Olivia dismisses Orsino, and the comic rudeness of 'fat and fulsome'. Orsino's reaction to her is also dramatic, and strong answers commented on his horrific threats of violence to both Olivia and Cesario, and explored the shocking effects of some of his powerful imagery such as 'marble-breasted tyrant' or 'sacrifice the lamb... To spite a raven's heart'. Perceptive candidates pointed out that Orsino's extreme emotion has been provoked not only by Olivia's consistent rejection of him, but also by her obvious preference for Cesario. Candidates found humour in Olivia's bewilderment at her rejection by her 'husband'; they commented on Viola's passionate declaration of love for Orsino in 'more than my life', and observed that this both compounded Olivia's confusion and built up to the powerfully dramatic climax of her calling Viola 'husband', and the shocked response to this of both Orsino and Viola.

Some candidates spent too long narrating earlier events. A few answers focused heavily on more minor features of language such as exclamation marks and rhetorical questions. These can help to indicate tone or heightened emotions, but rarely provoke a response in an audience on their own.

- (b) The best answers made a personal response to three or four selected qualities of Viola's character, then developed them and supported them with detailed reference, usually in the form of brief, memorised quotation. Candidates often found Viola likeable because of her intelligence and quick thinking, shown in how she deals with Olivia and in their witty exchanges. Some praised Viola's resourcefulness and independence, based on her actions after the shipwreck. Others liked how she is such a genuine person, despite her use of disguise; her constant love for Orsino is genuine

and unassumed, in contrast to Orsino's overblown love for Olivia. Perceptive candidates understood that her honesty makes her feel bad about the deception of her disguise and the love triangle she finds herself in. Some candidates liked the comedy generated by Viola, through her disguise, in situations with Olivia and Malvolio, but also in the 'fight' with Sir Andrew. Others said that most of the characters say nice things about Viola: Sebastian loves her deeply, she wins Olivia's love without trying, and even Sir Toby thinks Cesario is 'of good capacity and breeding'.

Some strong responses ended with the observation that, given Viola's good character, she is rewarded by getting what she deserves – Orsino's love and marriage to him. Some answers narrated what happens to Viola in the play. A few wrote about how memorable Viola is, how much sympathy they have for her, or they explored the theme of disguise in the play: these needed to focus on answering the question.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/31
Drama

Key messages

- The most successful answers referred to the question in a brief introduction and avoided lists of the writer's techniques to be addressed.
- Responses to passage-based questions which understood the context of the passage in the play, but also explored passage itself, in some detail, were the most successful.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
- Identifying technical literary terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and dramatic impact on the audience is an unproductive approach.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage was a feature of the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the questions, to choose their material effectively. They engaged with the characters and themes, conveying their enjoyment of the texts studied. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material drawing close links to the question throughout.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, and formulaic approaches, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulted in unnecessary repetition and valuable examination time being wasted. Though many candidates seemed to know their texts, characters and themes, they had not developed the skills required to analyse; they should be encouraged to move beyond the 'Point plus evidence' approach and to spend time analysing the effects achieved by the writer's choices of language, before moving on to their next point.

Successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as drama, referring to the 'audience', rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', as well as exploring the author's methods to convey the text's main concerns. Perhaps as a consequence of the lack of opportunity to see live performances during the pandemic, many candidates struggled to explore the dramatic impact of texts. The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language' or 'diction' to convey ideas.

The most popular texts were *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. There was an increase in candidates answering on *The Crucible* this series. However, candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text. There were two new texts, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and R C Sherriff's *Journey's End*, but there were too few responses to these to make meaningful comment in this report.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as

these responses were self-penalising. Rubric infringements were infrequent and though there were some brief answers, very few candidates appeared to run out of time.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular choice of text and question. Candidates knew the text and its themes and responded to the passage with understanding and a knowledge of its context in the play. The most successful responses referenced Walter's loss of the insurance money to Willy Harris and his call to Lindner to accept his offer of the money. The dramatic opposition to his plans by Mama, Ruth and Beneatha was explored with some close detail to the clash between Beneatha and Walter. There was some sympathetic response to the characters; the pathos created by Walter's words and desire to have some of the material benefits he sees others enjoy but particularly to Mama, who: '...always held her head up, showing her dignity. She has 'never been that dead inside', to accept an offer that will completely destroy her as head of the Younger family ...' Although some response to the writer's use of 'dead' here could have been explored, it is obvious that the candidate has an appreciation of the dramatic impact of Mama's words. Only the best responses analysed Walter's words, 'I am a *man*' and the dramatic impact of his faltering speech, punctuated by dashes.

Less successful responses lacked focus on the phrase 'powerfully dramatic' in the question, with candidates opting to work through the passage, providing a general commentary on it without fully understanding the pivotal moment for Walter and the family.

- (b) The basic ambitions of various characters were identified: Beneatha's dream of becoming a doctor; Walter's dream of owning a liquor store and Mama's dream of owning her own house. Less successful answers did not develop these points further. More successful responses went on to consider the dreams and aspirations of the characters in more detail with some well-supported ideas. Beneatha is a woman who hopes to succeed in a man's world; she aspires towards social mobility through education, as evidenced through her speech style. She seeks a more valid cultural/racial identity and rejects assimilation. Walter's dreams are more materialistic and perhaps naïve and wrapped up in notions of 'manhood', but ultimately, he wants the best for his family. Mama dreams of escaping the cycle of poverty, without compromising her core values was explored in the best responses. Very few candidates mentioned Ruth or Travis in any detail.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates recognised how Miller presents Parris as controlling and his self-centred concern with his status and financial welfare. There was understanding of the context and his fear of discovery of the girls dancing in the forest. There were some strong personal responses, exploring his behaviour and greed as a minister, in contrast to what might be expected of a man in his position. The most successful candidates explored Miller's use of language, seeing the humour in Giles's words that Parish was '*well instructed in arithmetic*' and Proctor's continuation on the theme of money that after Parish's lengthy discourse on '*deeds and mortgages*', he '*thought it were an auction*' and not a church meeting. These candidates contrasted this to Parish's idea that free speech is an attack on the authority of the church and any opinion, contrary to his, being the work of the devil supported by: '*There is either obedience or the church will burn as hell is burning!*' There was some perceptive analysis of the language, for example: 'Obedience' is an uncompromising word, just like Parris himself who views himself as the guardian of moral standards and religious piety in the community.' It was understood that the imagery of burning hellfire is frightening to the uneducated populace of Salem who would have a strong belief in a literal hell, making Parris's words threatening and terrifying. Knowing that he had sent for Hale, and his grievances against some of the inhabitants of Salem, the best candidates could see that there was trouble ahead.

Weaker responses focused on his greed and dislike of Proctor with some understanding of his anger at this moment but tended to paraphrase the text rather than support ideas with quotation and detail to the language.

- (b) For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Danforth, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, directing candidates towards a personal response to how Miller makes 'you feel' towards his control of the witch trials. Danforth's concern with his reputation, rather than with actual justice, was grasped, together with his speed to condemn people to death with little evidence. There was some understanding of how his portrayal reflected the absurdity of the witch trials and how shocking the consequences were. Feelings of anger and frustration at his inability to listen to Proctor and Hale, whilst believing Abigail and the girls wholeheartedly, were expressed.

Less successful responses narrated a little of his role in the play finding little to say about him, so these tended to be brief.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) The passage proved to be an effective choice, with the question about the upsetting nature of the scene allowing candidates to engage well. There was a lot of effective personal engagement and understanding of the dramatic irony to varying degrees, with the stronger responses fully engaging with the frustration and horror the audience feels. Some of the best answers started with a point on the structure of the passage, noting that the positive nature of Romeo's dream, even though it contained foreshadowing of his eventual doom, only served to highlight the depths of his despair on receiving Balthasar's news, making its impact more forceful. Most candidates understood the context of this moment commenting on how the audience's knowledge of the outcome of the play, and their consequent feelings of helplessness as the tragedy unfolds, was upsetting. Comments about bearing witness to Romeo's collapse without being able to do anything about it displayed a sense of the candidates' immersion in the emotional life of the play, which was pleasing to see. Those candidates who spent some time examining the writer's use of language were well-rewarded. For example, the verb 'reviv'd' was explored as being particularly powerful as it clearly displays the idolisation of Juliet by Romeo as if she were a goddess or divine; the only explanation as to how he could be brought back from the death in his dream. Though anticipated from the start, the imminent deaths of Romeo and Juliet, the 'star crossed lovers' was very upsetting for candidates.

Very few responses commented on the final section regarding the Apothecary and the description of his shop. Of those that did mention this section, none discussed the language and imagery used in any detail. Many misunderstood the use of 'sharp misery', thinking this refers to Romeo. Weaker responses were narrative and speculative in approach, focusing on the 'if only', for example: Friar Lawrence's letter had reached Romeo, or if Balthazar had not arrived so soon or if on reaching the Capulet crypt Romeo had waited.

- (b) Candidates were able to identify Benvolio as a peacekeeper, with some explaining the root of the name as 'goodwill', though, surprisingly, no one seemed to connect 'Mercutio' with 'mercurial'. They did see him as hot-headed and impulsive, at times violent. Only a cursory attempt to 'contrast' the characters as the question demanded was made, candidates preferring to analyse the characters separately; the contrast, however, was implicit in their judgements. Those candidates who did try to hold the characters up against each other at times did so successfully, for example: '... Benvolio wishes to avoid any potential threat of conflict whereas Mercutio would rather stay and cause an outburst of violence ...'

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/32
Drama

Key messages

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- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
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General comments

Many candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the question, choosing their material effectively. They engaged with the characters and themes, conveying their enjoyment of the texts studied. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material, drawing close links to the question throughout. There was a notable improvement in the use of quotations to support ideas, in the discursive responses this year.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, and formulaic approaches, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulted in unnecessary repetition and valuable examination time being wasted. Though many candidates seemed to know their texts, characters and themes, they had not developed the skills required to analyse; they should be encouraged to move beyond the 'Point plus evidence' approach and to spend time analysing the effects achieved by the writer's choices of language, before moving on to their next point.

