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Examiners' Report **June 2022**

International GCSE English Literature 4ET1 01R

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Introduction

Centres are thanked for choosing Pearson Edexcel as their International GCSE English Literature provider. We very much hope that both our candidates and centres are delighted with their results.

Introduction

The Summer 2022 series was very successful and the 4ET1 01R paper performed well and was very similar in performance to previous series and the main paper, 4ET1 01. There were no errors in the paper, no erratum notices and there were no enquiries from centres following the examination.

Centres are once again congratulated on preparing their candidates so well, especially during another very challenging year.

For the Summer 2022 paper, it was decided to remove the Anthology Poetry section due to the unprecedented circumstances related to the pandemic. The removal of one section of the paper enabled candidates and centres to access the paper with more confidence, especially after lost teaching and learning hours.

For this series, there were just two sections. In Section A, candidates were presented with an unseen poem and answered a question based on it (20 marks). For Section B, Modern Prose, candidates responded to one of two questions based on the prose text that they had studied (40 marks). The total mark for this paper was 60.

Performance overall seems similar to previous series. There was the same order in popularity of the Prose texts, with *Of Mice and Men* remaining the most popular followed by *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The least popular text remains *The Joy Luck Club*, but those who attempt it are often very successful.

A full range of marks were awarded. Often, as seen in the past, responses to Questions 6-11 were very successful and gained marks in the top two levels.

There were a number of 2in1 responses and exception scripts, where candidates had not written their Prose response in the correct answer space. Centres are urged to remind their students that there are specific areas in the answer booklet where responses should be written.

Feedback from examiners has been positive throughout and they were very impressed with the majority of the responses seen.

One examiner helpfully summarised the strengths and weakness in responses.

Students that did well in the Unseen Poetry section:

- commented on the overall meaning of the poem
- explored language form and structure skilfully
- provided a range of examples
- provided close analysis of specific words and phrases.

For the Prose section,

The candidates that did well:

- used short embedded quotations
- had a good knowledge of the context and how it impacted the text
- weaved the context into the essay, rather than bulking it on at the end
- answered the question clearly.

Candidates that did less well:

- had less knowledge of the text
- used long quotations or provided narrative responses
- bulked on too much context at the beginning or at the end of paragraphs.

Interestingly, the points above are similar to those mentioned in previous centre reports, which supports the belief that overall, the performance of the paper was very similar to past series.

With the optional prose questions, there was mostly a balance in the number of responses received. The paper performed as intended and provided equal opportunities for all candidates.

Question 1

Section A Unseen Poem

Q1. *The Hurt Boy And The Birds* by John Agard

Question: Explore how the writer presents the hurt boy in this poem.

Examiners were, on the whole, impressed by the general standard of answers to this question. Nearly all candidates were able to relate to the narrative thrust of the poem. The incidents related in the poem were identified as:

- physical victimisation (being punched, the broken spectacles)
- emotional bullying (the mockery occasioned by the reading out of the note he sent to a girl he fancied)
- the boy's secretiveness, not disclosing to family or friends
- leading to loneliness and his sharing of his pain with the birds.

The majority of candidates wrote accurately on aspects of the poem and gained secure marks from doing so. A lot of these then went on to identify language features, which enhanced and focused the incidents they had described. They referred to issues such as these:

- the impersonality and repetitiousness of the 'the hurt boy' and the way in which this simultaneously personalised and also generalised his experience
- his secretiveness – born of shame at being bullied, the nagging possibility that somehow, he deserved it? – implied by keeping his secrets 'hid under his skin'
- the bruised moon (it is a fact that a full moon does look bruised, with a dark blue stain disfiguring it.) This proved to be a differentiating point of the poem as interpretations were not always secure
- 'the crumbs of his heart', which was subjected to a variety of readings, notably that crumbs are what you throw to birds, that they are food which is thrown away as useless, that it shows that the boy's heart was broken into small pieces, that he did not wish to live and had no use for his heart any more
- the alliteration and sibilance in phrases such as 'spectacles stamped' and the emotive 'ruin' to show that they are beyond repair. The phrase 'nightly hissed' was rarely explained, and although many candidates noted the childish [rather than childlike] use of the phrase 'creepy crawlies', this was also rarely explained successfully. This was the weakest point in many otherwise acute answers. Indeed, the point about 'creepy crawlies' was often another discriminator in responses

- the aspect of structure was the least successful area of the analysis. Many candidates saw a rhyme scheme where there was none, and some showed off by writing about caesura without saying how it worked, where there was one in this poem, and what effect it had. Many candidates noted the irregularities in stanza structure and the use of a single line at the end, though very few used terminologies like couplet and quintain. Many candidates noted the rhyme birds/words – but hardly any suggested what the effect of the rhyme was. This also applied to the rhyming couplet created by the last two lines – more often noted than explored. One of the more effective comments on structure noted the third person narrative of the poem, and suggested that this meant that the poem could refer to a particular hurt boy [quite probably the poet himself] or to all bullied children forced to endure their torment alone and without a confidant.

An examiner commented: 'whilst only three or four candidates noted that the poem was written almost entirely in monosyllables [110 words, only sixteen polysyllables], all of them suggested [I thought rather ingeniously] that perhaps the hurt boy was writing about himself in an effort to distance himself from his pain. Similarly, many candidates noted the use of dashes as punctuation, and a few noted that this implied hesitancy or fear on the part of the boy. Some candidates offered a general overview of the poem, many of these being downbeat enough to suggest that the hurt boy had actually killed himself, and that the birds' wings were angels' wings flying him to his rest, a suggestion as gloomy as it is plausible, I suppose.'

In comparison to previous series, the quality of responses was similar. Often, we see the R paper being particularly successful. Most candidates gained a Level 3 or above for this question, which is in line with previous series.

The poem and question performed as intended, particularly with the 'bruised moon' and 'creepy crawly' discriminators.

The poem and question performed well and as intended and the quality of responses was similar to past series, with a full range of marks awarded.

The poem and question were similar in complexity, style and performance as past unseen poetry questions.

There are five exemplars for this question, as all candidates should answer the Unseen Poetry question.

The exemplars cover a full range of levels and marks.

The poem starts off by the line 'the hurt boy talked to the birds' which is repeated in the fourth, penultimate stanza again 'But the hurt boy talked to the birds'. To remind the reader of the relationship of the hurt boy talking to the birds.

The writer uses a strong sense of imagery throughout the poem, to make us picture the hurt boy. He uses the hyperbole 'and fed them the crumbs of his heart' as to inform the reader that the boy is in pain from the bully and feeding the birds is the only thing he has to keep him distracted from the suffering. This makes us sympathise for the hurt boy.

The ~~reader~~^{writer} does not mention the hurt boy's name and just refers to him as 'The hurt boy' to show and emphasise his pain and how hurt he is.

The writer uses a metaphor to describe the hurt boy's face as a 'bruised moon'. This is to make us picture the hurt boy's face as a handsome^{innocent} boy who has been punched and abused by a bully.

(metaphor)

The writer uses the phrase 'as if his pillow was a hideaway for creepy-crawlies' as to symbolise that he uses his pillow to hide ~~his~~ from pain and danger.



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Examiner Comments

In this first exemplar, the candidate begins well by identifying the use of repetition and hyperbole. There is recognition of the ways in which readers feel sympathy for the hurt boy, but points are underdeveloped. There is some misinterpretation about the 'creepy-crawlies' and the brevity of the response hinders progress.

Level 2, 7 marks



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should comment on language, structure and form (AO2). Ideally, candidates should select specific words and phrases, identify techniques, and explain how these are used to achieve an effect on the reader.

This second exemplar was awarded a mark at the lower-end of Level 3.

~~The~~ This poem is titled 'The Hurt Boy And the Birds' and is written by John Agard in 2004. John Agard uses enjambment ~~itve~~ in an irregular pattern. Last word sentence is used because ~~of~~ the ~~start of~~ end of each word in the first sentence of each stanza and uses 'birds' and 'words' as a regular rhyming device. Repetition is also used in ~~vet~~ the first sentence of every stanza. The writer uses this technique to emphasize his poem moral. He uses ~~rhyme~~ rhyming to create a sense of flowing or smoothness while reading the poem. Metaphors such as 'fed them the crumbs of his heart' are used to overexaggerate a hurting ~~heatt~~ heart and this creates more ~~sympa~~ sympathy from the readers to the ~~that~~ 'Hurt Boy' in this poem.

Another technique used is when ~~he to the~~ John Agard talks about the 'creepy crawlies' in his pillow, followed by the next sentence where he ~~tats~~ talks about 'the girl he fancied',

which is strange to talk about something disturbing and gutwrenching then ~~and~~ suddenly jumping to ~~a~~ a topic ~~at~~ that is completely opposite and gives you a heartache in a good way.

We know that a person is unable to 'talk to the birds', but ~~this boy~~ to this boy, ~~the~~ John Agard presents him as a loner ~~who~~ who does not have friends, but the birds keep him company. 'Fed them the crumbs to my heart' tells us that although the birds are unable to ~~reply~~ reply whenever he opens up to them, he knows that ~~bird~~ at least the birds will not judge him, unlike everyone else has in his life.

John Agard is ~~tr~~ trying to emphasise this boy's misfortune of being ~~bt~~ bullied and mistreated, even by 'the girl ~~who~~ he fancied'. ~~John Agard is tri po~~ By doing that, John Agard encourages the readers to feel sad as the metaphors and other techniques used by him evokes a sense of sympathy in the reader, and for some readers, even empathy.



This second exemplar begins with the candidate identifying a range of techniques, such as structure, repetition, rhyme and metaphors, but ideas are not fully explored or supported with examples. There is some comment about contrasting ideas when considering the 'creepy-crawlies' and the 'girl he fancied', and there is recognition that the boy does not have any friends and is bullied, and mistreated, even by 'the girl he fancied'. A clear understanding of the poem is presented; however, some ideas are repeated, language points often lack examples and some ideas require further development.

Level 3, 9 marks



Candidates should try to explore the complete poem, not just a small part of it.

Our third exemplar was awarded a mark at the top of Level 3.

Firstly, John Agard presents the boy as a victim and we see this idea portrayed in the title of the poem 'The hurt boy'.

The noun 'hurt' already gives us the impression that the boy has been physically or emotionally 'hurt' in some shape or

form. This idea is also conveyed ~~through the quotation~~ through

the metaphor 'his face a bruised moon' implying that the boy has been bullied which can

be shown through the quote 'bullies fist' and implying that the boy has been a victim of physical violence and abuse.

Furthermore the boy is also portrayed as lonely through the use of personification 'The hurt boy talked to the birds and fed them the crumbs of his heart.'

Suggesting that nobody wants to

talk to the boy, he is isolated to the point where he has resorted to communicating with animals. ~~we~~

Furthermore we get the sense that he struggles to talk to or express his feelings to humans and people as suggested by the repetition of the line 'it was not easy to find the words' and the repetition of the line 'the hurt boy talked to the birds' ~~imply~~ again emphasising this ~~idea~~ idea that the boy prefers to speak with animals.

