

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/12
Paper 12 Poetry and Prose

Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

Successful responses:

- demonstrate a detailed knowledge of poems and prose texts studied
- address the question from the start of the answer and throughout
- provide pertinent textual support for points made
- sustain convincing and perceptive analysis of the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts studied
- lose focus on the question set, e.g. by including extraneous context material
- make unsupported assertions
- describe or simply identify writer's techniques without further comment or explanation.

General comments

Examiners reported much evidence of candidates' personal engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poems and prose texts that had been studied.

Textual knowledge

The most successful responses offered a commanding knowledge of the text, with candidates able to integrate well-selected textual references to support their ideas and line of argument. The strongest responses selected judiciously from the poems or prose extracts printed on the question paper and avoided attempts to write exhaustively on every aspect of either poem or extract. In the strongest answers to the general prose essay questions, direct, concise quotation and indirect reference was integrated into essays. In less successful answers, where reference to the text was insufficient, responses tended to rely on unsubstantiated assertion and explanation. This was particularly evident in prose general essays, where a lack of detailed knowledge made it difficult for candidates to develop convincing responses to the ways in which writers conveyed and developed their ideas. In some cases, candidates answered the poetry question well but appeared to have little knowledge of the prose text studied. Lack of knowledge of the context of what was happening in passages was clear in some cases.

Focus on the question

A common feature of more successful responses was the sustained focus on the question. These essays began addressing the terms of the question from the start and maintained a clear focus on the question throughout. Less successful responses often showed an impressive understanding of the character or theme in the question but did not tailor their material to the specific demands of the question. Candidates should take note of the key words in IGCSE Literature questions such as 'memorably', 'vividly' and 'strikingly', as these are used to elicit personal responses to the writing. If these are ignored, there is a danger that candidates produce general overviews or character sketches rather than consider in detail the writer's presentation of ideas and characters. Equally, a better balance in both the use of evidence and in reference to key words in questions would enhance success: some responses to extracts were either line by line run-

thoughts with little analysis, or demonstrated competent understanding but with limited detail in support; there were also often two extremes in relation to key words – repetition of the question without convincing evidence to support, and competent responses to the text as a whole, but without explicit reference to key question words.

Focus was lost in some essays by the inclusion of extraneous background material, often in a lengthy opening paragraph. This approach is ineffective as historical, biographical and social context are not included in the band descriptors or assessed in relation to any assessment objectives. The use of lengthy conclusions which merely repeat points made in the body of the essay are also ineffective. Candidates should be made aware that answering the question is more important than following a pre-conceived idea about what constitutes a model essay.

Writers' effects

The most perceptive responses offered a sustained engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects and had a clear appreciation of writers' use of language, structure and form. Candidates who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were also more able to probe closely and convincingly specific effects. Less successful approaches included the logging of devices and explanation rather than analysis. Literary features were sometimes identified but rarely explored meaningfully in terms of the effects created by the writer. Use of the terms 'lexical field' and 'semantic field' often preceded a list of quoted words and phrases followed by general description rather than a probing critical analysis. Some candidates explained the connotations of words they had quoted (e.g. 'red connotes blood or danger') but needed to expand on their comments to analysing how the words are used within the specific context of the poem or extract. Commenting in simple terms on punctuation, structure and versification was often at the expense of exploring ideas. Many candidates began their answers with comments such as 'X makes this poem moving by use of punctuation' without considering the ideas that the poet communicates. A significant number of answers never progressed beyond describing techniques. The listing of features with little or no reference to key word meaning or key ideas is unlikely to achieve highly in this assessment.

Personal response

Strong individual responses were characterised by thoughtful and perceptive comments argued and supported with care. These responses engaged directly with those words in the questions designed to elicit a personal response to the writing. In some responses to poems, there was evidence of candidates adopting an overly assertive style of writing which gave the impression of there being only one 'correct' reading of the poem. Some less confident responses demonstrated empathy with characters by simply suggesting that the 'reader' experiences the same anguish as a particular character or that a particular predicament was 'relatable'; such comments need to be linked to textual detail and expanded upon in terms of how the writer is creating such responses in readers.

There was, generally, some very good work produced this session. Most demonstrated an enjoyment of and engagement with texts. There were very few rubric infringements.

Questions on individual texts:

Section A: Poetry

Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: from Part 5

Question 1 *The Trees*

Candidates were generally able to select appropriate examples of uncertainty in Larkin's language: for example, 'a kind of grief' and 'seem to say'. Most candidates were also able to recognise that Larkin's concerns focussed around life and death. Discussions which centred upon his jealousy of the trees, suggested by the word 'green', proved not to be particularly fruitful. Many responses interpreted 'trick' as a deceit: stronger answers were able to perceive its alternative meaning of 'wonder', referring to its connotations of wizardry and magic. Some less successful answers selected phrases and explained why they suggested uncertainty, without discussing any larger meanings or ideas. The strongest answers engaged with the paradox of the trees' apparent immortality and the way in which it relates to human life and were able to successfully analyse the tone and language.

Question 2 *Cold in the Earth*

Candidates had obviously been well prepared for this poem. The last three verses tended to be less well handled than the first five; candidates appeared to feel more confident in writing about the more straightforward declarations of suffering and loss than the more abstract ideas of the later stanzas. There were many comments about metre and structure which were not always helpful (e.g. 'the metre is like a heartbeat which is ironic'); where such references are made, there needs to be a clear purpose, explanation and link to the question. There were some excellent comments on the use of time and the wave metaphor, as well as the sun/stars metaphors. Strong responses often included comment on the paradox of being afraid of forgetting but wanting to remember, despite the pain memory brought, focussing on oxymorons such as 'rapturous pain' and 'divinest anguish', identifying the spiritual dimension of the persona's grief. Strong candidates also wrote convincingly about the various stages of grief described in the poem.

Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 1

Question 3 *For My Grandmother Knitting*

This was a popular choice among candidates, and many wrote movingly about the grandmother's loss of purpose and the role that knitting played in her old age. Candidates were able to identify the way Lochhead used hands as a symbol throughout the poem and to expand on the dual meaning of 'your grasp of things'. Less successful responses asserted that the relationship between grandmother and grandchildren was hostile or completely broken, missing such clues as the hint of concerned affection in 'gran you do too much'. Some responses contained misreading/misunderstanding as those candidates thought that it was the grandmother herself who was reminiscing rather than the granddaughter and attributed feelings to her that are not supported by the text. Some candidates searched for evidence of malevolence or cruelty on the part of the grandchildren in trying to persuade the grandmother that she need not knit them any more clothes but perceptive responses recognised the connection between a lifetime of providing and the sense of her having lost that role as she ages. Some candidates spent a long time discussing the hardships of the grandmother's early life, often neglecting the importance of knitting and the sadness of her old age. Many successful responses saw the implications of the way the elderly are treated in society but often such discussion could have been more closely focused on textual detail.

