

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/21

Writing

Key Messages

The questions differentiated a range of candidates successfully, with answers ranging from the very mature and thoughtful to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. At the high end, there were a good number of highly imaginative and engaging narrative/descriptive responses in **Section A**; and sophisticated and strongly purposeful argumentative/discursive compositions in **Section B**. These fluent and mature responses, as ever, were a delight to read and very impressive, considering the time constraints under which they were produced. At the lower end of the range, answers tended to rely on undirected, drifting or undeveloped plots, with lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue, especially with speech marks; evidence of apparently 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements and time management seemed satisfactory.

General Comments

The majority of candidates made real efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'colours and sounds' or 'time and place'; or a prescribed form/structure, such as a descriptive piece of writing or an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as script for a voiceover, debate or radio script. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in speeches opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

The Carnival

There were a few effective responses which evoked a lively atmosphere through interesting sensory imagery and visual/ auditory details. The creation of characters using dialogue, third person and specific details helped to develop the narrative in some responses. However, in a number of scripts, an appropriate structure was not a strong feature – the requirement to write a story **opening** was frequently overlooked and endings were often conclusive. Candidates who attempted this question often focused heavily on 'colours/sounds' and description overtook narrative in many responses. Less successful responses focused on first person recounts and were less effective as a result. Stronger responses gave a clear sense of a story to come.

Question 2

Sunday Morning

This was quite a popular choice of question, but a significant number of candidates were confused with the form required for the task. Narrative focus was common with quite a few responses that used a simple, linear narrative form which overlooked the need for description. The stronger responses were those that effectively evoked a particular time and a particular place through the use of present tense verb phrases, sensory imagery and close attention to small details. Less successful responses might have been improved by providing more imaginative and/or original descriptive detail beyond the depiction of a central character just lazing around in bed all day.

Question 3

Bitterness

Few responses to this question were seen. Candidates who attempted it tended towards quite predictable themes – failed relationships in particular. Most wrote in appropriate autobiographical form. The idea of ‘not yet coming to terms with experiences’ was generally not successfully addressed. Responses were frequently focused on the central character having to overcome some kind of adversity but lacked the sense of ‘reflection’ demanded by the question. A few responses effectively conveyed a ‘bitter’ state of mind within a credible character. A small number of candidates wrote a third person narrative response, overlooking the requirement to write an autobiographical piece.

Section B

Question 4

Student Council Speeches

This was the most popular choice of question on this paper: many responses were focused and interesting in content but most lacked structure. The strongest responses were those that created two very different voices to appeal to different elements within the imagined audience. The use of colloquial language alongside a more formal register was an effective technique employed by some candidates to create contrasting voices. Less successful responses were rather unoriginal in content – they simply identified some contentious or topical issues and gave opposing perspectives on them without creating the different voices/attitudes demanded by the question.

Question 5

Animal Welfare Voiceover

This was not a popular choice of question and not many responses were seen. Of those that were seen, it was evident that candidates struggled to employ the conventions of the form successfully. Appropriate structural devices were largely overlooked, and responses generally read like newsletters or brochures. Most made no reference to images or the conventions of scripting. Some candidates attempted emotive writing to persuade the reader (not viewer) of the need to have welfare charities for animals. Candidates approached the question in a general manner and therefore suffered with structure and a convincing tone. Some candidates spent too much time in their format for the promotional film rather than the content. However, most candidates did attempt to create a sense of a serious and active organisation.

Question 6

Youth Culture Radio Broadcast

This was the least popular task. Very few responses to this question were seen. Conventions of the script writing form were generally not apparent and candidates did not always give a clear sense of their response being a script for a radio programme. Where candidates did use different voices, it was in an interview form and so they were, essentially, scripting the un-scriptable. Some responses were just a description of youth culture. Some candidates seemed not to know the meaning of youth culture.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/22

Writing

Key Messages

The questions successfully differentiated the whole span of candidates, with responses ranging from the engagingly fluent and mature to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. There were quite a few exceptionally imaginative and convincing narrative/descriptive responses in **Section A**; and sophisticated and highly structured purposeful argumentative/discursive compositions in **Section B**. These fluent and mature responses, as ever, were a delight to read and were very impressive, considering the time constraints under which they were produced. At the lower end of the range, answers tended to lack purpose, featured undeveloped plots, and contained lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue; evidence of apparently 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements, and time management seemed satisfactory.

General Comments

The majority of candidates made genuine efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'mood and character', 'colours and sounds'; or a prescribed form/structure such as a descriptive piece of writing or an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as a newsletter, reference or a brochure. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in references opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

Opening to a Story called *The Market*

This was a very popular choice, though responses tended to be largely descriptive pieces lacking clear narrative control, and were consequently unconvincing as openings for a story. Strong responses came from candidates who correctly identified this question as 'an opening to a story' and also incorporated language effects, summoning interesting sounds and colours into the plot of the narrative, with ambitious vocabulary. Narrative strands included a theft of market goods; a child who was lost; the often comic mismatch between competing vendors' shouting; the narrator's adventures in and around the marketplace, often being coerced into attending the market by their controlling mothers. Less successful responses were either purely descriptive or ended abruptly without there being hints of an 'opening', or discursive pieces sometimes debating the worth of markets generally or advertising a particular market's merits. Tense confusions occurred and not only for the usual reason of a mistaken sense of immediacy/excitement: perhaps some candidates were trying to position the description of a market within a narrator's past experience, while trying to be alive to the bright colours and loud sounds created in a spurious present.

Question 2

A Descriptive Piece called *From Dusk Till Dawn*

This question produced some of the strongest responses. However, many candidates also misread this question, as 'dawn till dusk' rather than the correct 'dusk till dawn', with a number of unfocused descriptions from less successful candidates of their morning routine. The strongest responses had an imaginative sense of the passing of time, using different experiences of the (usually first-person) protagonist to describe differing emotions and/or evocations of landscape. A lot of these combined light/dark imagery with skylines involving the passage of the stars, moon or sun across the sky. Many protagonists had stayed up through the night because of insomnia or thinking about their problems/troubles in a reflective way. Less successful responses provided listings of laboured descriptions; a number displayed a loss of focus on passing time when digressing too much about personal feelings.