~~Secondly, the boys' emotional~~

Secondly, we get another portrayal of the boy's neglect and tease he experiences from people ~~the~~ through the personification of the note he sent to the girl he 'fancied' that was 'held high in mockery' suggesting that the boy tries to communicate with people but he gets made fun of. Furthermore the writer uses enjambment throughout

the whole poem to symbolise the
boy's constant distraught. The last
stanza and simple sentence 'Their
wings taught him new ways to
become' . . .



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Examiner Comments

This response identifies how the boy is a victim of physical and emotional hurt. The candidate comments on the boy's isolation and how he is bullied and teased. There is identification of specific nouns, personification, repetition and simple sentences and ideas are supported with relevant examples. Close analysis of specific words and phrases is not sustained; however, there is sufficient here to place this at the top of Level 3.

Level 3, 12 marks



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Examiner Tip

Some candidates find the acronym PETER (Point, Evidence, Technique, Effect on Reader) particularly useful, as it addresses all bullets in the mark scheme.

The following is a Level 4 exemplar.

Agard presents the hurt boy as hurt, both physically and emotionally. ^{The boy} ~~He~~ talks to the birds, which ^{and listen to his worries} seem to be the only things that comfort ~~himself~~ ^{him}.

Firstly, Agard portrays the boy as emotionally hurt. From the ~~beginning~~ beginning of the poem, it is evident that the boy is a victim of heartbreak. The speaker utilises the metaphor 'fed them the crumbs of his heart', to imply that the boy's heart is in pieces. ~~This~~ ~~also~~ Perhaps this ~~also~~ connotes that, now the boy's heart is broken, it is as worthless as a few scraps of bread due to ~~the~~ Agard's ~~word~~ lexical choice of 'crumbs'.

Additionally, Agard illustrates that the boy ^{is} ~~was~~ also physically hurt. ~~He utilises~~ ~~employs~~ another metaphor to ~~emphasise this~~. For ~~example~~, Agard ~~the~~ speaker says that the 'boy spoke of a bully's fist'. This shows the audience that the boy was punched by a bully. Agard employs the metaphor 'made his face a bruised man' to emphasise the extent of the damage to the boy's face. The ~~verb~~ adjective 'bruised' has connotations of redness and swelling,

and this contrasts the man 'moon' which has connotations of light, perhaps to illustrate that the happiness the boy had prior to being 'hurt'.

Furthermore, the boy's heartbreak is later described in the poem. Agard presents 'the note sent to the girl he fancied' as 'held high in mockery'. This injures ~~the~~ ^{provides the thought that he was} audience that the boy had ^{certainly} been rejected, and ~~perhaps~~ laughed at or made fun of, due to the ~~Agard's~~ Agard's main choice of 'mockery'.

Moreover, Agard utilizes simile to convey that the boy's glasses were also broken or damaged by the bully. The speaker says that 'his spectacles stamped to ruin'. This helps to create imagery in the audience's mind of the boy's bruised face along with his broken glasses.

Finally, Agard presents the birds as comforting to the boy. The speaker employs the repetition of 'the last boy talked to the birds' to ^{show} ~~give~~ the audience the cathartic relationship between the boy and the birds. He also shows their cathartic nature by stating that 'their feathers gave him welcome'. Agard finishes the poem with the phrase 'Their wings taught him new ways to be brave'. This contrasts

feelings of rebirth to the audience that the
boy is being reborn with a new outlook on life.



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Examiner Comments

In this next exemplar, the candidate provides a focused and detailed response. There are comments about how the boy is a 'victim of heartbreak' and how he is physically and emotionally hurt. There are comments about how the boy is bullied and rejected, and how he seeks comfort from the birds with whom he has a 'cathartic relationship'. A range of techniques have been identified, such as: metaphors, sibilance, repetition and adjectives. Points are supported with relevant examples and the response is sustained. Further development of some points could have benefited this response further.

Level 4, 14 marks



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Examiner Tip

Students should use short quotations rather than longer ones.

Our final exemplar for the Unseen Poetry question is a Level 5 response.

The language and structure used by the poet to describe the hunt boy and his actions clearly portrays his character and traits.

In the first stanza, the poet mentions that 'The hunt boy talked to the birds and fed them the crumbs of his heart'.

This is a metaphor for the manner in which the hunt boy releases all of his deepest problems ~~in~~ from his heart and tells them to the birds. This could also suggest that the 'hunt boy' is not merely physically hurt but could be hurt internally ~~with~~ and mentally.

In the second stanza, we find out that 'It was not easy' for the hunt boy to 'find the words' emphasizing how much his problems are affecting him to the extent that he can't even find words to express his emotions and experiences. The fact that 'he hid' secrets 'under his skin' in combination ~~or~~ with the fact that he couldn't 'find the words' implies that he has never spoken to anyone about the issues he faces and hence the hunt boy keeps it a 'secret' which he ~~hardly~~ hides 'under his skin', ~~and~~ further emphasizing how his experiences are likely to have had

internal and mental effects on him and his feelings. After this, we find out for the first time one of the ways he was actually 'hurt' when he 'spoke of a bully's fist that made his face a bruised moon'. This reveals that the 'hurt boy' has experienced problems with physical bullying to the extent that he got punched in his face. The comparison of the hurt boy's bruised face with a 'bruised moon' is ironic as the moon tends to be ~~a calm and~~ perceived as a calm ~~and~~ object, ~~too~~ however the ~~boy's~~ hurt boy's bruised face is chaotic and sad. Furthermore, the comparison ^{with} ~~for~~ the moon could be a metaphor for the way that he ~~was~~ is also hurt internally but has a whole different front and appearance that doesn't expose this, as from Earth we can only see one side of the moon which is light due to sunlight reflecting on it but the other side which no one has seen is darker. This relates to the way that no one knows about his darker 'secrets' which he tells the birds but conceals from everyone ~~that~~ else.

The fact that his 'spectacles' were ruined when he got bullied further emphasizes how no one can see the hardship he faces and the emotions he goes through by just looking at him, as spectacles are used to see things with clarity. This could indicate that he is confused or has a lack of clarity as he is only a 'boy' and isn't sure of why he is being bullied and going through this. The repetition of 'It was not easy to find the words' at the beginning of the

second and third stanza emphasises how difficult it is for the hurt boy to express his emotions and speak about his trauma ~~or~~ about the 'secrets' which he ~~conceals~~ hides beneath his skin. The fact that each of the times it says that it wasn't easy to 'find the words', it is followed by examples of his trauma could suggest that despite the fact that he eventually does open up and talk about it, it isn't easy.

The fact that things 'nigritly hissed' for the hurt boy and 'his pillow was a hideaway for creepy-crawlies' ~~the~~ may ~~be~~ ~~steps~~ be a metaphor for him having night mares which 'hiss' because they are about his trauma, and the use of the word 'creepy-crawlies' reinforces the fact that he is just a child and is likely to be confused about everything going on. ~~Therefore~~ Agard mentions that one of the supposed nightmares that the 'hurt boy' has is about a 'note sent to the girl he fancied' which ~~is~~ was 'held high in mockery'. This could be a valid explanation for why 'it was not easy' for the hurt boy to 'find the words' to express his emotions - as when he expressed his feelings about 'the girl he fancied' in the past, he was mocked for it and this could be the reason why he conceals his emotions.

The fourth stanza suggests that after the hurt boy 'talked to the birds' about his problems, 'their feathers gave him welcome' and 'their wings taught him new ways to become'. This indicates that after expressing his emotions and talking about his problems, the hurt boy was able to come up with solutions and ~~pro~~ find ways of dealing with his problems, and it suggests that talking to the birds was a great relief for him as he could relate his problems and talk about them without being judged as the birds didn't understand him and welcomed him.

The last stanza of the poem is a short stanza of only one line and it revolves around the hurt boy finding 'new ways to become' which shows his development and progress throughout the poem. It also emphasizes how talking to the ~~two~~ birds helped him find tangible solutions to his problems. The poem is generally short and consists of five stanzas, which - it has an irregular structure as all of the stanzas are different lengths - the first one and the last two are very short but the middle two are comparatively longer which further portrays his development and changes from merely stating that he has problems, to ~~is~~ describing and explaining his experiences, to finding solutions. The alliteration of 'creepy-creeps' creates a harsh double consonant sound which reflects on the

harshness of the nightmares which he has, ~~and~~



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Examiner Comments

In this final exemplar, the candidate demonstrates an assured understanding of the poem and explores all points in detail. There is recognition that the boy is physically and mentally hurt and how he cannot talk to anyone, apart from the birds. There is recognition of the trauma the boy suffers and some very good points are made, such as how the ruined spectacles result in not being able to see things properly. The point about the 'creepy-crawlies' suggesting nightmares is understood. The candidate systematically works through the poem and makes assured comments.

Level 5, 18 marks



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Examiner Tip

Candidates are free to select and comment on textual details in a variety of ways. All interpretations are considered, and awarded for, if supported by relevant evidence.

Question 2

SECTION B, Anthology poems, was removed for this series due to the current unprecedented circumstances. The Prose section was relabelled as Section B.

SECTION B Modern Prose

To Kill a Mockingbird

Q2: In what ways is Tom Robinson significant in the novel?

This was the most popular *To Kill a Mockingbird* question. On the whole, this question was answered well and most candidates produced thorough and assured responses. Most candidates focused their responses on the events of the trial and how Tom is considered a mockingbird character. A range of themes were explored and contextual points were often relevant and embedded. Some responses could have included more details about Tom, such as his family and how he came to have an injured arm.

The question performed as expected.

Two exemplars are included for this question. The first is a Level 3 response and the second a Level 4.

Tom Robinson is significant to the novel in many ways. He is one of the main characters and also a mockingbird of the novel. Tom Robinson was a man wrongly accused by a white woman, Mayella Ewell of rape which is later taken to the court. Though it is Bob Ewell, Mayella's father who had attacked her in a drunken state. Tom Robinson was a man who the white judge and jury refused to hear because he was a 'black' and chose 'white-trash' Ewell family to believe in.

Atticus Finch was the one who took this case into his hands while Scout and Jem believed Tom Robinson will be released. Despite Atticus' correct evidence of Tom Robinson's left hand being crippled in young childhood which suggests that he couldn't possibly harm her; the judge and jury both ignored the evidence. This shows the unfair and unjust system.

in Maycomb.

Later on, Bob Ewell went after Tom Robinson's family ~~and~~ but is stopped by a white man. Mr. Cunningham who tried to harm Tom Robinson again shows the racism in Maycomb. Tom Robinson's only fault was being kind to a lonely and abused Mayella who couldn't return the favor instead blamed ~~to~~ Tom Robinson.

~~A~~

Later in the novel, Tom Robinson is shot dead when he escapes the prison to which Atticus points out 'maybe he was tired of explaining good so he ~~chose the~~ chose the wrong way'.