Question 4 *Lion heart*

Many responding to this question gave a stanza-by-stanza explication without focusing on 'powerful changes'. Most answers identified the transition from sea to land and the powerful contribution of Chong's imagery to the overall effect. Some answers were of very good quality, identifying the changes/transition/celebrating the birth of a nation. These often took full advantage of the opportunity to explore the allegorical aspects of the poem in particular. A few appeared to rely on memorised notes or pre-prepared responses which did not allow for full exploration of the question set.

Gillian Clarke: from Selected Poems

Question 5 *Pipistrelle*

Pipistrelle was rarely chosen and, often, responses were not altogether successful. Many candidates did not focus fully enough on the question (*Explore how Clarke vividly creates impressions of the bat*), writing instead about the human relationship hinted at in the poem. Better answers were able to explore how Clarke's imagery evoked the delicacy and swiftness of the bat as well as the contrast between the first and third stanzas. Few discussed 'subliminal messenger' or the 'illegible freehand' and many overlooked the closeness of the poet's observations in the latter stanzas of the poem. One strong response noted the subliminal message as one of joy, commenting on the poet's use of 'love' and the idea they sat for so long in the dark.

Question 6 *Catrin*

Strong personal engagement characterised responses to this question. Understanding was generally strong, though the opening was dealt with less confidently. There were some strong comments on the speaker writing on the walls, though few explored this idea to its fullest extent. Most were able to discuss the rope image with some degree of success; a few were able to explore the nuances of the relationship and the 'struggle'/'fighting you off' with real sensitivity. Candidates did endeavour to focus on 'movingly' and did mention it frequently. The strongest responses focused on the central 'tug of war' between parent and child,

offering thoughtful analysis of metaphors. Many missed out reference to key last line, or assumed that the girl had just grown into a rebel in general.

Section B: Prose

No Longer At Ease

Question 7

The extract question was more frequently selected than the general essay. There were various points which made this passage a 'revealing moment'. In it we can discern Obi's earnest desire to use his education for the betterment of his country, his wanting to break away from what he sees as outmoded concepts and protocol (preferring to stay with his friend rather than the hotel chosen for him) and his idealism as a schoolboy. Strong answers commented on Obi no longer being 'at ease' with Nigerian culture, in terms of his comment about them 'having a long way to go', and the ultimate irony of this statement. However, we then recognise the ominous symbolism of the De Soto and the sight of Clara. Many candidates identified the significance of the anecdotes about Obi's schooldays and the appearance of Sam Okoli. Stronger answers were able to explore the clash between two cultures represented by the Union's arrangements for Obi's accommodation and his own choice. Some candidates were able to write about the ideas above but without making connections between them on the whole. As always with the extract question, focus on the techniques (use of dialogue, use of narrative voice ect) and language was essential for the higher bands, though only if explored fully and convincingly.

Question 8

Candidates who chose to answer this question showed secure knowledge of the novel and were able to refer to key scenes involving Obi and Isaac, such as the occasion in the chapter in which Obi is re-united with his father after his stay in England. Less successful responses did not always focus on 'powerful' and simplified the nature of the relationship, without exploring the wider reasons for the tensions between father and son.

Mansfield Park

Question 9

Most were familiar with the passage and wrote about it enthusiastically, with many appreciating the symbolism of the locked gate and the flirtatious exchange between Henry and Maria. Austen's dialogue presented opportunities for close engagement with language and tone and the most successful responses were able to take full advantage of this. Candidates were aware, in the main, of the shocking behaviour of the couple in relation to the mores of the time. The symbolism of passing round the gate was generally recognised also but there were few comments about the ironic tone of the narration at the start which is so important in preparing us for what is to come. Almost all candidates who attempted this had some very strong personal views of Maria's and Henry's behaviour and what was considered proper for an engaged woman and a single man within the context of the wider novel. There was evidence of knowledge and understanding of the text and its deeper implications.

Question 10

Candidates had obviously given some thought to the role of the Bertrams as parents and generally provided strong personal responses; however, assertions needed specific support for a reasonably developed response. Most candidates referenced Lady Bertram's pug and Sir Thomas' return in the middle of a 'Lovers' Vows' rehearsal, but other details were lacking in places. Answers tended to give verdicts about the lack of parenting skills of both characters but only a few saw the rather more nuanced portrayal of their kindness to Fanny and of Sir Thomas's realisation of the way in which he has contributed to the fates of his children. Strong responses were very detailed and engaged with both the text and the question; these tended to support their ideas with an impressive quantity of textual reference.

My Ántonia

Question 11

Candidates wrote convincingly about the accumulation of tension as the passage progressed, they were able to respond to body language and dialogue of both the protagonist and antagonist and the violence of the fight, identifying features such as Ambrosch's provocative manner and language and the impact of Antonia's

'No friends any more!' upon Jim. Most managed to go beyond the fight at the heart of the passage to consider the aftermath, in particular the reaction of Antonia and its significance in terms of the novel as a whole. Quite a few gave a line by line explanation without any thread to their argument; there was a tendency to drop into narration, undeveloped comment and generalisation such as: 'the sound of Jake hitting Ambrosch was like the crack of an axe so this was a tense moment'. Stronger answers looked for the contrast between the two families' attitudes and the context of the settlers' hierarchical social background.

Question 12

There were fewer answers on this question, but those candidates who chose it displayed confident knowledge of the novel and thoughtful engagement with Cather's portrayal of Jim and Antonia's relationship.

Hard Times

Question 13

Candidates generally showed understanding of the significance of this scene within the wider context of the novel. Personal engagement was particularly strong in responses to this question and many wrote moving personal responses about the factors which made the scene disturbing, exploring the despairing passivity of Louisa's responses and the inability of her father to understand her. The revulsion felt for Gradgrind's plan to allow his daughter to marry Bounderby and his oblivious reactions to Louisa's distress were present in many cases. The symbolism of the Coketown chimneys, of the fires, and the closing of her hand by Louisa at the end were well understood. The most successful answers were able to link arguments about the relationship to details of dialogue, gesture and image from the passage.

Question 14

There were few responses to the question about Tom Gradgrind but these responded thoughtfully to the qualified nature of the question (*Does Dickens make it possible for you ...*) and showed secure knowledge of Tom's character and role within the novel, particularly in relation to Louisa and Stephen Blackpool. There were some good responses commenting on Dickens' contrast between Tom and Louisa, on Tom's consistently being described as a 'whelp' but also on Dickens' partial sympathy because at the end, Tom is 'allowed' to feel remorse.

Spies

Question 15

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. Knowledge of the context of the passage within the text was demonstrated and candidates wrote convincingly about Frayn's withholding of the identity of the 'tramp', the narrative voice of the older Stephen and the many implications of Uncle Peter's 'it's over'. Success depended on the sharpness of focus on why it is 'powerful' and appreciation of why this is a turning point in the novel. It was evident where candidates were not prepared or who were unfamiliar with the text. Most candidates recognised the need to comment upon the shifts in narration without having a clear idea of what has been achieved through it and on the use of the Haywards' nicknames by the tramp. Most candidates seemed to identify the range of feelings, focusing on Stephen's 'fear' and the interplay between older/younger Stephen and the tramp/Uncle Peter though the pathos surrounding the adult and the predicaments for both child/adult within the extract were often overlooked. Strongest answers recognised the emotional paralysis that initially overcame Stephen and the way the author tracked his emotions through his rhetorical questions. Some very good answers commented on Stephen's inability to recognise the 'German' as Uncle Peter, with all the attendant understanding of adult relationships, fallen heroes and his own part in Uncle Peter's situation. Most candidates recognised the use of 'It's over then' to the foreshadowing of Uncle Peter's death. They saw the change in Uncle Peter from the glorious RAF pilot and hero to a sick tramp and what this says to us about war.

