

Marking notes

May 2015

Literature and performance

Standard level

Paper 2

6 pages

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Assessment criteria

These notes to examiners are intended only as guidelines to assist marking and as a supplement to the published external assessment criteria for written paper 2. They are not offered as an exhaustive and fixed set of responses or approaches to which all answers must rigidly adhere. Good ideas or angles not offered here should be acknowledged and rewarded as appropriate. Similarly, answers which do not include all the ideas or approaches suggested here should not be so heavily penalized as to distort appreciation of individuality.

With reference to criterion C, the better answers will contain examples that show an adequate sense of stylistic features with some awareness of their effects, using critical analysis and pertinent detail.

The best answers will show a strong sense of the stylistic and comparable features of the works, as well as the effects of these features.

Of course, some of the points listed below will appear in weaker papers, but are unlikely to be developed.

These apply to all answers below.

A maximum of **[5 marks]** may be awarded for each of the five criteria.

Criteria A and B

The danger of rewarding or penalizing the use of illustration/references/quotations twice in both these categories should be avoided.

Criterion B

“Personal response” and “independence of thought” appear as the levels of the descriptors increase. What is sought is an engaged and individual treatment of the chosen topic. Engaged and individual essays will usually make themselves clear by showing insight into the implications of the question and the quality and interest of the details cited in support.

The first person singular does not automatically constitute a personal response and conversely an impersonal academic style does not necessarily indicate a lack of personal response.

Criterion C

It is expected that every question set will provide candidates with ample opportunities to demonstrate their awareness of the demands of this criterion. However, where a question does not explicitly offer such opportunities, examiners should interpret criterion C broadly, to ensure that candidates are not unfairly disadvantaged. In such cases it would be sufficient for candidates to show, as appropriate to the question, an awareness of how elements such as plot, character, setting, structure, voice, *etc* are used by writers to meet their purposes. No matter how the question is phrased, candidates must also address related matters of style and technique.

“Awareness” and “appreciation” of literary features are the key elements under this criterion. The mere labelling, without appreciation, of literary features will not score the highest marks. On the other hand, the candidate who is attentive to literary features and deals with them in a meaningful way, but who does not consistently use the vocabulary of literary criticism, can still be awarded the higher achievement levels.

Reminder: the term “literary features” is broad and includes elements as basic as plot, character *etc*, attention to which is valid and must be rewarded as appropriate.

Criterion D

Any form of structuring to the essay will be rewarded if it is effective and appropriate. Different conventions are in operation and therefore all approaches are acceptable and will be judged on the basis of their effectiveness. Examiners should remember that structure does not exist by itself, but any structure must be measured by appropriate reference to the terms of the question and by its capacity to integrate these towards the development of an organized and coherent essay.

Reminder: in this criterion, supporting examples must be evaluated in terms of how fluently they are incorporated/integrated to shape/advance the argument, **not** in terms of their appropriateness or accuracy.

Criterion E

If you have reservations about awarding a four, you should ensure that these are well founded before awarding a three. The broadness of achievement in level three sometimes makes examiners reluctant to award four.

Judgment needs to be used when dealing with lapses in grammar, spelling and punctuation; therefore do not unduly penalize.

Mechanical accuracy is only part of this criterion. Ensure that all the other elements are considered.

Examiners should be careful to avoid being prejudiced in their application of this criterion by achievement levels in other criteria. It is possible to score highly on this criterion even if candidates have scored in the lower levels on other criteria, and vice versa.

1. An adequate to good answer will choose either one or both of the offerings of hope or pessimism and cite poems or places in poems where these attitudes are displayed. The answer will need to make specific references and then discuss some of the techniques, perhaps some basic ones like diction and imagery, that poets have used to convey the sense of either attitude.

A very good to excellent answer will play out the demands for an adequate to good answer, with a more probing and detailed analysis of both parts of poems and specific lines which reflect these attitudes. The “way” in which the poet conveys these may move on to more precise literary techniques where sound and meaning converge, and may provide more contextual support for the attitudes that are particular to certain poems.

2. An adequate to good answer will likely focus on the latter part of the question and how the use of comparison can make a poem more vivid. The candidate will cite valid examples with some analysis of what makes these work.

A very good to excellent answer may well pick up on the prompt more subtly, possibly probing the language more specifically, seeing as well how sound and meaning come together to intensify language and make comparison more powerful. At the least the candidate will fulfil the demands of an adequate to good answer while offering some greater strength in structuring and expressing the answer.

3. An adequate to good answer will grasp ambiguity as the heart of the question. The candidate will be able to cite poems in which there are elements of ambiguity she/he is able to identify and analyse. At least some slight address will be made of the prompt.

A very good to excellent answer may offer a greater range of examples where ambiguity is in play at various levels of meaning in the poems. Additionally, the candidate may more fully link the prompt about certitude to the use of ambiguity and the way readers may interpret the works.

4. An adequate to good answer is one in which the candidate will choose poems about whose context they have knowledge appropriate to the question. They will then discuss the treatment of the historical materials (which may include social, political or literary history) in their selected poems.

A very good to excellent answer may be more specific about the context and also more precise and detailed about the similarities and differences in the poets’ ways of handling the historical materials as they shape their poems.

5. An adequate to good answer will identify the matter of pace as the centre of the question and choose poems where they can speak about ways the poet moves through the material, either with considerable intensity and excitement or with a reflective or ponderous approach. This is not an easy topic and examiners will need to choose a broad view of pace, crediting solid interpretations of the term.

A very good to excellent answer may also be much more articulate about both the way pace is handled in the poems chosen as well as the effect of this aspect on the delivery of meaning and on reader response.

6. An adequate to good answer will convincingly and with sufficient focus choose a comparable subject from the work of two poets they have studied. They will address both content and style in both, and provide a personal evaluation which may move in the direction of “what I liked” – an acceptable response.

A very good to excellent answer will do all of the above, but may deliver more clarity about content and style as two aspects of the poem and may also be able to get to a more sophisticated level of evaluative response.