Mrs. Dubose talked ill about Atticus to Jem and Scout when they were passing calling him 'lawing niggers' to which Jem destroys her carnations.

When Atticus talks about this situation to Miss Maudie at dinner, she warns Atticus to not talk about the matter ~~in the~~ ^{in the} ~~in front~~ of Calpurnia. In Calpurnia's presence as she also belonged to a black community Tom Robinson was considered wrong in so many ways. He wasn't listened to

nor was he pitied on. Just how his kindness had turned into his own death.



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Examiner Comments

In this personal response, the candidate identifies that Tom Robinson is a main character in the novel and can be considered a 'mockingbird'. Points are made about Atticus taking Tom's case and, despite Tom's innocence, he is found guilty. There is comment about racism and how unfair society was at the time. Some points are only briefly explored and there is little contextual comment; however, the response does demonstrate a sound understanding of the character and novel, and relevant examples are provided.

Level 3, 22 marks



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Examiner Tip

As this is a closed book examination, candidates do not have to use quotations in their Prose responses. Examples can be specific references to specific episodes in the novel studied or paraphrased quotations.

This second example is a Level 4 response.

Tom Robinson is a coloured, ^{handicapped.} ~~handi-capped~~ young man, who is introduced in the later part of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He ~~has~~ worked in a cotton farm and has a small family. Tom Robinson is accused of hitting Mayella Ewell, a young white lady. He ~~is~~ was later, shot dead for trying to escape prison. ~~He~~ He can be said to be one of the mockingbirds of the novel.

The case of Tom Robinson can be said to be ~~a~~ a major plot, ^{or conflict} of the novel. His circumstance allows readers to get more glimpses to the attitude of the 'tired, old town' of Maycomb County. Moreover, it can be said that the introduction of his character affected Scout and Jem Finch's growth in the novel. It enabled them to see what they presumed a loving, close-knitted town to be evil and cruel. As they learn about the

case, they are appalled on how no one believed Tom Robinson's ^{innocence} ~~is innocent~~, even with obvious evidences brought to court by their father, Atticus Finch. ~~Not~~ However, it can be suggested that Jem was ~~not~~ affected, ^{more} ~~at~~ significantly than Scout, who was too young to understand its seriousness.

Jem, who had started puberty, where everything was ^{already} confusing and complicated, ~~seemed more~~ experiences the harshness faced by the black community. ~~The unfortu~~ This instills a sense of determination in Jem to protect the helpless. ~~In~~ ~~add~~ with that said, ^{his circumstance} ~~this~~ shows character development in which Jem ^{where he} turns from a mere naive boy to a man, an example of ^{the} Bildungsroman genre.

Tom Robinson's defender was Atticus Finch, one of the most trusted and ^{respected} ~~intelligent~~ lawyer in Maycomb. Though through Atticus's reasoning of how Tom was physically unable to create the said bruises on Mayella's face and arms, the court ruled Tom to be guilty. This is ironic as Atticus ~~de~~ declares 'in all a court, all men are equal', ^{earlier} ~~though~~ ~~many~~ This shows the strong prejudice even in an ^{established} judicial system. Miss ^{Maudie} ~~Maudie~~, Scout and Jem's neighbour states, 'only Atticus can keep a jury out for that long' as they discuss

the trial. Though, on the regular, these cases were concluded ever so quickly, it was not the case due to Atticus's strong determination in proving Tom Robinson innocent, ^{though regardless of} knowing the unfair outcome.

Tom Robinson is significant to the novel as ~~it~~ his character shows the racial prejudice faced by the coloured community in the 1930s, in the Southern states. Mayella Ewell, the said victim is of the lowest level in the social hierarchy amongst the white community. ~~They~~ ⁺ The Ewells lived near dumps; ~~and~~ were very poor; ~~and~~ * 'lived like animals'. Though they are detested by the white community, Mayella Ewell's ^{statements} ~~accusations~~ were stronger than of an innocent, black man. This ^{instills} ~~enforces~~ emphasis on how the white community still had the upperhand despite the Jim Crow laws, ^{being} introduced. It can be suggested that Tom Robinson's statement of 'I felt right sorry for her' pushed him to be declared guilty. ~~when~~ ~~The statement was unheard of during the 1930s as~~ of a black man feeling pity for a white woman was ~~the~~ unheard of in the 1930s. This may have caused the jury to detest Tom Robinson even further. This trial also refers to the Scottsboro trials that took place due to similar accusations.

To conclude, Tom Robinson is significant in

the novel as it offers a glimpse of the ongoing prejudice and cruelty faced due to the colour of a person's skin, even in a high institution like the court. Tom, who had come to help Mayella, was taken advantage of and accused wrongly, just to cover the shame of a young white lady. He reinforces the title on why it was a sin to kill a mockingbird; to kill innocence.



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Examiner Comments

This is a sustained personal response that identifies that Tom Robinson was a victim of racial prejudice, was handicapped, once worked on a cotton farm and how he is falsely accused by the Ewells. Despite Atticus taking his case, he is found guilty. Further comment is made about Jem and Scout learning about prejudice in their society and how the novel is a bildungsroman. Relevant contextual comments are made to support the points made. A thorough understanding of the novel and character are demonstrated, with some references to smaller details. Further details, examples and development would have benefited the response further.

Level 4, 29 marks



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Examiner Tip

Context must be included in Prose responses; however, there does not have to be a balance of coverage between novel and context, as responses should be literary not historical essays.

Question 3

To Kill a Mockingbird

Q3. Discuss the setting of Maycomb in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

There were only a small number of responses to this question, but they were, on the whole, successful in gaining marks in Level 3 and above. There were comments about the churches, different social hierarchy and the social mores. Most commented in the racism and how the 'tired old town' was typical of southern state small towns at the time.

The question performed well.

The following is a full mark exemplar.

In the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird', Harper Lee presents profound ideas of racism, prejudice, morality, ~~and~~ ^{justice, and education} ~~education~~ through her depiction of Maycomb. The town, ^{itself}, is a microcosm of the American Deep South in the 1930s; as such it is representative of the broader social evils of the ~~time~~ era.

~~Maycomb~~ In describing prejudice as 'Maycomb's usual disease'

~~The~~ Maycomb is a deeply racist society; this choice of setting reflects Lee's intent to convey the virulent racism ~~and~~ that was characteristic of 1930s Alabama. ~~At the time, society had deeply established hegemonic norms, not with~~ At the time, the deeply established hegemonic norms meant that Black people lived in perpetual fear of whites. Jim Crow laws meant that ~~with~~ segregation and racism were as institutionalised as

They were ubiquitous. In this context, racism's description as 'Maycomb's usual disease' is hardly surprising. Prejudice is accepted as a fact of life. This is most starkly evident through the trial of Tom Robinson, an innocent Black man who is convicted of the rape of a white woman without 'one iota of medical evidence' to prove his guilt. This mirrors the ~~the~~ Scottsboro Trials, when nine Black men were sentenced for the purported rape of white women within days, with little evidence. As such, Maycomb is representative of wider society in through its virulent racism; as Scout Finch describes the case, 'it was like watching Atticus walk into the ~~street~~ street, raise a rifle to ~~of~~ his shoulder and pull the trigger, watching all the time knowing the gun was empty'. This simile evokes Atticus' ultimate powerlessness in the face of ~~habitual~~ ingrained norms; ~~Tom Robinson~~ ~~could~~ in Maycomb, the colour of a defendant's skin mattered more than the content of his testimony. Regardless of the validity of his defence, Tom Robinson stood no chance. ~~As~~ He was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed." ~~This~~ In this society of ~~press~~ where stereotypes dictated decision,

The unsubstantiated claim of a white woman was more damning than ~~and~~ any ~~less~~ logical evidence.

Lee ~~of~~ further presents Maycomb's distorted perceptions of "morality, ^{and justice} as an integral characteristic of the town. In Maycomb, hypocrisy is ever-present. ~~The~~ Scout expresses outraged bewilderment at this, ~~saying~~ wondering how people can be "hate Hitler so much on 'turn around and be ugly about people right at home." This indicates that in Maycomb, morality is highly subjective. ~~Prejudice~~ People were quick to denounce Nazi aggressions against the Jews, but failed, or refused, to recognise their own complicity in prejudice. ~~Furthermore,~~ ~~Atticus~~ Atticus lays this bare in his closing speech, ^{denying} "the evil assumption that all negro men lie, all negro men are basically immoral beings, all negro men are not to be trusted around our women." The parallelism in this triadic statement has the powerful effect of ~~conveying~~ ^{revealing} Maycomb's tacit dictum. ~~In white people,~~ Black Maycomb's established society, black people are inherently inferior, and therefore undeserving of justice before the law. ~~While Atticus attempts to~~ Although Atticus' ~~repeated~~ ~~speech~~ ~~speech~~ blustering words face the jury into deliberation, they cannot charge the

inevitable outcome of the case. Much like the rest of the ~~American~~ Deep South, Maycomb perpetuates a series of biased assumptions that enforce a strict hierarchy, ~~set~~ with Black people firmly at the bottom. This is further exemplified by the recurrent use of "n****r" throughout the novel. ~~To use it~~ This serves to dehumanise Black people, and constantly reiterate white superiority. Furthermore, in kissing Tom Robinson, Mayella Ewell has "[broken] a rigid and time-honoured code of [Maycomb] society". This conveys that interracial relations ~~are~~ have long been viewed as acts of moral turpitude, not as a result of individual bias, but as a form of communal hegemony that is unquestioningly passed down.

Furthermore, Maycomb's prejudice extends to the ^{town's treatment of} the "mockingbird" characters of the novel.

Much like Tom Robinson, Boo Radley is ~~a~~ made a pariah because he does not conform with Maycomb's established norms. "Closed doors meant sickness and cold weather only"; in this context, Boo Radley's decision to not engage with ~~the~~ society leads to his ostracism. He is suddenly ~~he~~ transformed into a 'malevolent

phantom' because he defies Southern ideas of community. This is further evidence of Maycomb's constant bias and fear of the unknown.

Finally, Lee presents a critical portrait of education in Maycomb. Unlike Atticus, who is well-educated, the Ewells do not show "the faintest symptom of wanting an education." In this way, ignorance is presented both as ubiquitous and inextricably linked to prejudice, ~~to~~ Maycomb's "usual disease". Lee is intensely critical of formal education, however; Scout's teacher, "upon discovering that [she is] literate, [looks] upon her with more than faint distaste." This conveys that school seek only regimented control, not intellectual growth, which further contributes to Maycomb's ignorance and prejudice. This is evoked ~~off~~ ~~after~~ by the harrowing lynch mob scene. The men are poorly educated and conform to mob mentality, ~~not~~ realizing their culpability ~~are~~ only when individually appealed to by a child.

In these ways, Lee uses Maycomb as a representation of Southern hegemonic norms, including deeply

entrenched racism, prejudice, flawed ideas of morality and justice, and the links of these to a lack of education and xenophobia. In this way, she presents a ~~so~~ stirring portrait of a deeply racist society and its attributes, much of which remains relevant in our unequal societies today.



