



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

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

Paper 02R: Poetry and Prose Texts and
Imaginative Writing

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of students' work, together with tips and comments, for Paper 02R of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. This was the second summer examination of the refreshed '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). Students 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.

Students 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 poem in the examination.

The specification identifies that students:

'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.'

Students 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 poem or will be in the Question Paper in the case of a poem.

Students 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 students to consider language and structure.

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

Students are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section B. There are three writing tasks, to some extent linked by theme to the reading poem. Students 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 students were all able to respond to the poem from the Anthology in the examination, and that the majority had studied it before (although ALL students must have studied the Anthology fully). Some students had been taught about the context of the poem.

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

It was also clear that students 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 students 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.

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

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

- evidence that many students had understood the content of and ideas in the text
- the successful use of the bullet points within the question
- completion of the questions in the paper and coverage of the assessment objectives
- 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 prior study of the text
- demonstrated a lack of awareness of the range of ideas in the text
- failed to reference the question, with students simply writing all they knew about the text
- followed a rigid structure in their responses, with a paragraph by paragraph 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 such as paragraphs and structural and grammatical features
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

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

Question 1

All students showed an appreciation of the poem and were able to bring a personal response to the exploration of both language and structure. The task was very accessible for all students. Responses provided many different views. Most answers linked the unknown girl to the idea of Indian culture and the importance of that culture in the overall theme of the poem. This led to consideration of the poet's dual nationality and her desire to absorb her Indian roots. The poet was considered to be the unknown girl, finding her roots, yet aware that she was a foreigner in India and would lose the close connection with the country once she returned home, hence the use of the henna, which would "fade in a week" to represent this loss.

Overall, the situation was considered to be a seminal moment in the writer's life, enabling her to come to terms with her identity.

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.

Students at grades 4 and above were able to show an understanding that the girl was mysterious and that a person was looking for their identity. All students focused on the process of hennaing, which provided the understanding that the person was seeking their identity and was finding a connection. These responses included that the connection was temporary, but that there was a determination for preserving the new-found identity. Many theories were provided especially in the more developed responses. Some suggested the 'unknown girl' could be the writer, Moniza Alvi. Other students responded by focusing directly on Moniza Alvi, either looking for, or connecting with her identity. Some also suggested that she was confused over her own identity. Only a few responses said that the girl was youthful, but most identified her ability at hennaing. Some responses referred to her as either poor or possibly being poor, due to 'a few rupees.' Examiners noted some interesting selection of ideas:

- 'students were able to provide knowledge of context, how the writer described the unknown girl, the writer's feelings about the experience in India, identity of the use of language and in many responses the structure, providing their own personal views.'
- 'Students also recognised, along with the emphasis on the importance of Indian culture and traditions, a corresponding negative approach to western influences and ideas.'
- 'The act of applying the henna was explored in great detail by many students. One student felt that the unknown girl was able to "create a permanent impression from an impermanent art form."
- 'The emphasis on 'palm' was felt to show an open invitation and welcome.'
- 'Most answers spent some time on the use of the word 'icing', with its western links, with a quite subtle idea linking icing to the expression 'the icing on the cake', with 'connotations of a pivotal moment that immortalises a memory.'

Students 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 rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels. For example, students at this borderline grade often had not considered more than broad ideas such as the experience of hennaing. There was a lack of 'drilling down' into the text to examine the more nuanced ideas considered by students achieving higher marks.

Students 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. Students at this borderline at least covered the full text and understood the complexities of the writer's experience and feelings.

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 students opportunities to achieve across the range.

Most responses showed in detail that Western influences were present e.g. through the process of 'icing'. Reference given to the correct quotations and identifying the language devices. Level 5 responses provided detailed analysis of the language and provided details about the structure, for example reference to cyclical structure, that the words at the start of the poem, were similar with the concluding words or reference to the shape of the poem following the shape of a henna tattoo. This provided evidence of a deeper understanding for the continuing search for identity. One examiner noted:

'An interesting area was the discussion over 'Dummies'. Many responses used them as an intrusion of Western culture. Some identified them as Western tourists, others referred to them as Indians influenced by the West. A few said that it could be referring to Moniza Alvi.'

At the lowest levels students 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, limiting them to, at best, comment – students here were good at finding both language and structure features, but not as confident at explaining them. The responses were much more at a descriptive level, with limited and underdeveloped evidence. One examiner noted:

'Structure proved more problematic with some students ignoring it completely and some claiming that the structure resembled the silhouette of a woman. However, there were some interesting interpretations of why the poet used free verse.'

Students at the Grade 4 borderline were at least commenting on both language and structure. At this borderline grade students were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. Students at this

borderline grade were able to pick out features to link back to the ideas – there were many references to metaphor, symbols, repetition, but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features. The henna/peacock on the poet's hand was thought to indicate the poet's awareness of her dual state and the transitory nature of her "new brown veins". However, students felt that the poet had acquired more understanding of the traditions of India and felt she would make every effort to retain that knowledge.

Students at the Grade 7 borderline were commenting on both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. At this borderline grade students 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, the significance of the title, the use of repetition through the poem and the change of article from 'an' to 'the' at the end 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.

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, students were sometimes unable to consider references that supported different ideas and information (rather than many references which illustrated the same point) where students perhaps missed key elements that would have demonstrated apt, persuasive selection of information and ideas.

Example 1

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

The writer describes unknown girl as someone who is a complete stranger ~~henna~~ applying henna's to other's hand ~~as~~ which was a part of their culture where she had to pay the girl ~~as~~ few

repeats for the unknown girl to apply henna on her hand and the writer describes the henna on her hand as 'new brown veins'

She ~~des~~ describes india as a place where there alot of people and a place which is new to her and also tells her about the western culture and her experience that how she came to know about western style and also tells us how she would love to visit india whenever it's possible for her and how she would to tell about the ~~west~~ western culture and share it as much as possible and that whenever she visits india she will look for that unknown girl ~~and~~ and also tells us about her experience that how she came across a stranger and how she came to know about new things and tells us that how much she loves india and also tells how india is a place filled with people and also tells us about the bazaar a near bazaar she uses short sentences to explain her feelings and uses adjectives to produce an vivid image of the ~~the~~ view

Examiner Comments:

This response achieves a mark of 6 in Level 1. There is more than basic understanding of the text (the stranger, the henna, Indian culture, the new place, western style, she will look for the unknown girl). The second page does really repeat the first points. The selection and interpretation of information, ideas or perspectives is limited (it is very descriptive, but it is fairly valid in the context of the question). The student does only identify short sentences and adjectives, showing basic understanding of language and structure, but little awareness of how it is used to achieve effects other than 'to produce a vivid image'. The use of references is limited in relation the points made.

A mark in the top of Level 1 is appropriate, because although the response touches on the first bullet point in Level 2, the second, third and fourth bullets of the mark scheme in Level 1.

Example 2

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30) 001 11

The writer Moniza Aliri gives the title "An Unknown Girl". She was been in India for the first time. She ~~st~~ explains us that how the evening bazaar ~~was~~ expresses its culture of the country.

