



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language A (4EA1)

Paper 02: Poetry and Prose Texts and
Imaginative Writing

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January 2019

Publications Code 4EA1_02_1901_ER

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Paper 2 of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. This was the first January examination of the new 'A' specification in IGCSE English Language 9-1. The paper consists of three components: Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing - 60% (examination); Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (this examination) OR Unit 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (non-examination assessment). Candidates may also be entered for the optional Spoken Language Endorsement (non-examination assessment). Unit 2 for Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing is assessed through an examination lasting one hour and thirty minutes. The total number of marks available is 60. The reading and writing sections on this paper are loosely linked by the theme of the text from the Anthology which appears on the examination paper.

This focus of this component is:

Section A – Poetry and Prose Texts: study and analyse selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts.

Candidates should study the poetry and prose provided in Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* in preparation for responding to a given extract in the examination.

The specification identifies that candidates:

'should be able to read substantial pieces of writing (extended texts) that make significant demands on them in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. Throughout the qualification, students should develop the skills of inference and analysis.'

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section A, and there will be one essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*, which will be made available in a booklet in the examination if it is a longer extract or will be in the Question Paper in the case of a poem.

Candidates will answer the question in this section and 30 marks are available. There are three bullet points to prompt the response and the third bullet always asks candidates to consider language and structure.

Section B – Imaginative Writing: explore and develop imaginative writing skills.

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section B. There are three writing tasks, to some extent linked by theme to the reading extract. Candidates pick one question to respond to and the response is worth 30 marks. The format of the tasks

remains the same for each series – Question 1 follows the format ‘Write about a time when you, or someone you know...’, Question 2 follows the format ‘Write a story with the title...’ and Question 3 offers two images as a prompt for a response which is always ‘Write a story that begins...’ or ‘Write a story that ends...’.

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

Section A: Reading

AO1:

- read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives

AO2:

- understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.

Section B: Writing

AO4:

- communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences

AO5:

- write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to the poem from the Anthology in the examination, and that most had studied it before (although one candidate write that they were reading the poem for the first time). Some candidates had been taught the context of and background to the poem.

Throughout the qualification, overall candidates had been prepared well and all had, at different levels, developed the skills required to answer the questions.

It was also clear that candidates used what they had studied in their reading to feed into their imaginative writing, which inspired them. As the specification identifies, the main aims for our candidates in this paper are:

- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Candidates had, pleasingly, been given the opportunity to practise their writing techniques and planning and proofreading skills.

The responses of candidates had some positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that many candidates had understood the content of and ideas in the poem
- the successful use of the bullet points within the question
- completion of the questions in the paper and coverage of the assessment objectives
- the references to context and links to race and feminism in response to the poem
- the range of vocabulary for AO5
- writing that showed creative ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Less successful responses:

- demonstrated a lack of awareness of the range of ideas in the poem
- failed to reference the question, with candidates simply writing all they knew about the poem
- followed a rigid structure in their responses, with a stanza by stanza approach
- had an insecure grasp of language and structure with a lack of understanding of how language and structure were used, feature-spotting or confusion of terms
- had limited comment on language and structure and relied heavily on description of ideas or events for Question 1
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence
- lacked organisation of writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

It was clear that candidates had been able to understand the ideas in the poem and could comment on language and structural features. Their own writing was often enthusiastic and had a clear sense of purpose and audience in the voice and ideas used.

Question 1

AO1

The first two bullet points in the mark scheme relate to AO1 - read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives. The level of understanding of the text from the Anthology is assessed in the first bullet point, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives in the text in the second bullet point.

At the very basic level candidates tended to either explain what was being said in the poem. They were able to show some understanding of some parts of the poem, but the understanding was uneven. There was often limited selection and interpretation of information and ideas: for example, candidates at this borderline often did not move past confidence/pride.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were at least able to identify some of the key ideas in the poem, although at this borderline grade there was often an imbalance where the focus was on identifying basic/valid ideas and information from the poem rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels. For example, candidates at this borderline grade often had not considered more than broad ideas such as Maya Angelou being confident/strong/nothing could get her down. There was a lack of 'drilling down' into the poem to examine the more nuanced ideas considered by candidates achieving higher marks.

Candidates at borderline Grade 7 were more direct in approach, as they were able to select the relevant ideas from the poem in a detailed but succinct manner. Candidates at this borderline at least covered the full text of the poem and understood in the contrast in the way the poet spoke of others compared to herself. (Higher level responses widened the context to see the poet speaking for all women and black people, although not perhaps with the awareness of impact that Grade 8 or 9 candidates would have).

AO2

The third bullet point in the mark scheme relates to AO2 - understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. There needs to be understanding of the language and structure used in the text, and the level of skill is also a discriminator. *Explain* is a mid-level skill, *comment* a lower level skill and *explore/analyse* higher-level skills, which gives candidates opportunities to achieve across the range.

At the lowest levels candidates often identified and named devices, but did not demonstrate the skill or understanding to discuss their use. At this level responses were characterised by writing without any explanations – candidates here were good at finding both language and structure features, but not as confident at explaining them. The use of rhyme is a good example here that tended to be commented on, but lacked any sense of what it was used for. The responses were much more at a descriptive level, with limited and underdeveloped evidence.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were at least commenting on both language and structure. At this borderline grade candidates were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. Candidates at this borderline grade were able to pick out features in the poem to link back to the ideas – there were many references to rule of three, repetition and rhetorical questions – but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features.

Candidates at the Grade 7 borderline were commenting on both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. At this borderline grade candidates were exploring and analysing language and structure, with detailed and discriminating references. The majority at the borderline grade were able to explore less obvious features such as tone and symbolism alongside the features of borderline Grade 4. The examples of language and structure used at this borderline grade were much more considered and selected than at borderline Grade 4, and often were linked confidently to context such as issues of race and feminism.

The final bullet point in the mark scheme relates to selection and use of references from the text which has been studied for both AO1 and AO2. This is a very useful discriminator in this question. As previously mentioned, candidates were sometimes unable to consider references that supported different ideas and information (rather than many references which illustrated the same point) where candidates perhaps missed key elements that would have demonstrated apt, persuasive selection of information and ideas.

Example 1

Maya Angelou

1 How does the writer try to present strong emotions in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the narrator of the poem feels about herself
- how the narrator of the poem feels about others
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30) Q01 9

In the poem 'Still I Rise' by Maya Angelou, she presents ~~many~~ strong emotions all the way through.