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The most popular texts were *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Crucible*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. There was an increase in candidates answering on *The Crucible* this series. However, candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text. There were two new texts, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and R C Sherriff's *Journey's End*, but there were very few responses to either text.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as these responses were self-penalising. There were several rubric infringements where candidates either answered two questions on the same text or, did not answer one passage-based and one discursive essay. Though there were some brief answers, very few candidates appeared to run out of time.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular choice of text and question. It was pleasing that the candidates engaged with what was 'striking' here. The most successful responses engaged with the idea of Beneatha as an ambitious, strong-willed, modern woman who pushes the boundaries, and seemed to enjoy her sarcasm and feisty nature. Her strong presence in the scene was well understood as well as what she represents in the play. This latter element led some candidates a little astray as they wanted to write about Beneatha mainly as a symbol of the fight against racism and sexism which sometimes meant that the material in the passage was disregarded. Better responses developed the subtleties of Beneatha defending Mama's right to the money whilst hoping that she will pay for her tuition. Beneatha's relationship with Walter is key here and the bickering between them was explored by most responses. The sarcastic tone and amusing insults gave plenty of opportunity to look at language. The best answers tended to regard the bickering as an example of a long familiar mode of address, based on sibling rivalry, rather than real antipathy; to say that she 'hated' her brother is to overstate. Similarly, to say that Beneatha 'pitied' the family or 'despised' Walter and/or Ruth, as some did, is not supported by the text. Some candidates did not react at all positively to Beneatha here, seeing her as arrogant, selfish, even cruel, as opposed to wilful or immature, though the conversation about the money shows her as fundamentally honest and fair. The big section of stage direction at the start caused a few problems; and many spent less profitable time paraphrasing, particularly the information about her accent.

Less successful responses worked through the passage with little focus on the question and made straightforward comments about Beneatha and aspects of her personality. Weaker answers wrote about her in the play and paid little attention to the details of the passage, missing the description of her appearance and behaviour here completely.

- (b) Fewer candidates answered this question, and many struggled with the idea of the family as 'victims', working through the text, and listing their many problems in a narrative based manner. More successful responses cited some key ideas: the Youngers as victims of poverty, racial prejudice and fraud, and balanced it against the fact that they were better off than many and, in the end, they were able to stand up to Lindner. Very few were able to frame their ideas into the shape of an argument and to illustrate them closely from the text. Surprisingly, few mentioned the loss of the money.

Less successful responses dealt vaguely with racism and being poor but with little textual detail or link to the question: these worked through examples of their poverty, or the discrimination they suffered, without even mentioning the word 'victim' and often reinterpreting the question as 'deserving sympathy'.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) This was a popular text and question. A successful response to passage-based question requires the passage to be briefly contextualised. To answer this question, some sense of the context was essential; the dramatic irony that we know Proctor has confessed his adultery and Elizabeth does not is crucial to the tension. As this is the climactic moment in the play it was disappointing that so many candidates did not seem to be able to place it. The best considered the earlier scene and Elizabeth's seemingly unforgiving nature and how this positions the audience to expect a truthful answer which is not given. Many candidates of all abilities did not deal with Elizabeth's answer or its significance. As always, candidates needed to comment on what is in the scene but also how it relates to the wider presentation of the character/themes. The understanding of dramatic irony

varied, with some candidates struggling to make this explicit, but the more successful responses were able to fully engage with the audience's feeling of unbearable tension and anticipation. Many responses mentioned the contextual link to Miller's experience of McCarthyism, however few expanded on this or linked it to the scene in a way that could be rewarded. This question stimulated some strong personal responses with much sympathy for John's and especially Elizabeth's predicament.

All candidates recognised that there is tension in the extract. Better answers put the passage in context and therefore could examine how the tension builds until Elizabeth's answer. There was a real opportunity to comment in detail on language and the way the writer created effects in this question. Danforth's increasing verbal and physical aggression was well handled as were Elizabeth's nervousness and her attempts to protect John. Candidates referred to the stage directions effectively here though there was some misunderstanding of the stage direction '*faintly*', where several candidates thought Elizabeth was on the verge of fainting, rather than speaking quietly, as she pronounced the fateful lie.

Less successful responses often did not know that Proctor had already confessed and worked through the passage paraphrasing the action with little understanding of what was at stake here. There was some misunderstanding of the relationship between Proctor, Abigail and Elizabeth, with weaker responses referring to a 'love triangle' and Elizabeth's attempt to protect all, rather than her husband.

- (b) Fewer candidates attempted this question. For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Mary Warren, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, her 'dramatic impact' on the play. Better responses recognised her weakness and changing testimony and analysed her role in the play in relation to Abigail and Elizabeth. Only the best commented on the intense drama of the court scene; how Mary's change of heart signifies the loss of hope for an ending to the witch trials and condemns John Proctor.

Weaker candidates adopted a narrative based approach to Mary and her role in the play but finding little to say about her, so these tended to be brief.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) Candidates who answered on this text tended to know it very well and focused on why, and how, this was both a striking and revealing moment. This question yielded several high-level responses, as candidates were able to reflect on issues of class, hypocrisy and the 'stiff upper lip' attitude that permeates the text. There was some pleasing focus on language specifically on Stanhope's derogatory comments about Hibbert. Most felt that Hibbert was a coward trying to avoid the 'final push': a few sensitive explorations of the text argued that his reaction to war revealed the mental stress that soldiers were under and equated his attempts to get sympathy with Stanhope's seeking refuge in drink. Most could comment on the different dynamic between the three men and the terrible toll the war had taken on them.

Less successful responses adopted the narrative summary approach and tended to focus less on the passage in question and more on war in general. These responses tended to view Hibbert in a particularly harsh light, whereas better responses were more even-handed in their assessment of his behaviour. A few responses incorrectly suggested that Osborne was Stanhope's uncle and misread the nickname.

- (b) Too few seen to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular text and question. The word 'entertaining' was generally interpreted as being comical or amusing, and successful responses identified the humour in the passage, understood what the Nurse is saying in her long speech, and explored how this is entertaining for the audience. They knew the context; the subject of marriage with Paris was to be introduced, and recognised Lady Capulet's awkwardness because of her lack of closeness with Juliet, and her wish to have the

Nurse present for their talk. Most understood her vulgarity, talkativeness and tendency towards anecdote, but only the strongest responses were able to engage with how Shakespeare demonstrated this to show critical understanding of her as a dramatic device to relieve tension in the scene. The Nurse's position as a mother figure to Juliet was understood by all but some candidates who then became distracted by these emotional connections as opposed to focusing on the entertaining moments in this scene. Better candidates explored the rambling nature of her comments and how Lady Capulet had had '*Enough of this*'.

Weaker candidates were unable to move past general descriptions of her behaviour as being inherently entertaining, for example the fact that she 'talks a lot' or 'rambles'. They struggled with the language and simply paraphrased the passage ignoring the question of how Shakespeare made this an entertaining introduction. There were many misconceptions including that '*earthquake*' had a sexual connotation and that it was unusual to have a wet nurse. Very few candidates understood the reference to '*wormwood*' or to her '*teeth*' and what they contributed to make this entertaining. These simply stated that the Nurse was 'entertaining' but without exploring how.

- (b) This was a popular question and should have been straightforward, but it proved to be problematic for many candidates leading many to simply retell the story. Most candidates chose to answer the question by explaining what Romeo and Juliet did rather than what they said and how Shakespeare's use of language and stagecraft conveyed their powerful feelings. The most successful responses focused on key moments that illustrated the couple's feelings for each other, for example, the balcony scene, Romeo's banishment and their double suicide. This was a fair question which required basic exam technique to respond successfully. Better candidates explored the depth of feelings which Romeo and Juliet had for each other. Although many better answers did adopt a semi-narrative approach, they selected key scenes to focus on in detail. Popular choices were, the Prologue, the Capulet ball, the balcony scene and the final scene of their double suicide. Many included detailed textual references especially the comparison of Juliet with the sun and stars and the religious language of their first meeting.

Less successful responses relied on retelling the entire play, often losing sight of the task and making very generalised comments about their powerful feelings of love.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 5

- (a) Many responses simply ignored the key words 'such a dramatic moment' and provided a narrative commentary with paraphrase. Better responses placed the passage in context and contrasted Malvolio's pomposity with the revellers, also recognising how his behaviour here leads to the trick being played on him. Most candidates understood that the characters were making fun of Malvolio but seemed unable to take this further. The best responses recognised and explored Malvolio's anger/pomposity/threats and commented on the impact on Sir Toby, who is so drunk he effectively ignores them and carries on singing, deliberately mocking Malvolio. Most were able to recognise the meaning of what Sir Toby says '*rub your chain with crumbs*' but only the strongest candidates commented on his deliberate provocation which is then picked up and continued by Maria. Sir Andrew's line tended to be ignored by most, though a few did manage to make the link to the later challenge. Very few responses commented on how Maria's more 'restrained' reaction was setting up the plot for Malvolio's being gulled.

Weaker answers recognised that the revellers were annoyed with Malvolio, but often overlooked the contributions of the Clown and Maria. Some overstated the fact that Malvolio was of a lower class than Sir Toby but did not take this further and follow the relationship between them through the passage. This would be a very visually entertaining scene but not many appeared to enjoy the humour. Most candidates understood that the characters were making fun of Malvolio but seemed unable to take this further. Feste and Maria were not always mentioned but good candidates saw the importance of Maria's last speech.

- (b) Candidates who answered ended up with a list of the different love matches and types of love, and an explanatory narrative about them without really focusing on any specific moments or language detail. Better answers considered various aspects of love depicted and whether they were real or self-indulgent in some cases, like Orsino. Malvolio's self-love was often effectively examined.

Weaker answers often focused on the love triangle, not always accurately, or got side-tracked by the role of disguise in the play. These were very narrative in approach and lacked relevant textual detail to support ideas.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/33
Drama

Key messages

Good answers focused on the question from the start without a general introduction.

Successful answers were planned to cover three or four points, which were well-developed and explicitly addressed the question.

All strong answers made a response to the text in performance and analysed dramatic effects where they were relevant, such as: interaction between characters, movement, sound, dramatic irony and likely audience reaction.

Better answers to passage-based questions analysed the effect of the writing in detail, often selecting words and phrases for analysis where relevant, and considered the author's intentions.

Answers to discursive questions were stronger when candidates used a sound knowledge of the text to select the most appropriate material with which to address the question, and analysed some brief, direct quotation.

General comments

There were first-rate answers on all five plays this session, showing candidates' sustained engagement with their text as a performance and with the playwright's concerns. Many candidates made perceptive personal responses to the complexity of the characters and their situations. Along with Mama, candidates often sympathised with Ruth having to work despite her tiredness due to her pregnancy in *A Raisin in the Sun*; whereas in *The Crucible*, candidates were split between sympathising with Proctor because his wife does not understand him, or with Elizabeth as she finds it hard to trust her husband after his affair. Candidates showed universal empathy for the soldiers in *Journey's End* as they obey orders to fight in the knowledge that they are going to be killed. Many candidates could loosely put themselves in Juliet's situation of disagreeing with her father in *Romeo and Juliet*, and others often revelled in selecting their personal amusing moments from the play. The drama of the passage near the end of *Twelfth Night* has been building from early in the play, with its dramatic irony ensuring the audience and candidates are fully engaged with the action. A clearly stated personal response boosted answers.

A clear response to the text as performance on stage characterised the best answers. When it is difficult for candidates to see plays in performance, then watching a film of a production on stage is a good substitute. Even a cinema film of the play will help to bring the text alive, so long as differences in plot and setting are recognised. Some candidates referred to the plays as 'novels' and to 'readers', rather than 'audiences'. They needed to consider the effects of staging, including movement, sound, dramatic irony and audience reaction.