Question 3

An Autobiographical Piece called *Contentment*

This was the most successfully answered question of the three from Section A. Strong responses had a well-rounded, engaging and/or imaginative take on what it meant to be contented, and the path the narrator took (or was taken upon) to reach that point. Selected experiences that suggested either a sudden revelation or, conversely, a slow accumulation of wisdom, were seen. Because of the usual tendency amongst candidates to accentuate the gloomy/morbid experiences, the ability to shape a narrative in a positive way stood out even more. Less successful responses were potted life histories (often over-long) – usually long lists of bad things happening – with a sudden reversal at the end.

Section B

Question 4

Contrasting References for a Job Candidate

This question involved the balancing act of establishing 'different experiences/attitudes', while at the same time writing about recognisably the same person in both letters. Successful responses usually included some ironic interplay between the two former employers, either in the simple relating of different dates, so that one could see a progression/regression in the job candidate's virtues/faults, up to rather subtle differences in employers' attitudes; sometimes using dramatic irony to make the reader aware of 'blind spots' in one employer's comprehension, usually through naivety. Less successful responses used simplistic opposing virtues or faults where the job candidate was not recognisably the same. A few misunderstood the task and wrote references for two differently-named people, while a few even wrote job applications.

Question 5

Campaign Group Tackling Issues of Poverty

There were some quite impressive responses to this question although some tried to persuade readers to join the organisation, which was not a requirement of the task. Stronger responses tackled the issues in a sequentially logical/organised way, by sub-headings or paragraphs. Often, better answers included 'human interest' stories in the first couple of paragraphs, as in the tried-and-tested journalistic practice. Less successful responses became carried away with trying to persuade or exhort their readers at the expense of explaining the issues. Some were overly emotional, or forgot they were a campaign group and wrote too subjectively, or wrote the piece as a speech, rather than as a newsletter text.

Question 6

Text for a Building Company's Redevelopment Brochure

The 'brochure' aspect of this question encouraged a lively, though not too informal, style with structured texts often aided by sub-headings to organise points. Stronger responses combined explaining the 'issues' with persuading the 'local residents' to take part – many answers did just this. Less successful responses usually erred on the side of too much persuasion, exhortation in most cases, to the detriment of a healthy discussion

of 'issues', often reading as a pure advert rather than a reasoned argument. A few seemed to misunderstand this question: some seemed to think they were writing a speech; others treated it as a sales brochure as if the building had already taken place.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/23

Writing

Key Messages

The questions successfully differentiated the whole span of candidates, with responses ranging from the engagingly fluent and mature to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. There were quite a few exceptionally imaginative and convincing narrative/descriptive responses in **Section A**; and sophisticated and highly structured purposeful argumentative/discursive compositions in **Section B**. These fluent and mature responses, as ever, were a delight to read and very impressive, considering the time constraints under which they were produced. At the lower end of the range, answers tended to lack purpose, featured undeveloped plots, and contained lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue; evidence of apparently 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements and time management seemed satisfactory.

General Comments

The majority of candidates made genuine efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'mood and character', 'mystery and suspense'; or a prescribed form/structure, such as a descriptive piece of writing or an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as a newsletter, letters or a debate. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in letters opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

Opening to a Story called *The Gathering*

There were some interesting responses to this question, with candidates clearly enjoying the opportunity to write macabre story openings, some of which had a distinctive focus on blood and gore. Many candidates drew on their understanding of the gothic genre to inform this response, which led to some highly effective writing. The best responses were those that retained a close focus on the idea of a 'gathering' of some sort, and some candidates made effective use of language and structural techniques to produce writing which had a genuine feeling of 'mystery and suspense' about them. Less successful responses were those that simply went all out on the idea of vampires, meetings of the occult, or other typically horror genre content without managing the requirement to create the sense of mystery/suspense required by the question. One of the strongest responses seen was one where a secret gathering in a courtyard could be perceived by the central character from his locked chamber from which he later escaped. The setting was imaginatively described, and the reader never got to find out who was meeting or why, but the feeling of mystery and suspense was thoughtfully created. The ending was also carefully managed to set up the sense of a story to come.

Question 2

A Descriptive Piece called *From Sunrise to Sunset*

Only a small number of responses were seen. There was scope here for stronger candidates to produce well-written descriptive pieces. The strongest responses had an imaginative sense of the passing of time, using different experiences of the (usually first-person) protagonist to describe differing emotions and/or evocations of landscape. A lot of these combined light/dark imagery with skylines involving the passage of the sun across the sky. Less successful candidates were confused with the form required for the task and the need for description tended to be overlooked. Some struggled a bit with capturing the sense of time passing. Less successful responses provided listings of laboured descriptions; a number of candidates displayed a loss of focus on passing time when they wrote narratives or explanations of how they spent their day.

Question 3

An Autobiographical Piece called *Understanding*

This was the most successfully answered question of the three from **Section A**. Strong responses had a well-rounded, engaging and/or imaginative take on what it meant to have achieved ‘understanding’ about ‘a particular situation’, and the path the narrator took (or was taken upon) to reach that point. More successful candidates selected experiences that suggested either a sudden revelation or, conversely, a slow accumulation of wisdom. Because of the usual tendency amongst candidates to accentuate the gloomy/morbid experiences, the ability to shape a narrative in a positive way stood out even more. Less successful responses involved life histories (often over-long) – usually long lists of bad things happening – with a sudden reversal at the end. Some candidates took the words ‘autobiographical piece’ at face value and appeared to be writing about their own lives, which was limiting on occasion. Others created an effective sense of a character looking back at life.

Section B

Question 4

Television Debate on Tourism

This was the most popular choice of question on **section B** on this paper. The strongest responses were those that created two very different voices to appeal to different elements within the imagined audience. Successful responses used a range of rhetorical language to create contrasting voices. Less successful responses were those that simply identified opposing perspectives on the issue of tourism without creating the different outlooks and attitudes demanded by the question. Some candidates appeared to confuse tourism with immigration and focused one side of the argument on the negative aspects of people coming to the country to live, rather than to travel.

Question 5

Newsletter from Environmental Campaign Group

A few responses were seen and generally, candidates demonstrated confidence and competence with the form. Language devices were used to some effect by candidates in order to achieve the purpose and target the audience for their writing. Less successful candidates focused on the enthusiasm of the campaign group and on persuading people to join, rather than detailing issues. Successful responses provided details on specific environmental problems and explained why these were important, before detailing how the campaign group was helping.