Another way the writer presents strong emotions is when, she is showing us how she feels about others. All throughout the poem, people/others were constantly putting ~~her~~ the writer down, with the writer saying in 'hateful' ways and telling 'twisted lies'. But one quote that shows us how she feels about the others is 'out of the hurts of history's shame, I Rise,

us that once again even with others hating and putting her down, she is still rising above them.

Another way the writer presents strong emotions is when, she is showing us how she feels about others. All throughout the poem, people/others were constantly putting ~~her~~ the writer down, with the writer saying in 'hateful' ways and telling 'twisted lies'. But one quote that shows us how she feels about the others is 'out of the hurts of history's shame, I Rise,

Up from a past that's rooted in pain,

I Rise'. This,

(showing us that no matter what the others think ^{her} at she will ~~be~~ rise,

suggesting to us that maybe she means rising above ~~there~~ child like behaviour and

showing us that she thinks she is better than the others.

Finally, the use of language and the structure of the poem presents strong emotions by using Repetition. For example using

'I'll Rise' multiple times to show ~~to~~ the reader that no matter she'll rise, presenting to us strong emotions. Another way was

when she used Rhetorical questions multiple times, as it's like she's using questions

that maybe people have told her the answer to without her asking, in a judging way. ^{making her feel judged}

This also presenting to us strong emotions.

Examiner Comments:

This response achieves a mark of 9 in Level 2. Responses at Level 2 tend to be characterised by being 'underdeveloped', as this one is. There are some similarities with the first response, but there is more evidence of understanding than in the previous response. This candidate, unlike the first one, has structured their response around the bullet points in the question. There is a generic introduction (which is not necessary).

The first point made about the way the writer shows 'that she is strong and confident in herself even when others bring her down' shows some understanding of the poem when read with the example given of repetition and the supplementary example which shows 'even with others hating and putting her down, she is still rising above them'. This shows some selection and interpretation of valid ideas (Level 2), but this is not developed much more than that as the candidate moves on to comment on feelings about others. The

candidate understands the poem in that others were putting the writer down and gives relevant evidence to support this ('hateful' and 'twisted lies'). There is slightly more interpretation of the ideas in this section as the candidate's comment on the example demonstrates their awareness of 'she means rising above their child like behaviour and showing us that she thinks she is better than the others'. The understanding is not fully evidenced here, however. As with the first response, the candidate identifies repetition and rhetorical questions but again struggles with explanation any further than 'making her feel judged'.

The response partly meets the first bullet of Level 2 as there is some understanding of the text. There is some valid selection and interpretation of ideas, but this is not developed, so this bullet is not fully met in Level 2. There is brief and fairly general understanding of structure and effect, so this demonstrates more Level 1/2 achievement. The selection of references is valid, but not developed. Given the meeting of the first two bullet points in Level 2 (overall) and the final bullet point, the response meets the middle of Level 2.

Example 2

Maya Angelou

1 How does the writer try to present strong emotions in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the narrator of the poem feels about herself
- how the narrator of the poem feels about others
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30) Q01 16

Maya Angelou presents strong emotions in many different ways, one of these ways is by presenting the feelings of herself which can be exhibited in the quote, "cause I walk like i've got oil wells pumping in my room". The ^{simile} ~~metaphor~~ suggests to us that, she feels a great pride that even riches and money can't buy, because

as you know oil wells bring in a lot of money, and to own some in your house will make you feel rich, so what maya angelou is trying to say about herself is that she doesn't need money and riches to be happy.

Another way she presents her feelings strong emotions is showing that she sees other people who bring her down as evil, this can be exhibited in the quote "with your bitter, twisted lies." As the quote suggests, maya angelou presents emotions of hatred as she describes the lies of people as "bitter" connoting hate and "twisted" connoting anger, which overall presents her view on other people.

Another way maya angelou brings out strong emotions is by again using particular words or phrases, to bring out her views on other people, this can be evidenced in the quote "Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head ^{to} bowed eyes?" the rhetorical questions suggests that ~~the answer~~ ^{the} answer, ~~even though~~ is obvious to be "yes," as she is talking to people going against her, which brings a emotion of confidence because she is implicitly telling us that none of what she says would've happened.

Again maya presents strong emotions about herself; such as the emotion of happiness, ^{and self confidence.} evidenced in the quote: "Cause I laugh like I've got gold ~~birds~~ diggin' in my own back yard"; as the simile suggests (and ^{as I} have mentioned before) she doesn't need riches to be happy or to be satisfied, she only needs her pride and her sense of humanity.

Another way she brings out strong emotions is by using particular words or phrases which can be evidenced in the quote "you may shoot me with your words"; the quote gives a personification to the word as a bullet (because guns shoot), meaning the quote shows emotions of pain or warfare.

Another way she brings out strong emotions is through describing herself as beautiful evidenced in the quote word(s), "sassiness... haughtiness... sexiness"; As you can see all the words connote a very feminine nature, which can present alot of powerful emotions such as self confidence because no matter what anyone else says, she'll never give up and she'll always fight, because she knows that she is beautiful whether or not someone says so.

Moreover, she also uses the element of repetition at the end of every subsequent paragraph, even an example of ~~the~~ the use of the words, "I rise, I rise, I rise". This quotation appears at the end of the passage and uses the power of 3 as well as repetition, which creates the emotion of confidence and emphasises that no matter what, she'll always rise.

Another way Maya does this is by using particular words or phrases to create strong emotions evidenced in the quote, "Leaving behind nights of ^{terror} fear and pain and going to live in peace and love. "wondrously clear", suggest implicitly suggests to us that there is no-one to block her path/way. Also night connotes dark and evil, also an insecure atmosphere while, daybreak is beautiful and positive. Stripping the oxymoronic features, the repetition of the words "I rise" suggests again that she will rise above everything, either good or bad creating emotions for the will that she will fight as I have mentioned before in my paragraphs.

Examiner Comments:

This answer achieves a mark of 16 in Level 3. It begins with a clear focus on the question, but the explanation of the example is slightly laboured. There is evidence of sound understanding that the poem presents the writer as not needing money or riches to be happy, and there is clear understanding of this appropriate reference (Level 3).

The point about hatred of others and anger is mostly clear (although some confusion of whether this is the writer's hatred, or the hatred others have – or perhaps both?) This response seems to be sustained in its focus on the question, strong emotions, but this is rather repetitive. The identification of rhetorical questions is mostly clear, but again the explanation is quite laboured. It does end up being quite clear in the awareness of confidence, but the point about 'none of what she said would've happened' is unclear.