Question 16

Candidates had generally prepared well. General remarks about the dual narration were, however, not always sufficient: more capable responses identified the role of characters such as Barbara Berrill and Mrs Hayward in opening Stephen's eyes to the reality of the adult world. The best answers focused on specific incidents, especially the excruciating (from Stephen's perspective) first conversation with Mrs Hayward in the hide-out and some referred to Stephen's conversations with Barbara in the same place. Although a child herself, she manages to give perspectives about adult behaviour that make Stephen uncomfortable or

confused. Weaker answers were able to identify relevant examples of Stephen's lack of understanding such as the 'x's in Mrs Hayward's diary, but were not able to make very much comment. Some candidates used the extract from Q 15 which was self-limiting.

The Secret River

Question 17

This was a popular question and was generally well answered though a few were not sufficiently focused on the extract itself. Most focused well on the question and were able to find evidence to support assertions and analyse at least some of the language features. Successful responses focused on 'mysteriousness' and worked closely with the detail of the passage, exploring images such as 'naked as worms' or 'like the snakes or the spiders'. Strongest answers gave a brief context (before and after the extract) and then explored the Aborigines' closeness to nature. The best responses were those that focused closely on language analysis alongside an acknowledgement of the clashes of culture. They established that the view of the 'mysterious' nature of the aboriginal people was not a fact in itself but a merely a perspective of the newcomers of a different culture; that it is from Thornhill's perspective, as a result of his experiences from his life in London. Good points were made about how the passage presages events that will lead to the massacre at the end. Many candidates were able to discuss the difference between the aboriginal and the European view of land and ownership and its wider significance within the novel.

Question 18

Responses here showed good understanding of Sal's journey from London to Thornhill's Point. Candidates identified Sal's heroic characteristics and went beyond a character sketch to show understanding of her role in the novel, particularly in relation to Will and her impact on his life from childhood.

The English Teacher

Question 19

Answers here were often less successful than for most of the passage-based questions in that many lapsed into narrative or explanation of the situation without focusing on Narayan's ways of making this a powerful moment. The extreme agitation felt by Krishna and the heart-rending sobs of his wife are powerful in the context of the settled, humdrum life that he had led thus far and he is shocked by an intensity of emotion that was alien to him. This is closely connected to the underlying theme of Krishna's personal growth. Better answers produced thoughtful personal responses, exploring Narayan's depiction of Krishna's anger and Susila's distress and were able to place the episode within the wider context of the novel and the characters' developing marriage. Weaker answers paraphrased the extract rather than focusing on the question.

Question 20

Candidates showed some skill in identifying the roles of the main female characters in this text, from Susila to the Headmaster's wife, and made fairly reasonable evaluation of their roles. A few glossed over the role of women more generally and concentrated on Susila. There was often a lack of the well-selected detail needed to address the task fully.

Stories of Ourselves

Question 21

This was a popular question with a wide range of approaches. Some restricted their answer to the search for the Maori, without fully focusing on the question. Some focused on the relationship between the brothers and neglected the last few lines. The strongest responses ranged widely through the passage and showed real understanding of the significance of heritage. Responses were largely able to focus on what constituted a 'satisfying ending' by concentrating on Jim, though few were able to see that for the dead Maori it was satisfying as it was his 'place of happy return'. Many paraphrased the content of the passage and did not focus on it as an ending to a story, or omitted what is arguably the most important part of the extract: the story of the Maoris and the missing man. Understanding of the ending of the story was not always secure and the reason for the narrator's 'sharp pain' not identified. The metaphor of the 'long-distance runner' was a potentially fruitful image to explore. Those that responded well wrote with great sympathy for the Maoris. The powerful last line was often overlooked despite its importance. This was largely because candidates felt a satisfying ending, by necessity, had to be a happy one and this sentence jarred with that notion. Better

responses recognised that Jim, like the old Maori man, had a connection with the land that the narrator did not.

Question 22

Most candidates were able to identify a sense of place but some were unable to explain what made it strong. Responses were almost equally divided between the two possible stories. In the case of *'To Da-duh'* candidates tended to explain Da-duh's and the narrator's rivalry over the best place to live, without focusing on how a sense of the two places was created by Marshall. Strong answers referring to this text identified the impact of the competition between the two settings and the outcomes these had for the two characters. The world as a place in *'Millennium'* provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to explore the themes of this story and horrors of this dystopian future. Answers often lacked sufficient detail to support their arguments though stronger responses explored the word 'cubicle' and its connotations as a sensible starting-point.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/13
Paper 13 Poetry and Prose

Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

Successful responses:

- demonstrate a detailed knowledge of poems and prose texts studied
- address the question from the start of the answer and throughout
- provide pertinent textual support for points made
- sustain convincing and perceptive analysis of the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts studied
- lose focus on the question set, e.g. by including extraneous context material
- make unsupported assertions
- describe or simply identify writer's techniques without further comment or explanation.

General comments

Examiners reported much evidence of candidates' personal engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poems and prose texts that had been studied.

Textual knowledge

The most successful responses offered a commanding knowledge of the text, with candidates able to integrate well-selected textual references to support their ideas and line of argument. The strongest responses selected judiciously from the poems or prose extracts printed on the question paper and avoided attempts to write exhaustively on every aspect of either poem or extract. In the strongest answers to the general prose essay questions, direct, concise quotation and indirect reference was integrated into essays. In less successful answers, where reference to the text was insufficient, responses tended to rely on unsubstantiated assertion and explanation. This was particularly evident in prose general essays, where a lack of detailed knowledge made it difficult for candidates to develop convincing responses to the ways in which writers conveyed and developed their ideas. In some cases, candidates answered the poetry question well but appeared to have little knowledge of the prose text studied. Lack of knowledge of the context of what was happening in passages was clear in some cases.

Focus on the question

A common feature of more successful responses was the sustained focus on the question. These essays began addressing the terms of the question from the start and maintained a clear focus on the question throughout. Less successful responses often showed an impressive understanding of the character or theme in the question but did not tailor their material to the specific demands of the question. Candidates should take note of the key words in IGCSE Literature questions such as 'memorably', 'vividly' and 'strikingly', as these are used to elicit personal responses to the writing. If these are ignored, there is a danger that candidates produce general overviews or character sketches rather than consider in detail the writer's presentation of ideas and characters. Equally, a better balance in both the use of evidence and in reference to key words in questions would enhance success: some responses to extracts were either line by line run-

thoughts with little analysis, or demonstrated competent understanding but with limited detail in support; there were also often two extremes in relation to key words – repetition of the question without convincing evidence to support, and competent responses to the text as a whole, but without explicit reference to key question words.