Question 6

Residents’ Letters on Housing and Leisure Development

The ‘letter’ aspect of this question encouraged a lively, though not too informal, style with structured texts. Stronger responses created a sense of differing attitudes and viewpoints. Some candidates wrote letters directly to the ‘company’ rather than to the editor or the readership of the local newspaper, though the question did not make the audience explicit. The more successful candidates recognised the fact that these were letters to a newspaper and they were taking on the role of residents. Less successful responses usually

displayed a lack of identification of platform issues, as well as a lack of support for ideas.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/91
Poetry, Prose and
Drama

Key Messages

- Questions focus on ways in which writers treat particular concerns, so successful responses focus on authors' choices of language and literary methods, and the effects these might have on a reader or audience.
- Questions are a test of literary knowledge and understanding, so answers which rely on paraphrase and narrative summary will not do well.
- Candidates succeed best when they use secure detailed references and quotations to support points.
- Candidates need to think carefully about the specific question in order to select the most appropriate poems, stories or episodes from texts.
- Answers to **(b)** passage questions should examine the selected poem or extract in great detail.

General Comments

Examiners saw a good range of responses to all the texts in the examination paper across the three variants. There were, though, clear differences, with, for example, very little work on Ted Hughes on papers **91** or **92**, whereas his poetry was quite popular on **93**. Owen and *A Passage to India* were universally popular, though there was a clear drop in interest in the *Stories of Ourselves* anthology on the **93** papers. Examiners read some excellent writing on all the texts, candidates at their best when using detailed quotation and literary analysis to support thoughtful arguments. Such answers combined detailed knowledge of the texts with appreciative understanding of the writers' methods. There were candidates who relied on recall of plot and character and wrote narrative summary and paraphrase; even when relevant to the question, such answers attract few marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Comments on this paper must be prefaced by the observation that they are based on a small number of candidates who took this variant.

Question 1: Ted Hughes, *Selected Poems*

- (a)** There were very few responses to this question, which offered candidates an opportunity to discuss those poems in the selection where Hughes explores the natural world beyond animals. 'Snowdrop', 'Thistles' and 'A Crane in September' were popular choices. However, candidates did not have to limit themselves and it would have been good to see how Hughes presents parts of the natural world within other poems.
- (b)** The few responses seen to this question seldom explored the poem's language and imagery in much detail. From the opening golden flower image to the metaphors for the gathering strength of ice, there is much in the poem to discuss. Candidates might also have noted the way the poem's two-line stanza structure is made flexible by the enjambment from stanza to stanza, which then puts emphasis on some of the key diction and imagery.

Question 2: Wilfred Owen, *Selected Poems*

- (a) Candidates responding to this question had a great deal of material to choose from. ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’ and ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’ were popular, but many candidates were more successful when choosing poems which offered some comparison. For example, some looked at the physical effects of warfare in one of these poems, compared with the mental horrors in a poem like ‘Mental Cases’ and the continuing aftermath of war in ‘Disabled’. Responses were only fully successful if they fully focused on the poetic means by which Owen presented the horrors; too many candidates relied on a description of the horrors themselves. Candidates who planned a response to take into account such variation tended to produce more interesting and individual answers.
- (b) There were not many answers on ‘The Parable’, but most candidates who wrote on it recognised Owen’s use of the Old Testament story and style. Those who picked up the deliberately archaic diction, such as ‘clave’, ‘spake’, ‘Behold’, ‘lo!’ and ‘Lay not thy hand’, were able to demonstrate how Owen creates that style, rather than merely assert that he does so. Many, though, neglected to consider the implications of ‘the Ram of Pride’. Most responses were successful in showing that the Biblical story is overturned when the old man refuses the angel’s request and saw that Owen uses the father figure to represent the politicians and non-fighting enthusiasts for war.

Question 3: *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) There was an interesting range of responses to this question as candidates either chose to write about those poems which explicitly present death, or chose to consider, for example, the death of love, an interpretation which worked well with ‘When I Was Fair And Young’ and ‘I Grieve and Dare Not Show my Discontent’. Other poems featuring in answers were ‘Written The Night Before His Execution’, ‘The Author’s Epitaph, Made By Himself’, ‘Weep No More, Sad Fountains’ and ‘A Litany In Time Of Plague’. Most candidates knew the material well, however it was candidate’s ability to assess the effects of the poet’s techniques that best developed successful responses.
- (b) There were few responses on the Thomas Nashe poem. Candidates who did answer this question recognised the celebration of the season, with its imagery of new life, though not many showed awareness of the pastoral tradition or recognised the onomatopoeia imitating bird song in the poem’s refrain. Very few candidates noted the harmonies created within the poem by the use of internal as well as end of line rhyme, for example.

Question 4: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

- (a) Many candidates were well prepared for this topic. Most responses focused on ways in which Adichie presents personal and family loyalties tested by the challenges of the civil war. Candidates discussed the relationships between Olanna and Odenigbo, Richard and Kainene, and Ugwu and Odenigbo in particular, recognising these as the central relationships of the novel. More sophisticated responses moved beyond character focus to consider loyalty as it pertains to class, principles, tribe and country; exploring ways in which Adichie questions what it means to be loyal to one’s principles if those lead to a destructive civil war, which in turn causes child malnutrition and indiscriminate acts of violence and the abuse of power. The development of these considerations produced some very strong responses.
- (b) There were fewer responses on the passage. Stronger answers noted the question’s focus on ways in which the events of the extract are presented – less confident candidates restricted themselves to recounting aspects of the coup and Madu’s adventures in his escape. A successful response required close consideration of Madu’s dialogue, with few interruptions from his listeners. He invites Kainene’s recognition at several points: ‘You remember...’, ‘do you know...’, ‘You know Onunkwo, don’t you?’ These create an involved sense of storytelling, combined with the specific details of his escape, including the unpleasantness of the chicken house and the danger of the water tank. There are longer sentences of explanation and shorter climactic sentences for effect, such as ‘That bridge is a grave.’ Important for the novel are Madu’s explanation of the ethnic tension between Igbo and Hausa which led to the coup (though few candidates noted that Ibrahim is Hausa) and his pointed criticism of the ‘British GOC’ for Richard’s benefit.