Towards the end of the response the candidate struggles to develop their understanding of the poem further, as they point out their own repetition of ideas. The explanation of personification is clear, 'shows emotions of pain or warfare'. Reference to beauty also shows appropriate and relevant selection of ideas, although the connection to confidence is repeated. Repetition and rule of three are correctly identified with some attempt to explain, although again this fails to move into demonstrating more understanding of the poem (it links back to confidence again). The final point about oxymoron is slightly confused but there is understanding of contrast which is relevant, and the reference to connotation is clear.

This response meets the first bullet in Level 3, with sound understanding of the text, although this is not always secure and can be repetitive. The second bullet point in Level 3 is mostly met with some appropriate and relevant selection and interpretation of information and ideas, although there can be some repetition and lack of development. There is clear understanding and explanation of language and structure with appropriate references to meet Level 3 – AO2 is more securely into Level 3 than AO1. Although uneven, 'best fit' places this at the higher end of Level 3.

Example 3

Maya Angelou

1 How does the writer try to present strong emotions in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the narrator of the poem feels about herself
- how the narrator of the poem feels about others
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30) Q01 23

fighting for herself and others. This sets an example to her audience, wanting them to remember "I'll rise" like a slogan or motto.

Rhetorical questions are used to seemingly mock the people who think they can weaken her body and spirits, asking "does my sassiness upset you?" and "does my haughtiness offend you?" proving how she wants to fight back, trying to belittle the people who did it to her. This sets a lesson of pride, showing Angelou's passion for freedom.

Angelou uses juxtaposition throughout the poem to contrast what ~~the~~ the people are doing to her to how she is responding to it, contrasting "soulful cries" with "haughtiness." This shows that she wants to teach her oppressors that no matter what happens, she will always rebel against them and find happiness despite their constant abuse.

Similes are used to compare her body ~~to~~ and spirits to great things, such as "laugh like I've got goldmines" and "like I've got diamonds," reassuring her audience to have a positive mental

attitude despite whatever bad things may happen.

Maya uses metaphors to show herself as a great force, comparing herself to powerful things by saying "I'm a black ocean leaping and wide." This makes the reader understand the strength of her will, how she's not willing to give up and will continue to stay strong and strengthen others at the same time.

Enjambement is used to ~~keep~~ give the idea that Angelou's rebellion will continue, not stopping for anyone, such as when she uses enjambement to say "you may tread me in the very dirt but still, like dust, I'll rise."

Angelou uses onomatopoeia in words such as "cries" to bring a sense of reality and verisimilitude to the poem, further exploring the depth of her emotion, therefore sharing it with the reader.

Rhyming couplets are used to make Angelou's poem sound like a chant of protest, which came to be effective as "still I rise" became a civil rights anthem used everywhere to help people all over the

globe to protest and rebel, inspiring many people with her words. Carol Ann Duffy once said that "poetry is the music of being human," and Angelou's poem confirms this, inspiring people everywhere to fight for their freedom with her passionate words such as "haughtiness."

The last stanza of the poem is not in rhyming couplets like the rest of it, showing that Angelou wanted to convey her emotions so desperately that she broke the rhythm to speak from the heart, showing her true self coming out at the end.

She says "I am the dream and the hope of the slave," showing her true intention to empower people and to fight for justice.

The poem is in first person, meaning that every single person who reads and recites it will make it sound as though it is coming from them, allowing them to speak their feelings and that Maya Angelou made this poem for them. For example, "Still I Rise" empowers the person reading or speaking it, passing on Angelou's message of pride and self-worth.

Examiner Comments:

This response is a thorough and sustained answer to the question and is an example of a response which gets better with further reading. It achieves a mark of 23 in Level 4. The candidate takes the approach of using language and structure points to focus the answer, rather than the bullet points in the question, but there is sustained focus on AO1. There is immediate discussion of language to start the answer which uses time efficiently.

The first few references to language and structure, for example the senses and repetition, show appropriate selection and explanation, for example 'describing the evil of the people', 'trying to reach people on an emotional level', 'she will keep fighting for herself and others'. The answer then starts to become more exploratory, for example the 'slogan or motto' comment is developed further in the answer. There is some personal interpretation with a well-made and detailed range of language and structure points (rhetorical questions, juxtaposition, similes and metaphors, enjambment, onomatopoeia, rhyming couplets, first person).

This response meets all of the bullet points in Level 3, and there is thorough understanding evident to meet Level 4 in AO1 – the first two bullet points. The first bullet in Level 4 is met with sustained understanding of the poem – the ideas of oppression, hatred of others, fighting for herself and others, pride, passion for freedom, positivity, rebellion, depth of emotion, civil rights and self-worth. There is appropriate and, in most cases, detailed selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives (just Level 4).

The understanding of language and structure is evident and explained, with some exploration evident for Level 4. Some points could be developed more to be at the top of the level. The selection of references is detailed, appropriate and mostly supports the points being made (Level 4). 'Best-fit' is the top end of Level 4, as in some cases there is a lack of full support for points being made, for example 'her passionate words such as 'haughtiness'".

Example 4

Maya Angelou

1 How does the writer try to present strong emotions in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the narrator of the poem feels about herself ✓
- how the narrator of the poem feels about others ✓
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30) Q01 30

In the poem 'Still I Rise,' Maya Angelou strongly conveys her emotions of pride, confidence and defiance. She is repeatedly rising from her past of oppression to bring hope to others like her, to spur herself on and to defy what others expect her to do. In this I will explain some of the ways that Angelou expresses these emotions.

The poet has pride in herself and expresses this continually throughout the poem. She "walks like she's got 'oil wells' in her living room and dances like she's got 'gold mines' in her backyard. Oil wells and gold mines have strong connotations of wealth and so by ~~comparing~~ illustrating her actions with these she is expressing her confident and proud emotions.

Angelou also expresses her pride in her sexuality in the lines 'I ^{dance} walk like I've got diamonds / At the meeting of my thighs.' Diamonds are precious jewels and so Angelou is describing her sexuality with great value and is proud of it.

Furthermore, Angelou uses ~~the~~ simile to depict her power as she will rise 'like dust' which contrasts early how she was 'trod' in the 'very dirt'. She is, perhaps, alluding to ~~from~~ black people's ~~one~~ at the ~~bottom~~ social status ~~at the~~ and shows how she will rise above it. The simile 'like air, I'll rise' is also showing her confidence and the inevitability that she will rise. ~~It might also be linked to air as air rises with ease,~~ so will she.