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Examiner Comments

This is a maturely expressed and confident full mark response. The candidate explores a wide range of points when discussing Maycomb, including: Maycomb being a microcosm of the American Deep South, racism, prejudice, the trial and its effect; the distorted perception of morality; the social hierarchy, the place of mockingbird characters and the 'critical portrait of education'. All points are supported with relevant evidence and finer details that demonstrate a perceptive understanding of the novel. Contextual points are included throughout the essay and support the points made.

Level 5, 40 marks



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Examiner Tip

Examples can be specific episodes or events within a novel.

Question 4

Of Mice and Men

Q4. 'George is a selfish character and does not truly care for Lennie.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

This question appears to have performed well.

Some examiners considered this to be a little more challenging than question than Q5, but some excellent responses were seen. The idea for the question came from a student's response in a past series. There were some very thoughtful responses. Engagement with the premise was mostly contested and candidates argued that George was far from selfish and cared for Lennie greatly. Various examples of George caring for Lennie, such as looking after his work card, providing food, caring about his health – telling Lennie not to drink 'scummy' water, telling him what and what not to say and do and, ultimately, shooting him at the end of the novel, were considered.

An examiner commented: 'A few of the better answers reinforced the points they made by asking rhetorically what might have happened to Lennie if George had not intervened when he grabbed the girl's skirt – probably a charge of assault or worse and, in the end, confinement in an asylum. One candidate wrote quite graphically about what might have happened to Lennie had George handled his employment card and pay for him. A lost card, illegal employment on starvation – or no wages, or fleeced of his money in a poker game or at the local cat-house. It was perhaps a little fanciful to think that George actually thought things through in quite this logical way, but it is plausible to think that he did much of what he did to avoid trouble he either could not handle or talk Lennie out of.'

The question performed as intended.

There are two exemplars for this question. The first is a Level 3 response.

George is a selfish character and does not truly care for Lennie. I don't completely agree with the statement, ~~to~~ this is because Lennie was taken care of by George throughout the whole novel, there is not even a single time George left Lennie alone even for a minute for George's own benefit. But there are times that ~~but~~ George might have been selfish to Lennie, ~~but~~ in the end it makes completely sense why he said some harsh words at times to Lennie.

~~With~~ George and Lennie have always been together the whole novel, if Lennie were to be alone, George would make the world turn upside down just to find Lennie who has been hired to someone to hunt and use him, due to his childish ~~innocence~~ innocence, this has caused so much trouble for George but still decides to stay beside Lennie.

after all the trouble Lennie has caused to ~~at~~ George, ~~and~~ yet George decides to stay with Lennie. This should be more than enough to ~~say~~ ~~to~~ disagree with the statement, because all George did ~~is~~ ~~is~~ was dedicate his life to taking care of Lennie.

George and Lennie start off the novel by ~~not~~ escaping a ^{mob} group of men, due to the curiosity of Lennie, George did not waste his time ~~has~~ blaming of Lennie for what he, Lennie has done, what great misery he has struck on George.

George does dislike and mentions the things that bother him about Lennie to Lennie. After escaping and reaching their new future, in a different city, ~~seeing~~ George and Lennie both had seen a lake, and both of them went upto the lake to get refreshed, George and Lennie drinking little by little of the water from the lake, George did not like the way how Lennie was drinking his water with passion and had a small disagreement about a childish act, which can be labelled as him, George being selfish.

"you have me and I have you to ~~take care~~ ^{look} after me" this dialogue was said by Lennie to George. George did not disagree with what Lennie said and denied that Lennie has not taken care of him, that again shows ~~that~~ George is not selfish. George sharing the American dream to Lennie in fact should be one of the most humble and non selfish thing George has done, he shared his own personal dream to Lennie, him owning a farm and owning their own animals, letting Lennie into someone else's dream and saying that we will build it together shows how humble and non selfish George is.

George's killing ^{Lennie}, in the end of the play, has two opinions, one that he was being selfish, because he couldn't handle Lennie's problems that Lennie has caused distress to George, and killed Lennie for George's own benefit.

another opinion is that George was too humble that he wanted Lennie to not suffer this cruel world which never accepted Lennie's innocence, curiosity and childish behaviour. George made Lennie's life more easier since he does not have to struggle. Showing that his is not selfish.



The candidate begins by stating that they do not completely agree with the statement, but understands how George can, at times, feel frustrated. The candidate continues by commenting that George stays with Lennie, despite frequently getting in to trouble, how George warns Lennie about not drinking the 'scummy' water, the dream and the ending of the novel when George kills Lennie. Examples are provided, such as when George and Lennie run from Weed; however, precise or smaller details are not included. Examples could have been developed further to include more information. The candidate demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of the novel and supports ideas with clearly relevant examples.

Level 3, 24 marks



Candidates should prove to the examiner their knowledge of the text – do not assume the examiner knows everything.

Our second exemplar is a Level 5 response.

In Steinbeck's novella 'Of Mice and Men', published in 1937, George and Lennie's relationship is portrayed as incredibly unique. This was especially true since the Wall Street Crash of October 24th-29th, 1929 had led to 13 million being unemployed and 1/4 of people losing their houses. Yet even in the midst of such difficulties, they both look after each other in ways akin to a brotherhood, namely to overcome widespread loneliness and have their own dream to live by. And so, I completely disagree with the notion that George is selfish and doesn't care for Lennie.

Steinbeck ^{does, indeed} ~~portray~~ ~~George~~ portray George as a character who, like the plights of the vast majority of itinerant workers at the height of the Great ^{Depression,} ~~was~~ was

vulnerable to the onslaught of isolation. But from the very start when "even in the open one stayed behind the other", Steinbeck highlights how their friendship has been tested ~~at~~^{ed} often - most recently by them hiding in an "irrigation ditch" to escape angry townsfolk after Lennie touched a girl's "red dress" and "squeaked" in fear of rape. But it ultimately survives every test, and even after George rants about how "I could live so easy", the audience perceives that their friendship and devotion is mutual. This is especially true because of their parent-child relationship due to Lennie's mental disability, thus having to stick closer together in the face of oppressive and ~~the~~ bullying people like Curley on the ranch. This leads to a resentment towards the upper class who wear "high-heeled" boots, particularly from ~~George~~ George, who proclaims "I hate that Curley bastard" and "I bet he's eatin' raw eggs and writing to the patent medicine houses". ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~

And since the Soledad ranch acts as a microcosm for wider America at the time, this highlights the unfair treatment of the working class, which often had no savings whilst the upper class owned 1/3 of America's wealth at the

time due to widespread economic inequality. And this negative view didn't just come from itinerant workers escaping the Dust Bowl like George and Lennie from Auburn, Alabama, but also those in California's ~~the~~ Salad Bowl of fertile land — including figures with natural authority like Slim. Described as the "prince of the ranch" who moved with a "majesty only achieved by master craftsmen", even those respected by the more affluent members of society were critical of the corruption of Curley as "he couldn't 'be canned' 'cause his old man's the boss" as per Candy, where Slim even called him a "dirty little rat".

But what is also true that the upper class didn't just create the loneliness that causes ~~George~~ ^{George} to always stick up for Lennie's ~~causes~~ ("set him, Lennie" being a perfect example).

* justice) Rather, the mistrust and isolation with Crooks being "bullied by Curley's wife ('I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny') and Carlson killing Candy's dog ("Carl's right, Candy — that dog ain't no good to himself") that exacerbates the dire conditions faced by the lower societal class at the time. Even Slim proclaims this with "maybe

everybody in the whole ~~the~~ goddamned world is scared of each other", highlighting how the "dog eats dog" world of 1930s America meant George had no choice but to overcome loneliness and take care of Lennie despite the "hot water" he sets himself into. And since George is heroic in ensuring that Lennie does in the hands of the one man he trusts George is heroic and fulfils his responsibility having brought Lennie to the ranch and using the paradox of 'being cruel to be kind' to ensure that, above all else, Lennie dies happily. Thus, it'd be unfair to say that George doesn't care about Lennie; he does, as demonstrated by his actions.

Moreover, Steinbeck does use the American Dream shared between the two men to demonstrate additionally why, contrary to the statements George isn't selfish and doesn't care for Lennie. Envisioned by James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book 'The Epic of America', their dream is one where they'll have a "life which is better, richer and fuller for everyone" and, as Lennie desires, to "tend the rabbits" and "live off the fatta the lan". Although

it is also true that Steinbeck takes the title of his novella to forewarn that Lennie may never have this dream come true, alongside Crooks 2/3 of the way through say "nobody never sets to heaven, and nobody sets no land", it is also undeniable that George always does his best to tell Lennie his favourite bedtime like story to keep them going and provide comfort, meaning that he too lusts after the dream. And this is unique because unlike all the other men, George and Lennie ~~dream~~ dream of owning land together. Alas, the "best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Grandly oft ~~is~~ "Asley" from Robert Burns' 1789, poem 'To a Mouse' translates that "people's hopes and dreams often do not break out the way they intend them to". But since George even tries to strike a deal with Candy to ^{try} fulfill the dream, it would be fair to say that ~~George~~ George always acts with Lennie's best intentions in mind as far as their ambitions are concerned - ~~regardless~~ ^{regardless} of the fact that he knew that "we'd never do her (the dream)!"



This second exemplar demonstrates an assured knowledge and understanding of the novel. The candidate considers George and Lennie's unique relationship and how George shows that he cares for his friend and companion and is not selfish at all. Comment is made about how George, like many others, is 'vulnerable to the onslaught of isolation', but the friendship he has with Lennie is close, even if it has 'been tested often'. Other characters are explored to exemplify how George and Lennie differ and some comment about the dream, Lennie's 'favourite bedtime like story', is explored. The candidate concludes by stating that George always acts in Lennie's best interests. Focus on the questions is sometimes lost, but it is soon recovered.

Level 5, 34 marks



Candidates should regularly refer to the question in order to maintain focus.

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

Q5. Explore the theme of isolation in *Of Mice and Men*.

This was the most popular question for this text. Examiners considered this a very successful question as, to quote one examiner, 'the theme of isolation was wide enough to cover the whole novel, yet specific enough to be typified – by characters, plot, narrative arc and authorial intent – in many different ways – social, economic, racial, sexual, political, geographical and historical'.

The main points in essays included:

- Curley – disliked, mistrusted and avoided by everyone, including his wife
- Curley's wife – robbed of her individuality by being given no name, using her sexuality to attract attention – any attention – and cheapening herself in the process, as well as epitomising the second-class citizen status of women in the 1930s
- Crooks – the stable buck exiled from the bunkhouse and in effect living with his horses, isolated also by his literacy and fondness for reading
- Candy – isolated by his age and disability and his feeling of encroaching uselessness, not to mention
- Candy's dog, being overtaken by similar defects but further isolated by possessing no awareness of what is happening [and would happen soon] to him
- Slim – like all the itinerant workers, prevented from forming any relationships outside those he could buy at the local cathouse
- Lennie – isolated by his mental disability, bewildered by a world he cannot understand, by his lack of self-awareness, particularly of his own strength
- George – isolated in a relationship with a child in a man's body who hampers his every attempt to live a normal life, with no wife or family and no hope of one – 'the loneliest guy[s] in the world'.