The line "In the evening bazaar studded with neon an unknown girl is hennaing my hand." shows that the "bazaar evening bazaar" means market place is decorated with neon lights and a girl whom she doesn't know is "hennaing" her hand. ~~henna~~ The word "hennaing" means the art of body decoration using plant dye. "She squeezes a wet brown line from a nozzle." It is a short sentence, it grabs more attention from the writer's pen to ~~read~~ reader's mind. It was her first time drawing henna in her hand. She felt very The line "In the evening bazaar for a few rupees an unknown girl is hennaing my hand" shows that a girl in the bazaar is hennaing her hand for a small amount of money. The word "Rupees" it is the currency of India. "As a little air catches my shadow-stitched kameez a peacock spreads its line across my palm" It is a long sentence, it gives brief explanation about the situation she was been. The word "kameez" it is

~~a~~ ~~of~~ ~~their~~ ~~cultural~~ ~~dress~~ and it is made of a loose fitting tunic which ~~the~~ ~~indian~~ most of the girls wear in India. It represents their beauty and it looks very astonishing on the girl who is wearing it. The line "Colours leave the street float up in balloons." ~~It~~ ~~shows~~ ~~that~~ ~~how~~ ~~the~~ the writer expresses that the streets were decorated ~~and~~ with leaves and balloons. It shows the creativity and ~~changes~~ in the culture of India. "Dummies in shop-fronts tilt and stare with their western perms" this shows us that the dummies are decorated in a western style. It shows the importance to westernisation. "Banners for Miss India 1993, for curtain cloth and sofa cloth, canopy me" It shows that the banners were made of curtain cloth and sofa cloth. ~~which~~ ~~when~~ ~~she~~ she saw it she felt very impressed about their work. The line "I am clinging to these firm peacocks lines like people who cling to sides of a train." she explains that the people who ~~at~~ cling beside the train in that way she was ~~cling~~ clinging at ~~the~~ situation. "Now the furious streets hushed. I'll scrap off the dry brown lines before I sleep." this explains that the ~~the~~ busy streets were very hushed. She will scrap the dry lines which is henna before she sleeps. "It will fade in a week" it is a short sentence it creates a tension in the reader's mind. She tells that the henna design will ~~be~~ ~~invisible~~ not be visible in her hand after a week. "When India appears and reappears I'll lean across a country with my ~~her~~ hands outstretched longing for the unknown girl in the neon bazaar." ~~She~~ the writer explains that she will again come to India ~~to~~ to visit the neon bazaar ~~and~~ to do henna in her hand by

a unknown girl.

Through this The writer has written this in a poem format. She explains the modernisation of India towards its culture. She expresses her feeling in the poem through when she visited the evening bazaar and held her hand.

The poem was written in simple with simple words which could be understandable by the readers. There is a usage of emotive words in the poem. The language It was written in formal language which could be easier for the readers to understand the concept of the story.

Examiner Comments:

This answer achieves a mark of 11 in Level 2. The response shows some understanding of the poem, beginning with a general introduction (the writer is visiting India for the first time, the evening bazaar is part of the culture of the country). The point about the kameez representing beauty, the point about the creativity and changes in culture, the importance of westernisation, the modernisation of India shows slightly more than just some understanding and the selection is quite appropriate here – the student does select details which demonstrate Indian culture. However, some points about the poem are more basic, based on repeating the meaning of the lines chosen in own words, rather than interpreting ideas and perspectives. There is some brief comment on and (rather limited) understanding of language: reference to simple words/emotive words/formal language but examples are not identified in the main (the point about the writer 'clinging to the situation' shows more understanding). There is brief mention of structure (a long sentence/short sentence) and some comment (the create tension). The selection of references is valid, but not developed - they are repeated rather than developed.

The response meets the first bullet in Level 2, the second bullet point in Level 2 (with 'best-fit', given that some points are Level 1 and some are bordering on Level 3), the third bullet point in Level 1/2 (as language and structure is identified and in some cases commented on) and the final bullet point in Level 2. This answer achieves a mark of 11 at the top end of Level 2.

Example 3

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30) 001 15

"An unknown Girl", a poem written by Meena Alvi, describes the poet's experience in India with an unknown girl hennaing her hand. Thus, the writer presents her story with this girl with delicacy. First of all, she will describe the unknown girl, then the writer also will explore different aspects of the setting which is in India. Finally, the use of language and structure will also be a key factor to these experiences.

~~As the writer is getting hennaed~~

As the writer gets hennaed by an unknown girl, she finds a certain admiration for this stranger as she repeats the phrase "an unknown girl is hennaing my hand". This best quote could also symbolize how this girl helps the writer discover India. This "unknown girl" is described as gentle as she applies henna on the writer's hands: "She squeezes a wet brown line", "streaks". The reader can hint that this mysterious girl could symbolize the bridge between the "Western" culture and the one from "India" in "1993" uniting both as one. Thus, through this whole poem, a ^{big} metaphor is present.

Furthermore, as the unknown girl helps the writer discover the Indian culture, certain traditions are described. First off, the *khana* on the writer's hand is already a tradition. The beautiful drawing revealing an "amber bird" representing the beauty of this country and what the writer thinks about it. In addition, she also mentions "rupees", the local currency in India, "the evening bazaar", "people who cling to the sides of a train", "furious streets" ~~and~~ which all are the aspects of the life and the culture in ~~India~~ this country.

Examiner Comments:

This response achieves a mark of 19 in Level 4. The student starts by offering a clear introduction (which is unnecessary) but does secure their answer to the question focus. The response shows sound understanding of the poet's experience and how the unknown girl helps her discover Indian culture/traditions. The selection of information, ideas and perspectives shows relevant selection, and there is evidence that the student's interpretation supports the idea that the poet wants to remember her experience and keep her memories. In some points we may feel that there is almost some sustained understanding of the poem (not always fully articulated), for example 'could also symbolise how this girl helps the writer discover India'. For the third bullet point there is clear understanding and explanation of language and structure, and there are some sections where the student tips into Level 4 with some attempt to explore, for example the way personification is linked to significance of the country to the poet. There is some explanation also, for example the free verse and rhythm, and the ending tails off into more explanation.

The response meets all of the bullet points in Level 3, and just moves into Level 4 with some sustained understanding and some exploration. There is sound understanding of the text, and selection and interpretation of information, ideas, perspectives is appropriate and relevant to the points being made. For AO2 there is clear understanding and explanation of language and structure and how these are used by writers to achieve effects, including use of vocabulary and sentence structure. The selection of references is appropriate and relevant to the points being made. The answer does not move higher into Level 4 as there are areas where some of the effects are not explored, and there is a lack of detail.

Example 4

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30) 001 25

The poet describes the settings ~~in~~ ~~at~~ in which the hennaing took place. The bazaar is used as a symbol of the Indian traditions and heritage. However, it is juxtaposed with the "neon" lights, which ~~is~~ represents the Western culture.

There is an underlying tone of criticism towards the interference of Western culture into ~~the~~ the Indian, where the poet describes the "dummies in shop-fronts" using negative ~~adjectives~~ verbs ~~of~~ "tilt and stare". This criticism suggests that the poet treasures the Indian culture and craves to experience nothing but Indian traditions in her ~~experience~~ visit.

The poet then describes the girl hennaing her hand. The identity of the girl is however unrevealed to the readers,

this may suggest that what the unknown girl resembled is much more important ~~than~~ than her identity. She is a symbol of the Indian traditions and culture, which the poet will never truly experience, therefore the negative adjective of "unknown" is used to describe her.

The experience with the unknown girl is then described positively as ~~the~~ she "deftly" hennaed her hand. This suggests that the unknown girl is skillful and experienced, revealing to the readers that she ~~was~~ did the job of

hennaing for a long time. This increases the poet's attachment to the unknown girl, as she held onto the Indian traditions of hennaing, despite the fact that she gains "a few rupees" for her hard work. The poet's special experience is also highlighted in the metaphor "she is icing my hand". The continuous verb "icing" has a positive tone as icing relates to cake ~~and cake~~ which is a symbol of celebratory and happiness. The poet's heartfelt experience is presented as a celebratory.