Strong answers to passage-based questions analysed in detail the effects of interaction between characters and staging. The best answers came from candidates who carefully selected the most appropriate parts of the passage with which to support their answer. In contrast, some answers gave an account of events instead of analysing dramatic effects. Strong answers began by briefly placing the passage firmly in its context, so that a full understanding of the content could be shown. Others focused on the mechanics of writing, such as exclamation marks and full stops, without relating their effects to the meaning of the passage. For example, this was sometimes shown in answers to **Question 2(a)** on *The Crucible*, where the couple's strained relationship is conveyed in contrived questions and monosyllabic replies; but a full understanding of their awkwardness is only revealed when the context of the husband's affair is established.

Answers to discursive questions often showed a thorough knowledge of the set text. Strong answers developed over three or four main points and selected apt material from the whole play to support their response. Candidates improved their answers by analysing their selected reference to show how it supported their answer and addressed the question. Some candidates developed a more general reply to the question, but the answers were limited because the candidate did not know the text well enough to make detailed reference to the text. Other candidates needed to make sure they addressed the terms of the question explicitly, and to maintain this focus through their answer.

Some candidates needed to number their answers clearly. This includes some of those which were typed. There were very few rubric infringements. A few candidates answered two passage-based or two discursive answers on component 23. In this case, only the higher marked answer was credited.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) Good answers placed the passage briefly in its context: that Walter and Beneatha have been arguing about the insurance money, and after this moment Mama reveals her intention to buy a house. Candidates commented on the way that Mama's Christian beliefs are revealed as guiding her life; she does not want the sale of liquor to weigh against her on her 'ledger'. Her Christianity causes later conflict with the younger generation. Candidates also said that Mama's care for her family is revealed: she is concerned about Ruth's health, tiredness and determination to go to work. Some linked Ruth's tiredness to her pregnancy, while others considered the deeper implications of her reluctance to take the day off work, as evidence of the racist society the family live in: Mama suggests that it would be easier for Ruth to pretend to have the 'flu, an illness white people recognise, rather than risk the racist assumptions of her living in a ghetto – racist attitudes are shown by Ruth's mimicking of the way her employer will complain about her. The family's poverty is revealed when Ruth insists on going to work because they 'need the money'. Ruth's uneasiness about the state of her marriage to Walter is revealed when she supports his pitch for money for the liquor store despite her reservations. Perceptive candidates evaluated Ruth's assertion that the insurance cheque belongs solely to Mama; this may be her view, but we already know that Walter is asking Mama for finance, and surely Beneatha will not turn down money for her education.

Stronger answers often ended by giving an overview of the significance of the passage, such as that the cheque is needed to alleviate the family's poverty; or that the passage reveals the future conflict over how the cheque is to be spent. Other answers needed to focus on the passage rather than narrating events from later in the play; some needed to include more detailed reference, such as brief quotation, to support points.

- (b) There were strong personal responses to Joseph Asagai; candidates found him very memorable and liked how he respects Beneatha and helps her to appreciate her African heritage, and many candidates responded to how he forms a contrast to the shallow and assimilationist George Murchison. Stronger answers explored Asagai's role as a Nigerian and Yoruba candidate proud of his home country, and keen to share his culture with African-Americans whom he thinks are too assimilated. Most candidates were able to refer in detail to the drama and fun of Beneatha's African dancing dressed in Nigerian robes. Some perceptive candidates explored Asagai's romantic idealism and his own dreams of returning home to make a difference to his people through teaching and politics, to the point of sacrificing his life if required. Asagai changes Beneatha's perspective by encouraging her not to depend on others to achieve her goals.

The best answers directly addressed the question on 'memorable' with well-reasoned personal responses to Asagai. Strong answers used aptly-selected, detailed textual support, in the form of brief, memorised quotations. Some candidates focused more on Beneatha than Asagai and so missed a sense of his wider role. Others incorrectly described Asagai as African-American, which minimised his cultural significance to the play, or made assertions about him with some very general textual reference, or offered no support at all.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) Candidates needed to place the passage briefly in its context to show understanding of the relationship: Proctor is ridden with guilt over his affair with Abigail, and Elizabeth is finding it hard to forgive and trust him.

Most candidates analysed the stage directions and dialogue well: Elizabeth's suspicious questioning of her husband's late arrival; the dampening effect of her brief replies to Proctor's attempts to draw her out, as well as her lack of response to his kiss, were all seen as evidence of her inability to forgive him. Simpler answers blamed Elizabeth and missed how hard it is for her to trust her husband now; although she is trying, as shown when she blushes at his compliment and is cross at herself for forgetting his cider. Others felt that Proctor was trying too hard, with his flirtatious grin, kissing, and attempted romance over the flowers. Perceptive answers suggested that although both were trying to repair their relationship, Miller made it clear that there was a way to go yet. This was seen in the carefully staged ending to the passage, where both characters surreptitiously watch and judge the other. Strong answers responded explicitly to 'vividly' by analysing the effects of dialogue and staging. There was also some perceptive exploration of imagery, such as the way the blandness of the stew reflects the lack of spice in the marriage and the way it is still 'winter' mirrors its coldness. Some candidates thought Proctor's hopes for renewing his marriage were reflected in his expectation of soon seeing green fields on the farm and in his sensual enjoyment of the abundant flowers.

A common misreading was Proctor's disappointment at Elizabeth's lack of response when he kisses her; some candidates thought it was Elizabeth who was disappointed. Some answers explored the writing in detail, but they needed to explicitly relate their analysis to the content and context of the passage in order to show understanding of the relationship. Others thought Proctor's affair with Abigail was still going on, and Elizabeth did not know. A few brief answers related details of the affair, without much reference to the passage; and a few others tried to link their answers to McCarthyism, without benefit.

- (b) Successful answers had a clear grasp of the events in the play. Most candidates began by stating that Proctor's initial error was the affair with Abigail which provoked Abigail's desire for vengeance on Elizabeth and the start of witchcraft allegations. Some candidates pointed out that if Proctor had exposed Abigail's motives at this early stage, the witchcraft hunt and subsequent deaths may have been avoided. Astute answers blamed Proctor's desire to keep his lechery secret and thus maintain his good reputation for his downfall. Some candidates partly blamed Elizabeth for her initial coldness and then lying in court about Abigail and Proctor's affair. Perceptive candidates explored how such a well-respected man as Proctor could be believed to be guilty of witchcraft; they explored how Proctor's righteous habit of plain speaking created powerful enemies, notably in Parris. Some also considered the part played by Danforth's reluctance to admit that he may have been wrong in believing the girls' claims, and had therefore sentenced innocent people to death. Some candidates focused more on Proctor's final struggle, whether to accept Hale's pleas to falsely confess to witchcraft and save his life. His decision at the end of the play to tell the truth leads him to regain his honesty and good name, but he dies for it.

Answers were not expected to be exhaustive; strong responses developed an argument over three or four selected points using detailed textual support, usually in the form of brief, memorised quotations. Other answers showed confusion over some of the events, especially those leading directly to Proctor's death; some needed to support their points by referring to the text, and a few brief answers only considered Proctor's affair with Abigail.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) To make a good response, candidates needed to place the passage into its context: the 'Big Attack' has started and the men know that they are all likely to be killed shortly. Strong answers clearly stated this as the reason for them sympathising with the men. Strong answers also responded well to how the end is suggested by powerful staging, such as the lack of hope indicated by Trotter's disappearance into the dark, the tiny line of dawn being 'vague', the 'steadily increasing' shelling and booms of heavier artillery, and the ominous cries for stretcher bearers.

Most candidates felt sympathy for Stanhope because he drinks tea rather than his numbing whisky and has a 'quivering' hand which shows his fear. Perceptive answers saw that his inability to meet Raleigh's eyes to say goodbye indicates his guilt at sending men to their deaths. There was much sympathy expressed for Hibbert, who delays 'going up' as long as he can, despite Stanhope seeing through his excuses. Astute answers considered the powerful effect of the dramatic contrast between the cook Mason being 'fully dressed for the line', and the prevaricating Hibbert who 'is the picture of misery'. The kindness of Mason is shown in how he asks Hibbert to show him the way, which forces Hibbert to go without further confrontation with Stanhope, who stands firm in insisting Hibbert carries out orders. More perceptive readers commented on the pathos of Raleigh's shy 'Cheero' to Stanhope, of Mason's careful planning for keeping the kitchen fire going, and even of Hibbert's slow ascent of the steps, when they, and the audience, all know they are likely to die.

Some candidates needed to place the passage more firmly in its context; without the acknowledgement that the men will shortly die, sympathy for their plight is diminished. Some made a more general response to sympathy for the poor conditions in the trenches, in which Hibbert's requests for water were incorrectly interpreted as the men running out of drinking water. A few focused on Stanhope's leadership skills rather than answering the question on sympathy for the men.

- (b) Strong answers made clear the circumstances of the raid: it is ordered by the Colonel to gain information about the enemy sited opposite C Company in advance of the 'Big Attack'. Raleigh and Osborne, with ten men, are ordered to go into enemy trenches and bring a German back for questioning. Candidates considered that much of the significance of the raid lies in its obvious danger and loss of life; some pointed out the irony of the raid being seen as successful, even though six men and Osborne were killed. Some candidates focused on the Colonel's initial matter-of-fact meeting with Stanhope when the danger of the raid is pointed out and overridden. Others explored the dramatic build-up of tension between Raleigh and Osborne beforehand, as Osborne ensures the excited Raleigh does not realise the danger. Others considered the ludicrous interrogation of the German captive by the Colonel. Some focused more on the drunken 'celebratory' meal afterwards, while others commented on Raleigh's response after the raid to Osborne's death and to Stanhope. Strong answers selected a few apt references and explored the drama in detail. The significant consequences of the raid were often seen in the change in Raleigh, from naïve enthusiasm to his deadened shock afterwards, and in the loss of Osborne who represented a calm rationality and humanity shown in his nickname 'Uncle'.