Most of the candidates managed to write well informed essays on isolation using three or more of the characters in the above list [Curley's wife, Crooks, Lennie and Candy were the four favourites], and to the extent that they knew their characters well, most were placed in upper level three or above. It was the better candidate who added to their account of isolated characters by referring to:

- the siting of the ranch near Soledad ["loneliness", not as many candidates said, "solitude" but the point was more or less made]
- the wilderness, miles from anywhere, in which the ranch was set
- which is described as a rural idyll, but probably only by those who don't have to scrape a living from it

- the lonely lifestyle of the itinerant worker, who had to work where he was sent, controlled by a rigid bureaucracy
- the economic desolation of the 1930s, the slump which created a dog-eat-dog atmosphere in society, characterised politically as rugged individualism but in reality, affording comfort only to those with the sharpest elbows – isolation which rigidly divided class from class.

More successful responses considered the wider contexts, such as:

- racism: the infamous Jim Crow laws which, despite Civil War and Reconstruction in the south, saw black Americans as rigidly segregated in society as Africans in apartheid South Africa
- sexism: women at best were seen as wives and mothers, expected to have no ambitions or interests outside their homes, subject to a rigid moral code [often one ignored by their husbands; many women were a great deal less fortunate and subject to various forms of abuse which the law either ignore or was powerless to affect]
- ageism: Candy would not suffer the same fate as his dog, but provision for the old and helpless was minimal, harsh and meagre, and the disabled were afforded little help other than unsystematic and patchy charity
- disability: whether mentally or physically handicapped, sufferers could expect little in the way of systematic support
- itinerant workers were dispossessed – literally as well as domestically, of friends and relationships – by their peripatetic lifestyle.

As may readily be seen from the above, the best candidates covered a wonderfully wide range, and dealt with it in commendable depth as well.

Clearly, the question performed well and was very successful.

Four exemplars are provided for this question. The first is a level 2 response.

The novel 'Of Mice and Men' was written and published in 1937 in decade following the 'Great Depression'. It was set during the 'Great Depression' and 'The Dust Bowl' (in the 1930's). After the 'Roaring 20's' there ~~was~~ ^{was a} crash in the economy, it collapsed this was called 'The Wall Street Crash' (this is what caused the 'Great Depression'). There was a series of droughts in southern States such as Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas which left the majority of farmers struggling. In addition ^{to} the 'Great Depression' which left $\frac{1}{3}$ of America's population unemployed. Steinbeck based the novel on his own experiences as a teenager that worked alongside migrant workers in the 1910's.

The theme of isolation is quite present in 'Of Mice and Men'. One of the characters that is most isolated is Curley's wife. Due ~~to~~ the fact that she is a young woman in the 1930's she is oppressed and faces a lot of discrimination. She is forced into

being away from the group because her husband is jealous and doesn't want her to talk to other men. The other men think she's 'trouble' so they boycott her and warn each other not to talk to her. George told Lennie she was 'jailbait' and told him to 'stay away' from her. Curley's wife said 'I get awful lonely' due to fact her husband isolates her and himself from the rest of the people including each other; as Curley prefers visiting free houses with other women than spending time with his wife.

Crooks also is isolated in his own room due because he is a black man in the 1930's and gets discriminated against because of his colour 'I can't play because I'm black'.



The candidate begins with a paragraph in relation to contextual background to the novel and goes on to consider Curley's wife's and Crooks' isolation. Coverage of the novel and the characters' isolation is brief, and the contextual comments far outweigh the details from the novel. The lack of coverage from the novel does hinder progress. Ideally, candidates should primarily provide examples from the novel and support these with a relevant contextual point.

Level 2, 16 marks



Context must be included in responses; however, there does not have to be a balance of coverage between novel and context as responses should be literary not historical essays.

Our second exemplar gained a mark in Level 3.

The theme of isolation and loneliness is constantly projected throughout the novel. This is evident ~~when~~ as the novel is based "A few miles of Soledad". The noun "Soledad" meaning isolation and loneliness implies that the novel is based in a really isolated place. The phrase "few miles of" implies that it is beyond the loneliness of "Soledad" as it ~~is~~ ~~is~~ implies that it is the corner of "Soledad" and usually the corners or the ends are the loneliest places emphasising the isolation at which the novella is based in.

The theme of isolation is present through the novella. ~~As~~ As "people who work at ranches like these, are the loneliest men in the world". The phrase "~~such~~ ranches like these" ~~is~~ impresses the reader that ranches based ~~is~~ in "Soledad" or people working in "Soledad" are the "loneliest" people in the world. This highlights that the environment you work in has a reflection on the people.

The fact that men are working in ranches reflects the level of isolation and loneliness the men experience as jobs as in ranches its the same thing over and over yesterday being the same as today.

The ~~theme~~ ~~of~~ Steinbeck uses language to explore the theme of isolation. This is evident when Slim illustrates "Not too many guys travel together." ~~But~~ Slim says this in shock as at the time of the great depression not too many guys trusted each other or was still friends with each other and wanted to be alone. The phrase "Not many" implies that it was rare for people to come as a ~~group~~ duo or "together". Seeing people together was a shock as the only people who are together are Curley and Curley's wife.

In conclusion the theme of isolation is ~~based~~ ^{present} in the novella "Of mice and men". It is based in "Solitary" which means lonely and is reflected onto the characters as "~~escape~~ ^{men} who work at ranches like these, are the loneliest men in the world". This shows that that the environment has reflected onto the workers on the ranch as is rare when people come together as "Not many guys travel around together" all of these show the loneliness of the

workers on the ranch and how isolated they are.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of the novel and personal engagement is evident. There are comments in relation to: the meaning of Soledad, the 'loneliest guys in the world' mantra and Slim's surprise about George and Lennie travelling together. Some contextual points are included, but some ideas are repeated; the response does not include many specific examples; however, there is sufficient here for a mark in Level 3.

Level 3, 20 marks



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Examiner Tip

A short plan is always helpful, but remind students not to spend too long on it.

This next exemplar is a Level 4 response.

In the novella "Of Mice and Men", Steinbeck uses the theme of isolation ~~the~~ to carry the story and its message. As the novella was set in 1930s America, at the time of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, the theme of isolation was a prominent one and highlights the ~~every~~ cycle of everyday life for itinerant ~~workers~~ workers who ~~are~~ were disposable and were always on the move. This is, prominently through the characters of Crooks, Candy ^{shown} and Curley's wife.

Crooks "the stable-buck nigger" is presented as one of, if not, the most isolated characters on the ranch as he is black. ~~This highlights~~ Steinbeck uses Crooks to highlight the racial segregation of the time in 1930s America. The racial segregation ~~was~~ was heavily influenced by the Jim Crow Laws and this is shown through the novel as Crooks is isolated away from the characters as he "ain't allowed in the

bunkhouse" with the other ranchworkers " ~~even~~ because (he's) black". He is often only referred to by a racial slur and nothing more, he is also given one of the lower ranked jobs on the ranch due to his race which further emphasises the isolation of races in 1930s America. ~~He does~~ He does put up with his poor treatment as he knows that he can't find a job elsewhere if he quits since, during the Great Depression, ~~the~~ employers would rather hire ~~the~~ white ~~men~~ men who were able to do work (like Slim) and ^{migrant} workers were disposable.

~~The~~ Isolation is also shown through the "old Swammer" Candy who highlights the ableism and ageism of 1930s America. Candy is ~~of~~ also given a low ranked job of "Swammer" and his main characteristic is his old age. He has also "lost his right arm" which puts him at a disadvantage and is often isolated from the ranch workers as he isn't able to do tough work. ~~Here~~ Candy emphasises the disposability of itinerant workers during the Great Depression as he says "if I ain't able to do work anymore, I'd get put on the county". This ~~is~~ demonstrating how everyone is isolated and alone as they fight for themselves - building upon Darwin's idea of 'survival of the fittest'.

Another character who ~~is isolated~~ portrays the theme of isolation clearly is "Curley's wife" who highlights the sexism of 1930s America. Although Curley's wife is in a relationship and isn't a ranch worker, she is the ~~on~~ only woman on the ranch and that in itself makes her isolated. Her dream is to go to "Hollywood" and make it big as a star to get the attention and love she wants. In 1930s, Hollywood was a common dream for women and the women on screen such as Marilyn Monroe were often presented as ~~female~~ femme fatales. This is reflected as "Curley's wife" is often called "a tart" or a "rat" by the ranchmen which shows ~~her~~ the isolation of women and their portrayal in 1930s America. ~~The irony~~ It is ironic that she wants to become famous as we, as readers, never even know her name since she is only known as "Curley's wife". She is only seen as ~~not~~ property (along with ranch workers) and can't even get her name known within this small group which shows how isolated she is along with ~~how~~ how unachievable the American Dream is.

In conclusion, the theme isolation is prevalent in "Of Mice and Men" as shown through the characters on the ranch. This highlights upon the ableism, ageism, sexism, and racism during 1930s in America which

Shows how ~~isobart~~ isolated certain characters are. Those who don't stand out are also isolated due to them being ranch workers ~~in~~ during the Great Depression where everyone was fighting for themselves.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate demonstrates a thorough understanding of the novel and clearly relevant examples have been used to support the points made. The candidate explores the isolation of Crooks, Candy and Curley's wife and explores some of these in detail. For each example some contextual comment is made; however, the reference to Marilyn Monroe is not entirely accurate to use here (as she was more 50s and 60s) and perhaps Greta Garbo or Vivien Leigh would be better examples to use for example. The response is sustained and there is personal engagement with the question.

Level 4, 28 marks



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Examiner Tip

Although film versions can be good teaching resources, students must be made aware that not all film versions are a true representation of the novel. Some film versions include details not included in the novel(s). Of course, candidates should be writing about the novel and not the film.

For this final Q5 exemplar, we have a full mark response.

The Novella of 'Of Mice and Men' explores the cruel chimera of the American dream provoking society mirrored by the hierarchy on the ranch to be ostracized against each other. ^{Steinbeck} ~~the~~ ^v portrays the game of marginalization of the barley bunkers, the seasonal drifters and the lonely woman against the nepotism obtained from being the boss's son and society's construct. Ultimately, isolation is constant throughout the novella, but appears the most through the characters of Crooks, Curley's wife and the two itinerant workers accompanied by the economic devastation of the 1930s.