The ~~peacock~~ peacock is then hennaed onto the poet's hand. The poet "clings" to the peacock lines. The verb of clinging suggests desperation and longing for the traditions of India. The peacock is a symbol of pride, grace and beauty in the Indian culture. ~~She uses~~ The

poet uses the simile 'like people who cling to the sides of a train'. This simile implies that the poet is holding onto the peacock lines as if to save her life (and retain her lost Indian traditions) just like people at the sides of a train.

However, an underlying tone of sadness is conveyed onto the readers as the poet ~~means that~~ explains that the henna "will fade in a week". This suggests that her feelings of belonging to India will fade with the henna, and she will be seen as a foreigner - once again - in a country she treasures and holds close to her heart.

The structure of the poem is simple but unorganized. It is a free verse with no specific pattern. This may suggest lead back to the poet's feelings and rushing thoughts, as she wishes for the experience to last longer but is constantly reminded that she is not Indian and she will never truly be a part of this exotic culture.

Examiner Comments:

This is an example of an answer that achieves a Level 5 mark of 25. There is sustained understanding of the importance of Indian culture/heritage in this response, seen in 'bazaar', 'peacock', juxtaposed with Western culture represented by the 'neon' and 'dummies' (suggested criticism). The selection is appropriate, detailed and quite subtle and perceptive, for example the positive experience with the girl, but with the underlying tone of sadness as the poet remains a foreigner. The information offered about the bazaar, the girl's expertise and the peacock supports this perspective. Thorough and detailed points are made about the poet's perspective, supported by exploration of language features, for example the idea of icing on a cake, the symbol of the peacock, the tone of sadness and the end point on structure.

There is sustained understanding of the poem, for example 'the poet treasures the Indian culture and craves to experience nothing but Indian traditions in her visit', the idea that 'what the unknown girl resembled is much more important than her identity'. In places these do show some perception, but this does not achieve this throughout (or articulate this in some places) to move further into Level 5. This bullet is just achieved in Level 5. The second bullet point is met fully in Level 4 (it is not quite apt and persuasive for Level 5, although it could be if more development had been offered). The understanding of language and structure is thorough and explored overall (there are a few places where this could be further explored), achieving Level 4. The final bullet point is met in Level 4. 'Best-fit' places this just into Level 5.

Example 5

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30) Q01 23

In the poem, An Unknown Girl by Moniza Alvi, the poet describes her evening in ~~a~~ a bazaar in India where she is getting hennaed by an unknown girl. ~~In this poem, the unknown girl~~ The unknown girl takes a central place in this poem and ~~helps the~~ allows the poet to express her feelings. In An Unknown Girl, Moniza Alvi presents her experience with the unknown girl as a metaphor of ~~her~~ the poet clinging on to a part of herself.

The ~~poet~~ poem is set in Moniza Alvi's ~~country~~, India birthplace, India. Throughout the poem, the poet uses many ~~semantic fields~~ words which indicates the setting of the poem such as "bazaar", "rupees", "kameez" or "henna hennaing". Thus, the poet uses the semantic field of an Indian bazaar in order to present the setting of the poem. Furthermore, the poet creates a lively atmosphere when she describes the "furious streets". Although the word "furious" often has a negative connotation, ~~the~~ the use of this adjective in this poem allows Moniza Alvi to present the liveliness of the bazaar and creates a feeling of warmth and joy. Thus, ~~it~~ throughout the poem, the poet ~~creates~~ describes her feelings of expresses her happiness through the description of the bazaar since it is her home.

Although the ~~poem is set in~~ structured by unknown girl in the bazaar takes a central place in the poem, Alvi presents her as a stranger. ~~Throughout the poem~~ The poem is structured by the anaphora of "an unknown girl". This repetition gives her a lot of importance and suggests that she is more than just an "unknown girl". However, the poet still presents her ~~as~~ a stranger and gives no description of her appearance.

~~The only~~ Thus, the reader is only aware ~~that of the girl's~~
~~actions~~ that she "is hennaing my hand." Although the reader is
only aware of the girl's actions, it is evident that the ~~unknown~~
girl is more than just a stranger in the bazaar to the poet since
she "longs for the unknown girl" at the end of the poem with
her "hands outstretched". This feeling of longing ~~suggests reveals~~
suggests that the poet is no longer talking about the ~~stranger~~
girl hennaing her hand in the bazaar ~~but the poet herself as she~~
~~views~~ and that the identity of the unknown girl changes. Thus,
the unknown girl is no longer the stranger in the bazaar but the
poet herself since she views herself as a stranger when she
~~loses the Indian side of her~~ has been away from India for
too long and loses that part of her.

Similarly to ~~her~~ feelings ~~towards the~~ towards the
unknown girl, the poet clings onto India. After getting the
henna, the poet ~~reveals~~ that she is "clinging to these
firm peacock lines like people who cling to the sides of a
train." This simile not only shows that ~~Mariza Ali~~
attempts to hold on to the Indian side of her but also
creates a ~~typical~~ representative image of India in the
reader's ~~head~~ mind. Thus, the use of this simile highlights
the fact that the poet is clinging on to a part of
her which only appears when she returns home. Furthermore it
introduces the idea that the unknown girl is the poet herself
since the feeling of longing, ~~is explored later on for her~~
~~is explored later on~~ which adds on to the poet clinging onto
a part of herself, is explored later on.

Thus, throughout the poem, An Unknown Girl, Moniza Alvi presents her feelings of longing for her country. By exploring her feeling of loss and her desire to cling onto a part of herself, the poet realises that she is also an unknown girl when she loses touch with the Indian side of her. Thus, Moniza Alvi presents ~~her feeling~~ experience with the unknown girl as a symbol for herself when she has been away from her home for too long, making her experience with the unknown girl a metaphor of ^{Alvi} ~~her~~ clinging onto a part of her.

Examiner Comments:

The opening of this response shows understanding of the poem, her experience as 'a metaphor of the poet clinging on to a part of herself', and although some of the student's assertions about the poem we may not agree with, this understanding is sustained and there is a detailed selection of information: the liveliness of the bazaar, the poet's happiness, the importance of the unknown stranger, the feeling of longing the poet has, the way the poet clings to India (and a part of herself), the feeling of loss. The first two bullet points have been met in Level 4, but there is no evidence of Level 5 achievement here (perceptive, apt, persuasive).

There is exploration and understanding of language and structure, meeting this bullet point in Level 4, and the selection of references is appropriate to these explorations, although not always detailed. The student offers some exploration of the experience as a metaphor, semantic field, words to create liveliness, the description of actions, simile, although there could be more detail in some places to achieve Level 4 fully. This response is placed almost at the top of Level 4 with a mark of 23. There is sustained understanding of the text and there is a detailed selection of information. There is some thorough understanding and analysis of language and structure and how these are used by the writer. The selection of references is appropriate and fully supports the points being made.

Example 6

1 How does the writer present her experience with the girl in 'An Unknown Girl'?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the writer describes the unknown girl
- how the writer describes feelings about the experience in India
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

The writer uses various linguistic techniques to present the ~~unknown girl's~~^{writes} experience in the bazaar,

The writer starts off by contrasting the "neon" in the bazaar with the unknown girl's sari peach knee. ~~This~~^{suggests} This use of contrast may suggest that the unknown girl is almost out of place as she sits in the bright neon bazaar wearing very plain colours.