Some perceptive answers ended their answers by commenting that the true bravery of soldiers such as Osborne and Stanhope was shown in the way they carried out orders, in the full knowledge of their danger and futility. Some other answers spent too long narrating details of the raid. Some candidates only knew a general outline of the raid and needed to refer to the text in more detail, while others confused the raid with the 'Big Attack' at the end of the play. A few gave general answers on conditions in the trenches.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) Good answers placed the passage in its context: Juliet has just accepted a potion to feign death from the Friar in order to avoid having to marry Paris. Candidates needed to remember that she is already secretly married to Romeo. Some candidates commented on the tension caused by the busy start to the passage, with Capulet bustling about, giving orders for arrangements for the wedding to Paris despite his daughter's refusal. Strong answers commented fully on the dramatic irony throughout the passage, underlined by Capulet's ironic comments in praise of the Friar. They showed how the audience finds tension in Juliet's submission to her father's will, dramatically demonstrated by her prostration in front of him, because we know it is all a lie. Some candidates thought the tension created by Capulet's initial insults to Juliet serves to remind us of his harsh threats towards her if she does not do as he wants. They pointed out that the contrasting expression of his happiness and excitement at her apparent capitulation also creates tension, since it is based on Juliet's lies. Many answers commented on the tension being further compounded by Capulet's sudden whim to bring forward the day of the wedding to the next morning, hastening preparations, with the accompanying implications for Juliet in taking the potion, which is only known by the audience. Perceptive answers pointed out that Capulet's determination to stay up all night to ensure arrangements are made in time is excessive and his emotions are heightened; tensions are raised because the audience knows this is all false and it will all come crashing down.

Most answers explored the use of dramatic irony well. There were a few answers which accepted the surface meaning of the text in Juliet's agreement to marry Paris; some of these wrongly thought Juliet was deciding who to marry, Romeo or Paris, and decided on Paris because of his wealth; they sometimes commented on Capulet's excitement at enforcing his will, but without showing understanding of the tension or irony.

- (b) The most frequently chosen amusing moments were scenes with Mercutio, especially the banter between Mercutio, Romeo and Benvolio on the journey to the ball, and Mercutio's encounter with Tybalt. Scenes featuring the Nurse were also popular, such as her first appearance or the scene where she returns from Romeo and withholds his reply to Juliet. Some candidates chose the conflict between the servants Sampson and Gregory, and Abram and Balthasar at the start of the play, because of the comic banter between the men. Candidates' enjoyment of the text was clear from their responses, which often explored the humour of the context and characters in the selected moments well, and made detailed analysis of use of language, which proved particularly bawdy whenever the Nurse or Mercutio were involved.

Other candidates found different moments amusing, and candidates' personal selection was respected where they explicitly identified what they found comical, and where they explored how Shakespeare achieved his effects. Some wrote about the humour of Juliet defying her father when she refuses to marry Paris, and others explored the effects of dramatic irony, where the audience are amused by knowing something the characters do not, such as the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet where the audience already know the lovers are from opposing families. Others made an answer to what they found 'entertaining'.

There were some purely narrative responses which needed to make a relevant response to 'amusing', and there were some responses where the candidate alleged moments to be 'amusing', but then focused on how sad or upsetting they were, referring to moments such as the lovers' suicides at the end. Some other brief answers only addressed one moment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 5

- (a) To show a clear understanding of the content of the passage, candidates needed to place it firmly in its context towards the climax of the play: Olivia has previously married Sebastian, believing him to be Cesario. Orsino arrives, with Cesario, to repeat his offers of love to Olivia. Olivia believes Cesario to be her husband. Orsino and Cesario (or rather, Viola) are unaware of Olivia's marriage to Sebastian. Strong answers responded fully to the interaction between characters and to the way they are brought together for this powerfully dramatic conflict, with dramatic irony enhancing the audience's enjoyment of the mayhem.

Candidates commented on the abrupt way Olivia dismisses Orsino, and the comic rudeness of 'fat and fulsome'. Orsino's reaction to her is also dramatic, and strong answers commented on his horrific threats of violence to both Olivia and Cesario, and explored the shocking effects of some of his powerful imagery such as 'marble-breasted tyrant' or 'sacrifice the lamb... To spite a raven's heart'. Perceptive candidates pointed out that Orsino's extreme emotion has been provoked not only by Olivia's consistent rejection of him, but also by her obvious preference for Cesario. Candidates found humour in Olivia's bewilderment at her rejection by her 'husband'; they commented on Viola's passionate declaration of love for Orsino in 'more than my life', and observed that this both compounded Olivia's confusion and built up to the powerfully dramatic climax of her calling Viola 'husband', and the shocked response to this of both Orsino and Viola.

Some candidates spent too long narrating earlier events. A few answers focused heavily on more minor features of language such as exclamation marks and rhetorical questions. These can help to indicate tone or heightened emotions, but rarely provoke a response in an audience on their own.

- (b) The best answers made a personal response to three or four selected qualities of Viola's character, then developed them and supported them with detailed reference, usually in the form of brief, memorised quotation. Candidates often found Viola likeable because of her intelligence and quick thinking, shown in how she deals with Olivia and in their witty exchanges. Some praised Viola's resourcefulness and independence, based on her actions after the shipwreck. Others liked how she is such a genuine person, despite her use of disguise; her constant love for Orsino is genuine

and unassumed, in contrast to Orsino's overblown love for Olivia. Perceptive candidates understood that her honesty makes her feel bad about the deception of her disguise and the love triangle she finds herself in. Some candidates liked the comedy generated by Viola, through her disguise, in situations with Olivia and Malvolio, but also in the 'fight' with Sir Andrew. Others said that most of the characters say nice things about Viola: Sebastian loves her deeply, she wins Olivia's love without trying, and even Sir Toby thinks Cesario is 'of good capacity and breeding'.

Some strong responses ended with the observation that, given Viola's good character, she is rewarded by getting what she deserves – Orsino's love and marriage to him. Some answers narrated what happens to Viola in the play. A few wrote about how memorable Viola is, how much sympathy they have for her, or they explored the theme of disguise in the play: these needed to focus on answering the question.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/41
Unseen

Key messages

- There were very few rubric errors and misunderstandings, and most candidates explored the deeper implications behind the surface meaning of the text.
- Most candidates are now much better at structuring their interpretative responses, with clear introductions and conclusions related to the question.
- Candidates need to be more selective in their comments on language, structure and form, and go into more detail.
- There is some misunderstanding of 'personal response' which is about interpretation of the text rather than anecdote or broad statements of effect.

General comments

Examiners were impressed by how well centres and candidates have dealt with this exam paper in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Although the examined entry for this paper was considerably lower than in the past, the smaller cohort performed to the high standard that we have come to expect in recent sessions. Once again, the prose passage (**Question 2**) was considerably less popular than the poetry (**Question 1**), but both proved equally accessible and suitably demanding across the range of the candidature.

The general standard was high, with very few rubric errors or serious misunderstandings. Where there were serious misunderstandings, it was often because candidates had not read the short introductory rubric which precedes the question in bold, and is intended to help them.

A small number of candidates produced purely narrative responses, but most responses were full and well-organised. Examiners welcomed the large number of strongly written introductions focused on the question and giving an overview of the text as a whole, and conclusions which often contained an evaluation of the text or deeper thinking about its interpretation, rather than simply repeating the terms of the question. Most candidates used the bullet points to organise their paragraphs, which led to compact and succinct responses, better focused than some of the more rambling answers in past sessions. Balanced responses, with equal weight to different stanzas and sections of the texts, were highly rewarded; there were fewer unbalanced or incomplete responses than in some sessions. Candidates make better use of the reading and planning time when they organise clearly developed responses, instead of writing too much, too quickly. Most candidates saw the questions as invitations to develop an interpretation, clearly supported by evidence in the form of short quotation followed by comment on effects. Good candidates group effects together and observe internal patterns within the text.

Some candidates still seem to think that marks are awarded simply for recognising features of language and do not develop their interpretations of the effects of figurative language or narrative choices. More successful candidates make a choice of interesting images, dictional choices or structure in order to develop their own interpretation, making connections between different parts of the text. Few candidates are able to comment meaningfully on rhyme scheme or poetic structure, and some struggle with choices of narrative viewpoint in prose which are more complicated than the purely first personal. Candidates attract higher marks when they say a lot about a little, digging deeper into the writer's choices, instead of superficial commentary on a range of features. Jumping from one device to the next is not likely to be rewarded, and misses the chance to explore the writer's choices and to make links and connections. The relationship between language features and deeper meaning in the text as a whole needs to be clear, and supported by synthesis of evidence from different parts of the text.

Personal response should be the candidate's individual interpretation of the text, making meaning from tone, mood and structural development. There is a close link between AO3 and AO4, as the first drives the second, and Examiners can often distinguish between scripts in the higher mark bands by the quality of comment that follows a quotation, and how well quotations and commentary are integrated within an overall argument. This is linked to the importance of an effective introduction and consideration of the question and bullet point, as the stem question provides an opportunity to evaluate the effects of the text on the reader, and this is supported by the particular characteristics of the text which are identified in the bullet points. Candidates who divide the texts into clear section, and then work on how the text develops, and especially on how it ends, are likely to produce well-structured arguments of their own. Examiners are experienced in judging the quality of engagement with literary texts, even if they might disagree with some of the conclusions reached. 'Personal response' gives candidates space to make their own interpretation of these challenging unseen texts, which are valid if strongly supported by verbal analysis of the textual evidence. Personal response is not about individual anecdotes, or vague statements about the impact of language on an individual reader such as 'this creates a picture in my mind.' There is no requirement to compare the texts to other texts, such as the candidate's set texts, and no need to draw personal 'lessons for life' from the text, as imaginative literature is rarely so didactic.

The courage and ability of most candidates to come to conclusions about meaning and to dig into the language, constantly quoting and commenting, proved impressive and indicated clearly that preparation in most centres is taking place along the right lines. Teachers and candidates deserve much praise for maintaining strong interpretative skills in this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates selected **Question 1** on the poem, 'Up on the Roof' by Maura Dooley. The focus of the question was on how the poet memorably conveys her joy at being on the roof.

Many candidates structured their answers by following the guidance offered in the bullet points and considered how the persona describes her interest in being alone on the roof, how she responds to her partner's actions and words and the significance for her of the experience that she recounts. Some exploited the opportunities offered by the poem to analyse the poet's joy and sense of release when in her rooftop 'haven', by examining her use of language and subtext.

Most candidates recognised the persona's decision to find out why writers and singers extol the pleasures of being 'up on the roof' as an impulsive one. They commented on the poet's use of the vocative address to the reader, at the start of stanzas one and two, and on how this device is used as a 'hook' to draw the reader into the world of the poem. Some considered the poet's choice of the words 'flying or jumping' associating them with a sense of freedom or energy. A handful of candidates took a more sombre view and inferred that the persona was considering suicide.

The majority of candidates recognised the poet's appreciation of being 'alone' and noted that the phrase 'at last', uttered 'like a sigh', suggested that the roof was providing the poet with a form of escape. Several candidates pondered over the phrase, 'the air bright', concluding that this example of synaesthesia reflected the poet's sensory confusion, under the influence of the novelty and the freedom she experienced on the roof of a six-storey building. Many candidates chose to see the persona's partner as an agent of suppression. Others were determined to see a love story unfolding between the freedom-seeking poet in her 'too-light jacket' and the unnamed 'he' who pursues her to her rooftop sanctuary with her 'too-heavy jacket'. Less romantically inclined candidates observed that 'he', who remains a nameless masculine presence throughout the poem, has interrupted the poet's reverie 'under the stars' to muffle her 'foolishness'. These candidates recognised the persona's thinly disguised resentment of the partner's intrusion and of his apparently condescending treatment of her.

