

Marking notes

May 2016

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 be able to identify some form of outcome for what poems articulate. These outcomes can be emotions like empathy or astonishment or actions such as rebellion, reformation, the healing of relationships and the like. The candidate will need to be able to describe what particular elements are connected to outcomes and how the poet has constructed the words to elicit emotions or actions.

A very good to excellent answer will also identify what might “happen” as an outcome of the poem, and may go on to make more subtle distinctions as to likely effects. Such answers may be more precise in connecting stylistic choices to the potential responses of readers or undertake to question the validity of the prompt.

2. An adequate to good answer will make some judicious selection of several individual words from poems and show their role in the larger context of the poem. Some of the ways the words can be seen to function could be how they may have been the anchor for expansion into developing ideas and conveying feelings or how they drive or complete the overall effect of the poem. The different functions of abstract and concrete terms would likely provide some further interest and investigative possibilities.

A very good to excellent answer may also make some striking and unexpected choice of words and be able to argue convincingly for their roles in particular poems. Although the criteria do not demand comparison, a candidate may add further interest to the response by comparing the different ways in which single words can be made by poets to function powerfully but differently, as openings, closings and repetitive emphasis, for example.

3. An adequate to good answer will clearly convey an understanding of the nature of stanzas and be able to discuss the use of stanzas in at least two poems. The pauses and continuations that occur with stanzas, the length or unevenness will be some matters that candidates may choose to discuss. At root, candidates will be able to talk about the way particular poets have used stanzaic structures to shape meaning.

A very good to excellent answer may also note more precisely the differing effects of various kinds of stanzaic structure or the uses poets may make of stanzas to create tension, surprise and closure.

4. An adequate to good answer will consider, first, the arguable prompt about intense emotion and then proceed to examine how poets in their study have handled the intensity of emotions expressed and how that has been constructed. Such techniques can include diction, line length, repetition, punctuation, direct address and the like.

A very good to excellent answer may provide a more extended reflection on the inclusion of intense emotion in poetry and the consequences of that, going beyond but including the demands of an adequate to good answer, perhaps explored with more precision and subtlety.

5. An adequate to good answer will be able to identify moments of insight or realization, trace the way the poet has come to such understandings and consider their importance to the delivery or the success of the poems.

A very good to excellent answer may also go beyond what is demanded in a good answer to consider more precisely and effectively the stylistic techniques that allow for the representation of such insights or realizations. Such answers may go on to estimate how far the effectiveness of the poems is connected to the inclusion of such insights.

6. An adequate to good answer will identify literal or metaphorical journeys in poems, conveying the nature of the journey in each of the chosen poems, validating it as such, and exploring how the poet has delivered it.

A very good to excellent answer may also probe more deeply into the notion of a “journey” and make, particularly in the case of those journeys which are not literal, a more compelling argument for that interpretation of the subject, or probe more fully the way stylistic features have enriched the concept.