Firstly, the most abundant character that the readers are swiftly introduced to and that is the epitome of isolation on the ranch - Crooks. Steinbeck portrays Crooks as the stable bunk that immediately takes place at the bottom of

hierarchy crafted on the ranch. The novella being published in 1937 proved that the Jim Crow laws were still implemented as they were first introduced in the 1890s but were overruled by the civil rights acts in 1964. The Jim Crow laws stated that African Americans were to be 'separate but equal' and were to be segregated. This was not the case as African Americans were extremely deprived educationally and socially hence justifying these laws notoriously racist in 1964. However, it seems that Crooks holds great precious wealth from the 'Roaring twenties' as he has in his room "gold spectacles" and a "tattered dictionary". The era of prosperity is reflected through the "gold" as it holds the connotations of wealth and money and intellectualism that Crooks had due to the economic boom and massive industrialization taking place in the 1920s. Consequently, this consolidates Crook's isolation as it simultaneously is a beacon of hope for him, his source of misery and the everlasting reminder of what could be. Ultimately, Steinbeck presents the theme of isolation through the deep rooted but poignant sadness of Crook's hopes and reflections of his life in the gilded age, but also through the extreme forms of racism he faces on the ranch, one of them being the Jim Crow laws.

Steinbeck also presents isolation through the journey of the two seasonal drifters - Lennie and George. George tells Lennie that "guys like [them] are the loneliest guys in the world".

This portrays the harsh reality of the lives of migrant workers and to what extent they had to go to and reach to find not even remotely ^{good} paying jobs and to cling onto the hope of one day having "a big vegetable patch", having "orchards, peaches, cots, nuts and a few berries," all highlighting the American dream of capitalistic ownership of land; something so simple but something so rare.

Steinbeck himself grew up in Salinas where agriculture was the leading industry however, when big Multinational companies took over small local farms, they would employ the cheapest labour they could find. A worker would earn \$2.50 to \$3.00 a day. This not only made it extremely difficult to find work, but to find good working conditions and a good environment. Steinbeck describes the bunkhouse in chapter two and it has "white-washed walls" and is "unpainted" and has a "small square window" with a "wooden latch" resembling a prison like environment. This juxtaposes the

environment of the bush where there is "twinning over the yellow sands" and the "pool is deep and green" implying wealth and how it refuges in nature and not the man-made world following a policy of rugged individualism provoking the theme of isolation to be so prevalent within the society in the 1930s.

Moreover, Steinbeck explores Darwin's theory of predatory nature employing it to portray isolation and how it is caused. The predatory nature of men in the 1930s was caused by the 'survival of the fittest' and how it was everyman for himself.

Steinbeck portrays this through zoomorphism when he describes Lennie "as strong as a bull" but Curley's wife that "flaps like a fish". This constant comparisons of distinct animal kingdoms within the text allow the readers to understand what extent they would go to to 'survive' in the harsh reality of the 1930s. Ultimately, Steinbeck is able to portray isolation through the social alienation of workers trying to search for decent jobs and the presence of predatory nature of man allowing the readers to depict that the 1930s was the lowest point for America socially, economically and

potentially.

Lastly, isolation is portrayed through the character of Curley's wife. She is isolated and "never gets to nobody" and dreams of her life and how she "coulda been in the pictures" and "had nice clothes". Steinbeck presents Curley's wife as resentful of her current life and how she could have been more because "this guy said [she] was a natural". Curley's wife is in a constant turmoil with herself as the isolation and loneliness she feels provokes her to sexualize herself and "throw her body forward" however when she receives the attention and the eyes she's been wanting to look at her, she doesn't like it and "biddled". Steinbeck's lexical choice of biddled portrays how uncomfortable Curley's wife just is and makes the reader understand that this is the only way she could receive attention or to make up for the lack of attention that she would have gotten if she was an actress. Contextually this is significant as the culture of celebrities and Hollywood was introduced in the 1920s. They portrayed the "femme fatales" that

demonized women and vented them as tempting seductresses. Moreover, they said unrealistic beauty standards to 'ordinary women' such as Curley's wife which stirred her inner conflict with herself and society's constructs even more. The entertainment industry, more specifically the movie industry was prospering in the 1920s and now served as a form of escapism in the 1930s. A form of escapism for Curley's wife from her dull, mundane and sinister life. Approximately 120-130 million movie tickets were sold per week in the 1920s portraying just how popular it was. This not only therefore reinforces Curley's wife hope of what could be but also portrays how she was estranged by all on the ranch and was left to sit with her inner turmoil in isolation.

~~Through~~

Through the above, Steinbeck has portrayed the theme of isolation deep-rooted within the characters provoked by the capitalistic society that has constructed the source of their misery in the 1930s. Isolation is present

within the nomad drifters in search for work, within the barley bunker and the notorious discrimination and intolerance he faces and the lonely woman in search for a better future simultaneously in conflict with her existing inner ~~to~~ commotion. However perhaps it is Crooks that is the most abundant epitome of isolation in the ~~the~~ novella portraying the segregation and isolation he endures whilst letting him reflect on his past success serving as an everlasting ~~is~~ memory of what could be.



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This is a maturely expressed and confident response. The candidate refers to the 'cruel chimera of the American Dream' and goes on to explore how characters suffer from isolation, such as Crooks, Curley's wife and the ranch hands. A range of points are made and there is detailed treatment of all examples provided. There are also comments in relation to the ranch hierarchy, racism, living conditions on the ranch, 'every man for himself' attitude, and how Crooks can be considered the loneliest character on the ranch. There are some language points that are not assessed in this part of the paper. The depth and coverage of this response places this at the top of level 5.

Level 5, 40 marks



Remember that AO2, language, form and structure, is not assessed in this section of the paper.

Question 6

The Whale Rider

Q6. Examine the relationship between Kahu and her uncle, Rawiri.

Most responses to this question were very successful and often gained marks in Levels 4 and 5, which is similar to previous series.

There were a small number of responses to this question when compared with other texts. Most were very successful and demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the novel. The majority considered how Rawiri helped Nanny to bury Kahu's birth cord, thus establishing an immediate bond with his niece. Some discussed events when Rawiri went travelling, but more successful responses included smaller details, such as Kahu looking after Rawiri's motorbike. Overall, the question performed as intended.

A full mark response is included as an exemplar for this question.

Witi Ihimaera's 1987 post-colonial novel "The Whale Rider" tells the story of a young girl named Kahu and her destiny to save her iwi (tribe) and an ancient pod of whale to whom her destiny is tied to. Set in Whangara, in Aotearoa, Kahu must face challenges from her family ^{and} the nature around her in preserving her Maori culture. Throughout the novel, themes of tradition vs. modernity, identity, nature, fear, colonialism and love appear, with close connections and ties between the members of Kahu's family. With many elements of magical realism and based on ^{the} real struggles Maoris face, Ihimaera creates a sense of unity between ~~the~~ most characters. Perhaps, One of the most vital bonds in the novel is between Kahu and the narrator, her uncle Rawiri.

Kahu and Rawiri might have one of the closest relationships in the novel. Significantly, Rawiri is seen as Kahu's guardian throughout the novel.

The event that ties Rawiri to Kahu is the burial of her birth cord. Without the support of Koro Apirana, the chief and Kahu's great grandfather, Nani Flowers' recruitment of Rawiri in burying Kahu's birth cord ^{under the "marae"} establishes him as her protector and guardian, bound by the destiny ~~to~~ put in place by their mythological ancestor Paikea, with whom Kahu shares a name, despite her being a girl in a ~~mat~~ patriarchal society common in many Polynesian cultures. Rawiri's ability to almost see the spear that would symbolise Kahu and hear the whales saying "taiki e" "let it be done", shows that he has a connection to his culture that extends from the present into the past and an ~~inst~~ understanding that would influence and nurture Kahu.

Perhaps because he is her guardian, Rawiri would often wait anxiously for Kahu to come home, ditching his dates to spend time with her and even taking her to the movies, where Kahu would cry when she sees whales being killed. Whaling was a very common practice in the past, ~~be~~ leading to the near extinction of whales, which are praised in cultures like Maori. Ihimaera was inspired to ~~right~~ write "The Whale Rider" by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and the sinking of the Greenpeace ship, both with disastrous environmental concerns. He often writes about controversial topics such as sexism in

"The Whale Rider" and the LGBTQ+ community in his roman-a-cléf "The Nights in the Garden of Spain", based on his own experiences. Kahu's reactions to the whales and imitating whale songs as a baby were all witnessed by Rawiri first, giving him an insight and responsibility over her.

Rawiri's migration to Australia and Papua New Guinea, was symbolic of the identity loss and migration of many young Maoris today, however his family took it the hardest. Kahu would often write many letters to Rawiri, telling him how she misses him. This is the perfect example of the unity ~~love~~ and "kohitanga" between them. Rawiri's effect as the narrator also tells us about the bond shared between them as she "tugs at his heart".

Kahu's role as the Whale Rider is seen firsthand by Rawiri, and this plays an effect in ^{cementing} ~~crystallising~~ their relationship. To prove that Kahu can be chief, she would dive down to retrieve the Korōi carved stone, in the process, seeking the help of dolphins. This is experienced by Rawiri, but also lets him know of her commitment to the culture. ~~For~~ Rawiri's fear for Kahu's life is seen when the ancient whales beach in Whangara in a suicidal attempt to find peace, as Kahu sacrifices herself to become the Whale Rider, Rawiri is distressed

and yelling at her to come back. The desperation of Rawiri to get his niece back shows his inability to accept her going, despite being one of the only people to know of ~~the~~ her powers, and maybe purpose.

Rawiri is also ~~be~~ seen as the person Kahu admires and trusts. Often coming to comfort Kahu after fighting with her "Paku", his love and tenderness toward her is prominent throughout. Similarly, Kahu poking fun at Rawiri, urging him to not wear his leather jacket to her performance hints at the playful and lighthearted nature of their relationship. Together, Rawiri and Kahu's relationship is the perfect mix of admiration, trust and fun. ~~The~~ His time spent away only exaggerates his role as her guardian, chosen by destiny.



The confidence and maturity of this response is clear throughout. The candidate explores the relationship between Kahu and Rawiri from the moment she is born through to the end of the novel. A range of examples have been included, such as: their close relationship, the burial of Kahu's birth cord, Rawiri sighting the spear, Rawiri being Kahu's guardian and 'ditching his dates to spend time with her', Kahu writing letters, the retrieval of the stone and more. The conclusion impressively sums-up their relationship as being 'the perfect mix of admiration, trust and fun'. Contextual points are embedded throughout the response and, even though other points could have been included, the attention to small details secures full marks.

Level 5, 40 marks



As exemplified in this response, try to refer to a range of examples from throughout the novel, not just one area.

Question 7

The Whale Rider

Q7. Discuss the importance of courage in *The Whale Rider*.

Like Q6, the majority of responses to this question were very successful.

This was the most popular question for this text. Performance was similar to previous series. Candidates engaged fully with the question and provided a range of examples, such as Kahu and Nany challenging a male-dominated society and when Kahu is courageous when riding the bull whale at the end of the novel.

The following is a Level 4 exemplar.