Focus was lost in some essays by the inclusion of extraneous background material, often in a lengthy opening paragraph. This approach is ineffective as historical, biographical and social context are not included in the band descriptors or assessed in relation to any assessment objectives. The use of lengthy conclusions which merely repeat points made in the body of the essay are also ineffective. Candidates should be made aware that answering the question is more important than following a pre-conceived idea about what constitutes a model essay.

Writers' effects

The most perceptive responses offered a sustained engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects and had a clear appreciation of writers' use of language, structure and form. Candidates who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were also more able to probe closely and convincingly specific effects. Less successful approaches included the logging of devices and explanation rather than analysis. Literary features were sometimes identified but rarely explored meaningfully in terms of the effects created by the writer. Use of the terms 'lexical field' and 'semantic field' often preceded a list of quoted words and phrases followed by general description rather than a probing critical analysis. Some candidates explained the connotations of words they had quoted (e.g. 'red connotes blood or danger') but needed to expand on their comments to analysing how the words are used within the specific context of the poem or extract. Commenting in simple terms on punctuation, structure and versification was often at the expense of exploring ideas. Many candidates began their answers with comments such as 'X makes this poem moving by use of punctuation' without considering the ideas that the poet communicates. A significant number of answers never progressed beyond describing techniques. The listing of features with little or no reference to key word meaning or key ideas is unlikely to achieve highly in this assessment.

Personal response

Strong individual responses were characterised by thoughtful and perceptive comments argued and supported with care. These responses engaged directly with those words in the questions designed to elicit a personal response to the writing. In some responses to poems, there was evidence of candidates adopting an overly assertive style of writing which gave the impression of there being only one 'correct' reading of the poem. Some less confident responses demonstrated empathy with characters by simply suggesting that the 'reader' experiences the same anguish as a particular character or that a particular predicament was 'relatable'; such comments need to be linked to textual detail and expanded upon in terms of how the writer is creating such responses in readers.

There was, generally, some very good work produced this session. Most demonstrated an enjoyment of and engagement with texts. There were very few rubric infringements.

Questions on individual texts:

Section A: Poetry

Question 1 *Elegy For My Father's Father*

Accomplished responses focused on the question throughout and engaged perceptively and selectively with some of the key words and phrases in the poem. The nature of the powerful feelings varied from candidate to candidate, ranging from outright dislike to a grudging or even whole-hearted admiration of the man. Candidates who looked closely at the language of the poem were often enabled to arrive at an interpretation of the poem which successfully demonstrated how powerful feelings are conveyed. Most recognised the grandfather's uncommunicativeness. The use of the term 'Father's Father' was generally commented on as conveying a distance between the speaker and the grandfather. Phrases which revealed tensions in the family were frequently recognised and identified. The strength of the grandfather as a young man, and the contrasting weakness of the older man often drew comment, although some candidates appeared to think that the speaker had personally witnessed the grandfather carrying a flowering cherry tree on his shoulder. Confident answers recognised the grandfather's bond with nature, and some commented fruitfully on the ambivalence which seems to pervade the relationship and the poem. There were some recurrent loose readings, notably of the flowering cherry tree and the lion sun, and the use of abbreviated quotation was

much in evidence in some answers which restricted discussions of language. Some candidates directed the powerful feelings they felt towards what they perceived to be a neglectful and ungrateful family.

Question 2 *My Parents*

This elicited some strong responses. There was plenty of comment on the implied class division between the speaker and the other children. This was seen by some as ironic, in that 'lower class' boys were picking on a supposedly superior child. There was plenty of useful comment on the imagery used in the poem to describe the actions of the children and its effect on the speaker. Many recognised the envy he seems to feel for their freedom, and some went on to explore the fascination he exhibits with their behaviour and appearance. The ambiguity of 'them' in the final line was commented on in some stronger answers, raising the question of whether the forgiveness was directed towards the boys or the parents. Opinion was largely divided between those who saw his parents as protective and those who saw them as restrictive, the latter often losing focus by discussing snobbishness in general. Less successful answers tended to ignore the phrase 'of the speaker' in the question, writing a more general account of the poem or focusing on their impressions of the boys, sometimes asserting that the speaker hated them without attempting to support this reading.

Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 1

Question 3 *Love (III)*

Many candidates simply worked through the poem for this question, offering an explanation of what was occurring with a limited focus on the word 'peace' in the question. Those who saw the poem as a conversation between God and an unworthy sinner, in which God eventually wins, were sometimes able to demonstrate that a sense of peace is something that is earned. A few, strong responses dealt with the FINIS, which can be said to demonstrate the achievement of peace. Less successful answers worked through the poem, asserting that peace was evident when the words cited from the poem did not really bear that out. Some became distracted in discussing Christian doctrine which did little to advance their argument or meet the assessment criteria.

Question 4 *Heart and Mind*

Examiners reported that many candidates struggled with this poem. Those who focused on the 'regret' of the title generally managed to find a starting point for their answers. Those who attempted to 'explain' or offer a general analytical commentary often struggled, and there was a good deal of confusion and misunderstanding. Stronger responses often looked for details that could be linked with death, the passage of time, the loss of strength; some traced the contrasts between love and lust. Few explored the interplay between past and future, or the significance of the mythological references. In general, candidates found this to be a very difficult poem.

Gillian Clarke: from Selected Poems

Question 5 *Baby-sitting*

The question was often well handled, and most candidates were able to identify the speaker's concerns about the prospect of baby-sitting for a strange child. However, a significant minority did not appear to appreciate that this apprehension and the child's waking reactions were taking place in the mind of the speaker. There was also some misreading or unsupported assertion which claimed that the speaker 'hated' the baby, and would be prepared to mistreat it. The baby's imagined reactions were not fully understood by many, and the force of the images in the second stanza was rarely explored in detail. Stronger responses saw the contrast between conventional ideas about babies and how they are perceived and the speaker's perception, and some commented on the baby's lack of a name and the reason for the speaker's negative feelings.

Question 6 *Still Life*

Opportunities were often missed in response to this question. The significance of the title was not usually considered, and most responses attempted to trace the relationship between the two characters. Some commented on links between 'yellow-gold', 'candlesticks and kettles' and 'heat', but most responses tended to be uneven, making isolated comments on particular details without addressing the key terms of the question.

Section B: Prose

No Longer At Ease

Question 7

Responses to this question were frequently narrative in structure, and relied on a good deal of quotation, often with little analysis. Obi's advice to Christopher about his relationship with Florence was misunderstood in some cases, and there was some confusion about the story of the Catechist, many thinking that it was Obi's mother who had broken her husband's head. A surprising number suggested that Obi was arguing in favour of bribery, using his position to sleep with the girl. More successful responses contextualised the extract more accurately, treating the moment as a step towards Obi succumbing to bribery later on. Some very successful responses saw that Obi was occupying two worlds, colonial and Nigerian, and used this perception as a basis to explore his confusion at this juncture.