In addition, Angelou links herself to nature's strength and beauty to convey her own - 'Like moons and like suns' she will rise. The cycles of moons and suns are inevitable, the sun will always rise, so through this Angelou expresses with confidence that she will rise above her oppressions like the inevitable rising of the sun and moon.

One final metaphor that Angelou employs is: 'I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide.' The fact that she likens herself to an ocean shows how ~~she~~ strong and powerful she thinks she is, because oceans have a brutal force of waves that are practically impossible to stop. All these similes and metaphors create a strong image of her unstoppable emotions ~~and~~ in the reader.

However, Angelou not only conveys her emotions through how she feels about herself, she also displays them through her feelings towards others. For example, ^{for your} 'bitter, twisted lies' ~~shows her def~~ is emphasized due to the alliteration of 't' and makes it seem as though she is spitting it out at the reader in anger and defiance.

Additionally, Angelou illustrates ^{that} ~~that~~ she thinks others expect her to ~~to~~ fall down with 'bowed ~~eyes~~ head and lowered eyes' ^{and} 'shoulders falling down like teardrops', ^{others} through this she powerfully displays her defiance to ~~the~~ as she persistently 'rise[s?]' above the hatred.

Rhetorical questions are featured in many ~~vers~~ stanzas to convey her challenging attitude, such as 'Does my sassiness upset you?' and 'Did you want to see me broken?'

These rhetorical questions are almost a mocking challenge to her oppressors - she is testing them to see if they react.

They are a powerful tool that she succeeds in using to show her defiance, almost amusement, to her oppressors.

'I rise' is repeated frequently to really push home that she will rise, she seems to be spurring herself as each stanza builds and builds with bubbling defiance and power. The poem ends with 'I rise' - repeated three times, each on their own line, to create a triumphant stand against anything daring to challenge her back. This repetition is also an opportunity for others like her to join her and stand in tip with her to express their defiance. They will 'leave behind nights of terror and fear' and come out of the 'hubs of shame history's shame' to stand together.

Angelou's African-American lexis also conveys her power over words as it links her to her culture yet she uses it skillfully to emphasize her emotions. For instance, "Cause," "Diggin'" and 'aweful hard' are all used to emphasize her defiance and control over words.

Finally, Angelou uses rhyme ~~and~~ to reflect her rising emotions. 'Lies/rise' is a contrast, she is ~~confronting~~ overcoming the lies and will rise with confidence. She ~~also~~ uses some stanzas to echo the ones ~~to~~ before it, like a chorus,

to create a build up, ~~of~~ too. This can be seen through the two word change in the beginning of these ^{stanzas} ~~verses~~ 'Does my sassiness upset you?' and 'Does my haughtiness offend you?' Thus, with these techniques Angelou expresses with power and confidence, her emotions of triumph and defiance.

Examiner Comments:

This is an example of an answer that does everything in Level 5 to achieve full marks. An answer does not have to be 'perfect' to achieve the top of the mark range – the consideration is 'has it done everything in the Level'. This response shows perceptive understanding of the poem, with the confident introduction directing the reader to pride, confidence and defiance, oppression and hope. Responses in Level 5 are generally characterised by use of discriminating references – where candidates really think about which examples they will give to illustrate their points. This candidate does this and integrates their references very confidently and seamlessly.

The understanding and analysis of language and structure is perceptive, meeting this bullet point in Level 5, and the selection of references is discriminating. The interpretation of ideas and the impact on the reader is perceptive. Interwoven points about connotation, allusion, inevitability, persistence and 'mocking challenge' in terms of language and structure use, linked to ideas such as oppression and race are apt and persuasive.

This response is placed at the top of Level 5. There is perceptive understanding of the poem, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives is apt and persuasive in clarifying the points being made. There is perceptive understanding and analysis of language and structure and how these are used by the writer – for example various interpretations are offered on the same point ('I rise'). The selection of references is discriminating and clarifies the points being made. This answer really builds in perceptive understanding as it goes on, and it has an impressive fluency and fluidity in approach.

Writing

At the lowest grade boundary candidates tended to offer a basic response. They always had straightforward use of tone, style and register, with audience and purpose not always clear. At this level candidates tended to express but not always connect ideas and information, with limited use of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There were few responses that only achieved Level 1 – this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

At the Grade 4 borderline candidates tended to at least have straightforward and at best appropriate use of tone, style and register, selecting material and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to connect, but not always develop, ideas and information, with some structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There was a tendency in the majority of responses marked at this borderline grade to set out a stronger description in the start of the story and then focus more on plot towards the end where planning had let the candidates down. In some cases the stories lacked development to move higher into the mark scheme for AO4. At this borderline grade the use of vocabulary and syntax tended to be appropriate but repetitive and at times limited to vague simile/metaphor, use of short sentences, questions and exclamations for effect. The level of AO6 at this borderline was appropriate but overall formulaic, where it appeared that candidates had been advised to include plenty of adjectives or similes in their writing and felt the need to include them at all times.

In the best responses candidates tended to at least have successful and at best touches of subtle use of tone, style and register, managing ideas and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to manage, but not always manipulate, ideas and information, with a range of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. Responses at this level had some creative ideas, humour and withholding information to the end as a technique. The Grade 7 boundary tended to have some selective vocabulary used for specific effect rather than just to demonstrate knowledge of particular multi-syllabic words.

The assessment objectives for these tasks effectively discriminated the quality of responses. Advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short story in the time available – they need to have a clear organisation and direction in mind, and to perhaps not ‘over-season’ the pieces with vocabulary and syntax.

The main areas that discriminated the writing responses were:

- whether candidates could meet both parts of the first part of bullet one in the mark scheme for AO5 – for example they often expressed ideas to achieve in Level 2, but these ideas lacked the order for the second part of that bullet. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them.
- the success of tone, style and register in AO4.
- the spelling of basic vocabulary in AO5.
- the accuracy of punctuation and use of varied punctuation in AO5.
- the use of a range of sentence structures for AO5.

Sentence structure was clearly an area centres had focussed on: varying the way sentences begin; more use of subordinate clauses to begin complex sentences; effective use of one-word sentences and one-sentence paragraphs to demonstrate conscious crafting. Some candidates attempted to use ambitious vocabulary while some seemed to steer away from ambitious vocabulary in order to maintain accuracy. A key message to centres is to focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task. This

was a common weakness running through all but the very best answers. The more 'pedestrian' answers showed a lack of organisation and often demonstrated a lack of planning and direction. Be ambitious in the structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original.