Question 5: EM Forster, *A Passage to India*

- (a) There were very few responses. Successful answers developed ideas that Adela’s desire to see ‘the real India’ is both laudable and naïve, marking a contrast between her attitudes and those of the established members of the British community in Chandrapore. Important elements of her experience to

consider would have been her relationship with Ronny, the tea party, the car accident, the Marabar Caves and Aziz's trial, for example. In each of these episodes, Forster gives the reader different levels of access to Adela's thinking and candidates needed to consider this as part of his presentation of her experiences.

- (b) This was the more popular question although there were few answers to this question. Godbole is one of the important minor characters of the novel and this episode epitomises his characterisation. The two adjectives Forster uses at the beginning of the passage, 'sly and charming', are indicative and candidates might have noted the way his balanced, lengthy responses are so different from Fielding's straightforward questions. There was an opportunity here for candidates to examine his careful courtesy ('Excuse me...') while he poses different questions for debate with elaborate care in balanced, patterned sentences. His philosophical questions, though, are central to the novel and provide the reader with questions to debate, while the reader may also, like Fielding, find his philosophical obfuscations irritating.

Question 6: *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) Candidates used a number of stories to respond to this question, including 'Srendi Vashtar', 'The Hollow of the Three Hills', 'The Bath' and 'The Enemy', although occasionally they struggled to show fully the stories' relevance to the 'strong feelings' referred to in the question. Stronger candidates had a clear grasp of the stories chosen and gave detailed accounts of the characters, discussing not only how the stories presented their strong feelings but also how they dealt with them. Less secure candidates were often restricted to narration of the stories, which was especially true of 'The Hollow of the Three Hills'.
- (b) Most responses to the passage from 'Report on the Threatened City' included some detailed discussion of language, commenting on the detached descriptions of the behaviour of the human race and governmental control of the population. There were some careful comments on the creation of the perception that people witnessing alien craft are 'mentally inadequate or deluded', 'described as mad' and 'threatened with incarceration'. Several candidates also commented on the way in which the narrative credits the younger population with greater awareness, despite growing up in a state of 'total war-preparedness'. Some strong responses commented on Lessing's satire of the human race presented in the passage and story as a whole.

Question 7: Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

- (a) There were very few responses to this question. Successful answers tended to consider Honey's youth and the way Albee uses her and her relationship with Nick to contrast with Martha and George. She provides a particular counterpoint to Martha in her naïvety, inability to cope with alcohol and her phantom pregnancy, which is part of the play's concern with children and childlessness.
- (b) While several candidates attempted this scene, they often did so in a narrative manner, overlooking the key words of the question and therefore missing Albee's creation of dramatic tension. Most described the action without considering Albee's dramatic methods or the importance of the scene to the play as a whole. The game playing is a key part of this scene, each game a humiliating ritual for some of the company. George's preparations for Get the Guests create suspense, punctuated by Honey's drunken incomprehension and Nick's impatience with her.

Question 8: William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

- (a) Not many candidates attempted this question. There were a number of different avenues for interpretation that they could have taken including: political disloyalty, disloyalty to family and disloyalty in relationships. Richard was most likely to be at the heart of discussion, but other areas of the play were also worth consideration, such as Clarence's dream, Hastings and Buckingham.
- (b) Responses to this question generally demonstrated sound knowledge of Richard's character as exemplified in this scene and elsewhere in the play. They noted such details as the irony of his statement that he cannot prove a lover, yet later is successful in his seduction of Anne. Most responses were aware of Richard's ultimate treatment of Clarence, so effectively discussed the ironies of this scene and Richard's manipulation of him.

Question 9: Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*

- (a) There were very few responses to this question, where More himself was the most likely focus. The rest of his family could also have been considered, with a character such as Rich as a counterpoint.
- (b) Answers here were well considered, often with a sympathetic view of the character of Chapuys, noting his determination but also his slyness towards the end of the extract, alongside Norfolk's apparent dislike of him. Stronger responses made full use of the stage directions as well as the dialogue, showing an understanding of the genre.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/92
Poetry, Prose and
Drama

Key Messages

- Questions focus on ways in which writers treat particular concerns, so successful responses focus on authors' choices of language and literary methods, and the effects these might have on a reader or audience.
- Questions are a test of literary knowledge and understanding, so answers which rely on paraphrase and narrative summary will not do well.
- Candidates succeed best when they use secure detailed references and quotations to support points.
- Candidates need to think carefully about the specific question in order to select the most appropriate poems, stories or episodes from texts.
- Answers to (b) passage questions should examine the selected poem or extract in great detail.

General Comments

Examiners saw a good range of responses to all the texts in the examination paper across the three variants. There were, though, clear differences, with, for example, very little work on Ted Hughes on papers **91** or **92**, whereas his poetry was quite popular on **93**. Owen and *A Passage to India* were universally popular, though there was a clear drop in interest in the *Stories of Ourselves* anthology on the **93** papers. Examiners read some excellent writing on all the texts, candidates at their best when using detailed quotation and literary analysis to support thoughtful arguments. Such answers combined detailed knowledge of the texts with appreciative understanding of the writers' methods. There were candidates who relied on recall of plot and character and wrote narrative summary and paraphrase; even when relevant to the question, such answers attract few marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1: Ted Hughes, *Selected Poems*

- (a) There were very few responses to this question. 'Hawk Roosting', 'View of a Pig', 'Pike' and 'Thistles' were most popular among poems used by those candidates attempting it, and these responses tended to argue that Hughes presents the natural world with human characteristics which perhaps sidestepped the focus of the question. Poems like 'The Jaguar', 'Wind', 'Full Moon and Little Frieda' and 'When Men Got to the Summit' provided more fruitful ground for discussion of the poet's presentation of human responses to the natural world.
- (b) More candidates wrote about 'Her Husband' candidates recognised Hughes' portrait of a relationship in continual conflict, picking out details of the husband's aggressive and uncaring behaviour as well as his wife's passive-aggressive responses. There were some misinterpretations with candidates showing a lack of understanding of the coal mining, working class setting of the poem, while others saw the last stanza, surprisingly, as optimistic. Most candidates showed varying sympathy for these two characters, though those that argued that the husband had worked hard for the benefit of his wife and had a right to expect more from her echoed the attitudes of the husband in the poem but missed the ironies of Hughes' writing.