The writer ~~also~~ uses ~~adjectives~~^{verb} like "icing" to describe the unknown girl ~~icing~~^{hennaing} her hand. The ~~use~~^{verb} of ~~the~~^{making} ~~adjective~~^{icing} ~~icing~~^{icing} is usually used for ~~delicious~~^{delicious} cakes and muffins. But in this context ~~it~~^{could} ~~mean~~^{mean} that the icing represents her ~~enjoying~~^{enjoying} the hennaing. This suggests that she is having an enjoyable experience in the bazaar.

The writer continues to describe the hennaing, "a peacock spread its lines across my palm." The metaphor "peacock spread its lines" could represent ~~how~~^{how} the writer ~~was~~^{was} embracing her Indian culture, as a peacock is ~~the~~^{used} used to ~~represent~~^{symbolize} happiness in India, and since she is of two different cultures, western and Indian. This ~~reference~~^{reference} is also shown when she states "I have few brown veins" The word brown could represent

India and how she feels she is understanding and connecting more and more with the Indian culture.

Towards the end of the extract the writer starts to convey feelings of sorrow. "I am clinging to these peacock lines..." The writer uses a very dramatic word "clinging" as if ~~the~~ the peacock went away it would cause her terrible pain. The writer continues to compare the clinging of the peacock to "people who cling to the sides of trains". This comparison is very dramatic, since the people who cling to sides of the trains are holding ~~on~~ on so they don't die, while she is holding on to the experience of India as if her life depended on it.

~~The description of the unknown girl suggests that she is very~~

~~The extract ends with the writer saying "I'll scrape off the dry brown lines." The scraping off of the dry brown lines could symbolize the writer's scraping off her doubt and feeling of ~~not~~ not belonging to India. ~~and then once the dry brown lines are scraped off, it will reveal a peacock which once again represents~~ ^{the} hope and happiness of the writer ~~at the middle of~~~~

~~The~~ The writer describes how "Dummies on the shop fill and stare with their western perms." The Dummy represents her being influenced by the western culture and forsaking the Indian culture. The extract ends with the writer saying "I'll scrape off the dry brown lines". The scraping off of the dry brown lines could symbolize how the experience in the bazaar caused her feelings of doubt and not belonging to disappear. Once the brown lines are scraped off, it will reveal a peacock which once again symbolizes the hope and happiness of the writer.

In conclusion the writer uses various linguistic techniques such as metaphors, symbolism and contrast to represent the writer's experiences with the unknown girl and the bazaar.

Examiner Comments:

The student moves immediately into reference to language in the contrast of neon and peach satin and the reference to 'icing' (although these do not securely show sound understanding of the poem). There is sound understanding of the poem, however, in the comment on Indian culture, feelings of sorrow, holding onto the experience of India, the forsaking of Indian culture and the hope and happiness of the writer (which touches on some Level 4 selection).

There is clear understanding and explanation of language, the peacock and its symbolism, the comparison of the 'clinging', the use of the dummies, the reveal of the peacock, but this is not thorough or wide-ranging to achieve into Level 4. The selection of references is appropriate and relevant.

The response touches on of the bullet points in Level 3. There is sound understanding of the text, and selection and interpretation of information, ideas, perspectives is appropriate and relevant to the points being made. There is some evidence of the student starting to explore some details. For AO2 there is clear understanding and explanation of language and structure and how these are used by writers to achieve effects, including use of vocabulary and sentence structure. There are some areas at the start where the understanding is not quite sound, so this answer achieves towards the top of Level 3, but not right at the top. It achieves 17.

Writing

At the lowest grade boundary students 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 students 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 students hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

At the Grade 4 borderline students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 straightforward 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 students knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were some that produced responses that were more

like an essay. Examiners noted that students need to manage their time better, as even responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the end.

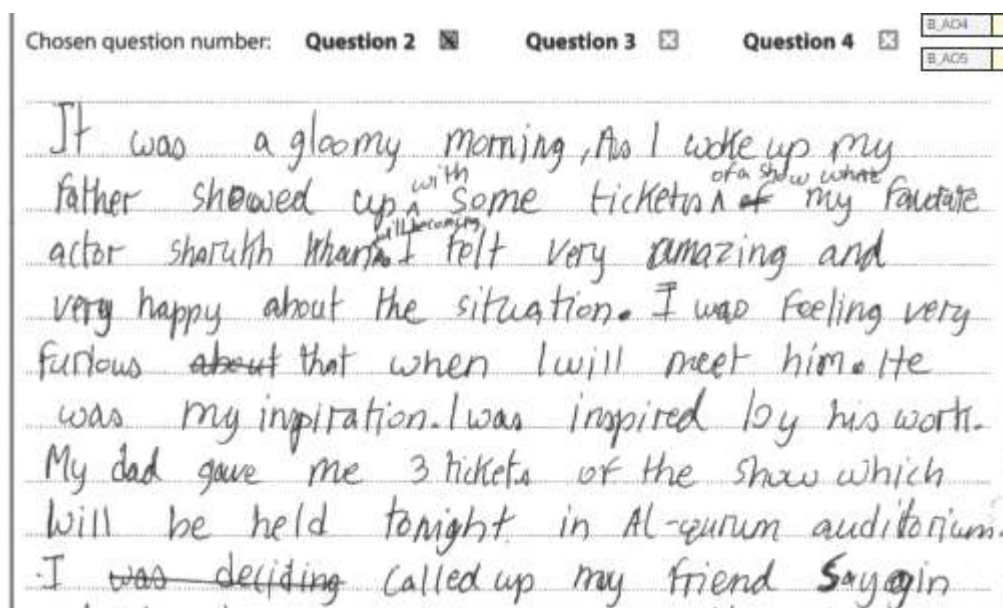
Some comments from examiners include:

- 'There were some stunning answers, particularly in response to Questions 3 and 4'
- 'There were some truly exceptional pieces of writing in response to 'The Painting' with students of all abilities demonstrating flair and imagination as they produced original, innovative and truly moving pieces'
- 'Overall, I enjoyed many of the answers and was amazed by the considerable skills displayed.'

Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, met an important person.

This question was the least popular this series. Responses introduced a range of people who were admired or important, from long-lost relatives to celebrities. Some responses relied on school and used their teachers/house-parents/headmasters as the important character. Examiners noted varied quality of responses being offered. More limited pieces focused on a much more basic account of the meeting without a sense of purpose or audience. Examiners did find that even in very basic responses there was often a sense of audience and purpose. The majority of students managed to go beyond Level 2. Better responses gave a much more descriptive response implementing a lively tone and register.

Example 1



and John to go with me to the show. As I told them they felt very shocked and they were very excited to go with me. It was 9 o'clock in the evening. I was waiting for my friends in the entrance of our house. As they came we rushed to the auditorium. The auditorium was quite far from my place. Finally we reached! It took an hour to reach our dream destination. We quickly dropped out from the vehicle and rushed towards the hall in the auditorium. We went inside the hall and sat in the second row of seats. We were planning that at the end of the show we'll try our best to meet him. There were thousands of people showed up in the show to see Sharukh Khan. Suddenly, the man himself, Sharukh Khan came onto the stage and performing in my favourite song. My heart felt relief when I saw him live for the first time. The host of the show Mrs. Jai Divya was looking very glamorous. As the show was about to end, ~~there~~ they were asking questions ~~about~~ to the audience in the hall, if anyone can answer the question's they will get SRK's signed tshirt and chance to ~~click~~ click a picture with him. Finally, I raised my hand to answer a question, and the answer I gave it was correct, they called me ~~on stage~~ up on stage to meet SRK. It was the best moment of my life. I was very curious while, I was on the way to the stage. As I met him, I shook his hand and hugged him. The situation was emotional for me and I clicked a picture

With him in my phone. I said him "you are my inspiration, I love like ur dress up styles, ~~your~~ your attitude & love towards the people." he felt very amazed as I told ~~it~~ this to him. He was very important person in my life.