In terms of register it was clear that the majority of the candidates knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were some that produced responses that were more like an essay. Examiners noted that candidates need to manage their time better, as even responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the end.

Some comments from examiners include:

- 'students managed to create the setting and mood successfully, often using direct speech and imagery as well as some structural techniques, such as one-sentence paragraphs for effect'
- 'candidates used punctuation to aid meaning and also tended to deal with more personal, meaningful and emotive topics'
- 'Candidates at the higher end used punctuation to aid meaning'.

Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, challenged and unfair situation.

Examiners noted a wide range of responses being offered including some where candidates confused the title and thought it meant a challenging situation. The question successfully allowed candidates to draw from a range of personal experiences. In the most successful responses, candidates had sophisticated use of tone and narrative.

Example 1

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

B_AO4	6
B_AO5	4

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4**

My best friend's mum was a ^{kind}~~kind~~, young, healthy woman. She had everything. She had a house, a husband, and ~~a~~ two kids but everything comes with a price. She had developed cancer and the first few months were tough on her and the family.

Once she had come to terms ^{with} ~~it~~
 it she she found it a bit easier
 life went on for two years. I
 went to see my best mate not
 knowing what had gone on and I knocked
 on the door his mum showed up and
 we caught up for a bit and she
 seemed great she was happy she said
 to me 'I've beaten cancer' and she
 was proud of herself later on
 in the year she died to
 the cancer she thought she had
 beaten it but instead it had won
 my best friend messaged me and
 told me. ~~me~~ That's the day my
 best friend's ^{hero} ~~life~~ was ^{crushed} ~~finished~~.

Examiner Comments:

It achieves marks of 6+4, a total of 10. The answer is more than basic and limited, and it communicates in a broadly appropriate way. There is a focused opening with the setting of the scene of the mother and her situation and ends with a 'shock' that she had developed cancer. There is some grasp of the purpose – although the candidate seems to have approached this question as a challenging situation rather than when you challenged an unfair situation – so this is more Level 2. There is awareness of the audience, in the attempt to build 'tension' – it was tough, she came to terms with it, life went on, but then she died. The form, tone and register is straightforward – it loses control a little as the response moves on.

For AO4 the candidate communicates in a broadly appropriate way (Level 2). The candidate shows some grasp of the purpose and of the expectations of the intended reader, and straightforward use of form, tone and register (Level 2).

For AO5 the candidate expresses and orders information and ideas – the situation of the mother and her family, the diagnosis, coming to terms with it, being proud, the

death and the impact on the friend. These ideas are not developed for Level 3. The candidate does try to use paragraphs (Level 2). The vocabulary is correctly spelt (Level 2) and the spelling of quite tricky words is accurate: developed, tough, knowing, caught, thought. Punctuation is variable in quality, with apostrophes missing but some punctuation of direct speech, and the candidate lacks full control of sentence structure as the answer goes on.

Example 2

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

B_AO4	14
B_AO5	10

Chosen question number: Question 2 Question 3 Question 4

I was aghast & at this decision.

~~Q1: Decision~~
Decision disagreement

"But why? It's just not fair!" I yelled in desperation pleading my mother to permit me to play on my precious, gleaming, shining game console. I checked my ~~grey~~ silver grey watch and it obediently displaying 10:30 pm.

You must be wondering who is this guy and what is he ~~whining~~ ^{whining} about? Hi, I am Bob Green, an eleven year old boy who is addicted to gaming. Gaming means the ~~world~~ world to me. Recently for my birthday, I was the made the ~~pride~~ ~~as~~ owner of a brand new, jet black console which to me is as precious as diamonds and as good ^{and magnificent} as gold. I was as proud as a ~~peacock~~ ^{peacock} ~~to own~~ such a ~~television~~ ^{television}.

COPPER

Now, onto the story. The Sun was waving
goodbye and the Snow and White moon
was preparing itself for his ~~class~~ a busy
day at the ~~off~~ office. ^Whilst I, ~~was~~ let's just
say was having a superlative time, playing games
as if there was no ~~tom~~ tomorrow. ~~But~~ When
all of a sudden... ~~my~~ my ears notify me
of my strict mother ¹ ~~screaming~~ "Turn that thing
off. NOW!" It's been three hours ~~since~~
since you started." ~~That~~

~~disorder~~, ~~as a~~ ~~revelation~~, ~~disappointing~~

This was ~~just~~. Here I was having the time
of my life ~~just~~ cut short. ~~My~~ ~~heart~~ My heart
started pounding beating louder and faster than
a drum. I was ~~scared~~ ^{permitted}. I didn't want to finish.
My brain scrambling in search for a way to
convince my mother. My emotions were: scared, creaked
and robed. ~~I had to~~ ~~instead~~ However, all
my mother heard was a humorous amount
of incoherent appeals and pleas.

" " Please can I play a teensy weensy ~~bit~~ bit
longer? " I begged ^{probably} pushing my luck to the limit.
"NO!" ~~she~~ roared my mother immediately. "Go to
bed now or else you will be really fired for
school," she exclaimed. ~~My~~ "But why? It's just
not fair!" ~~I~~ I yelled in desperation. The

thought of having to stop was stuck in my ~~head~~ head.

"I said so, stop now!" came the reply. ~~me~~ I now had to resort to Plan B. Asking my ~~father~~ more lenient father; my father always ~~did~~ did a ~~br~~ brilliant job at convincing my mother. Surely he would help me out. As

I ~~walked~~ ^{relaxed} ~~re~~ into my parents bedroom, I saw my father ^(who had jet black hair with black eyes) occurred on his ~~black~~ ~~hair~~

matte black, ~~powerful~~ powerful, stark of the dark laptop typing away at the ~~speed~~ speed of light.

I enquired, "Can you assist me with something?"

"If it's regarding the console forget about it.

You know your mother." he replied. All hope was lost. The war was over. I had failed.

Despite challenging an unfair decision, I had lost (I came close though, didn't I?). I had spent the last ~~hour~~ hour relentlessly arguing in hope to rise; unfortunately it didn't go to Plan.