Question 8

Candidates who chose this option often showed good knowledge of the novel as a whole, and reasonable understanding of Joseph's part in it. His status as a representative of Nigerian culture was identified, and his role as a friend of Obi was explored. His 'holy of holies' was much mentioned, as was the conflict between his perspective and that of Obi. Little was made of the fact that he and Obi were fellow Umuofians living in Lagos, and that, to a certain extent, he takes Obi under his wing; when mentioned, these ideas encouraged detailed exploration.

Mansfield Park

Question 9

Candidates tended to deal more successfully with one of the key terms of the question than the other. There was no requirement for parity of treatment of the terms, but stronger answers did at least nod towards recognition of both. There was a range of material available to deal with both terms. The opinions of Fanny's cousins concerning her being 'prodigiously stupid' provided a good starting point, and Mrs Norris's behaviour towards the nieces and her comments about Fanny were also rich sources. So too was Lady Bertram's indolence and complacency. Some stronger responses dealt with issues of education, and there were some attempts to evaluate Sir Thomas and his wife as parents. Another hallmark of stronger answers was the way in which the 'How' of the question was dealt with. Some answers explored the use of irony, for example in the ways in which the narrative voice contrasts with the dialogue between the sisters and their aunt, or undercuts the listing of Lady Bertram's preoccupations. Less successful answers often made excess use of quotation with little or no comment.

Question 10

Candidates who selected this option generally knew the details of Fanny's return to Portsmouth, and the reasons behind it. Stronger answers moved beyond narrative to explore the differences between Portsmouth and Mansfield Park, and Fanny's reactions to her old home. Some became side tracked into narrating what happened to Fanny on her visit to Portsmouth, whilst more successful explorations recognised Portsmouth's inferiority in Fanny's eyes, and her realisation that 'Portsmouth was Portsmouth; Mansfield Park was home'. Other candidates offered responses which seemed to be relying on memorised points which had tangential relevance to the question.

My Ántonia

Question 11

Candidates commented on Lena's appearance, her work with cattle and the contrast between her tough outdoor life and her femininity. Some construed her effect on Ole Benson as a deliberate attempt by her at seduction, and there was some confusion between 'Crazy Mary' and Lena, perhaps caused by their common bare footedness. The references to her knitting were seen by some as linking to her later career. Her freedom and independence were seen as admirable by many, some of whom commented on the difference between her behaviour and the socio-historic norms. Stronger answers often took into consideration the viewpoint of a narrator who is already attracted to Lena.

Question 12

Responses to this question tended to be heavily reliant on narrative. Candidates recognised that Mr Shimerda was an immigrant. The contrast between his circumstances in Europe and in America was generally recognised, as was his sense of isolation in his new environment. What would have been beneficial in many answers was a sense of how these details were 'powerfully' depicted.

Hard Times

Question 13

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to achieve some success in showing that this is indeed a sad moment, and many were able to explain why. Tom's perception of himself as a 'donkey' and the desperation behind his wish to 'blow up' Facts and Figures were well recognised, as was Louisa's helplessness. The Utilitarian background to this sometimes led candidates away from a close consideration of the extract into a wider discussion of some of the novel's perceived themes. Those who stayed with the extract were often able to comment effectively on the ways in which Dickens presents the atmosphere of the room, with its darkness and shadows, and the effect of Louisa emerging from and returning to those shadows. The youth of the children, and their contrast with Sissy Jupe, often featured as intensifying the sadness of the moment.

Question 14

This question was often successfully handled. Candidates responded enthusiastically to the way in which she is presented as almost a pantomime villain. Her treatment of Louisa was commented on by many, together with her designs on Bounderby. Her physical description was often a feature of strongly personal responses, and candidates generally evinced a mixture of dislike and scorn for her.

Spies

Question 15

This was a popular question, and was often successfully handled. Candidates generally focused on 'sympathy' with some success, and maintained that focus throughout their answers. Some pointed contrasts were made with the Mrs Hayward at the start of the novel and the figure presented here. Sympathy arose from her situation, her tears, her feelings of guilt and her apprehensions about her husband. Sympathy for Stephen arose from his assumption that he is being asked to help 'a German', from his mistaken feelings of guilt, his embarrassment and the pathos of his last apology. Strong answers often dealt with the narrative voice and the ways in which Stephen responds to Mrs Hayward's comments about people being 'picked on'.

Question 16

Those who attempted this question generally identified two distinct moments, obeying the rubric in avoiding the **Question 15** extract. However, responses were generally narrative, and there was often little exploration of the ways in which suspense is created. The journeys to the Man in the Barns and Stephen's dealings with Mr Hayward featured prominently.

The Secret River

Question 17

This question was often well-handled. Most candidates commented effectively on the descriptions in the opening paragraphs. However, there were some recurrent misreadings which tended to undercut some answers. 'Their mass' was frequently read to mean the sheer number of prisoners, rather than the mass of the blocks of stone. Some candidates seemed to think that William's trial had already taken place. A significant number of responses did not get much further than the first few paragraphs, and the force of 'It was a kind of mercy' was not always appreciated. Many commented that Sal was his only hope, and dealt well with the 'kind of wealth' she provided. This led some to go on to consider subsequent events in

Australia, sometimes at the expense of relevance to the question. Other candidates considered how this scene exemplifies the class system in England at work. The young bacon thief was also mentioned fairly frequently, although candidates were less secure in their treatment of his story and its importance.

Question 18

In response to this question, unselective narrative was not always avoided. There was also evidence of a recurrent tendency to use the extract to answer a general question. There were some responses which drew heavily on the extract to demonstrate the lack of opportunities for the Thornhills in London and this could be self-limiting in demonstrating a lack of wider knowledge. The opportunities identified by candidates were to rise up the social ladder, to own land and property, to employ other people, and to gain wealth. Some stronger responses went on to evaluate the success achieved by the Thornhills, commenting on its hollowness.

The English Teacher

Question 19

Few strong responses were seen in response to this question. Most observed that the headmaster's visit was at night and unexpected. There were some effective but underdeveloped comments about religion and superstition in India. This was sometimes linked to themes in the novel as a whole. There was some consideration of astrologers and their predictions, and some mention of the headmaster's state of mind. However, the details of the extract needed much closer consideration in many responses. Only the strongest mentioned the headmaster's invitation to Krishnan to take over the running of his school, or his indifference to the fate of his wife and family.

Question 20

Most responses concentrated on Leela. The changes brought about in Krishnan's life by her arrival, and the comfort she gave after Susila's death, were pointed out. The benign spontaneity of the children in the headmaster's school attracted some comment, though this needed further development and textual reference.

Stories of Ourselves

Question 21

This question was often well handled. Candidates appreciated that Barbados was new to the narrator, and very different from Brooklyn. There was some confusion or conflation of Barbados and Bridgetown so that the journey from old, run-down town to country was not fully appreciated. Most candidates, however, were able to comment on the discomfort of the back of the lorry, and the appearance of the town. The narrator's perception of the threatening sugar cane crop drew much comment. The tension between characters was frequently recognised and stronger answers pointed to the narrator's fear of nature and Da-duh's fear of machines, seeing this as a battle between two different worlds.