The novel "The Whale Rider" by Witi Ihimaera, published in 1987, follows the journey of a young girl, Kahu, who ~~tries~~ ^{attempts} to redeem the Maori values ~~and~~ after the effects of modernity and colonisation. The theme of courage is central to the storyline of the novel and the development of the characters.

In the beginning of the novel, Koro Apirana is seen storming out to sea after ^{hearing} news of ~~the~~ ~~gender~~ of his new grandchild ^(Kahu). ~~As a leader~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ Whangara tribe, Koro Apirana holds extremely biased views about the treatment and equality of the genders. The Maori ^{society} ~~attitude~~ is one that comes with embedded ~~patriarchal~~ patriarchal dominance and the rights of women are still presently overlooked. Koro Apirana's wife, Nanni Flowers, despite being a female in a misogynistic society, finds the

courage within herself to chase Koro back to shore, and express her feelings of disappointment in his actions. Courage is crucial in exploring the changing views of the Maori society and expressing evolution in the views about gender roles throughout the novel. ~~Koro~~ Koro Apirana, being the leader of the tribe expressed that he wanted "nothing to do with her" as "she has broken the male line of descent in our tribe" after hearing news of Kahu's birth. Even with hearing Koro Apirana's ~~has~~ prejudice against women, Nanni Flowers fights to express herself and her gender as equally ~~not~~ capable and important.

In the middle of the novel, Rawiri is seen leaving the ancestral land to venture to Australia. The connection between ~~the~~ Man and nature is crucial to the survival of the Whangara tribe throughout the novel as they believed their ancestor, ~~ventured~~ Paiea, ventured to their homeland, riding the back of a whale. Rawiri shows a great deal of courage when he decides to leave the sacred land of his tribe and venture to a more modern, colonised ~~area~~ country in hopes ~~of~~ of a more exciting life. Whilst he's there, he meets a friend who invites him to live in Papa New Guinea where

he experiences racism and is described as "too dark" as well as being compared to animals. Shortly after, Rawiri returns to the land of his roots to deepen his connection with nature and earn the respect of the fellow members of his tribe. Courage is what drove ~~to~~ Rawiri to experiment with the direction of his life but also binded him with his ancestral land and forced him to realise that the connection his people had with nature was sacred and vital.

~~Kahu~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~+~~

During the novel, Kahu is seen retrieving a stone from the depths of the ocean that symbolised courage, strength and the characteristics of a leader. After several failed attempts from the boys to ~~retrieve~~ retrieve the object, Kahu ~~expresses~~ ^{displays} the courageous side to her and successfully collects it. Koro Apirana had previously stated that he felt that "naming a girl child after the founder of the tribe was belittling Kahutia Te Rangī's prestige" however, it is Kahu's courage that proves to Koro Apirana that she is more than worthy of leading in a ~~to~~ predominantly male ruled society. The many rights of women that have currently been taken away ^{by male figures} are challenged by Kahu's courage and success.

Courage is important to the development of the character's throughout the novel and simultaneously deepen the connection between members of the tribe to the ancestral land. Several rights to land have been removed by colonisers presently therefore, courage is vital to the novel.



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In this response, the candidate explores courage through a range of examples. The candidate begins with some contextual comment and goes on to explore the patriarchal and misogynistic society and how this is taken to extremes by Koro. The candidate suggests that Nanny (Nani) Flowers shows courage when she chases after Koro when they learn they have a great-granddaughter. Rawiri shows courage when he decides to travel abroad and Kahu shows courage when she retrieves the stone set by Koro as a test for the boys. Some thoughtful comment is made about the way courage helps to develop the characters and deepens their connections with their Māori heritage. There is some context, although more contextual points could have been included. A thorough understanding of the novel is demonstrated in this sustained response.

Level 4, 30 marks



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Examples can be specific episodes or events within a novel. Examples do not have to be quotations, especially as this is a close book examination.

Question 8

The Joy Luck Club

Q8. Explore the relationship between An-mei Hsu and her daughter, Rose, in the novel.

As seen in previous series, this is the least popular option, but responses to this novel are often very successful, with most gaining marks in Levels 4 and 5. The knowledge and understanding of this challenging text is often impressive.

There were only a small number of responses to this question, but all were detailed and demonstrated a thorough and assured understanding of the relationship between the mother and daughter. Most included points about the loss of Bing and how Rose felt guilty about her brother's death, Rose's lack of confidence and being unable to speak up for herself and the lessons her mother tries to teach her. Contextual points were embedded and supported the points made.

The following is a Level 4 exemplar.

Joy Luck Club is a story by Amy Tan abo mainly about four women and their relationships with their daughters. Among them were An-Mei Hsu and her daughter, Rose.

An-mei was taught that her own mother was dead and she was forced by her grandmother, Popo, to forget her as she "brought great disgrace to the family". An-mei and her little brother were traumatized when Popo would tell dark stories about children who do not obey. However, when Popo fell sick her mother visited for the first time which confused little An-mei as she was told a lot of bad impressions about her. Yet when she witnessed her mother cutting off her flesh to enrich the soup as an ancient tradition, she felt a connection with her 'near stranger mother' because of her physical sacrifice. Soon after she decided to leave with her mom, her mother had died. So she never grew up with a proper mother figure which can affect her future daughter, Rose.

Growing up, An-mei wasn't blessed with a ~~mother~~ parent who could teach her life lessons she ought to know so she was forced to

learn it herself. Because of that, ~~her death~~ Rose didn't exactly turn out to be the daughter she'd expect to be. She would often neglect her duties because her brother, Bing died when he was four. Rose blamed herself for it as she was supposed to supervise him. And while the family didn't hold her accountable she still felt guilty.

This led to a one-sided unhappy marriage with her and her husband, Harold. Because of the incident with Bing she avoided all her future responsibilities/decisions to Harold. This gives us as the audience ~~that~~ of the patriarchal society women suffered through.

An-Mei ~~and Rose~~ was born with bad examples and she ~~felt~~ expressed her feelings ^{that} 'My heart felt like crickets scratching from a cage'. The quote makes us realize that she'd ~~felt~~ never felt free and was always trapped in her own thoughts which forbid her from ever feeling free/independent. Her behaviour is reflected to Rose because she was unable to gather her opinion~~s~~ to be heard.

While growing up, Rose often heard her neighbours which were mother and daughter yelling, fighting, and even heard them throwing items. She feared to have that type of relationship with her mom because it seemed like a chaotic mess. And so, she always agreed and stayed quiet with her mom.

Later on, she realizes that all that fighting was also a symbol of love. A way to express affection and a type of love language. She realized that her and her own mother rarely talked and had arguments.

This was because she was too scared to argue and fight but that is how you grow a relationship. That lesson was too late to be learned because it created troubling matters for her and Harold.

An-Mei and Rose have a relationship that was different from the rest. Reasons why is because they don't converse much when they are in trouble. An-Mei ~~also~~ found it difficult to tell Rose her history and Rose told her mother married Harold despite her mother being against it. Communication seemed to be the main reason they didn't understand one another.

Nonetheless, An-Mei still comforted and ~~advised~~ Rose when her first fight with Harold happened and even though she ~~was~~ was against ^{the marriage} ~~it~~, she advised them to stay together and fix their problem. Their bond is ~~is~~ like any ~~in~~ other mother-daughter relationship in the book. Due to some language barriers and them growing in different cultures, they ~~are~~ remain capable of loving each other and ~~are~~ understanding the generational differences.



This is a sustained response, although points could be developed further to include more details. However, a wide range of points has been made, including: An-mei's childhood, being raised by Popo and her mother cutting her own flesh; Rose not being the daughter she had hopes she would be; Rose blaming herself for Bing's death; Rose's difficult marriage to Harold and her mother giving support; the neighbours' arguments and how this compares with the lack of conversation between An-mei and Rose; the cultural barriers and generational differences. A wide range of ideas have been presented, but they are not fully explored. There is breadth, but not depth. The lack of explicit contextual comments keep this lower in the level.

Level 4, 25 marks



A separate answer space is provided for each answer required from the candidate. Please remind students to use the correct area of the answer booklet. However, should a candidate prefer to answer the questions in a different order, this is perfectly acceptable, but the correct answer space should still be used.

Question 9

The Joy Luck Club

Q9. 'I wondered why my destiny had been decided, why I should have an unhappy life ...' (Lindo Jong)

Examine the theme of destiny in *The Joy Luck Club*.

There were a small number of responses for this question in relation to destiny. Again, most were very successful and included a range of points. Some considered the Chinese zodiac and focused some discussion in Ying-ying and how her date of birth was altered at immigration. Some provided detailed examples of how Lindo Jong changed her own destiny by blowing out one end of the two-ended candle.

The following exemplar was awarded a mark at the top of Level 3.

Characters such as Lindo Jong, Ting-ying and Lena St Clair, and An-mei and Rose Hsu experience destiny in their stories in different ways.

Lindo was born in imperial or feudal China to a poor family so she was seen as property by her parents to be married to a more powerful and richer family as the feudal hierarchy made social status rigid and difficult to increase so Lindo's parents sent her to be married to Taitai's son as a way to improve her quality of life. Lindo feels that this destiny is inevitable as she did not want to dishonour her parents so she attempts to change it by using Chinese culture against Taitai such as by blowing out the candle to show that the marriage will fail ~~or~~ and making up a story of how the ancestors have warned that the marriage will fail and that Lindo was not the true wife which turns out to be successful due to their superstitious belief and respect of elders which allows Lindo to free herself of 'an unhappy life'.

Lindo later works at a Fortune cookie factory in the US where there was the belief of the American dream of reaching the top of the social ladder through hard work which greatly contrasts with the rigid Chinese system which is significant to Lindo's character of freedom and pioneering spirit who was able to take control of her destiny.

This contrasts with characters such as Ying-ying and An-mei and their daughters who have a passive nature. An-mei and Ying-ying were taught to suppress their feelings and ~~wants~~ desires such as An-mei being taught to swallow her tears as women were expected to serve men and stay quiet to not disturb them in Feudal China which contrasts with the more free and egalitarian culture of the US where many of the daughters have jobs such as Lena's architect firm as they would have been expected to get an education instead of marrying to support themselves which is seen as a more ideal destiny by the mothers such as Suyuan who insists that June finishes her college education.



The theme of destiny is explored through comments in relation to Lindo Jong, Ying-ying and Lena St. Clair and An-mei Hsu; however, there are few examples provided and the response is lacking in development. The blowing-out of the candle is one example that could have been explored in more depth. Nevertheless, the candidate demonstrates a sound understanding, evident through the use of minor details such as the reference to Tai Tai's son, and there is some contextual comment. A sound understanding is demonstrated in this personal response.

Level 3, 24 marks



Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not assessed in this paper, however, if a candidate struggles with writing, consider applying for permission to use a word processor.

Question 10

Things Fall Apart

Q10. In what ways is Ikemefuna important in the novel?