Question 2: Wilfred Owen, *Selected Poems*

- (a) This was a very popular option, where candidates were able to find plenty of material to support an

essay about the mental suffering caused by warfare. It seemed that most appropriate poems in the collection had been used at some point, though the most popular were 'Strange Meeting', 'Mental Cases' and 'Disabled'. Some candidates discussed the horrors of war without paying heed to the question's focus on mental suffering, but successful candidates discussed psychological, mental and emotional traumas caused by the violence of war, experienced by soldiers both on the battlefield and as survivors. There were good comments about Owen's use of visual and aural imagery, and the emotive language used to evoke sympathy and to convince the reader. While most candidates concentrated on war poems, some of the best responses were based on alternative poems, using 'On My Songs' and 'Shadwell Stair', for example, looking at how the imagery shows a troubled state of mind or explores personal emotional crises of identity and creativity. Such answers showed an individual response to the question with a discriminating choice of poems.

- (b) 'The Letter' produced many strong responses, most candidates readily understanding the situation in the poem and responding with sympathy to the plight of the soldier. The strongest responses showed how Owen creates that sympathy through the language and structure of the poem, the main text being the letter to the soldier's wife, while the brackets present the contrasting reality of life on the front line. Occasionally the colloquial expressions caused some confusion, but most essays showed understanding of the vernacular, suggesting an ordinary soldier of the ranks without advanced education who attracts the reader's sympathy through his making light of his discomforts in the letter, his false optimism and his care for his children. These points were often contrasted with the onomatopoeic shell in l.15 and the poignant drama of the letter writer being hit at the end of the poem. There was also perceptive discussion of the soldiers' camaraderie on the battlefield, with their banter evident in the poem and the responsibility of the letter being passed to Jim at the end. Less successful answers often provided a great deal of general context about the censorship of letters, poor rations, mistreatment of soldiers, poor medical resources and the ignorance of those at home, which although all relevant points sometimes dominated instead of the text of the poem. Occasionally too, the setting of the poem was not understood and some candidates missed the alternating 'voices' of the poem.

Question 3: *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) Successful responses to this question tended to use such poems as: 'The Man of Life Upright', 'A Mind Content', 'A Litany in the Time of Plague' and 'The Author's Epitaph' among others. Some essays created a strong impression that candidates had prepared particular poems and were determined to force them to fit whatever question appeared on the paper; consequently there were many answers where the choice of poems made the candidate's job of answering the question very difficult. The most successful responses showed that the candidate knew two appropriate poems equally well and in sufficient detail to be able to write about the authors' choices of language, imagery and structure used to communicate ideas of moral goodness.
- (b) While there were many descriptive and narrative responses to Tichbourne's poem, this question gave candidates opportunities at all levels. There were some original and highly perceptive discussions from some candidates, while less confident students were still able to engage with the form and language. Many candidates recognised the use of antithesis and paradox and explained the effectiveness of these devices. On the whole, there was sound appreciation of Tichbourne's imagery, but many answers did not explain the use of diction beyond a superficial level, giving literal explanations of 'frost of cares' and 'field of tares', for example. On the other hand, there were some excellent discussions of 'The fruit is dead and yet the leaves be green' in terms of fertility and lack of fulfilment. The symbolism of the sun, representing hope and expectations was explained by many candidates, as was the imagery of 'My thread is cut' and 'dish of pain'. The patterning and structure of the poem was often discussed capably by stronger candidates.

Question 4: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

- (a) Many candidates attempting this question showed good textual knowledge and were well-prepared to discuss the effects of time shifts in the novel, focusing sharply on the impact the structure has on revelations of character, character growth and development, relationships, and the changing political arena. There were some answers which lapsed into narrative summary, describing the events of each section of the novel, but strong answers considered Adichie's preoccupations with the drastic changes in the dynamics of love, solidarity, betrayal, defeat and political divisions which are accentuated by the shifts between the two time periods, creating interest and suspense for the reader. The identity of Baby was often a key element of discussion, with the revelation that she is

Alana's baby overturning the reader's previous assumptions. Candidates also explored sudden contrasts of life in *Nsukka*.

- (b) This passage attracted a large number of well-focused, analytical responses and many candidates found much specific material to comment on. The context of Kainene's disappearance was well understood and the sharp exchanges between Madu and Richard provided a key source of analysis, including Richard's monosyllabic replies and Madu's use of the words 'foreigners' and 'we', as well as his question 'Will you go back to England?' In addition, candidates commented perceptively on Richard's sadness and nostalgia in terms of his thoughts about the 'stew' and 'the drained pool'. Adichie's description of the scuffle was a key part of most essays, particularly ways in which it reveals Richard's weakness and his underlying racism. Many essays were alert to Adichie's use of key details, such as the inclusion of Richard's thoughts in the narrative, including his memories of Kainene, the imagery of 'oiling their faces with a valour' and the 'crayfish on Madu's breath.'

Question 5: E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

- (a) A number of responses to this question discussed Mrs Moore generally, without focusing on the question of her Christianity. More successful answers considered her spirituality and its openness, citing, for example, her assertion that 'God is here' in the mosque and her later consideration of the wasp. Her Christian beliefs were seen to inform her lack of prejudice in her generosity to Indians and her disapproval of her son's attitudes towards them. In this way, her Christianity was often contrasted with the behaviour of other apparent Christians in the novel. There were several excellent essays which explored the challenges to her faith in detail, considering the effects of the Marabar Caves in particular. Her gradual disillusionment from that point was often well documented, as Mrs Moore moves to a spiritual position more in tune with Godbole's philosophy than conventional Christianity. The further development in the irony of her ultimate transformation to a Hindu deity, 'Esmis Esmoor', was also noted by some.
- (b) There were some excellent responses to this question, which looked at the presentation of the Collector by closely examining both the narrative descriptions of him, particularly in the opening paragraph and the interjections in the closing paragraph of the extract, and his dialogue with Fielding. Such answers noted the narrative irony in descriptions such as 'like a god in a shrine' and 'beautiful' matched with 'fanatical'. This was linked with the 'staleness and ungenerosity' in the final paragraph, together with the forceful rejection – 'never, never' – of close relationships between Indians and the English. Candidates who produced such responses sometimes wondered, on the evidence of the passage, whether the Collector's greatest concern is for Miss Quested of the blot on 'my whole career'. However, there were also many weak answers to this question, mainly from candidates who showed a lack of understanding of this key part of the novel. Some were unable to discriminate between Fielding's and the Collector's lines of dialogue, while others thought that Fielding was the Collector, a major error that undermined the entire response. A large number of candidates also demonstrated their limited understanding by failing to observe Forster's irony in the passage, taking their cue from an un-ironic reading of the 'god in a shrine' image and continuing to accept the description at face value, arguing that that the Collector is god-like, brave, beautiful and generous in his dealings with all people in very trying circumstances.