It was one of my best memorable day and I ~~was~~ ^{felt} truly amazed when I met the important person in my life.

Examiner Comments:

This response starts with an attempt to create atmosphere 'It was a gloomy morning', which seems to be contrasted with the happy receipt of the tickets. There is clear progression through events, with attempt to convey feelings at various points, building to a conclusion: the tickets, the journey to the venue, the show and the chance to speak to the actor/singer. While there is no evidence of paragraphing, the events are ordered and broadly connected.

For AO4 the response meets all of the bullet points in Level 2, but there is also some achievement of Level 3. Communication is clear overall, and there is a clear sense of purpose and some sense of the reader (Level 2/3). The form, tone and register are straightforward. A mark of 9 is appropriate here.

In AO5 again, all of the bullet points of Level 2 are met. There is some awkward expression and a lack of paragraphs, but the ideas are expressed and ordered, with some connection of them just slightly nudging Level 3 here. There is also some varied vocabulary spelt correctly, such as *situation*, *auditorium*, *destination*, *vehicle*, *memorable*. The final bullet point is met in Level 2, with some control of punctuation and sentence structure. Given the second bullet is met in Level 3, a mark of 5 is appropriate.

Example 2

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4** B.AO4 1
B.AO5 2

June 16th, 2017, a date I will never forget.

It was my best friend's birthday party and I had no intentions of missing ^{it} ~~this~~. We had both been waiting for it for such a long time. However, thirty minutes before leaving, my dad came to

my room and told me to get changed. "Wear your Manchester United football shirt with Pogba's name on the back" he said. I was confused. I love football and Paul Pogba is my favorite player but I could not go to my best friend's party wearing a football shirt. I wanted to wear a nice dress, like all the girls would. But soon he handed me a black envelope with my name on it. Was it an invitation? What was this black, soft and large envelope? I couldn't wait to open it and that is what I did right away. To my biggest surprise I read the words "Meet Paul Pogba from 20:00 to 00:00" in big gold letters on a black invitation. I couldn't believe it. I first thought it was a joke but when I saw my father's big smile I realised I would meet Pogba. I was a few hours away from meeting my idol, the one that has inspired me to start football, the greatest of all times, Paul Pogba. I couldn't hold my emotions anymore. It was a mix of happiness, joy, excitement but also stress and fear. The tears started running ^{down} ~~through~~ my cheeks. I couldn't wait to tell my best friend about it. That's when I realized we were the 16th of June and that I could not miss her birthday. I started wondering if she would understand. I decided to call her before taking a decision. She did understand and was really happy for me which also surprised me because she ^{usually} is the jealous kind of person. I ~~quickly~~ After wishing her happy birthday I quickly changed into my favorite outfit: Manchester United's football kit ~~and~~, took the invitation and got in the car. Adrenaline was surging down my whole body. I could feel my heart beat faster and faster. The car ride was only fifteen minutes but felt like hours and hours. When I finally got there the night had already ~~fallen~~ fallen. It was a huge place with neon everywhere and no roof. We couldn't see the stars because there was too much light but it wasn't too warm or humid. I would say it was the perfect temperature. I was looking around, amazed, when

a man came and talked to me. "I am sorry to bother you Miss but you have a VIP pass" he said "you have more chances of meeting Pogba if you follow me to the VIP square". Without thinking I followed him. The vip square was even better than what I had imagined. Burgers, drinks, everything was free. The man came back to me and told me Pogba would arrive shortly, he asked me if I wanted to see him. I accepted and followed him to a tent. There was a really long queue in front of the tent. Pogba would never have time to meet everyone. I knew I would never be able to talk to him. My heart wasn't beating fast anymore. The adrenaline was gone too. I felt empty. I was disappointed. I looked around and starting leaving. The man called me. "Don't leave" he said "Pogba is coming". He took me to the tent's door, skipping the whole queue. I was confused. What was happening? I went in the white and big tent and I saw him. My idol was standing right in front of me. My heart stopped. I could not speak. I had never felt that way before.

Examiner Comments:

This response starts with a short sentence for effect, and the attempt to try and create a sense of foreshadowing with 'I had no intentions of missing it'. The response is clear, and the ideas are clear: the receipt of the black envelope, the invitation to meet Pogba, the date being the same as the birthday party, the VIP pass, potential disappointment and then the meeting. The response attempts to create an interesting switch from the birthday to meeting Pogba to try to confound the reader's expectations, although not fully effective. The response communicates feelings clearly and successfully at times, for example 'I felt empty. I was disappointed. What was happening?'

There is a clear sense of purpose and audience. There are some attempts to be effective, for example 'Was it an invitation? What was this black, soft and large envelope?' The communication of the idea of the response meeting their idol is clear, and the tone is always appropriate and clear.

For AO4 the response communicates clearly in the main, and the attempt to be effective moves this further into the Level towards the top. The response shows clear awareness

of the purpose and of the expectations of the intended reader (Level 3), and clear use of form, tone and register (Level 3). It meets all of the bullet points in Level 3, achieving a mark of 11.

For AO5 the response develops and connects information and ideas. As with S2A, there are no paragraphs but it is easy to follow the progression of the events. There is varied vocabulary, with accurate spelling, for example invitation, realised, excitement, adrenaline, humid, queue. Occasional errors do not detract from those which are correct. This bullet is met in Level 3. For the final bullet point the response just moves into Level 4, as they use varied more than a range of punctuation (speech marks, question marks), sentence structures are managed for deliberate effect, for example 'Without thinking I followed him', 'My heart stopped'. This just tips the AO5 mark into Level 4 with a mark of 8.

Question 3: Write a story with the title 'The Painting'.

This task provided an extremely interesting range of responses with a variety of approaches from visiting an art gallery to being the painter, learning to paint, success in a painting competition and the influence of a painting. In many instances, the painting was described in detail, and the response was either absorbed into it, or an element of the painting, usually a figure, came alive. One response travelled through a whole series of paintings, starting with Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* and continuing with *The Last Supper*, asking for help each time to escape and get home. Some answers used the idea of stealing a painting and these tended to work quite well. One examiner noted:

'An interesting response provided a description of a painting which was treasured by a wife; a portrait of her husband who was often absent. Another response adapted the story of 'My Last Duchess'.'

All responses were able to adapt their use of punctuation and vocabulary to provide their understanding of the task. Many had the feeling of mystery and left the reader thinking about the events. There were many Level 5 responses to this question which were very engaging for the reader, using very extensive vocabulary and were very engaging for the reader. There were very few responses in Level 2. As one examiner commented:

'There were some truly exceptional pieces of writing in response to 'The Painting' with responses of all abilities demonstrating flair and imagination as they produced original, innovative and truly moving pieces.'

Example 3

Chosen question number: Question 2 Question 3 Question 4

BLANK T2

The Painting

In my house, there's a peculiar painting affixed to the wall with cement and stone, as opposed to traditional methods such as a nail and a hook, or perhaps even just creative usage of glue. It is located just down the hall leading from the entrance, at the left of the living room and to the right of the kitchen.