Examiner Comments:

This is a lively and engaging story and the opening grips the reader with the direct speech. It achieves marks of 14+10, a total of 24. There is a lively tone which suits the potential audience (young people would relate to this!) Crafting is evident throughout with descriptive touches (although perhaps slightly heavy on the description, but this is not penalised) and some effective touches in terms of tone - whether deliberate or accidental. For example, the idea of what they wanted to say versus what their mother heard: 'incoherent [sic] appeals and pleas'. The voice of the mother is effectively created and reflects her personality, and there is the contrast with the 'relaxed' father who is

(ironically) on his computer, and says 'You know your mother'. The metaphor of the war lost is effective.

For AO4 the candidate meets almost all of the bullets in Level 4, with successful communication and effectiveness in the use of form, tone and register. There is a secure sense of purpose (challenging an unfair situation) and the audience, assuming this is young people, who can relate to the challenge.

For AO5 the candidate manages information and ideas, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text – direct speech, sentence starters for example. There is use of a wide, selective vocabulary with only occasional spelling errors. The candidate positions a range of punctuation for clarity (speech marks, exclamation marks, question marks, colons) and definite management of sentence structures for deliberate effect. They meet all of the bullet points of Level 4.

This response is a good Level 4 answer. It lacks the subtlety and perceptive approach needed for Level 5 but is very successful and effective overall. AO5 is not complex, sophisticated or extensive to meet Level 5, but is selective and deliberate.

Question 3: Write a story with the title 'Bitter, Twisted Lies'.

This question was the least attempted question, but where attempted candidates showed a variety of thoughtful, subtle and creative ideas, such as people being told lies by someone or telling lies themselves.

Some quite simple ideas worked effectively such as a family member being a surprise visitor. Other more complex starting points were equally successful such as a surprise visitor that was a concept rather than a person.

Example 1

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:	Question 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Question 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 4 <input type="checkbox"/>	B_AO4	10
				B_AO5	6

Bitter, twisted Lies...

~~It~~ It was the year of 1986, 2 years into my ~~existing~~ for the french ~~foreign~~ foreign legions.

A mistake joining this group of outcasts, The wind blows a gust of hot air every minute; the sun constantly glaring at us and almost spraying us with ~~strokes~~ of heat, the ~~course~~ ^{coarse} hot sand sucked our boots in every step of the way. The water canteen being emptier than ever and the blisters ^{even} ~~so~~ increasing.

We had marched for days trying to return to the fort carrying nothing but water crackers and ~~guns~~ rifles. The rifles being as heavy as steel beams after carrying it for long.

Hour after hour and we get no break, minute after minute and the ^{sun} magnifies, second by second and our foot prints fade ^{away} like ~~intelligent~~ - remnants of the desert...

Suddenly a ~~new~~ ~~loud~~ ~~loud~~ bang! and the ~~falling~~ ~~of~~ ~~avalanches~~ corpse drops. ~~fall~~ followed by the sound of stamping horses and war like, aggressive screams; All of a sudden a panic arose and the men pulling out their rifles preparing to throw their lives away.

~~At the~~ ~~time~~ ~~we~~ Outnumbered and outmatched all of us were killed off and slaughtered all of us but one, I was left to tell the tale of the Arabian men whom wanted their country back.

Soon after it ~~passed~~ all passed there was nothing left but my friends beneath the sand who slowly ~~and~~ disappeared like a ~~another~~ remnant of the desert.

Joining this so called "honorable", "brave and legendary Legion is nothing but bitter twisted lies, a romantic attraction for ~~the~~ societies outcasts to be used as pawns to conquer ^{land} ~~land~~ which doesn't belong to ^{us} ~~us~~.

Examiner Comments:

The candidate achieves marks of 10+6 (16 in total) by creates an appropriate story with clear form and a story which moves clearly from joining the foreign legion to the 'battle'. The sense of purpose and audience is clear, although the ideas may appear simplistic and a little too fast-paced to be secure.

For AO4 the candidate communicates in a clear way (Level 3). There is a clear sense of purpose in the main (we are left wondering where the 'bitter, twisted lies' will come in) and audience. The strongest of the bullets is the third, where there is appropriate use of form, tone and register (Level 3), and the second page is stronger than the first. It does almost everything required for Level 3 but is not borderline L3/4 for 11 marks.

For AO5 the candidate connects appropriate information and ideas, although these could be developed more (they are moving in a very fast-paced way which impacts on development). Structural and grammatical features and paragraphing make the meaning clear. The candidate tries hard to vary punctuate sentences and openings, for example using repetition for effect. The final paragraph of page 1 is typical of this response, with varied vocabulary (Level 3), employing technique but ending in a spelling error which spoils the climax! Likewise, control is not always secure, for example at the top of page 2. The response meets all of the bullets in Level 3, although does not develop ideas which would move it to the top of the level.

Example 2

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4**

B_A04 1

B_A05 2

Bitter, Twisted Lies.

Ares shoulders quivered. His dark hair shadowed his fierce stare. His pale skin was etched with definitive markings which shimmered faintly in the moonlight.

Ares stepped back from the window and sank his head in a lonely solace. In his age his face had grown long and hollow.

Ares bent down below his bed, his fragile spine withering quickly. He removed a chest stowed in secret. It was small but old and this led one to believe he was hiding something important.

He removed a newspaper article from the box. It was a picture of his grandchildren, and a picture of their house burnt to the ground. The incident was labeled as a terrible accident and had occurred six months ago. Ares knew this was no accident.

His silent husband for not saving them
only fueled his aggression. The constant
thought of his grandchildren's death burned
and throbed in the back of Ares' mind,
like a splinter, driving him mad.

A cooling drop of sweat ran down
Ares' forehead. It rested in the smudged, deflated
pocket beneath his left eye. He threw the
chest at the mirror in the corner of
the room. The veins ripped and pulsed
under his ^{thin} skin like tracing paper. The
shards rickshaded off all the walls and
ceiling.

He looked at one of the fragments on
the floor. But in this symmetry he did
not see himself, only a killer. He remembered
how he envied their happiness. Hated their
tranquility.

After months of lying to himself he
had forgotten. Replaced the truth with something
much more innocent. His brain was now
fully gone, half merciless killer half
fragile Ares.

Ares was now sprawled over the bed, crying helplessly. These were only tears of self-pity however. Kneeling, he ~~prayed~~ looked once more at the shard in his hands before firmly embedding it into his side. The blood seeped out from ~~the~~ the gash like honey.