Question 6: *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) The question about characters dealing with their past was a popular one, though a number of responses dealt only with accounts of the characters' pasts in a descriptive manner, neglecting to consider ways in which they are explored in the stories. Such answers were unsuccessful, as they did not fully address the question and did not consider the literary presentation of the texts. The most popular stories were 'The Hollow of the Three Hills' and 'The Bath', which were often treated in this way. Candidates struggled particularly with 'The Bath', as the story focuses on the elderly woman's current difficulties, with some references to the past. 'The Hollow of the Three Hills' was generally a more successful choice, and there was also much good work on 'Elephant' and 'The Prison', arguing that the central characters were in their present bad situations because they refused to confront issues of the past. There was also focused critical comment on how Tommy is presented as retreating from life situations with naps and solitary movie watching and that even his attempts to do something about the girl are partial and half-hearted. Likewise in 'Elephant', the repetitive behaviours of the narrator in bailing out his family because of his feelings of guilt about the past made interesting reading.

- (b) It was evident in many answers to this question that candidates enjoyed this story and its ending. In considering 'its effect as the climax', many sympathised with Conradin and were alert to the narrative delays, such as the starlings, which make the outcome uncertain until the ferret emerges from the shed. Many wrote well on the idea that Saki creates expectation of the Woman's 'triumph', as 'always' in the first half of the extract and that Conradin's last chant is out of defiance in perceived defeat. Most made thoughtful points about how the end is chilling and/or deeply satisfying, as Saki presents Conradin making toast while the body is brought in and the adults wonder how to break the news to 'the 'poor child''. Many candidates wrote well on the irony here and its effect on the reader. Most responses showed good concentration on the extract, though with some relevant references to other parts of the story such as the hen and the limitation on butter. The most confident answers considered the effects of narrative perspective and the access to Conradin's thoughts and observations. Those candidates who wrote narrative accounts of the passage missed key opportunities to focus on the stylistic and linguistic features with which the passage abounded.

Question 7: Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

- (a) This question on a key aspect of the play elicited some strong responses, often focusing particularly on Nick and Honey and the destruction of the illusion of the perfect all-American couple. These answers picked up on the moments that show how Nick clearly despises his wife, while the image of Honey peeling off labels was used to good effect. Candidates also had much to say about Martha and George, including their manufactured illusion of the son. Some interesting essays argued that the 'illusion' was actually that they were an unhappy, dysfunctional couple and that the ending of the play shows true togetherness after they have played their shared games. Many answers showed a good sense of the dramatic ways in which the illusions are destroyed, with much being made of the exorcism parallel and the song.
- (b) There was some equally good work on the extract, which showed familiarity with the episode as a turning point. There was thoughtful comment on how Martha is trying to appear the same to Honey and Nick but is having coded and more highly charged exchanges with George. There was debate about the interpretation of the final lines, with some arguing that Martha is sarcastic and scathing when she comments on George having made a pretty speech and rising to the occasion, while others suggested she is conveying approval to George and understanding that he is showing full complicity in their shared illusion by his speech.

Question 8: William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

- (a) There were very few answers to this question, which gave candidates an opportunity to tackle one of the central aspects of Richard's characterisation. Success depended on secure selection of key episodes with an analytical awareness of Shakespeare's dramatic handling and effect on an audience.
- (b) Again, there were few responses. There were opportunities for candidates to discuss the tension between the characters in this most unlikely wooing scene, with references to killing and outright hostility from Anne, expressed in a number of ways, including damnation, threats of 'Some dungeon' and names such as 'hedgehog'. These are balanced with Richard's admission of guilt, with references to 'Heaven', 'beauty', 'sweet bosom' and names such as 'gentle Lady Anne' and 'fair creature'.

Question 9: Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*

- (a) Few candidates responded to this question, which focused on a particular aspect of Thomas More's character. Bolt's portrayal of More as a careful speaker, positioning himself in key arguments with scrupulous care over his language was central to effective responses here.
- (b) Candidates often wrote effectively on Bolt's portrayal of Rich's hypocrisy and considered the details in the passage that show that he is fully Cromwell's creature. They often wrote well too on the significance of Norfolk's presence in this scene. There was sound analysis on the effects created by More's own defence, in that the audience can see the pure reason and truth of what he says but also have great dread that this is where all of Cromwell's power ('*calmly technical*') is stacked against him. A number were alert to such stage directions, including where More '*gestures helplessly*', while the obviously fake testimony is examined '*with much seriousness*'.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/93
Poetry, Prose and
Drama

Key Messages

- Questions focus on ways in which writers treat particular concerns, so successful responses focus on authors' choices of language and literary methods, and the effects these might have on a reader or audience.
- Questions are a test of literary knowledge and understanding, so answers which rely on paraphrase and narrative summary will not do well.
- Candidates succeed best when they use secure detailed references and quotations to support points.
- Candidates need to think carefully about the specific question in order to select the most appropriate poems, stories or episodes from texts.
- Answers to **(b)** passage questions should examine the selected poem or extract in great detail.