Question 22

A considerable amount of narrative was given in response to this question, often with limited focus on the question. Conradin's circumstances, his illness and his disagreeable guardian led to some consideration of his experiences as not by any means a normal childhood. Few candidates saw the dark humour of Saki's writing, and there were many expressions of horror at the boy's heartless consumption of another slice of toast. Generally, more consideration of detail was needed in response to this question irrespective of story selection.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/22
Paper 22 Drama

Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

Successful responses selected the most pertinent and significant material in order to reflect the focus of the question.

Responses would have been improved by considering the dramatic content of the set passage over the listing of literary features.

Successful answers explored and analysed, and avoided excessive explanation, description and narrative re-telling.

Stronger responses refrained from giving excessive historical/cultural/contextual information at the expense of a sharp focus on the question and set text.

A personal engagement with the text, ability to evaluate and an appreciation of the play on stage enlivened the most successful answers.

General comments

Most candidates showed a sound knowledge of their set texts and engagement with character, genre, structure and ideas. In answer to the passage-based questions, the strongest responses selected the most dramatic, powerful, tense or significant moments in the passage as required, rather than going through it line by line, giving explanations and contextual details that were not relevant to the question. Setting passages briefly within their textual context was often useful, though excessive reference to other parts of the play at the expense of close analysis of the passage did not allow candidates to address the given tasks.

There were some very strong answers to discursive questions. These were characterised by a strong overview of the play and an ability to support points by close textual reference in the form of accurate quotation. Many candidates responded effectively to the question and structured a convincing argument but did not know the play in sufficient detail to support the points made.

A significant number of candidates showed insecure knowledge of technical terms, or used them to substitute genuine analysis. Blank verse and iambic pentameter; simile and metaphor, for example were often confused or misused. The most significant misuse this session was of dramatic irony when the candidate either meant proleptic irony or just irony. Candidates referred to end stop, when they meant an exclamation mark or a full-stop and cited this as dramatic effect even when it simply indicated the end of a sentence. Caesura was confused with a pause in the dialogue and candidates often wrote about the effect of short sentences when the sentences in the text are often long and complex. There was still the tendency to try to answer a question by working through punctuation and literary techniques as a starting point, without showing understanding of the context, ideas and what is actually happening in the text. The initial focus should always be on the events on stage, on the action, characters, ideas and staging, followed by a jargon free analysis of the effects of the techniques used.

Whilst the historical and cultural context of the text is a useful aspect of teaching, candidates tended to display this knowledge in the examination at the expense of a focus on the question, sometimes to the extent of writing several paragraphs of background information. Speculation as to how a contemporary audience

would have reacted to the play, though interesting, is not what is required on this paper. It is the candidate's own personal response which is of paramount importance. Conversely, some contemporary concerns, such as gender equality, are unhelpfully applied to historic texts if discussed at the expense of textual analysis.

Candidates should be dissuaded from using line numbers instead of writing quotations. This is inadequate textual support and prevents high achievement as it is then difficult to consider effective word choices or techniques. It is particularly counter-productive as the candidates have the passage printed on the paper and should select the quotation they wish to use.

There were many sophisticated responses this year which showed a thorough exploration of the complex issues these plays present and the ways in which they provide a powerful impact on an audience.

Some candidates do not number their questions correctly or at all, especially on typed scripts. It would be helpful to both candidate and Examiners if the importance of this is emphasised. There were few brief or imbalanced scripts.

Comments on specific questions

J.LAWRENCE AND R.E.LEE: *Inherit the Wind*

Question 1

Strong answers to this question understood Brady's desire for celebrity, manipulation of the press, rather blinkered religious faith and dislike of criticism. Other striking aspects of his portrayal were cited by many, such as his love of oratory, his relationship with Drummond and the fact that he calls his wife '*Mother*'. Such responses looked at the language Brady uses, such as the grandiose ideas and oratorical alliteration in: 'fighting the fight of the Faithful throughout the world'. Less successful answers took him at face value, perhaps betraying a lack of secure knowledge, as also exemplified by candidates thinking that he was in Hillsboro with his mother.

Question 2

There were many engaged and thoughtful responses to this question. Secure responses considered the outcome of the trial; Rachel's 'conversion' to free thinking and the satisfactory conclusion of her romance with Bert; Brady's downfall; Drummond's trouncing of Hornbeck and weighting up of Darwin and the Bible. Less successful answers misunderstood the verdict or made reasonable points but without any textual support.

ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 3

Strongest answers demonstrated understanding of the irony and foreshadowing inherent in the passage and hence its significance in the play. They combined comment on this with an analysis of how Miller conveys Eddie's controlling relationship with Beatrice and Catherine through his repetitions, imperatives and interruptions and the underlying significance of his calling Catherine '*baby*' and '*kid*'. The ironic significance of the Vinny Bolzano story, along with what it reveals of the code of the community, was fully appreciated. The power of the language used to convey the brutal treatment Vinny received was explored in some detail. Strong candidates understood that this is not dramatic irony. Although we know from the start that Eddie will die, we do not know how or why. Candidates appreciated that an audience will remember what happened to Vinny as the depiction is so striking and will see how Vinny's fate mirrors Eddie's. The strongest candidates understood that Eddie betraying his most strongly held beliefs later in the play reveals the extent of his obsession with Catherine and inability to alter his fate. Less successful responses were often imbalanced – looking at the drama in the dialogue but not the significance or vice versa. The least successful answers made no mention of the Vinny Bolzano story and its significance or did not refer to the passage in any depth or detail. One relatively common misconception was that Eddie, at this point in the play, disliked the cousins and did not want them to stay, candidates therefore missing his concern for their safety.

Question 4

Sophisticated responses considered the extent to which Eddie was responsible for his death by looking at the role of fate and/or the culpability of the other characters as well as giving a rigorous account of Eddie's fatal flaw/s. Some strong answers concentrated purely on Eddie but the strongest made an evaluation of the extent to which he was aware of or understood his feelings for his niece. Other strong answers looked at the codes of masculinity, honour and revenge which also play a part in the tragedy.

Less confident responses tended to narrate events quite accurately but without sufficient comment and evaluation. There were few neutral answers. The play engaged most candidates and strong opinions and feelings were fully expressed.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 5

Knowledge of the play as a whole played a part in the strongest answers. Successful responses showed awareness that Catherine, a suffragette, was prejudiced against Sir Robert for his reactionary views on Trade Unions, understood that she thought he was taking the case for selfish reasons and knew that this prejudice is overcome during the course of the play. They could consequently understand her irritation with his desire to escape to Devonshire House, his unwillingness to discuss the case with her and her provocative smoking. Most candidates grasped the striking description of Sir Robert's elegance and superciliousness, the awkward pauses, his apparent rudeness and Catherine nearly losing her temper. Less successful answers either did not look closely at the dialogue and Rattigan's effects in sufficient detail or were unaware of the context.