Sometimes, we cover up the painting with two large draped cloths from both sides, as sometimes the colours become too bright and expressive for optimal viewing. Strangely enough, the painting almost invariably does this during the daytime, with no occurrence of this phenomenon during the evening hours.

The appearance of the painting depends on how you look at it, as its contents are different depending on the conditions that you

view it from. For example, one time on a muggy October afternoon, I had a glance of wonderfully detailed trees and foliage, with people in the background. I never moved to any of them though, because only some kind of nutcase would stare at a painting.

The artist of the painting is unknown to my knowledge. There's no signature on the left hand corner, the right hand corner, along the edge of the canvas, or even on the back. Although I have never seen the back, I'm quite sure that there's no signature there, because despite my best efforts I could strangely not turn the painting over. It's a shame, really. I enjoy the unknown artist's work, from powerful brush strokes, to finer details such as mellow light colours, with other times the same colours even appearing to be different ones.

Of course, this isn't the only painting in my humble abode, as one beautiful painting isn't enough to save my bland living space. Inside my living room, I keep a smaller painting on the table, with different qualities than the one down the hall.

The painting came with a strange button-box that changes the image shown on the painting's canvas. At first, I was bewildered at the number of options I could pick from, ranging from comic-book style illustrations to horrific masterpieces of gothic abominations and Lovecraftian creatures. The novelty died out after a while, because despite the sheer number of painting styles to select, there was hardly anything that was truly satisfying to look at.

However, in my opinion, the most horrible painting in my house is the one located in the guest's powder room. It is situated in a strange location, which is just above the sink, where the pill cabinet should have been. The painting it shows is a gruesome figure, with beady eyes, moles on its nose, ragged clothes, yellow teeth, and possibly also herpes. I strongly

dislike that painting in particular, as it tries to copy my every move, mocking me with exaggerated facial expressions and piercing eyes. I try not to look at it as often as possible, but it's there.

And now we come to the end of our little tour around my rather small art gallery of about two paintings. (I'm not counting the horrific third painting) I wish to see you all again soon, perhaps with new artworks to display, or maybe some particular ones removed due to... inappropriate behaviour. But feel free to drop by anytime. Remember, none of these are for sale, and if anybody does so much as attempt to thieve one of them, they're going straight to jail. Except for the one in the guest's powder room. I'm willing to pay someone to take that appalling pile of silt off of my hands.

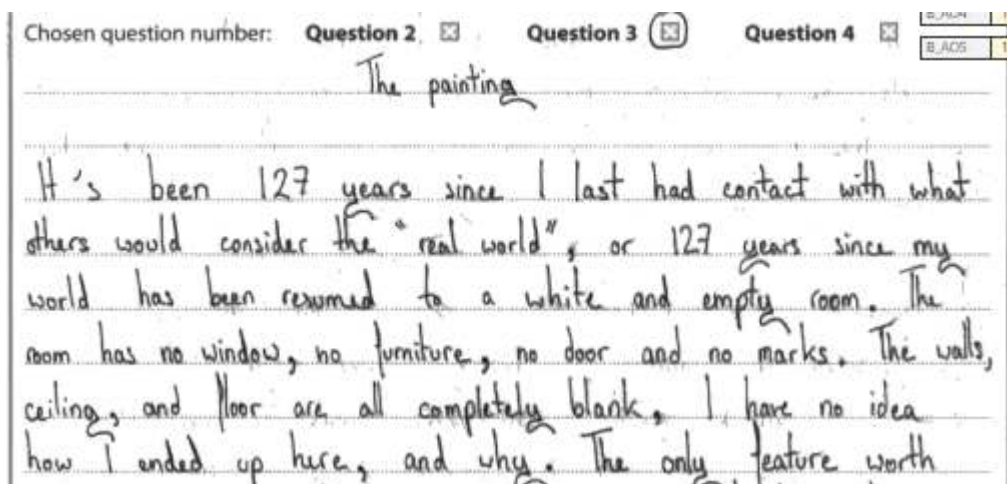
Examiner Comments:

This response takes an unusual approach to the task and creates quite a compelling character in the narrator. The response subtly combines ordinary details about the whereabouts of the paintings and their fixings and compares these with the rather macabre comments on the actual paintings themselves. (It does not matter that there is more than one.) There is a very strong narrative voice throughout, with some touches of humour providing a further contrast e.g. with the painting in the 'powder room' and the sinister invitation 'But feel free to drop by anytime'.

The opening is effective in its simplicity, and by the end there is a realisation that it is perceptive and subtle. It is important to remember that what a young person sees as subtle communication is not always what we might expect! The task is sharply focused on purpose and the expectations of the intended reader, with the gothic undertone and the strange quirks of the paintings. For a young person, there is sophisticated use of form, tone and register, for example 'comic-book style illustrations to horrific masterpieces of gothic abominations and Lovecraftian creatures'. There is full achievement of Level 5 – while it is not always what would be expected to be seen as sophisticated, its simplicity of writing contrasted with the complexity of the narrator and the paintings is sophisticated.

For AO5 the response manipulates complex ideas (the narrator's thoughts that it is the paintings that are strange creates an effective parallel with their own strangeness) utilising a range of structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion. An extensive vocabulary is used strategically here, for example peculiar, optimal, invariably, phenomenon, bewildered, and rare spelling errors do not detract from overall meaning. There are lots of techniques subtly employed. Punctuation is accurate and well-controlled to aid emphasis and precision, and a range of sentence structures is used accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects. AO5 does not have to be perfect to achieve the top mark of Level 5, which is what this response achieves.

Example 4



noticing in my world is a painting, one I knew because its reputation preceded it, though until the day I ended up here, I never saw it. It's a curious ^{and} thing, when you recognize something as soon as you first lay eyes on it, yet that happened to me.

I never paid attention to life, back then. Every ~~one~~ of my thoughts were related to work. The farm. Everything I grew there was all I could ask for. Unfortunately, I couldn't say the same for my wife, a pretty, young thing I never knew how I ended up with. I saw her as a bird, fragile but twittering endlessly about everything that passed through that vain little head of her's, always wanting more than she could get, always itching for a chance to fly away. She did fly away, eventually, but never in the way she hoped.

She left her body behind for me to bury underground, still young, still pretty, but not likely to accomplish the goals she set for herself. My life resumed and I drowned myself in work, ~~even~~ forgetting the smiles and constant chatter of her voice in the background, both meaningless and full of heart. Then I ended up here.

Of course I tried to get away! I bashed against the walls, screamed, fought, scratched, cried, and gave up. The walls remained smooth, untouched, and I healed after each and every wound I gave myself. I don't know where I am, I don't have to eat, or sleep, ~~or~~ and I don't age. The only clue I had was the paining, nagging and hinking at an idea I couldn't comprehend. But I tried to anyway, I tried to pray.

She was a fervent believer in Him, always thanking Him, speaking to Him, and asking for things she would never receive. I silently observed each time, not daring to open her eyes to the truth, only thinking of how beautiful she looked, kneeling in front of a wax ~~figure~~ figurine, her delicate eyelids ~~and~~ veiling her eyes, her palms joined together, her lips soundlessly moving to form words that could never be let out. I watched and wondered, how folly and illusions could ~~brighten~~ brighten up a person's face like a child's, and the wonder left me and I picked up a ~~shovel~~ shovel, and went back to work.