General Comments

Examiners saw a good range of responses to all the texts in the examination paper across the three variants. There were, though, clear differences, with, for example, very little work on Ted Hughes on papers **91** or **92**, whereas his poetry was quite popular on **93**. Owen and *A Passage to India* were universally popular, though there was a clear drop in interest in the *Stories of Ourselves* anthology on the **93** papers. Examiners read some excellent writing on all the texts, candidates at their best when using detailed quotation and literary analysis to support thoughtful arguments. Such answers combined detailed knowledge of the texts with appreciative understanding of the writers' methods. There were candidates who relied on recall of plot and character and wrote narrative summary and paraphrase; even when relevant to the question, such answers attract few marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1: Ted Hughes, *Selected Poems*

- (a) The question gave candidates the opportunity to use a wide range of poems, with 'Pike', 'Hawk Roosting', 'Thrushes' and 'The Jaguar' proving particularly popular choices. Many answers focused on ways in which Hughes portrays animals as powerful, dangerous, violent, instinctive or majestic, with some commenting too on the symbolic value of the animals to show nature's superior energy, vitality, and violence in comparison to humankind. Other answers were more specific, looking at Hughes' language and imagery which presents creatures in unexpected ways – here the 'Speedway goggles, international mobsters' of 'Swifts' and the mechanical 'coiled steel' of 'Thrushes' were examined, for example – while others commented on the mingling of 'Little Fauntleroy', 'wet blue-reddish muzzle' and 'Butchers developing expertise' in 'A March Calf'.
- (b) This poem produced a curious range of answers. The most successful ones came from candidates who noted the requirement in the question to consider imagery and structure and picked up the sequence of 'Now' at the beginnings of the stanzas and commented on the way the poem's switches from stanza to stanza imitating the fluctuations of the river in this early month of the year. This then allowed them to comment on the imagery of wealth and majesty for when the river runs high and the imagery of deprivation when there is less water flowing. Some alert responses noted the use of 'voice', 'song' and 'choir' and considered this and other patterns in the imagery. Such answers were much more successful than those which ran through the poem offering a descriptive summary of each stanza and those which asserted an imposed reading without due consideration

of the poem itself – such answers suggested that the poem is about pollution, man's despoliation of the globe, or even the suicide of Sylvia Plath.

Question 2: Wilfred Owen, *Selected Poems*

- (a) Quite a large number of responses offered only general critical commentaries on two poems, with the word 'outrage' perhaps featuring in the opening and the conclusion. More successful responses considered the demands of the question and gave thought to what in the poems was provocative and Owen's poetic methods of provocation. They homed in on the telling details, such as disrespect for the dead soldier 'flung' in a wagon, the wheelchair-bound hero left unattended, the soldiers left fighting not just the enemy but the poor conditions, made worse by poor equipment and limited supplies. In these essays, poems such as 'Disabled', 'Mental Cases', 'Dulce et Decorum Est', 'Futility', 'The Sentry' and 'The Dead-Beat', among others, were used successfully. Less assured responses to this question were general 'horrors of war' essays, lacking clear and discriminating focus on what might 'provoke outrage'. Some sensitive answers though, also considered what kind of outrage might have been produced, such as anger, frustration, horror, shock and a determination to effect change.
- (b) This poem proved to be a very good discriminator. The best responses showed precise discussion which viewed the poem as three separate snapshots that show first the official view of soldiers on parade, followed by a more intimate dialogue between two men where rank does not feature and finally a passage which is almost a monologue, where the soldier who was told to "hold his mouth" reflects with insight. There was comment on the aggressive verbs which show hierarchy – 'rapped' and 'snapped' – creating reader sympathy for the soldier. Less successful responses gave a summary, incorporating confusion about the speakers within the poem. Many candidates picked up on the reference to Lady Macbeth however not all were able to apply the link successfully to the poem. Equally only the strongest responses examined carefully the language and imagery of the last stanza and the implications of the 'world washing out its stains' for 'Field-Marshal God's inspection.'

Question 3: *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) There were few responses to this question. While those candidates who attempted it interpreted life's uncertainties quite broadly, the most popular poems were Spenser's Sonnets 54 and 75 with Shakespeare's Sonnet 73. Successful answers looked closely at the poets' use of the sonnet form, while candidates who either failed to focus on poetic expression, or chose poems which did not fit the question as easily, tended to struggle.
- (b) This was a much more popular question, though many essays did not focus clearly on ways in which Campion presents a virtuous life in the poem. There was much general comment and stanza by stanza paraphrase. More successful responses explored the sermon-like tone of the poem, some arguing that Campion resents an ideal of behaviour rather than an instruction manual, while others argued persuasively that the privations of virtue are described to be so straitened that the poem presents a virtuous life as deeply unattractive. These thoughtful responses depended on a very close examination of the language and imagery, giving different interpretations to phrases such as 'silent days', 'Good thoughts his only friends' and 'sober inn'. Some candidates commented well on that final image, with its implications of the earth being only a stopping place on a longer journey. There were also observant comments that the poem's tight, controlled form imitates the control of the subject's life.

Question 4: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

- (a) While there were a number of responses which offered narrative summaries of sections of the novel, more confident answers recognised the opportunity to write about the effects Adichie achieves by presenting the action of the novel from differing perspectives. Many candidates showed impressive, detailed knowledge of the text and were able to show how the different points of view show the socio-economic effects of war on different generations, classes, and characters. In considering Richard, Olanna and Ugwu, some interesting answers commented that the three characters were all types who might be expected to be weak in a war situation – the bookish foreigner, the social beauty and the houseboy. Successful answers explored how these characters' particular backgrounds and experiences affect their responses to the war, with Ugwu's growing understanding and maturity modified by his terrible experiences in the war, leading him to be its chronicler. They also explored Olanna's perspective, from an initial position of privilege and

education changing to a woman struggling for food helping in a refugee camp, while Richard drew many developed discussions of the importance of an Englishman's perspective within Biafra during the civil war, as a detached but involved foreigner.

- (b) There were many sensitive responses to this passage, where Richard is under direct and indirect attack in an unfamiliar social world, in which he 'felt helplessly weak'. Candidates commented on Madu's ambiguous relationship with Kainene and his and Major Udodi's racial and sexual verbal attacks which put pressure on Richard, while stronger responses discussed the importance of this section following Richard's point of view, so that his internal doubts and frustrations are evident to the reader. The fact that his thoughts are internal emphasises his inability to speak – some observed that he has no dialogue in the passage at all while the narrative shows that he 'wished he could open his mouth'. Successful answers also analysed the intentional antagonism in Madu's questions and comments as well as Udodi's crude sexual suggestions which demean Richard's relationship with Kainene, comparing these with Richard's body language as he 'bristled' and 'slapped at an irritating mosquito'.