Candidates offered varying degrees of condemnation of the partner's words and actions. In the opening stanza, his words '*A blanket on a fire*' are quoted by the speaker and the use of '(he says)' in parenthesis suggested, to some candidates, that the speaker may be imitating 'his' voice as she quotes him. The admission 'and it's true' did not lead candidates to a sense of the speaker's agreement with the statement, rather they saw it as a revelation that, figuratively or literally, the speaker is 'left black, bruised a little, smouldering' by the partner. Many candidates interpreted this as a reference to mental or actual, physical abuse suffered by the speaker. Citing the partner's words to support their ideas, many candidates suggested

that the persona had fled to the rooftop after some altercation with him and that his action, in following her, was either an act of contrition or of controlling behaviour.

In the central stanza, candidates noted the wholly positive nature of the persona's response to being on the roof and the way in which she lists the seemingly endless possibilities for joy, afforded by the rooftop space. Candidates referred to the repetition of 'you can', which appears five times in the space of six lines and is a celebration of what the roof enables her to do. The ending of the stanza, 'You can breathe. You can dream,' presented as two short affirmative sentences seemed, to most candidates, to embody the essence of freedom. Many candidates commented on the 'bird's eye view' that the persona experiences from her vantage point on the roof, and they unpicked the image about the pleasures of reading and reeling in 'life with someone else's bait'.

Some candidates did not understand the images in this stanza and assumed that the speaker was reminiscing about going fishing with her partner. The image of the 'galaxies like so many cracks in ceiling spilling secrets' was also variously interpreted. A small number of literal-minded candidates maintained that the cracks in the ceiling have been caused by too many people 'up of the roof' while some inferred that the persona was disturbed by the noise of other couples arguing in the apartment block.

Most candidates recognised the poet's ongoing enjoyment of the mystery of the night-sky, and they noted the disappointment felt, and signalled, by the poet's use of 'But' to start the final stanza, when 'he' once again disturbs her mood. While some wanted to see the partner's attitude as that of a loving and protective parent, coddling the persona with heavy clothing and engaging in childish games to entertain her, others perceived the partner's suggestion that they play 'I spy' as further evidence of a patronising and attention-seeking male. Not content to star-gaze in silence and wonder, as the poet is seen to be doing, he intrudes into her 'dream', talking down to her as if she was a 'child'. The reference to the stuffiness of the car was seen by many candidates to remind the reader of the weight of the 'too-heavy jacket' stifling the poet's imagination and freedom.

In response to the partner's invitation to play a child's game, the persona looks up to see the 'black and blue above' which many candidates associated with the bruising, alluded to in the first stanza, and the poet's realisation that she will not participate in the 'game'. Astute candidates also noticed the repetition of the affirmative 'can' from the previous stanza and read into her declaration that she 'cannot name' the mysteries of the night sky but she 'can' enjoy them, a new awareness of her own abilities. Candidates celebrated the fact that, with the use of her imagination which has not been suppressed, she 'can' trace the constellations of The Plough and Orion.

Not many candidates recognised the description of the two constellations and some puzzled over the significance of a 'farming tool' and 'the belt of a god'. The reference to 'join the dots' – another popular childhood pursuit – was seen by some candidates as a thinly-veiled jibe at her partner. The concluding statement of what 'all any of us needs' pointedly omitted reference to a partner or to love and, for many candidates, this was a clear signal that while 'up on the roof' the poet had reached a decision about her future.

Question 2

Although fewer candidates chose the prose in this series, many impressive answers were seen. The passage is taken from *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* by Hilary Mantel and the focus of the question is on how the writer portrays Frances's discomfort in her new surroundings.

Many candidates used the bullet pointed prompts to support their examination of how the writer conveys Frances's physical sensations during her walk, her reactions to her disturbing encounter with the truck driver and how she felt during the uncomfortable conversation with Yasmin. Most candidates recognised the convention of the third person, yet omniscient, narrator who is able to convey to the reader all of Frances' inner thoughts and feelings throughout her uncomfortable walk. Some candidates missed this device, instead believing that Frances was telling her own story.

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned aspect of Frances' experience was her sense of being in a completely alien world where, not only was the landscape and the vegetation foreign to her, but all human contact was also challenging and uncomfortable. Many candidates wrote about Frances being completely out of 'her comfort zone' but, in this instance, the cliché rang true. Candidates who looked carefully at the language of the passage remarked upon the presentation of a hostile environment, where, at every turn, Frances perceived danger. From the shrubs that 'spiked the air' to the 'snaking' wires and the 'burning' wall,

everything in sight, including the cranes that ‘split the sky’ and the builder’s skip that ‘forced’ Frances into the road, presented a hazard.

Very good answers were seen where candidates recognised that all of this was taking place in the context of extreme heat, like nothing Frances had ever experienced or expected. Candidates noted that Frances was experiencing another cliché, ‘sensory overload’. Drenched in sweat, her sense of smell, assaulted by the ‘unsavoury’ aromas of the sea and the oniony smell of the hajjis’ skin and hair; her vision assaulted by the vivid colours of their zigzagged gowns and deserted by her usually acute sense of direction, Frances, like the building ahead of her, felt ‘desolate’. Candidates with an eye for pathetic fallacy made the connection between Frances’s inner and outer experiences.

Some candidates did not examine these first three paragraphs very carefully but those who did were better able to appreciate Frances’ state of mind and disorientation, even before the unsettling appearance of the ‘man in a Mercedes truck’. It was this section of the passage that attracted the most detailed attention from candidates. Most were able to recognise the panic felt by Frances when being harried by the ‘man’. Some candidates picked up on the word, ‘crawl’ which they felt was fitting for a ‘low-life’ or for the ‘creepy crawler’ they perceived him to be. Very good observations were made about the sudden short phrases, used by the writer, to describe Frances’ initial response to threat: ‘She ignored him. Quickened her step’ – two actions not linked by a conjunction, which some interpreted as the rhythm of Frances’ heartbeat, accelerating in fear, as she attempts to escape him.

Others concentrated more on the ‘man’s’ use of the imperative, ‘Tell me where you want to go’ and ‘just jump right in’ and of his ironic use of the respectful term of address ‘madam’, when it was clear from his laughter and dismissive wave of his hand that his intentions were anything but ‘respectful’. Some candidates unpicked the description of Frances’s face ‘suffused with a narrow European rage’; they questioned the description of ‘rage’ being ‘narrow’, but appreciated Frances’ bravery in the situation, turning to face down a possibly dangerous man, on top of all she has already had to endure. Some astute candidates, having discussed the intimidating presence of the man who was a stranger to Frances, went on to consider how Yasmin, a female and a neighbour to Frances was, in her own way, equally discomfoting to Frances.

Some candidates noted that this is the third ‘face’ to be mentioned in the space of four lines and that this one was ‘agitated’ and hardly the face of comfort that Frances might have expected. Yasmin’s questions seemed to many candidates a further assault on the already ‘battered’ Frances. The tone of ‘proprietary wrath’ booming down on Frances, as Yasmin ‘hovered above her’ was considered most ‘unsisterly’. Candidates sympathised with Frances, perched on the edge of her seat to prepare for ‘flight’ and once again patronised and belittled, this time by a woman.

Overall, the passage attracted a good number of detailed responses and candidates responded sympathetically to Frances’ ordeal in her new ‘home’.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/42
Unseen

General comments

Key messages

- There were very few rubric errors and misunderstandings, and most candidates explored the deeper implications behind the surface meaning of the text.
- Most candidates are now much better at structuring their interpretative responses, with clear introductions and conclusions related to the question.
- Candidates need to be more selective in their comment on language, structure and form, and go into more detail.
- There is some misunderstanding of 'personal response' which is about interpretation of the text rather than anecdote or broad statements of effect.

General comments

Examiners were impressed by how well centres and candidates have dealt with this exam paper in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Although the examined entry for this paper was considerably lower than in the past, the smaller cohort performed to the high standard that we have come to expect in recent sessions. Once again, the prose passage (**Question 2**) was considerably less popular than the poetry (**Question 1**) but both proved equally accessible and suitably demanding across the range of the candidature.

The general standard was high, with very few rubric errors or serious misunderstandings. Where there were serious misunderstandings, it was often because candidates had not read the short introductory rubric which precedes the question in bold, and is intended to help them.

A small number of candidates produced purely narrative responses, but most responses were full and well-organised. Examiners welcomed the large number of strongly written introductions focused on the question and giving an overview of the text as a whole, and conclusions which often contained an evaluation of the text or deeper thinking about its interpretation, rather than simply repeating the terms of the question. Most candidates used the bullet points to organise their paragraphs, which led to compact and succinct responses, better focused than some of the more rambling answers in past sessions. Balanced responses, with equal weight to different stanzas and sections of the texts, were highly rewarded; there were fewer unbalanced or incomplete responses than in some sessions. Candidates make better use of the reading and planning time when they organise clearly developed responses, instead of writing too much, too quickly. Most candidates saw the questions as invitations to develop an interpretation, clearly supported by evidence in the form of short quotation followed by comment on effects. Good candidates group effects together and observe internal patterns within the text.

Some candidates still seem to think that marks are awarded simply for recognising features of language and do not develop their interpretations of the effects of figurative language or narrative choices. More successful candidates make a choice of interesting images, dictional choices or structure in order to develop their own interpretation, making connections between different parts of the text. Few candidates are able to comment meaningfully on rhyme scheme or poetic structure, and some struggle with choices of narrative viewpoint in prose which are more complicated than the purely first personal. Candidates attract higher marks when they say a lot about a little, digging deeper into the writer's choices, instead of superficial commentary on a range of features. Jumping from one device to the next is not likely to be reward, and missed the chance to explore the writer's choices and to make links and connections. The relationship between language features and deeper meaning in the text as a whole needs to be clear, and supported by synthesis of evidence from different parts of the text.

Personal response should be the candidate's individual interpretation of the text, making meaning from tone, mood and structural development. There is a close link between AO3 and AO4, as the first drives the second, and Examiners can often distinguish between scripts in the higher mark bands by the quality of comment that follows a quotation, and how well quotations and commentary are integrated within an overall argument. This is linked to the importance of an effective introduction and consideration of the question and bullet point, as the stem question provides an opportunity to evaluate the effects of the text on the reader, and this is supported by the particular characteristics of the text which are identified in the bullet points. Candidates who divide the texts into clear section, and then work on how the text develops, and especially on how it ends, are likely to produce well-structured arguments of their own. Examiners are experienced in judging the quality of engagement with literary texts, even if they might disagree with some of the conclusions reached. 'Personal response' gives candidates space to make their own interpretation of these challenging unseen texts, which are valid if strongly supported by verbal analysis of the textual evidence. Personal response is not about individual anecdotes, or vague statements about the impact of language on an individual reader such as 'this creates a picture in my mind.' There is no requirement to compare the texts to other texts, such as the candidate's set texts, and no need to draw personal 'lessons for life' from the text, as imaginative literature is rarely so didactic.