So now I'm unable to do anything. I sit with my legs crossed in front of the painting. I know it so well I could trace it with my fingers on the floor, eyes closed. It's strange to see it in a room and not on the roof of a chapel. I see God, his hand reaching to almost touch, but not quite, the hand of Adam, the first man. I wouldn't consider it beautiful, but I know it's the only thing she wouldn't shut up about, even when I asked her to. It's the only thing she ever really wanted to see.

"It must have been nice to have had someone, to not have been alone." The words leave my mouth naturally, as no one can hear. I wouldn't want to forget the sound of my own voice, tearing through the silence and anchoring me to a version of my reality.

I guess it's alright to worship. I personally still don't believe. Then again, I doubt I'm ~~the~~ a reference, I've been alone and unhappy for near eternity, ~~my knowledge of~~ aware of the passage of time in the back of my head, like

a dull 'headache'. I let my one chance of happiness at 'Joy' slip through my fingers without caring the slightest. I guess I'll never believe, but it's alright to worship if it makes you happy. However, I in this room, populated by me and a painting, I guess nothing could. I exist with my memories, most about work. I don't dream, I don't hope, I never lived. That's my last regret. She died, but she also lived.

Examiner Comments:

As with Example 3 this response takes an unusual and compelling approach. The response is quite reminiscent of Angela Carter or 'My Last Duchess' in the anthology. The response creates a sophisticated combination of two realities and two timescales, one in the room with the painting and one the earlier reality of the narrator's work, the farm and his wife. There is perceptive and subtle movement between the two, making for compulsive reading (even though it leaves the reader with more questions than answers – is he in prison, an institution, has he murdered his wife?)

There are subtle and evocative moments, for example 'I wouldn't want to forget the sound of my own voice...anchoring me to a version of my reality', '...aware of the passage of time...like a dull headache'. The way the events gradually unfold, both with regard to the painting itself and what happened in the 'real' world, and whether the painting he sees is real or not, is sharply focused on purpose and the reader. It meets all of the bullet points for Level 5 and more.

For AO5 the response manipulates complex ideas (the different worlds and the possible fate of the narrator) utilising a range of structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion. An extensive vocabulary is used strategically here, for example accomplish, meaningless, comprehend, fervent, veiling, and rare spelling errors do not detract from overall meaning. There are lots of techniques subtly employed, for example short sentences for effect, sentence starters. Punctuation is accurate and well-controlled to aid emphasis and precision, and a range of sentence structures is used accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that starts 'Everywhere was silent.'

Most responses used the phrase correctly at the start. Repeating the phrase within the response was used for effect by some responses. Responses ranged from adventures in the snow, to walking at night around the streets witnessing violence, enjoying the silence at night, or arriving home to circumstances that were unexpected. One particular response which had an impact on an examiner was about a soldier returning from war:

The writer described the silence of walking home in contrast to their excitement at seeing their family. After reaching his home the soldier discovered that all his family had died due to a bomb explosion. The response continued and discussed the irony that the soldier had only gone to fight in the war to keep people safe, especially his family.'

Many responses had used the pictures for ideas, with more using the second image rather than the first. One examiner commented:

This led to a whole range of situations from running away from home, to kidnapping for body parts, to space invasion, to war, to pursuit by a whole collection of discreditable characters. The ideas of night/darkness/loneliness/fear etc were often effectively conveyed.'

Example 5

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4** B_1047
B_ACS T

Everywhere was silent. Out of the bedroom window, the unrealistic powder of winter had covered all. A white ocean, infinite and quiet, was everywhere. All, fast asleep, unconscious of this long-awaited miracle, were silent. Quietly putting on a jacket and cap, I went to explore the silent wonderland. Under my bare feet, the snow did not make a sound. Smooth and cold, it silently melted under ^{my light toes} ~~my~~ ~~hoof~~. Not a bird was in sight. No footsteps or tweeting interrupted this surreal silence. The trees, grounded beneath the snow and still, as if making a pact with this unexpected peace, were silent. Everywhere was silent. The white sky and snow melted into one, creating a dome over this sudden tranquility. Seconds, minutes, hours melted into one. Impossible to keep track of time or place. In this silence, nothing mattered. Trapped in this beautiful ~~tubble~~ bubble, I could have spent on eternity. Reality had disappeared and been replaced by the imposing silence. A quiet cloud, surfing over a gentle breeze, disappeared into the distance. I could not take away my eyes ~~through~~ from the blinding purity of my surroundings. In this moment, all was empty, except for my lungs, filling me with the chilly air. Pushed by a sudden desire, my feet started to move, surprising me, as it seemed

as if I had become one with the trees and was now grounded to this snow. Behind me, I left little shell-holes, disturbing the perfectly smooth and flawless snow. I wanted to know how far I could go before the Frost would turn to grass and Reality would seize me from this dream-like paradise. But no matter how far I walked, the cold texture was beneath my feet and within the air. Everywhere I went, Everywhere was silent, as if it did not care to come from the depths of Frost. I suddenly felt a cold drop on my nose, and realized it was snowing. Quietly, it covered me in its white sheets, falling filling me with warmth. Slowly, I was started turning around and around, laughing my heart out, breaking the ominous silence, trees absurdly turning into clouds, clouds turning ~~to~~ into bushes, ground turning into sky, before all becoming an harmonized blur. Dizzy and disoriented, ~~and~~ I saw that Frost had once again taken control over the environment, smoothing out once again the snow, and filling my footprints with delicate powder. Once again, ~~Every~~ Everywhere was silent. Suddenly taken by Reality, I noticed the trees had formed a wall around me, taking a step closer everytime I closed my eyes. Panicked, I tried to find my way back home. But Frost had covered my tracks, leaving me powerless and lost. The ominous silence became louder and louder, penetrating my head and system, making it unbearable. My vision blurred with tears and anxiety. No sound would come out of my mouth when I screamed for help. Silence had taken control over me, pressuring and shoving me to the ground, making my numbed feet weak, making it impossible to run away. Suddenly, a weak voice broke the silence. Sally was at our porch, crying for me. Little Sister, where are you? Where are you? Silence had vanished. Guided by Sally's call, I found my way home. One in front of her, she looked at me in disbelief, with my nose red and feet red, iced tears at the corner of my eyes. "Big Sister, where were you? I was looking for you!" she exclaimed. "Come inside, I made you some hot cocoa."

Examiner Comments:

This response is again a very successful piece of imaginative writing which uses the first image, with just a faint narrative thread as well. It starts out with effective repetition of the title idea and idea of silence throughout. The description provides at first a 'silent wonderland', then becomes an ominous and threatening silence in the second half of the script once the trees started to form a wall and the character became lost. The change in description of the setting is mirrored by the change in the character's feelings. The ending is understated and effective in the use of the rather anonymous 'big sister' and 'little sister'.

Communication is perceptive and subtle in this response, in a different way again to Examples 3 and 4. The task is sharply focused on purpose and the expectations and requirements of the intended reader. As with Example 1, there is sophisticated use of form, tone and register (for example the alliteration 'Dizzy and disoriented') while appearing fairly simple in ideas. It meets all of the bullet points in Level 5.

For AO5 there is a lack of paragraphs which does need to be acknowledged, but it is important to note this does not mean the response cannot achieve Level 5. There is extensive vocabulary and accurate spelling, for example unrealistic, surreal, tranquillity, numbed, vanished. Sentence control is ambitious, there is punctuation to aid emphasis and precision, for example we can imagine that the capital letters used for 'Frost' and 'Reality' are deliberate to almost present these as creatures. The lack of paragraphs does limit the answer from achieving full marks, but a mark of 11 is achieved.