Examiner Comments:

For AO4 this candidate meets all of the bullets in Level 4. They communicate successfully, have a secure realisation of purpose and audience and effective use of form, tone and register. In terms of the level of communication the candidate does attempt to be subtle in their approach and their focus on the individual in the story, which is credited with a mark at the bottom of Level 5. The marks achieved are 16+7, a total of 23.

For AO5 the candidate is not as successful – it is important to remember that the levels are not always going to be the same across the two AOs. Ideas are connected and developed, and structural and grammatical features and paragraphing make the meaning clear. There is no secure evidence of these being managed cohesively and deliberately. The candidate attempts to use a varied vocabulary (and it is quite selective), but basic words are misspelt, for example 'were', so 'best-fit' is top Level 3. The candidate uses accurate (not really varied) punctuation, adapting sentence structures as appropriate. For AO5 therefore this response meets the top of Level 3 using 'best-fit'.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that begins 'It was a new day...':

In this series this question proved the most popular. Examiners felt the pictures were used as a stimulus by the vast majority of candidates and they produced a wide variety of storylines, including the more straightforward, for example an ordinary day described without much interest for the reader; the unbelievable, for example a day which began in a very ordinary way but developed into a day when the narrator was the victim of a robbery, a murder took place at the narrator's place of work and his mother died of an incurable disease before he was able to rush to her side; and the moving and personal.

Example 1

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4**

B_A04

B_A05

It was a new day on the mountain for John and Lisa. The couple were recently engaged and seeking an enlightening experience to bring them closer together, before their wedding. After deep thoughts, they agreed that watching the sun set over a rural village, on top of a mountain would complete their journey ~~as~~ before marriage. They compared the sun's radiant orange glow to their blazing love.

It was a three day hike to get to the top of the mountain, and John and Lisa had reached the last few hours of their conquest ~~up~~. The trip had so far gone perfectly with ~~not~~ ^{almost} no problems. It was a little ~~windier~~ ^{more windy} today, but the sun still hung high in the sky keeping the couple more than warm enough.

As the two young adults carried on with their quest, they had begun to notice the incline of their paths were slowly getting steeper. It was nothing their fit young bodies couldn't handle, ~~but~~ yet their screaming blisters were fighting for them to

~~stop~~ stop. After sticking plasters on their bulging blisters, they ^{sung} ~~swung~~ on their ^{bags} ~~backpacks~~ and continued on the tough terrain.

At this point in the ^{day} the ~~sun~~ was at its peak warmth, and John was already on his ^{second} ~~third~~ t-shirt turned inside-out; he was sweating like a tap. The wind had stopped and there was nothing to cool him down. He took a sip of his warm water and carried on. The day was getting late and they knew they ~~hadn't~~ ^{didn't} have much time.

Lisa started to notice something wrong with John, he was slurring his words and walking wacky. At first she thought he was drunk, with the way he was acting. That was impossible as they hadn't brought a drop of alcohol with them. "Are you okay?" asked Lisa, and she received a chuckle from John. Lisa took it as a sign that it was another one of John's so called 'hilarious' pranks, and so she chose to ignore this.

They carried on with ~~John's empty water bottle~~ and John had finished the last of his water. Fodishly John chose to keep this ~~you~~ a secret. John really wasn't feeling good. His was dangerously dehydrated. He felt dizzy. He tried to shout out to Lisa but his throat was too dry. He felt himself ~~go~~ falling back.

Boney!

John had collapsed on the rocky road and Lisa ran to his rescue. She immediately knew what was wrong. She pulled her water out and treated him like it was a baby's feeding time. Lisa phoned the mountain rescue and there was a helicopter on its way.

~~They were~~ Lisa sacrificed her water and brought him back to ~~an~~ reality as if it were a potion. John woke up and through the trees could see the sun. The sun was setting over the village. He turned from the sun and softly spoke these words "I love you".

As they deeply gazed into each other's orange tinted, blue eyes they realised that, this was a more perfect moment than they could've ^{wished} ~~hoped~~ for:

John was taken away to the hospital and was revived to his regular ~~sant~~ self. The couple ~~were~~ weren't the adventurous type but had learned their lesson with an experience they'll never forget.

Examiner Comments:

The final marks for this response are 11+8 (19 in total). This response meets Level 3 for AO4, although does a little bit more in meeting the needs of the reader, so moves to the

top. There is clear communication of the ideas in the response, the enlightening experience, the couple's relationship, the difficulties faced on the conquest. There is a clear sense of purpose, the new day's plans and journey, and there is an understanding of the expectations of the intended reader, although again the pace means that the ideas are not securely expressed enough to move into Level 4. The opening page takes quite a while to move forward from 'setting the scene', but there is sense (if a little clichéd) of their newly-engaged romantic love. The form, tone and register are appropriate, although not as effective as it could be to move into Level 4 after the first page.

For AO5 the answer uses a wide, selective vocabulary with only occasional spelling errors, meeting Level 4 in this bullet point. For the other bullet points the response meets Level 3. Ideas are developed and connected, and structural and grammatical features and paragraphing make the meaning clear. There is accurate and varied punctuation (speech marks, question and exclamation mark), adapting sentence structures as appropriate, for example sentence starters and lengths. The candidate really tries with crafting, for example the sun's radiant orange glow to their blazing love! There is some clear description throughout such as screaming/bulging blisters with a nod to alliteration and varied vocabulary such as conquest.

Example 2

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒ **Question 4** ☒

B_AO4	1
B_AO5	2

It was a new day, in a new country,
with a new identity and most crucially, a
newly aquired lump sum of stolen cash.

I stretched my aching limbs, and slid out ~~out~~ of whoever's bed I had hijacked the night before. I firmly gripped the flower-printed curtains and separated them, unveiling a postcard-like view of the Hawaii morning sunrise. Sun-kissed locals walked leisurely along the sugar crusted ocean. Palm trees stood sturdily, patiently waiting for the sun to fully rise and bathe them in sunlight.

I turn back around, to give my ~~Ameri~~ New York bred eyes a rest from the burning brightness outside.

Once my eyes adjusted once more to the dark room I was hiding in, the gorgeous streets of Honolulu, Hawaii are put to shame by the glowing ~~to~~ black gym bag full of pale green American dollars. I was child with a box full of toys, a cat beside a fish tank, a fugitive hiding out in Hawaii with a truck full of unearned cash.

It was only two weeks ago that I was living, or half-living, in my musty New York apartment. Sleeping, eating, waking, sleeping, eating, waking, and rinse and repeat.