Responses to this novel are always a joy to read. There were just 25 responses to this question, but all were a delight to read. Most candidates provided detailed essays about the character and how he and Nwoye formed such a close relationship. There was exploration of how Okonkwo's downfall started after his involvement in Ikemefuna's murder and how this led to Nwoye's conversion to Christianity. Responses were thoughtful, assured and, at times, perceptive,

As seen in previous series, responses were very successful, often gaining marks in Level 5.

The following is a full mark exemplar.

Question 11 ✘

written about Nigeria in the 1890s

In the historical postcolonial novel *Things Fall Apart*, the importance of the character, Ikemefuna is shown through his influence on the protagonist, Okonkwo, and ~~the character~~ ^{Okonkwo's} eldest son, Nwoye; at the same time, Ikemefuna shows great literary importance ~~to~~ ^{to the plot in} how the novel unfolds.

~~First~~, Okonkwo, the protagonist, is also presented as a tragic hero as ~~the~~, and Ikemefuna is one of the ^{major} occurrences in his story that led to his ~~do~~ tragic end. ~~As a~~ Characterised with the tragic flaw of fear ~~in~~ resembling his ~~father~~ failure of a father, who stays in his hut during his lifetime ~~as~~ as if he is a woman, ~~and~~ being sensitive and "gentle", displaying interest in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~main~~ ^{the} state, ~~or~~ being unable to care for his family and ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~no~~ ^{no} titles in his life, hence being called "agbala", meaning "~~woman~~" ^{woman} — leads to Okonkwo's rejection of all things ~~to~~ ^{to} "feminine", including emotions. This is where Ikemefuna's effect plays out. Ikemefuna who is sensitive yet willing to act towards Okonkwo's expectations in farming yams, ~~gains~~ ^{gains} Okonkwo ~~unlike~~ ^{unlike} Okonkwo ~~gains~~ ^{gains} Okonkwo's affection. Okonkwo turns a blind eye to this

affection by ~~more~~ understanding that he is merely pleased by how Ikemefuna meets his expectations. Okonkwo begins treating Ikemefuna as his son, and as Ezeudu says, "the boy who calls you father". Of course, this affection and fondness is disturbed by the Oracle's words on the killing of Ikemefuna. Okonkwo, who is told not to participate in his killing due to the fact it is known that he is son of Ikemefuna, is the very man who kills Ikemefuna.

Because of Okonkwo's actions, the significance of Ikemefuna is reflected in Okonkwo's selfish act of murder masquerading as an act to the community in following the Oracle's will. Yet, in the act of killing a kinsfolk, he has offended Ani, the Earth Goddess, which leads to his subsequent punishment which can be ~~too~~ interpreted as the punishment by a higher power in altering his fate from being made for "great things", to his descent from a heroic image to that of a tragic hero. Without Ikemefuna, the subsequent events would not follow, hence, Ikemefuna is ~~important in the portrayal of~~ Ikemefuna's importance is shown through in the earlier parts of the ~~novel to~~ novel in the portrayal of Okonkwo's depiction as a complex character with a tragic flaw.

~~Similarly, the~~ Despite Ikemefuna's short-living stay in the novel of a few chapters among all twenty-five chapters, Ikemefuna's ~~effect on the~~ influence to the story is rather long-lasting, beginning in part one, to part three.

This long-lasting effect Ikemefuna brings into the novel

is shown through Nwoye, Okonkwo's eldest son. Okonkwo is shown to have strict and high expectations on his children; beating them if they do not meet his standard of "manliness" ^{in a patriarchal society}, forcing Ikemefuna and Nwoye to eat yams, and telling them stories of violence, war, and conquest when Nwoye clearly enjoys those of his ~~own~~ from his mother more. This is also where Ikemefuna's long-lasting influence on Nwoye begins, and ~~it is Ikemefuna's influence, could be even as~~ ^{the strength of} Ikemefuna's influence could even extend to which Nwoye defies his father to ~~come~~, and his people, to convert to Christianity.

Ikemefuna is said to ~~be~~ harbour a ~~is~~ stock of folk tales ~~that~~ Nwoye enjoys fables, ~~such~~ told by his mother, such as that of the manipulative tortoise, instead of the stories about violence and conquest Okonkwo tells him. ~~He~~ Nwoye also listens to the folk tales Ikemefuna brings from Mbaino, which results in the friendship and brotherhood between them. Ikemefuna, ~~though favoured by Okonkwo, can be~~ can be seen as a figure of escape from ~~the~~ Okonkwo's high expectations. At the same time, knowing that ~~he~~ ~~Nwoye's~~ his own father is the murderer of Ikemefuna, whom he has shown an intimate relationship with, may result in defiance against this father of Nwoye's, as both Ikemefuna and Nwoye call ~~ok~~ Okonkwo "father". Moreover, Ikemefuna, being from another village, opens up ~~to~~ Nwoye's mind in accepting things foreign to him, which prepares Nwoye to accommodate to ~~the~~ Christian beliefs. Since Christian beliefs also puts emphasis on the individuals ^{and sanctity of life}, perhaps ~~due to~~ Nwoye ~~in~~ leads to Nwoye



A separate answer space is provided for each answer required from the candidate. Please remind students to use the correct area of the answer booklet. However, should a candidate prefer to answer the questions in a different order, this is perfectly acceptable, but the correct answer space should still be used.

Question 11

Things Fall Apart

Q11. 'It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen.' (Chapter 25)

Examine the theme of shame in *Things Fall Apart*.

There were just 17 responses to this question, but it performed extremely well. Shame was mostly explored through Okonkwo's father, Unoka, and Okonkwo's shame of breaking the *Week of Peace*, being exiled and ultimately when he takes his own life. Shame was also explored through Okonkwo's shame of how the tribe did not resist colonisation enough and allowed the missionaries success in converting so many of the tribe.

The following is a Level 4 response.

"Things Fall Apart" is a novel written by Chinua Achebe during the decolonization of Africa. Within the novel, the theme of shame is presented at multiple points in different ways.

Firstly, we are presented with Okonkwo and the shame that his father brought him. Okonkwo's perception of his shameful father largely influences his actions and behaviour, increasing his fear of failure, as well as imbuing him with a hatred for everything that reminded him of his father Unoka. Throughout the novel we are reminded of his hatred for gentleness and ~~things~~ laziness because of this shame. This could be a reflection of ~~the~~ Chinua's views of people at the time who ^{were more} often were affected by shame of their parents.

Next in the story we see how as a result of this shame Okonkwo is motivated and "sweeps out of poverty".

and misfortune" to become well respected among his people. We are also presented with how Okonkwo views his son, Nwoye, as shameful, for being like his father. This shows how his viewpoint of what is shameful ends up pushing Nwoye away, eventually resulting in Nwoye leaving the clan later in the story. It further shows how Chinua ~~views~~ views shame and the excess of shame as things that drive people away from each other, and his thoughts that people at the time shouldn't bring shame to others or view them as being shameful for no reason. This is in contrast to how Chinua spent his life at the "crossroads of culture" and learned how to respect other religions, and not view them as shameful.

Later on in the novel, Okonkwo commits the murder of Ikemefuna, something he was specifically told not to partake in. He goes through with it in fear of being thought of as shameful and weak, and ends up committing this sin ~~with~~ blinded by this fear.

Next we are presented with how Okonkwo feels shame when being exiled for accidentally murdering an ~~important~~ important person in the clan.

~~This situation~~ This ~~is~~ exile pushes Okonkwo further away from ~~to~~ his clan members, reemphasising the idea that shame pushes people apart.

In the play we also see how ~~we~~ people of the clan who have been shamed upon and excluded are often the first ones to switch sides, and many of ~~these~~ such people join the christian missionaries ~~who~~ ~~simply~~ because ~~they~~ they feel pushed out of the clan anyways.

This presents the idea that shame often leaves people sad and lonely, more desperate for salvation. Nwoye is also a prime example of this, being ~~to~~ one of the first to convert as a result of ~~his~~ Okonkwo's viewpoint of Nwoye being shameful.

Finally, during the final chapters, Okonkwo ends up taking his own life after realizing nobody was ~~with~~ ~~in~~ going to help him. His perspective of shame, the fear and anger that resulted in, ends up pushing everyone away from him. Throughout the novel, he never once realized that he was too afraid and obsessed with shame and a desire for respect which ~~led~~ ~~to~~ ultimately led to his downfall.

In the end, ~~even~~ in an ironic way, his clansmen viewed Okonkwo as a shameful person for suiciding, refusing to even bury his body. ~~The~~

In conclusion, this novel shows ~~us~~ how shame is an ever present lingering part of human nature that ends up driving people apart as a result. ~~Of Chinua also shows ~~it~~ gives the reader the ideas that~~



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Examiner Comments

In this response, a wide range of examples have been included when exploring the theme of 'shame'; however, very few of these are explored in any detail or depth. The candidate explores: Okonkwo's shame of his father, Unoka; the shame of poverty driving Okonkwo to gain respect and power; Okonkwo's disappointment of his son, Nwoye; Okonkwo's fear of appearing weak, which is why he strikes the final blow in Ikemefuna's murder; the shame of exile; the clan's conversion to Christianity and, finally, Okonkwo taking his own life. All of these points are relevant and valid, but coverage of each one is brief. More contextual comment could also have been included. There is a thorough understanding of the novel and a mark in Level 4 is awarded.

Level 4, 25 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Regularly check our website for new teaching resources and latest updates.

4ET1_01R_SecB

There are no exemplars for Section B. This is the area where unidentified questions are scanned. There were 39 responses where candidates had not identified which question number they were answering.

Centres are asked to remind their students to tick the relevant box.

Paper Summary

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

When responding to the Unseen Poetry, Section A, candidates should try to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of the poem
- focus on the question
- refer to form and structure and try to suggest why this may have been used
- give examples of language and explain their effect on the reader
- comment on all areas of the poem, not just the first few lines
- use short quotations and avoid copying large areas of the poem.

When responding to Modern Prose, candidates should remember to:

- focus on the question
- avoid narrative retelling of the events in the novel
- provide a range of examples from their chosen text – remember that as this is a closed book examination, examples need not be quotations but examples of events or episodes within the novel
- prove to the examiner their knowledge of the text – do not assume the examiner knows everything
- comment on contextual points and try to relate these to the points being made
- avoid dealing with context separately. Do not write a page of historical background, but link all contextual points with an example from the novel and in relation to the question being answered
- when using film versions, which are most valuable teaching aids, remind candidates that not all scenes in a film appear in the novel that they are studying and that their responses must be based on the novel and not the film version.

As always, the responses are always a pleasure to mark and have, once again, been very enjoyable to read.

Centres should be congratulated on preparing their candidates for the examination. As always, we very much hope that you will continue to deliver this specification and that you and your students are delighted with results.

Do look at our website for more details about future examinations and opportunities.

For those candidates looking to continue their English Literature studies, the Pearson Edexcel International AS and A Level (Specification references: YET01 and XET01) are ideal options. These qualifications are becoming very popular and successful and have received positive feedback from centres. Full details are available on our website.

Again, thank you for choosing Pearson Edexcel as your International GCSE provider. We should like to wish you all every success for the future.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

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