Question 6

Most candidates who answered this question were firmly in support of Arthur Winslow. His championing of Ronnie's innocence at great personal cost, his determination and his principled stance were all applauded. Stronger responses were clear on the principle at stake and the concept of letting right be done. The strongest answers combined the above with an evaluation of the cost to Grace, Dickie, Catherine and to Arthur himself. Few candidates considered that there were less admirable aspects to Arthur's fight, though many noted that Catherine supported him even though it cost her the marriage to John. Some answers made relevant general points but could not support these by close reference to the play.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V*

Question 7

Most candidates maintained a secure focus on the question but were less successful at looking at the vividness of Shakespeare's effects in the passage. Candidates did not always explore the rhetoric of this well-known speech. Most recognised that Henry's oratorical powers played a major part in his leadership but seemed less able to explore these powers. The strongest answers were aware of the immediate context. They knew that this is prior to the battle of Agincourt, the English are tired, demoralised, ill and outnumbered. Henry has discovered what his troops think by visiting them in disguise and uses what he learns in the speech. Comment included the repetition, alliteration and augmentation in '*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers*', skilfully dealing with egalitarianism and the fearful odds in one phrase. The motivational force of '*All things are ready if our minds be so,*' was often noted. His ability to change Westmoreland's viewpoint was cited, as well as how he offered the men everlasting fame. Few, however, explored the vivid projection Henry makes into the men's future and the visualisation of St Crispin's days to come. Weaker answers thought that the day was named after the battle and that this was the post battle celebration.

Question 8

Although the majority of candidates understood what the question was asking and made valid points about dramatic impact, fewer could support his with detailed knowledge. Many wrote at some length but rather generally about Henry's past, his transformation on becoming King and his rejection of Falstaff but concentrated less on the events of the play. Most mentioned the hanging of Bardolph, though often not knowing his name, and that Henry's rejection of his boasting, lying, thieving and cowardly former companions reflected his new role. Some mentioned both comic relief and that the antics of Pistol and company showed a darker undercurrent in the play. References to their behaviour at Harfleur, Pistol's comic encounters with M. Le Fer and Fluellen and the fates of Nym and the boy were rarely employed, though successful responses often ranged across these points.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 9

There were many high quality responses which considered the sound and movement on stage; Macduff's desire for vengeance; the imagery of evil; Macbeth's surprising show of guilt and avoidance of causing Macduff further harm; his mistaken belief that he is invincible; the dramatic reversal of this following Macduff's revelation; Macbeth's response to the witches' equivocation and his restoration of some honour and audience sympathy in his refusal to yield. The best answers explored the balance of sympathies; concisely contrasted Macbeth here to the man at the beginning of the play; commented on the restoration of his honourable warrior qualities and his 'release' from the evil charm that has held him spellbound and discussed the differences in Macduff 'haunted' by his family's death and Macbeth's haunting by Banquo. The power of the language was fully analysed in the best answers, for example the connotations and thematic significance of *'tyrant'*, *'hell-hound'*, *'bloodier villain'*, *'juggling'*, *'haunt'* and *'untimely ripp'd'*.

In less successful and in some strong answers, there were common misconceptions. *'Beest'* in *'If thou beest slain and with no stroke of mine'* was often read as 'beast', leading candidates astray. *'My soul is too much charg'd with blood of thine already'* was misinterpreted as Macbeth taunting Macduff, with *'charg'd'* seen to mean *'fired up'* rather than laden with guilt. This interpretation makes little sense in the context of the speech. *'I bear a charmed life'* was taken not in the sense that he had been under the witches' protective spell but that he had been having a great time. Some candidates thought that the audience already knew that Macduff was not of woman born and many were confused by the concept. Some otherwise sound answers spent too much time on the context or on Macbeth's history in the play at the expense of looking at the crucial drama in the second half of the passage.

Question 10

Perceptive candidates homed in straight away on the contrast between the characters and reactions of Macbeth and Banquo and the compelling reversal of their friendship. They commented fully on Banquo as a foil. He sees the evil trickery in the witches, he is not without ambition but will not play foully for it. He remains loyal to both Duncan and (out of fear and wise caution) to Macbeth, whilst suspecting his friend of regicide. Their initial closeness was explored with apt textual reference and comment on the language. Macbeth's suspicion and subsequent murder of Banquo by hired assassins was seen as evidence of his moral deterioration and his estrangement from his wife. The dramatic impact and psychological and symbolic significance of the ghost's appearance was fully explored. Macbeth's reasons for killing Banquo could have been more fully documented as compelling insights into his fear, emptiness and paranoia.

Less successful candidates did not fully grasp the significance to Macbeth of Banquo's children carrying on the royal line. Many did not select the fact that Macbeth murders his best friend, then publically exposes his own guilt by seeing that friend's ghost at a state banquet, as a significantly compelling aspect of their relationship.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/23
Paper 23 Drama

Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

Successful responses selected the most pertinent and significant material in order to reflect the focus of the question.

Responses would have been improved by considering the dramatic content of the set passage over the listing of literary features.

Successful answers explored and analysed, and avoided excessive explanation, description and narrative re-telling.

Stronger responses refrained from giving excessive historical/cultural/contextual information at the expense of a sharp focus on the question and set text.

A personal engagement with the text, ability to evaluate and an appreciation of the play on stage enlivened the most successful answers.

General comments

Most candidates showed a sound knowledge of their set texts and showed engagement with the characters, themes and emotional impact. Candidates need to be reminded that to show understanding of the text as performance, the dramatic impact of stage directions, dialogue and characters' actions and behaviour should be explored without them assuming the director's role. Some candidates had been taught to conclude responses with extended explanations of what the play means to them personally. For example, what they learned about excessive ambition in *Macbeth* and the pitfalls to be avoided in life or, in *The Winslow Boy*, how important it is to maintain a good relationship with one's father; that a close family should always support each and make sacrifices. Whilst these are worthy lessons, they took up valuable time, when more pertinent points in answer to the question and in response to the text could have been made.

There is a tendency to try to answer a question by working through punctuation and literary techniques without showing understanding of the textual context and what is actually happening, particularly in passage-based questions. For example, 'end stop', rather than exclamation marks or full-stops, was frequently cited as creating a dramatic effect when it may simply indicate the end of a sentence. Similarly, a range of unrelated technical terminology was used that did little to develop or support the argument being made.

Candidates were often drawn into discussion of manliness (especially in *A View from the Bridge*, *The Winslow Boy* and *Macbeth*), with much to say about gender. There was also considerable comment on the subservient role of women; women in America in the 1950's were repressed, their roles being to pander to husbands/uncles and being unable to work outside the home. These comments, though apt if connected to the question, often detracted from questions that were unrelated to gender issues and were generally sweeping generalisations, rarely rooted in the text. In such cases, valuable time was wasted developing this line of argument which could have been spent in answering specific questions more closely.

Most candidates managed their time well and there were few very brief answers. There were, however, some responses where there was little knowledge of the text and which appeared to have been done as unseen responses. These did not achieve highly.

Most candidates divided their time successfully on Paper 23 and there were very few rubric infringements. However, some rubric infringements occurred in **Question 10** of *Macbeth*, where candidates failed to adhere to the rider to the question: this stated clearly, **'Do not use the passage in Question 9 in answering this question'**. By using the limited relevant detail to the characters in the passage it was difficult for candidates to achieve marks in the higher Bands.