Example 6

Chosen question number: **Question 2** **Question 3** **Question 4** B.AO4
B.AO5

Everywhere was silent.

The night was cold and the people gone. It was just this morning, when the girl ~~had~~ had woken up to bright rays clanging off her curtains, ~~except~~ seeping past the door frames and invading her room in a sense of utter warmth and affection. It was just this morning, ~~that~~ ^{that} her mother ~~had~~ ^{driven} off to work, saying, 'I'll be back in time for dinner, girls. Just consider me and her sister can order what ever they ~~want~~ ^{wanted}: Chinese, Indian, American. It was just this afternoon, when school had rung its last bell, and summer had arrived; ~~the~~ it was bringing that humidity and freedom so many ~~longer~~ ^{longer} had longed for since the start of semester.

But now, everything had changed.

Everyone was gone.

Everywhere was silent.

Monica opened her eyes to a dim surrounding, water hanging in the air, ashes hung in the air like snowflakes, dripping, falling down from up above, composed of water and the scent and sky. But instead, the air would be ~~like~~ ^{were} like fire and dry, crisp and dry.

She was lying on the stone cold pavement, her hand leg cleftly to her side, not ~~so~~ ^{on} touching the ground, but hovering over it as if the ground here ~~was~~ ^{was} a thousand degrees hot. Her mouth was dry, ~~aching~~ ^{aching} and her eyelids heavy.

Slowly, painfully, Monica rose. Her head seemed to revolve three sixty, ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~rock~~ ^{rock} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~head~~ ^{head}. Her feet ~~was~~ ^{was} were steel; heavy, ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~hard~~ ^{hard}, ~~useless~~ ^{useless}, and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~air~~ ^{air} she ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~breathed~~ ^{breathed} was ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~full~~ ^{full} ~~of~~ ^{of} the fumes of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~fire~~ ^{fire}.

Where am I? ~~Is~~ ^{Is} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~light~~ ^{light}.

But she knew where she was. Right ~~there~~ ^{there} ~~there~~ ^{there}, ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~standing~~ ^{standing} strong and strong, was the post office. To her right, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Indian~~ ^{Indian} restaurant that had served her more than once long family memories. She stood on the pavement she had crossed a million times before. The familiar the changes, the confusion of it all made her stumble against the sheet ramp to her left, it's ~~yellow~~ ^{yellow} ~~light~~ ^{light} glowing beautifully ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the pitch darkness that surrounded her.

The other was still falling - quietly and gracefully and slow.

Suddenly, Monica realized same thing.

Everything was burnt. Everything but the street light, the only one for a mile ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~lazy~~ ^{lazy} ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~pick~~ ^{pick} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~ground~~ ^{ground}.

The Indian restaurant stood: still and attractive, but burnt.

The post office: large and complex, but burnt.

She looked down at her clothes, picked at the little crisped off edges - burnt, burnt, burnt.

Her whole town was burnt.

But not this ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~street~~ ^{street} ~~light~~ ^{light} next to her - the one supporting her.

Everything was wrong. ~~Yet~~ ^{Yet} ~~this~~ ^{this} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~important~~ ^{important}, ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~neglected~~ ^{neglected}, tall piece of structure still stood.

Where

What happened?

Monica did not know. She did not know how she got here (though she remembered telling Izzy she'll be back with dinner - Indian - is a half hard). She did not know where ~~of~~ ^{of} the people ~~disappeared~~ ^{disappeared} to - the woman selling her usual macho-flavored ice creams; the ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~blind~~ ^{blind} man who sat by the Indian restaurant, ~~asking~~ ^{begging} for money; the car that used to run by back and forth and bank and speed.

through these long streets.

But now it's all gone.

And Monica had a million unanswered questions.

And she ~~also~~ knew that no one would be able to answer ~~those~~ ^{these} questions - for she was the only person standing, the only creature breathing in this ball of obsidian streets and buildings and emptiness.

Strangely, Monica did not feel alone.

Everything was silent, but not her senses. She had the urge to run through the cracked streets, ~~check~~ ^{street lamp} check behind every ~~post~~ ^{street lamp}, dive into every alley she ~~can~~ could find. She had the need to do so - for she knew she was not alone.

"Hello!" she shouted.

~~There was no~~

Her voice came at ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~un~~ ^{un} ~~pleasant~~ ^{pleasant} ~~pleasant~~ ^{pleasant} ~~liberty~~ ^{liberty} as a ~~raw~~ ^{raw} ~~raw~~ ^{raw} ~~cruel~~ ^{cruel} ~~cruel~~ ^{cruel} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~desperate~~ ^{desperate}.

"Is anyone here!"

No one answered. Nothing moved. No one was here.

"By anyone?" she whispered.

And then, in an overwhelming sense of confusion and anger and fear, Monica started to cry. She needed her mother. Needed her sister. Needed someone - anyone, to tell her she was not alone.

But no one came.

And so she stayed there, ~~wait~~ ^{wait} waiting.

~~Then~~

A few hours later, the sun had risen. And it painted ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~sky~~ ^{sky} ~~orange~~ ^{orange} ~~grey~~ ^{grey} ~~sky~~ ^{sky} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~sleep~~ ^{sleep} with its thin frail clouds and wisps of ash in such an apocalyptic manner, that Monica came to a final conclusion on her ~~own~~ ^{own} circumstances.

There was only one explanation for this; for the dryness and emptiness and hollowness of her being.

The world had ended, but she still stood - breathing fire smoke and ~~tears~~ ^{tears} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~ashes~~ ^{ashes} crying tears of ash.

The world had ended, ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~but~~ ^{but} she had refused to die along with it.

Everything was still, everything was silent.

Everything was gone, and soon she will follow along with it.

Examiner Comments:

As with previous scripts this is a Level 5 response with top marks of 18 and 12. The well-structured narrative fits the task, using the image of the streetlight, and is deliberately intriguing: has there been a natural disaster, nuclear attack, an apocalypse? The pace of the narrative is controlled in a very sophisticated way, with the repetition at the beginning of 'It was just this morning', then afternoon, and the normality of going to collect a takeaway contrasted with the tragic and unusual circumstances the narrator is in. The ideas of the early humidity of the day foreshadowing the potential natural disaster that has happened and the ashes like 'snowflakes' contrasting with the fire and burning, are subtly and perceptively used. Details are used in a sophisticated way, for example the normality of the people, the woman selling ice cream and the man begging, the restaurant and the post office.

For AO4 the response achieves 18 marks. Communication is perceptive and subtle. The task is sharply focused on purpose and the expectations and requirements of the intended reader. There it is sophisticated use of form, tone and register. It meets all of the bullet points in Level 5.

For AO5 all of the bullet points in Level 5 are met. There is frequent use of structural and grammatical techniques for effect, for example the single line sentences, 'Everyone was gone'. The tone is sustained and assured. The range of vocabulary is used strategically, for example humidity, deftly, obsidian, and spelling errors are rare. The response is punctuated with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision, for example semicolons, question mark, speech marks, dashes, exclamation marks. Sentence structures are controlled and varied deliberately for effect, the repetition of sentences starters and endings for example: '...,but burnt'.

Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, students 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 if the text is a poem, consider the key points linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make sure you are covering the whole text 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 text you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case interesting the reader.
- 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 how 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 how readers are interested.
- 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 effective 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 beginning.
- 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.