The courage and ability of most candidates to come to conclusions about meaning and to dig into the language, constantly quoting and commenting, proved impressive and indicated clearly that preparation in most centres is taking place along the right lines. Teachers and candidates deserve much praise for maintaining strong interpretative skills in this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The Anglo-Jamaican poet Edward Lucie-Smith's moving poem 'Poet in Winter' describing an experience of writer's block, proved a popular choice in this series. About two-thirds of candidates chose this question, a number of them identifying with the difficulties of the persona in writing. Some compared these thoughts and feelings with their own 'striving in this exam hall', comparing the poet's 'bent head' to their own. More objectively, those who had read the introductory rubric and question carefully appreciated that there was a surface narrative to this text, which might or might not be autobiographical, and that descriptions of winter were an extended metaphor for the poet's barren inspiration. Many offered highly individual responses to the poem and claimed to have developed a new appreciation of the arduous task of literary creation.

The question asked candidates to focus on the vivid portrayal of thoughts and feelings through language and imagery, while the bullet points suggested that they look initially at the descriptions in the first stanza, then at the poet's imagery (especially in the second stanza) and finally at how the writer conveys the poet's isolation in the third stanza. Given this direction, most candidates structured their responses sequentially, but many were able to pick up cross-references and make an effective synthesis of observations from different parts of the poem. Working through the poem, most were able to see how ideas and the dramatisation of the poet's frustrations developed, but most struggled to see just how carefully crafted the poem actually is. Many asserted the poem did not rhyme or was chaotic, perhaps because they struggled to identify the sight rhymes. In fact, the poem has a sophisticated interlocking structure of three rhymes in each stanza, and its elaborate patterns and mastery of enjambment and caesura are an ironic contrast to the struggles of the poet described in it. Many candidates lacked the tools to say anything meaningful about the poem's structure, but some wrote very effectively about the movement of the verse and its pauses, and those who were able to read the syntax of the stanza, each a carefully crafted sentence, were better able to relate form to meaning.

Most candidates had plenty to say about the first stanza, pitying the poet's prison-like confinement to 'a small room' with just 'one table and chair', some linking this to the poet's isolation and others to his dedication to his craft. Strong answers related the poet's halting progress to the rhythm of the lines in which he 'writes, then cancels what he writes'. Many empathised with his frustration as he 'tears up the sheet, runs fingers through his hair'. Some wanted 'tears' to be a pun, although that seems unlikely: the sustained metaphor of 'violent longing' is more relevant than floods of tears. Some felt that longing was related to the first line of the next stanza: 'For him love does not burn, but chains him so' and picked up a pattern of violent images associated with love ('tears', 'fights', 'lie heavy', 'hurled', 'caught and wrung', 'mailed gauntlet'). A few even thought that there were suggestions of self-harm or despair here, associated with disappointments in love. Some of these attempts to construct a narrative became too speculative when they moved away from the language of the text. Those who associate this desperation more with the writer's attempts to pen his

thoughts and emotions adequately were probably closer to the poet's meaning, and that 'violent longing' could as easily be about his passion for writing as his passion for others. The poem keeps returning our focus to the blank page.

Although some candidates treated the descriptions of 'a winter landscape literally', many felt it was entirely metaphorical. Some thought tenor and vehicle existed side by side in this extended set of metaphor describing 'the sensed tilting of his hemisphere'. Some linked this image to 'his bent head' in the third stanza, but those who read over the line ending were better able to pick up the imagery of 'the frozen solstice' and the 'oncoming ice-age of the will', to suggest that the poet's inspiration is frozen over. These candidates sometimes linked the imagery of winter ice with 'familiar roads are covered now...by a blank sameness' in the second stanza and to the 'false snowstorm' of the third stanza. Perhaps it was the last image in particular which helped many candidates to decide that this winter was largely imagery. Stronger answers also made the link to the whiteness of that blank sheet of paper, helped by the simile 'thoughts are like granite hurled into soft snow'. Many wrote effectively about this contrast, linking granite-like thoughts to the words which 'lie heavy on his tongue' and the 'soft snow' to the effects of a 'polar wind' which becomes the chilling 'draught' scattering the poet's 'fragments of verses' in the third stanza. One candidate wrote that 'the writer uses the simile to symbolise the way the writer is throwing words onto a blank piece of paper' and that 'he believes his thoughts and feelings taint the beauty of his mind and subsequently the paper he writes them on'. This and similar answers began to probe the origins of the writer's block. There were some strong responses to the idea that love is not a burning inspiration for the poet, but a chilling reminder of his isolation, and to the idea that 'familiar roads', his usual ways of writing or living, are 'covered now' by an all-enveloping blankness. Perhaps the most difficult image for the poet's struggles was that of 'the mailed gauntlet' at the end of stanza two. Weaker responses tended to leave this out altogether, but there were strong answers, helped by the descriptive gloss, exploring how this image personifies the polar wind as an invincible challenger, and conveys the bitterness of the poet's struggles against the chill and ice of a metaphorical winter. One candidate felt this personified the poet's task as a villain and suggested that 'the old-fashioned vocabulary creates a fantasy, fairy-tale atmosphere'.

The third stanza begins 'And yet', which is a discourse marker to indicate a change of direction or viewpoint. In this stanza, nothing really changes, but there is a stronger indication of the violent subjectivity of the poet's feelings. Anyone else 'opening the door' to the study portrayed in the first stanza would not see anything to disturb them, and would observe the poet at work quite 'casually'. Some candidates felt this made the wind that blows through the stanza as 'false' as the stage snowstorm described in the simile in the final line. Many commented on the laboured alliteration of the 'slowly scribbled page' to describe the poet's quickly hidden and ultimately fruitless efforts, or on the return to winter in the final lines. A few suggested that the imagery of 'the stage' suggested the artifice and performance of poetic expression, while others were interested in the eschatology of 'damned to strive' to suggest that writing has become, for this poet, the torment of the damned, which he seems predestined to suffer. One candidate thought that the observer opening the door suggested 'god is watching the damned man struggle through the snow.'

Here, in the final stanza as in the first, some candidates made very effective parallels between the poet's physical environment and his imagination or mental state, and how he seems singled out for a lonely destiny. Some of these personal responses were very well-expressed, commenting, for instance, on how the poet's thoughts 'can not be retrieved in the midst of the rubbish of scrunched up papers in his head, preventing him from achieving a breakthrough' or 'he creates his own snowstorm in the process of putting treasure among the ashes, no longer to be found'. There was engagement with the idea of a 'stage' and of the 'hypothetical observer'. Some candidates considered the act of writing as a kind of performance, or saw the poet as his own worst critic. One wrote that 'he feels eyes watching from behind, from the open door, in silent judgement'. Another commented that poetry itself was a 'showy endeavour'. Others related the 'draught' that scatters the poetic fragments to the 'polar wind' and the 'tilting of his hemisphere' to link the stanzas together and illustrate how the poet's inspiration had cooled. A few thought the poet had finally found some inspiration in this final stanza but struggled to support this assertion. More common was the view that this stanza represented a return to the bleak and impoverished reality of stanza one.

These responses, and the structure of the previous paragraphs, should show that candidates work will be most effective when they work carefully through the poem, but go beyond spotting features of the writing. They attract more marks when they: develop their ideas, make links between different observations, comment on how language and imagery prompt interpretative comment and have an effect on the tone and mood of the whole text, as well as their impact on the reader. Examiners appreciated the wide range of personal responses to this poem, which became effective critical responses when candidates linked their interpretations clearly to the poet's methods and purposes, through succinct quotation and developed commentary.

Question 2

The extract from the memoir *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* by the eminent South African writer J. M. Coetzee provided some interesting challenges for candidates trained to spot the more obvious literary devices. Coetzee's spare prose deploys few adjectives and adverbs, and there is little imagery in this passage. Effects are rather more subtle, and the emotional power of the passage lies largely in its subtext, and deeper implications. Thus, this passage proved a very effective test of AOs 2 and 4, while language analysis needed to be more stringent. However, candidates did have an opportunity to write about an interesting choice of narrative viewpoint, and it is a pity few took this up. The writer is clearly writing autobiographically, yet chooses to do so in the third person and in the present tense. By dramatising his boyhood self in this way, he vividly captures what the boy saw and felt at the time, while distancing himself from the personality revealed. The third bullet point in particular asked candidates to consider narrative point of view and voice, and those trained to do so produced more convincing and critical responses. Strong candidates commented on Coetzee's manipulation of the memoir form, and on the text's apparent emotional detachment. One wrote 'perhaps he does not want to associate with his past self' while another response said 'the detail in which he describes the bicycle suggests that it is seared in his memory, even all this time later'.

The question asked about how the writer memorably conveyed his family's life and relationships, and while many struggled to analyse in detail what was memorable about the writer's style, many were able to engage with his telling use of detail, and most were confident in addressing family relationships and the tensions revealed. Many candidates seemed very well-versed in the language of popular psychology and described relationships, probably not inaccurately, as 'toxic' or even understood the boy's jealous feelings towards his mother suggesting 'she was a prisoner of her son's love'. However, more basic responses were confused by the use of third person, or by the logo of the red goblin on the vacuum cleaner; some conflated the boy's emotions and betrayal with the father's or thought the goblin was the narrator or his little brother. With the reference to Cape Town some candidates recognised the setting and many showed good contextual understanding of patriarchal attitudes to women at a time before women's liberation movements. Surprisingly few put the two contexts together and related attitudes to women to wider postcolonial and political issues. Context can also be a distraction from focus on the literary text itself and is not a requirement in this paper or syllabus. Exploring the narrative structure of the writer's memories, and ways in which he 'zooms in' on particular details and moments which represent his feelings at the time, was more effective.

Candidates often performed well by working through each bullet point in turn and working chronologically through the passage. The writer begins by portraying the family's life in their new home in Worcester. Most candidates were not impressed by the surroundings and some thought there was evidence that the family fortunes had declined. Many wrote about 'this box of a house' as the first of several metaphors of entrapment or even imprisonment, and most responded to the 'bleak' environment and to the way dust 'seeps' everywhere. Daily life seemed to candidates dull and monotonous, especially for the mother as she 'trails' her vacuum cleaner behind her. Some commented that the dust and the vacuum cleaner seemed to have more life than the human inhabitants. A few saw the 'goblin' as some kind of Imp of the Perverse, while some were disturbed by the description of the boy sucking up ants 'to their death'. Most found the descriptions of 'plagues of flies', dust and ants distasteful, and could understand why the boy as well as the mother would feel trapped and restless. A number of candidates felt that this was a sinister contribution to a mood of restless unhappiness, and many commented on the trio of plagues in this paragraph as effective layering to shape meaning. A few also saw the ants as a metaphor for the mother's crushed desires, and the boy's itchy nights as a representation of her own itch to escape. Both mother and boy are described as 'sucking up' their victims, but in later parts of the passage they are themselves sucked up into a family hierarchy neither are happy with.