Comments on specific questions

J.LAWRENCE AND R.E.LEE: *Inherit the Wind*

Question 1

To answer this question fully, candidates needed to focus on the 'powerful' aspects of the scene and to show understanding of how this was conveyed by the writers. This was at a key point in the trial where Drummond's scientific witnesses have been disallowed and he is examining Brady. Weaker responses worked through the passage, narrating events at a literal level with little consideration of the question or scene. They attempted to summarise what Drummond said with limited success. Stronger responses immediately acknowledged that this was a turning point in the play where Brady loses the support of the crowd and were able to trace this from the '*few snickers*' to the metaphorical '*slap(ped) in the face*' for Brady. They explored Drummond's ability in turning an impossible situation to his advantage and were able to follow closely the intricacies of his argument, noting the authors', and Drummond's, facility with language. His control over his cross-examining of Brady compared to his initial '*fiery*' tone were explored in depth. The idea of knowledge and progress versus blind faith, at the heart of the drama, was clearly understood.

Question 2

The most popular choice of admirable character was Drummond. Some chose Cates or Rachel and even Hornbeck and there was much to consider in relation to all of them. The few candidates who chose Brady appeared to acknowledge that he was slightly more difficult to admire, or defend, once they started to write. Most candidates showed good knowledge of the text and character giving clear well-supported reasons for the choices made.

ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 3

To answer this question well, focus was required on 'revealing and unsettling' and the best responses were able to explore both what Eddie said about Rodolpho and what the passage revealed about Eddie's and Beatrice's relationship. Some responses were unbalanced with too much time spent working through Eddie's 'excuses' for disliking Rodolpho without analysing the deeper implications and real reasons for his dislike. Most were able to comment in some detail on Miller's writing and Eddie's dislike on the grounds of his effeminacy or homosexuality. Some candidates suggested that Eddie himself was revealing his own latent homosexuality; a claim difficult to substantiate. The most successful responses probed at Eddie's undeclared reasons for his dislike, his own feelings for Catherine and the threat Rodolpho posed to them. They responded thoroughly to the drama on stage, analysing Miller's writing to show explicitly what was revealed of Eddie's feelings. His determination was explored as the '*campaign solidified*' and the war-like language identified and carefully linked to his '*retreat*' once Beatrice raised her 'other worries' and went on the attack. Most candidates understood Beatrice's upset and feelings of neglect in her question, 'When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?' and were able to follow through with close analysis of the implications and consequences of this statement.

Question 4

Candidates responding to this question often did not pay attention to what was 'striking' about Catherine's portrayal. As such, material was not well-selected and character profiles were often written, explaining all about Catherine and the plot. Most focused on the early scenes and wrote of her naiveté and desire to gain Eddie's approval, often noting that she undergoes a change as the play progresses, but simply stating she calls him 'a rat' without showing knowledge or understanding of the causes of this change. The most successful responses were able to explore the change from the child-like girl to the young woman in love with Rodolpho, seeking to be her own person. They were able to explore the second half of the play and the

factors that led her to denounce him as 'a rat', closely analysing the kissing and the betrayal of the cousins to the Immigration Bureau.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 5

There were few responses to this question and they were generally narrative in approach. Candidates often worked through the passage explaining what it was about, though there was a lack of understanding of the textual context. Others retold the plot with little focus on the passage. Successful responses were able to analyse what was moving, showed understanding of the sacrifices which had been made and the moving empathy and unity between father and daughter.

Question 6

Weaker answers wrote two separate character studies with little focus on 'relationship' or 'dramatic impact'. More successful answers developed understanding of Catherine's initial dislike of Sir Robert Morton in their first encounter and their friendly banter and hint of 'romance' at the end of the play. Few, however, addressed her changed opinion of him and the underlying impact of their unifying stance in the face of different political views.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V*

Question 7

Most candidates were able to comment on some 'entertaining' aspects of the passage though those who failed to understand that Henry was in disguise were less successful. The most successful answers understood the context and the comic interlude, the night before Agincourt. They focused on Pistol's attempt to speak French and lack of understanding of 'Harry Le Roy'. They identified the way in which an old friend did not recognise his visitor. His praise and his parting insult were commented on as was Pistol's declaration that he was 'as good a gentleman as the Emperor' though not all understood how or why this is entertaining. Weaker responses did not go beyond commenting on Pistol. More successful responses explored Pistol's anger towards Fluellen before addressing the entertaining aspects of the conversation with Gower. The entertaining aspect and irony of Fluellen's admonishment of Gower to 'speak fewer' whilst he proceeded to speak a lot about the ancient wars was clearly enjoyed by some candidates. They also commented on his language, comic repetition and colloquialisms in 'tiddle taddle, pebble pabble'. Most candidates were able to convey some understanding and enjoyment of the moment.

Question 8

There were some very successful responses to this question, focusing on Henry's reasons for going to war against France and himself as a noble King. Most had the requisite knowledge and supported ideas with relevant references to the text and were aware of the ambivalent attitude to war. Weaker responses omitted the 'invasion of France' from the question and focused solely on Henry as a character to admire or not. Successful responses referred to Henry's rightful claim to the throne and the Salic law whilst showing full awareness of the bishops' ulterior motives in proposing this justification for the invasion. The Dauphin's taunting of Henry's youth and former life style and Henry's response, with his verbally skilful reply to the insult of the 'tennis balls', was also explored in detail. The best responses were able to weigh up the legitimacy of the invasion against the horrors and brutality of the war, supported by close analysis of Henry's speech both to his men before battle and to the governor of Harfleur.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 9

There was a strong sense of the drama and tension conveyed in many good and varied responses. The most successful responses explored the dramatic irony, the tension before the discovery of the murder, the interference with the Chain of Being and the disruption to the natural order. The act of innocence by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and the sense of chaos in the exclamations, the alarum-bell ringing and the rapid entrances and exits were also features of these responses. Close attention was paid to the vivid imagery of Macduff's speech conveying the horror of what he had seen and emphasising the enormity of the crime. Weaker responses spent too much time explaining the previous scene and Duncan's murder. Others limited

their response to a linear analysis of Lennox's speech noting parallels between previous events – the witches' prophecies and the 'prophesying'; the witches and the lamentings; the obscure bird and the owl and the strange screams of death, supposedly paralleling Duncan's screams as he died. For higher reward these responses needed consideration of the whole passage and linking to details from the given passage.

Question 10

The discursive question was less successfully handled. There was an imbalance in the treatment of the two men with Macduff coming off worse as candidates clearly felt more comfortable and knew far more about Macbeth. Weaker responses focused on one character (usually Macbeth first) then the other with very little on Macduff with a few straightforward links drawn between them. Others retold the plot with scant reference to the question. The most successful answers looked at their loyalty to the King and to Scotland; their similarities in rank and skills as warriors, as well as Macbeth's driving ambition and Macduff's suspicion of him. Their differing responses to the loss of loved ones was a feature of the very best responses with well-supported comments on Macbeth's indifference to Lady Macbeth's demise and Macduff's emotional outburst and devastation at the death of his family.