It was only when my childhood friend, Robbie, contacted me that I began to realise there was a way to escape the exhaustingly sedentary pace of everyday life.

"The big bank break-in. The moment I've been waiting for since I learned the word 'bank'. I'm not pressuring you to join me, Finn; I know you like to take the safe route."

That's what Robbie said to me on the first phone call we had shared in three years.

Now, we were about to be closer than ever...

Examiner Comments:

This answer achieves marks of 12+8, a total of 20. It has a successful hook to open with followed by some good vocabulary in the descriptive passage. The plot is then driven again by a reminder of the money with some interesting metaphors to describe himself followed in the next paragraph by repetition for effect. The ending just about holds together.

The response meets AO4 in Level 3 as it communicates clearly, and there is some fairly successful communication such as 'whoever's bed I had hijacked the night before', 'my New York bred eyes'. There is a clear sense of the purpose and sense of the audience, although the descriptive opening impacts on the ability to develop the response successfully possibly in timing. The third bullet point met on the Level 3/4 borderline and is overall appropriate. There is enough to just move into Level 4 with 12.

In AO5 there is varied and quite wide and selective vocabulary (for example the use of adverbs) and the spelling is accurate overall. Sentence structure is mainly accurate, and the candidate tries to vary sentence starters and structures, for example the 'sleeping, eating, waking'. Punctuation is accurate overall, but not always varied. Another example of best-fit being the bottom of Level 3. Ideas are connected and starting to be developed, but brevity impacts on moving the response higher.

Example 3

A NEW ADVENTURE

It was a new day and I was ready for adventure. I had a long, agonising two years in hospital and out of hospital. Each appointment they had prodded and poked ^{at} ~~and~~ my shattered ankles, each appointment they had told ^{me} I couldn't get back on the snow, each appointment they ^{had} ~~told~~ ^{insisted} that I ~~was~~ ^{me} to wait 'just a few more weeks'. I was fed up of waiting for them to say I was ready - I ~~knew~~ I was ready.

And so here I am. I'm standing on the snowy peaks I yearned for each day. The wind ~~is howling~~ ^{is howling} around; it ~~was~~ ^{me} seems to be pushing me to the edge.

It wants me to go, it wants to soar beside me as I slide and bump down the slipping slope. I am ready to do this again. Nothing can stop me from doing what I love, and this is a ^{my} new day.

I push off the high peak I was teetering on the edge of and start my sliding descent down the almost vertical slope. My snowboard is strapped to my black leather clad boots, wind and ice is battering at ~~my~~ the glass of my helmet. I am a ^{lonely} black figure against a backdrop of white.

The wind sings for joy as I fall; it is glad that it needn't wait any longer to speed down ~~the~~ with me. I feel my well learnt manoeuvres kick in ~~and~~ as my ~~fe~~ board streams ~~on the icing off the white icy~~ powder. My legs, knees and back all fell into their natural positions upon the board. Rocks, dips and bumps all come rushing at me with immense speed, ~~and~~ ^{but} I dodge each with graceful ease. It's like I never stopped.

Suddenly there is ~~a~~ ^{the} massive drop ahead of me. My heart misses a beat and I jolt down - my stomach ~~stays~~ stays up, squeezing up my body and creating a strange sensation inside me* // I'm flying! I soar through the air and stare across the great expanse before me. The clear blue sky is cut raggedly in half ~~or what~~ ~~split~~ by the

lines of peak over peak, each overlapping the other. ~~I~~ I feel elated as ecstatic energy courses through my every fibre. Oh how I have missed this!

I land with a thud and continue my daring endeavour with utter joy pushing me on. I made it! I did it! I had defeated the drop that ~~struck~~ ^{ripped me apart} me ^{had} those years ago. They told me I couldn't do ^{it} - my family, my friends and the doctors - they had all insisted that I would never be able to snowboard again. My mother was horrified when I told her I was coming here. She ^{had} pleaded and begged me to stay and keep safe, but I couldn't. The rolling hills had ~~beckoned~~ beckoned me. How could I abandon the one thing I loved the most? And so, against all the resistings of the people around, I came here and beat my injury.

* ~~Fear~~ For an instant fear ^{takes} ^{heart on its hand} took my ~~hand~~ ^{heart} and ~~made~~ ^{makes} me wish I hadn't come. But, no! I ^{cannot} ~~cannot~~ back down now, not when I ^{am} ~~was~~ so close. The drop ^{will} ~~would~~ not defeat me! This very fall was what had broken my ankles the first time, it will not now. I will make this work.

Examiner Comments:

This is an extremely effective response where communication is perceptive and subtle – the candidate picks up the subtleties of the need to get back onto the snow and the understanding of the emotion involved. The task is sharply focused on purpose, and the positivity of the new day's adventure. The audience are engaged through the effective description and techniques used. The tone is sophisticated in its simplicity of expression of what emotion the narrator is feeling.

For AO4 the response does get better the more it is read and there is more to pick up on in terms of technique each time. For AO5, there is manipulation of complex ideas (the aftermath of the accident) in a way which is subtle and not overdone. The candidate utilises structural features throughout 'And so here I am', and there is effective description throughout, extensive vocabulary such as *yearned*, *descent*, *manouvers [sic]*, *beckoned*, and varied sentence structure. The candidate effectively links the ending to beginning (manipulating ideas). There are subtle touches used very effectively, for example the change to 'this is my new day', 'elated as ecstatic energy courses' (alliteration for effect) and the extended metaphor of the wind. A full mark response in spite of rare errors.

Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure you have studied the poetry and prose texts in the Anthology fully and use the examination time to remind yourself of the text, not re-read it.
- Even in the text is a short poem consider what the key points are linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make you are covering the whole poem from beginning to end in order to meet AO1 in the higher levels.
- Read the question carefully and make sure you are answering **this** question, not telling the examiner what you know about the poem you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case strong emotions.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure you are offering ideas about how language and structure are used. Many of you were able to give examples, but sometimes you did not offer a comment about the example was used.
- For AO2 try to cover points on both language and structure, commenting on the different techniques that have been used by the writer and how they link to the overall topic of the question, in this case the presentation of strong emotions.
- When you are writing, always think about your reader, what information and ideas you want to develop and how you want the reader to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects.
- Think carefully about how you will begin to write so that it is engaging for your reader from the very start.
- As you begin to write, know where you will end. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar
- In writing, focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task.
- Be ambitious in your structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original.
- Use the number of marks available for each question as an indication of how long you should spend answering each question.