The story of the mother's bicycle dominates the rest of the extract, and most could see the bicycle's symbolic significance as a representation of the thwarted desire to escape confinement and entrapment, not just within the house but implicitly within family life and an unhappy marriage. Some saw the 'box of a house' as indicating not just physical confinement but the confinement of gender roles too. Some candidates were intrigued by the mother's impulsive desire for a horse when she probably did not know how to ride one, and many were disgusted by the father's sarcastic comparison to 'Lady Godiva', rightly calling out the implicit misogyny and assertion of patriarchy. Stronger responses often referenced the excessive use of personal pronouns and short sentences and were able to comment on their effect on the reader. When the bicycle itself is introduced as 'black' and 'huge and heavy' some felt this ominous, while others wondered whether the fact that it was 'second-hand' indicated the family's reduced circumstances, or represented another woman's failed bid for freedom. Certainly the bicycle is too big for the boy, in a telling detail about his own immaturity. Several candidates were appalled at the father's refusal to teach the mother to ride the bicycle, and felt this was a strong indication of her isolation and lack of support. Most sympathised with her cry 'I will

not be a prisoner in this house' and contrasted this with the father's misogynist presumption that 'women do not ride bicycles'.

The final bullet point suggested that candidates evaluate the writer's retrospective feelings about the behaviour of his father and himself. This required more detailed appreciation of the distance the writer places between his older and younger self, and his deeper understanding that this was a pivotal moment of betrayal, when he decided, against his better instincts, that he 'belongs with the men'. Some, however, got muddled between the boy and his father at this point, thinking the father felt regret or a sense of betrayal. Another misunderstanding was to read the father's jokes literally, thinking that the townsfolk of Worcester really had mocked the mother, when this was really just a construct within the father's belittling 'jokes'. A few thought the mother rode away and that it was she, rather than the bike which had disappeared at the end of the passage. These mistakes were the result of not reading carefully enough and reflecting on how the writer is portraying memories. Those who thought about the passage as a whole, and the significance of the way it ends avoided this mistake – and made up the vast majority of responses. Most candidates understood the meaning of the final paragraph and the nature of the boy's betrayal of his mother, linking it to moment he caught a glimpse of her looking 'young and fresh and mysterious'. Polysyndeton adds emphasis here, and shows the boy, in memory, lingering over this moment: when the mother 'pedals away' from him, she is also 'escaping towards her own desire' and the boy seems threatened by those prepositions. His reluctance to grant her 'a desire of her own' was identified as jealous self-protection and the reason why he ganged up with a father who is generally portrayed unsympathetically here.

Stronger candidates often noticed that the mother is not 'gifted' with repartee and related this to the reported speech in the passage, where the father's sarcasm and jokes dominate and contrast with the mother's initial stubbornness followed by her equally impulsive submission. The best answers wondered if her surrender was in some way linked with her son's betrayal. Several noticed the lexical field of conflict including the idea that she had been 'defeated'. The boy himself feels he 'must bear part of the blame'. A few candidates noticed the starkness of these monosyllables and felt the weight of his guilt. One or two noticed that the boy chooses to laugh at her through the description of her riding 'in an uncertain, wobbling way, straining to turn the heavy cranks', rather than dwell too long on the disturbing suggestion that she might be 'escaping from him'. Most understood the nature of an oppressive patriarchy which has conscripted the boy's support by the end of the passage. Not all pinpointed the exact moment when this happens, in the last three paragraphs printed on page 4 of the paper, in contrast to the mother's assertion that 'I will be free'. Many noticed that the boy initially sided with his mother and 'thought it splendid that she should have her own bicycle'. A few noticed that in his imagination he sees them cycling together, and one or two noticed that the trio of 'she and he and his brother' deliberately excludes his father. Strong answers made the observation that it is the 'jokes' that undermined this position: the boy begins to wonder 'what if his father is right' as his mother is not able to make a quick quip in response but just counters with 'dogged silence'. Even in memory, the writer describes the mother's attempts to teach herself as 'silly'. The writer's language shows 'what a betrayal this is' when the boy's 'heart turns against her'. That rare moment of imagery suggests the emotional significance of this, while the stark short sentence shows that 'now his mother is all alone'. The writer implies that he not only feels guilt retrospectively, but he felt it at the time. The strongest responses showed a deep engagement with those emotions and how they are represented on the page.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/43
Unseen

Key messages

- There were very few rubric errors and misunderstandings, and most candidates explored the deeper implications behind the surface meaning of the text.
- Most candidates are now much better at structuring their interpretative responses, with clear introductions and conclusions related to the question.
- There were very few rubric errors and misunderstandings, and most candidates explored the deeper implications behind the surface meaning of the text.
- Candidates need to be more selective in their comment on language, structure and form, and go into more detail.
- There is some misunderstanding of 'personal response' which is about interpretation of the text rather than anecdote or broad statements of effect.

General comments

Examiners were impressed by how well centres and candidates have dealt with this exam paper in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Although the examined entry for this paper was considerably lower than in the past, the smaller cohort performed to the high standard that we have come to expect in recent sessions. Once again, the prose passage (**Question 2**) was considerably less popular than the poetry (**Question 1**) but both proved equally accessible and suitably demanding across the range of the candidature.

The general standard was high, with very few rubric errors or serious misunderstandings. Where there were serious misunderstandings, it was often because candidates had not read the short introductory rubric which precedes the question in bold and is intended to help them.

A small number of candidates produced purely narrative responses, but most responses were full and well-organised. Examiners welcomed the large number of strongly written introductions focused on the question and giving an overview of the text as a whole, and conclusions which often contained an evaluation of the text or deeper thinking about its interpretation, rather than simply repeating the terms of the question. Most candidates used the bullet points to organise their paragraphs, which led to compact and succinct responses, better focused than some of the more rambling answers in past sessions. Balanced responses, with equal weight to different stanzas and sections of the texts, were highly rewarded; there were fewer unbalanced or incomplete responses than in some sessions. Candidates make better use of the reading and planning time when they organise clearly developed responses, instead of writing too much, too quickly. Most candidates saw the questions as invitations to develop an interpretation, clearly supported by evidence in the form of short quotation followed by comment on effects. Good candidates group effects together and observe internal patterns within the text.

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The courage and ability of most candidates to come to conclusions about meaning and to dig into the language, constantly quoting and commenting, proved impressive and indicated clearly that preparation in most Centres is taking place along the right lines. Teachers and candidates deserve much praise for maintaining strong interpretative skills in this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates selected **Question 1** on the poem 'Privacy of Rain' by Helen Dunmore. The focus of the question was on how the poet vividly conveyed her enjoyment of the rain.

Most of the candidates used the bullet points to respond to the task by addressing how the poet describes the beginning of the rain, the impact of the rain on the senses and the effects of the rain on the speaker and on the world which she observes around her. The focus and sequencing of bullet points is carefully designed to help guide candidates through their response to text and task in a full, structured and logical fashion although candidates should be reminded that they should not feel bound or restricted by the bullet points – some strong responses may well exhibit a more flexible or expansive structure in their development. Certainly candidates should also be reminded that simply rehearsing the terms of the stem question and of the bullet points in the opening paragraph is not an especially effective or profitable way to begin their answer. Candidates should be encouraged from the outset to attempt to get to the heart of what they see is central, interesting or illuminating about the subject and the writer's approach to it. So, in this case, many candidates began by observing that the poet's response to her experience of rain went beyond simply 'enjoyment', but manifested feelings of joy, sensuous pleasure, exhilaration, profound admiration and so forth. Some candidates used their recognition of the multi-faceted character of rain as the springboard for detailed exploration of these different elements in the main body of the essay. Others saw the poet's appreciation of the beauty in an everyday natural phenomenon and her looking at her subject with fresh, alert eyes, implicitly challenging perhaps conventional or negative notions of rain as, for example, simply depressing or restricting. Whatever the nature of the candidate's point of focus, such an opening encourages the coherent development of a personal response or line of interpretation through the course of the essay, while also helping to suggest to the examiner a clear critical or holistic understanding of the text and authorial intention.

In terms of understanding (AO2), strong responses tended to show a clear grasp of the ways in which the poet enjoys the rain in a sensuous or, indeed, sensual manner and often explored the intimate bond which she appears to have with her subject. There was an appreciation of the transformative power of the rain which works on a number of levels, whether that be in the initiation of energetic movement, cleansing, nourishment or the creation of private spaces. With regard to the latter, some candidates struggled somewhat with the 'privacy' of the poem's title and what this might mean or connote and, to be fair, the idea is only touched on somewhat ambiguously in the poem itself. Some strong responses focused on the closing off of spaces by the 'curtains' of rain or people's retreat onto verandahs or 'under canopies'.

Many candidates were able to make a developed response to the way in which the poet achieved her effects (AO3) with much detailed and, at times, sensitive analysis of the writing. 'Feature spotting' as an end in itself was thankfully not too much in evidence with even mid-band responses attempting to engage with the specific effects and connotations of the techniques employed and how these related to the poem's meaning or range of meanings. Just a snapshot of the points of analytical focus encountered in scripts might include the exploration of language in the vivid use of visual, aural and tactile imagery or the extended personification of both the rain and the different elements of the world it affects. Many candidates discussed the use of the single-word sentence repetition of 'Rain.' and what this might suggest in terms of authorial attitude or mood. Some candidates focused on the effect of the full stop here, particularly in the context of the poem's reasonably intensive use of enjambment elsewhere. As regards enjambment, candidates generally had some sensible things to say about this feature whether in its directly mimetic quality in relation to the falling of rain or, more subtly, in its heightening of the sense of movement, energy and fluidity in the poem. While, however, a close focus on the detail of punctuation can at times be useful and, indeed, occasionally illuminating, some candidates perhaps spent too long on an exhaustive survey of the poem's number of full stops or commas, for instance, without really furthering their appreciation of the text. More productive tended to be a discussion of the effect and nature of the longer third stanza or, in particular, the parallelism in the first and last stanza. The ability to analyse how a text 'works' as a whole entity and the writer's crafting of a structural unity (or, conversely, elements of incoherence, dissonance or fragmentation) is often the mark of an especially strong response.