Question 5: E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

- (a) Candidates took a number of different approaches to this question some successfully interpreted the places and ceremonies very widely, including some it was difficult to see as religious ceremonies, such as the Bridge Party and tea at Fielding's house. The Marabar Caves episode was frequently cited, which was successful if carefully argued, but many candidates relied on assertion rather than argument. It is important that candidates choose their material carefully in response to the specific question. Successful answers usually focused on Mrs Moore in the mosque, her disillusionment in the Marabar Caves, the preparations for Muharram and the Hindu Festival in Mau. By looking at these, candidates were able to comment on the variety of religious practice and experience and linked this with the structure of the novel. Successful answers often focused on 'oneness' as the novel moves from a rare moment of religious togetherness with Mrs Moore and Aziz in the mosque to separation, division and disillusion, before the chaotic reunification in the Hindu Festival. Such answers often drew on impressive recall of specific telling detail from the novel. Less confident candidates wrote rather generally about religion or religions, lacking the focus on places and ceremonies required by the question.
- (b) While some context was necessary to establish the nature of the changes in Aziz, the most successful answers did this economically and focused most of the response on the passage itself. Within the passage, candidates noted Aziz's changed attitudes presented in his 'genuine hatred' of the English, his bitterness and resentment about the 'treachery' of Fielding and 'those advocacies of the girl'. His views about nationalism and politics were noted, as well as the development of his views on Islamic culture and faith. Candidates noted that changes in his life such as marriage and children bring him contentment, while some observed that despite the changes in his life in Mau, away from the English, some of his character traits remain the same. Strong answers looked at the unease Forster puts in the back of Aziz's mind regarding Fielding's sacrifices, and the static, emotionless description of Aziz standing motionless in the rain. The imagery of hunting around Aziz's 'escape' was widely noted and usefully discussed, particularly when this was part of observations about presentation of Aziz through narrative voice.

Question 6: *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) The range of stories in the anthology contains a wide variety of characters and challenges, so there was plenty of material from which candidates could choose in answering this question. This was shown in the number of stories used; among them, 'The Bath', 'The Moving Finger', 'The Lady in the Looking Glass', 'Sredni Vashtar', 'The Prison', 'Billennium' and 'Elephant' were particularly popular. There were some very productive discussions of devices in the stories, such as the bath, the mirror, toast, the wardrobe, dreams among others. While there were certainly a number of responses which merely narrated the stories, Examiners commented that they were impressed by the number of candidates who clearly worked to avoid simply plot and character-based responses and focused on the writers' methods of presentation.
- (b) Curiously, there was often less success in avoiding narrative and focusing on method with this passage question, which resulted in many simply narrative essays. Stronger answers often considered the creation of the gothic setting in the first paragraph, with the hills, the hollow and references to 'decaying', 'sluggish', 'dim' and 'putrid', before going on to explore the presentation of the two contrasting women, one 'graceful in form and fair of feature', the other an 'old withered

woman'. After this, strong candidates discussed the speech patterns and language of the women while considering movements and body language. A successful response required this level of detailed attention to the writing of the passage in order to consider its effects on the reader.

Question 7: Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

- (a) Most of the few answers to this question tended to contrast the two male characters of the play. More successful responses saw Nick as a foil to George, representing different attitudes and ideas which allow the audience a better understanding of George's character. Nick's youth, his science studies and his relationships both with Honey and Martha were contrasted with the character and behaviour of George. Some successful answers focused clearly on certain episodes in the play which demonstrate those contrasts effectively, particularly arguments between the two men. Less successful responses did not clearly consider ways in which Albee creates those contrasts, and did not have a strong awareness of the dramatic effects used.
- (b) While some candidates ignored the beginning of the passage, others saw that Honey's disappearance after George's revelation of her hysterical pregnancy and Nick's response provide a comparison with George and Martha's marriage. There were not many answers, but successful ones looked at ways in which Albee continues to present the relationship between George and Martha as ambiguous and changeable, in this way keeping the audience uncertain. Martha's apparent congratulation of George in the middle of the passage before her scathing reversal was as key part of this. Their attacks on each other are a key feature of Albee's presentation of their relationship in the play; what makes this extract particularly noteworthy is George's angry plea of vulnerability towards the end and Martha's exclamation that George married her for such ritual humiliation.

Question 8: William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

- (a) Few responses. Candidates might have looked at Richard's cynical manipulation of the crowds through Buckingham, while the Citizens' scene is also a useful part of the play to examine. There is a clear conclusion that while Richard seeks to rule and enjoy the pomp and position as head of state, there is little concern manifested in the state itself.
- (b) This scene gave candidates a good opportunity to comment closely on Shakespeare's presentation of Richard's hypocrisy and attacks on other characters. The religious references in his protestation of innocence at the beginning offered much evidence, as his descriptions of others can often be applied to himself. Candidates also noted the false courtesy of the entire scene, with Richard addressed as 'your Grace', 'Brother of Gloucester' and 'My Lord of Gloucester', masking the verbal attacks. Richard, on the other hand, often speaks directly, with references to 'insinuating Jacks', 'lewd complaints', 'contempt' and 'disgrac'd', showing his greater verbal freedom and deliberate undermining of the false courtesy. Alert candidates also noted his provocative echoing of others' lines, with the repeated "She may" and 'What marry, may she?' showing his confident control of this meeting, which includes several figures he later has killed.

Question 9: Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*

- (a) There were a few responses to this question, though many discussed religion in the play without paying enough heed to the question's focus on dramatic presentation. They might have considered ways in which Bolt presents religion and religious belief through choices of particular characters and their characterisation, focusing in particular on some of the theological debates in the play. There was also an opportunity to consider different attitudes to religious belief weighed against personal survival and family relationships.
- (b) Audience response questions give candidates an opportunity to follow the dramatic action of a scene and show appreciation of ways in which the writer's dramatic methods are likely to create responses within an audience. Here the image of More as a prisoner at a formal Commission was an appropriate starting point and the presence of Cranmer, Norfolk and Rich with Cromwell should also have drawn comment. There are other clues in the stage directions, such as Norfolk and Cromwell glaring at 'one another in hatred', Cromwell being 'impatient' and folding his 'arms resignedly', which communicate the mood and tension to an audience. The tension, and recognition of More's tactics, is also apparent in his silence during Cranmer's questioning. Candidates could have commented on the care of More's own contributions to the dialogue, where an audience would recognise and probably appreciate his legalistic precision. An audience may

also respond with shocked admiration of his clear acknowledgement of his possible fate at the end of the extract.