The poem is obviously particularly open to a range of personal interpretative responses (AO4) and there was much to admire in the depth and variety of these in evidence. Some candidates explored to great effect the romantic or erotic qualities implicit in the text at points and how the rain 'makes things happen' in private, covert or secret places. Rain as a cleansing, purifying agent was at the heart of many responses with candidates exploring how the image of 'rinsing/tight hairdos' was emblematic of a more profound restoration of a carefree naturalness and 'innocence' in the world. Many chose to focus on ideas connected to the rain's perceived sustaining and regenerative powers with many placing these powers within the context of the rain as being representative of Nature as a whole. Ecological or 'green' readings of the poem clearly had a certain validity in this regard although some had a tendency to become somewhat strained in their polemics, with little textual evidence in support or perhaps a slightly disproportionate symbolic weight accorded to, say, 'the brick wall' as indicative of the ugliness/blindness/inertia/imprisoning restrictiveness etc. of the world of man in contrast to the energising beauty and freedom of Nature. The range of responses to the closing image of 'bud-silt/covers the windscreens' was interesting with some candidates interpreting this as the poet suggesting darkly destructive natural forces, hostile and inimical to man and his works. Others, more convincingly on the whole, read this as simply a consciously anti-climactic return to mundane reality and the everyday nuisance that rain undeniably can be. Whatever the precise line of thought or interpretation, there is undoubtedly a certain authorial ambivalence to explore here and success in this regard is dependent on the candidate's appreciation of what is implicit in a text and, in particular, its pervasive tone or tones. Exposing candidates to as wide a range of poetry beyond the set texts is invaluable in helping to attune the candidates' 'ear' for such tonal nuances or shifts. One might also observe that a number of candidates did not give themselves the chance to make a comment on these lines at all as their responses did not get through to the end of the text. Candidates should be reminded of the virtue of leaving sufficient time to examine the poem or extract's close in some detail as there is invariably something valuable to observe here in relation to the text's totality or the final note on which we, as readers, are left.

Question 2

A sizeable minority of candidates selected to answer **Question 2** on the opening of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan and examiners were impressed by the quality of responses. There has been a suggestion in previous series of centres having clearly directed their candidates to opt for the poetry question rather than the prose. While there has been less evidence of this in recent years, it remains good practice for centres to encourage their candidates to read both texts/questions carefully at the start of the examination as many will no doubt find the prose extract amenable or possibly engrossing in its subject-matter and/or in the writer's approach to it. Certainly, this extract, while quite challenging in some of its aspects, offered much scope for the candidates to respond in considerable detail and at a very high level to its 'writerly' qualities and its vivid use of language and a range of narrative techniques to draw the reader in to the story.

The question especially encouraged candidates to explore how the writer makes this such an intriguing opening to a novel and it was clear that the majority of candidates who attempted this question did indeed find it genuinely 'intriguing' and this undoubtedly goes a long way to explaining the generally high standard of response. Again, the majority of candidates used the bullet points effectively to discuss how the writer vividly portrays Dorrigo's earliest memory in the church hall, the central protagonist's memories of Jackie Maguire

and his elder brother Tom and his reflections on the ways men express their feelings. The majority of candidates demonstrated a knowledge (AO1) that the writer presents Dorrigo as an adult reminiscing and thinking back to childhood memories of war time and the era which followed in which men were discouraged from crying. They showed understanding (AO2) of the marked contrast between his earliest memories of the women in the light of the church hall and his later ones of men crying. Memories of being loved and secure – blessed, indeed – as a toddler are set in uncomfortable juxtaposition with darker memories of men's outward expression of suffering (and society's implicit condemnation of this as 'weakness') which as a child he only partly understands at the time but which he finds striking, indeed, shocking and which remain 'fixed' in his memory. It is fair to say that a number of candidates struggled somewhat to show a clear understanding of the precise nature of Dorrigo's reflections which follow on male expression of sorrow or grief and the changing nature of social attitudes towards this. Such difficulty was understandable given the density of the writing here, its largely abstract nature, its shifts in time and the somewhat subtly ambivalent and ambiguous nature of the protagonist's thoughts together with their ironical and at times mocking tones. That being said, many candidates showed a particularly impressive grasp in their tracing of the movement of male crying from taboo to a socially accepted and, indeed, encouraged performative act.

As has been observed many times in previous reports, if candidates are taught to identify the nature of the narrative perspective or point of view being employed in texts, this can be greatly to their advantage. Where we as readers are seeing the story from, as it were, and how the writing – and our response to it – is shaped by the nature of the narrative 'voice' should clearly be integral to any analysis (AO3). Here, while the narrative is written technically in the third person, the writing in the opening aligns itself almost entirely with the perspective of the central protagonist's consciousness, his memories and thoughts. Many candidates discussed the effect of the reader being 'dropped into' Dorrigo's inner world and having to establish an objectivity and sense of context as he or she went along. Many candidates found the sense of mystery and slight disorientation felt as a result certainly one of the intriguing and engaging elements of the opening. Some candidates commented on the 'random' nature of the memories described although such an observation clearly underplayed the thematic coherence of the passage, for all the striking time movements backwards and forwards. Many sensibly began by identifying the opening rhetorical question as an obvious narrative 'hook'. While some candidates were somewhat baffled by the opacity of this question, many were able to use it to begin to develop the contrast, on both literal and metaphorical levels, between the warm, loving sunlight of Dorrigo's very earliest memories and the darkness and sense of aloneness to follow. Some strong responses recognised a broadly philosophical, existential quality to the question while others presciently saw it as perhaps foreshadowing not just the darkness of Jackie and Tom's world but that of Dorrigo himself later in life – candidates were intrigued as to what the precise nature of his story might be.

As already stated, for such a relatively brief extract there was much for candidates to work on in terms of developing their response to the ways in which the writer initiated and sustained reader engagement. There was, for example, much really excellent work on unpicking the various elements of the comparison of the rhythmic sound of Jackie's crying with the 'thumping' on the ground of a rabbit in a snare and the range of possible connotations that the reader might feel in terms of intensity of pain and suffering, intimations of death, dehumanisation and so forth. Very strong responses focused on the disturbing or menacing qualities of the diction in 'a forearm rising up' and 'its black outline leaping in the greasy light of a kerosene lantern.' Many candidates pointed to the claustrophobic connotations of Jackie's torment being set in a 'small dark kitchen' and how men's outward expression of grief or sadness was seen as shameful and had to remain hidden, played out in corners. Very strong responses highlighted the structure of that particular sentence with 'crying' tagged on to its close after a comma with poignant effect. In similar vein, others observed the powerful use of short sentences for effect as in 'Over and over' or 'He said nothing at all' and the emphatic force of the repetition of 'nothing' here. Much good work was done on the use of figurative language as in the 'sea'/beach' simile or later in such phrases as 'the only compass in life' or the extended metaphor of emotion as 'a theatre in which people were players who no longer knew who they were off the stage.' Candidates who, again, were able to carry through their analysis to the very end of the text were able to comment on the troubling implications of the final sentence 'He just stared into the flames' and all that it suggested about Tom's numbed and alienated psychological state as well as how it echoed ideas about the destructiveness of war or contrasted pointedly with the 'blinding light' of the opening with its 'transcendent welcome'.

As suggested earlier, the text and task really worked at engaging the candidates and there was much strong personal response and interpretation (AO4) in evidence through the course of many essays. The character and experiences of Dorrigo – as well as those of Jackie and Tom – clearly hooked many candidates' curiosity and imagination. In the context of current debates and concerns relating to mental health, the theme of male expression of feelings of loss, grief or depression is clearly a topical one and definitely engaged the interest of candidates, helping to inform the immediacy and depth of their response even if some struggled, as already indicated, in unravelling the precise nature of the central character's own reflections on the subject.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/05
Coursework

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- select relevant material to meet the requirements of the text
- substantiate their arguments with relevant, concise references to the text
- analyse in detail and sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- write exhaustively and lose focus on the task
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- list writers' techniques without close analysis
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses.

General comments

There was much evidence of coursework of a high standard this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the texts they had studied; this was a testament to the hard work of both candidates and teachers in this most challenging of academic years. There were a few instances of syllabus infringements, for example where candidates entered assignments dealing with only one poem or short story or with only a discrete extract from a prose or drama text. These deficiencies were mentioned in the individual reports to centres.

The most successful assignments sustained a clear focus on a carefully worded task designed to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the highest levels in the mark scheme. In these assignments, candidates selected relevant material from the text to address the task that had been set. Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text, sometimes at exhaustive length, but did not tailor their material to the specific demands of the task. This was an unproductive approach taken in many poetry assignments where candidates worked through the poem offering a line-by-line commentary, in so doing, losing the sight of the task. Candidates should be taught the skill of selecting material judiciously in a way that directly addresses the task set – this is true for examination questions as well as coursework assignments.

The most convincing essays sustained a critical engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects (Assessment Objective 3), relating their points to the task. Less successful assignments often commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to their use in the text and sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, anaphora and enjambment in poetry essays, without regard to the thrust of the question.

Several centres submitted empathic responses, with most providing the necessary information: the name of the character and the precise moment in the text that the interior monologue takes place. The most successful responses captured a convincingly authentic voice for the chosen character and moment. It should be remembered that significant characters from novels and plays (not short stories) lend themselves best to empathic tasks.

Guidance for teachers

Guidance on task-setting can be found in the Coursework Handbook, which stresses the importance of (a) wording tasks that direct candidates explicitly to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects and (b) avoiding insufficiently challenging command words such as 'Describe' and 'Explain'. Teachers within the centre should together discuss the appropriateness of proposed tasks before they are given to candidates. This means that any problems can be nipped in the bud.

There follows a reminder of what constitutes both good practice in the presentation of coursework folders:

- Start each assignment with the full wording of the task. In the case of empathic responses, the chosen character and moment should be clearly stated. This is important since it allows the moderator to determine how successfully the candidate has captured an authentic voice for the character at the specified moment.
- Use focused ticking in the body of the text to indicate valid and thoughtful points, together with concise marginal and summative comments which relate to the wording of the levels descriptors.
- Provide a brief explanation on the assignment or cover sheet in cases where marks are changed during internal moderation. Such purposeful annotation aids transparency and contributes to the robustness of the assessment as it enables a centre to justify its award of particular marks. It is, therefore, not appropriate to send clean (i.e. unannotated) copies of assignments.

The following examples of unhelpful annotation should be avoided: excessive ticking (e.g. of every paragraph or every line); hyperbolic praise of work of indifferent quality; labelling by assessment objective. Simply putting the supposed relevant AOs in the margin is of very little benefit to the moderator, as it does not reveal the *extent* to which a particular assessment objective has been addressed; instead, more specific reference should be made to the relevant levels descriptors.

Most centres carried out administration efficiently. Cover sheets (individual record cards) were secured by treasury tag or staple which allowed easy access to candidate work. In these centres care had been taken to:

- include all candidates' details on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form
- transcribe totals accurately across the various documents.

All centres are advised to include a clerical checking stage in their moderation procedures before submitting their paperwork to Cambridge [International](#). This check should be carried out by a different person from the one who completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets originally.