

Marking notes

November 2016

Literature and performance

Standard level

Paper 1

9 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 1. 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 may still be very good answers.

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

Criterion A

[5 max]

The task is essentially focused on an analysis of a chosen passage from a prose text. Through this analysis the level of understanding will be evaluated by the examiner. This “understanding” of the text should include the relevance of the passage and its place in the context of the novel as a whole. A synopsis of the plot of the text may be a first step towards demonstrating understanding but “good” and “perceptive” understanding will evaluate style and theme as well as plot detail. The analysis and understanding of these elements of the text will always be conducted with a view to the performance of the chosen passage. The importance of support and validation of all ideas through reference to the text is crucial. The text is fundamental and reference to it mandatory.

Criterion B

[10 max]

The “ideas” for dramatization are generated from the text and should not be independent of it. The textual “justification” required to support the “ideas for dramatization” in Criterion B will be drawn from a thorough contextualization of the passage and a secure understanding of its relevance to whatever issues the questions raise.

The association of “good” and “excellent” with the word “practical” attests to the value of ideas that can be realized in a practical staging context. These are ideas for the stage or a staging area and temptations to propose grandiose scenarios more applicable to “blockbuster” cinema than theatre should be resisted.

The candidate may draw diagrams or make sketches if it is thought that these are necessary to communicate the “ideas for performance” but such visual additions are not mandatory.

Criterion C

[5 max]

This criterion evaluates the clarity and coherence of the language used in the essay and looks at the appropriateness of the register, style and terminology which the candidate employs.

Clearly in an exercise which demands a facility in two disciplines, namely literature and performance, the candidate will be expected to demonstrate a facility in the use of the terminology specific to each discipline. As a writer of prose the candidate will be assessed on clarity, variety, precision and concision. The clarity of a written communication depends on accuracy in grammar, spelling and sentence construction. The effectiveness of a written communication will depend on the use of vocabulary, a sense for precision or accuracy of expression and concision which argues for an economy of expression. The persuasiveness of a piece of writing will depend on choice of idiom and style.

The following elements are particularly relevant to Criteria A, B and C:

1. Adequate to good candidates will identify a passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will attempt to contextualize it in order to establish its significance, this may involve a summary of the content of the passage and why the transaction is so important to the narrative in terms of itself and the consequence(s) it is a catalyst for. Attention will be paid to the staging choices the question encourages the candidate to make in order to convey this. The area of focus is a significant action and the acting and production effects which bring out its importance and its future significance. The adequate candidate may respond to this in quite general terms but the good candidate will already be narrowing perspective around the transaction, how it is staged and the acting that registers it dramatically for an audience. There may also be references to different production effects which may provide further ways of dramatizing the action. The transaction might be material, spiritual or emotional and may involve more than two characters.

Adequate to good responses will attempt to focus on the question but may not always succeed in doing so. They are likely to introduce references from the novel and be largely descriptive in their account, tending towards a narrative register. The candidates who achieve good responses will be establishing some analytical points in the passage which support the importance and significance of the transaction. Specificity will distinguish the good from the adequate candidate. Since the question specifies an action which one assumes should have a pivotal importance, how this action is staged for an audience is the crux of the question.

Adequate to good approaches to the movement from page to stage will vary from the candidate who may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, to the candidate who will more likely to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a dramatic scene which conveys the significance of the passage. The presentation of action will be set up against a backdrop that is designed to project this to an audience in particular ways. The examiner might reasonably expect to see lighting and staging used in conjunction to enhance these representations for an audience. Staging effects like design, lighting and sound are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail again registering a difference in the quality of the response. The good candidates will be able to see how use of the stage setting either spatially or through design (or both) can be manipulated to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. Attention to the role of sound, lighting, costume will contribute to staging and this attention will vary depending on choices the candidates make on where they choose to place their emphasis and on the quality of the work. It is likely that there will be a focus on the work of the actors on stage, the adequate candidate will demonstrate this work in a general manner, the good candidate will be insightful enough to select particular features of the actor's performance and connect them to the overall purpose of the scene by dramatizing the transaction in an effective way.

Adequate to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for staging may rely on a generalized grasp of the production elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected in a good candidate. The understanding of stagecraft may well be a defining factor in responses to this question especially when candidates engage in production effects; these should be practical and feasible, not outlandish or cinematic. Particular design gambits and specific uses for production and design elements will serve as platforms for the delineation of the characters and the transaction they perform. How they combine to affect the audience will be an important factor for the good candidate who will be aware of the audience's response in a more detailed way than the adequate candidate who is likely to make reference to the audience but in a less strategic manner.

Adequate to good writing will be legible and clear. The adequate candidate will express ideas reasonably well, there may be redundancy, and a lack of precision, technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but

a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

The excellent candidate will choose a passage that is immediately apposite. There will be a powerful understanding of why the transaction is important in a wider context of the novel and how acting, staging and production effects combine to impact the audience. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of analyzing the passage in relation to the foci of the question. The essence of the work will be captured in the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging it is taken up. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology; the candidate will make staging and acting/action choices on the basis of conveying the range of meanings both explicit and implicit to the passage in the chosen performance space for an audience. Communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre and the possibilities inherent in the application of the production and design elements to the staging concept. The candidate will be aware of the dramatic context and the resonance and dramatic implications of the transaction. The chosen performance space will be a location where action and movement will combine with carefully directed presentational strategies to register meaning and significance to an audience. The aesthetics of performance will be keenly felt and the encouragement this question gives to surprise, shock or a climactic sequence may be registered. The use of lighting and sound may be enhancements to these effects as may an appreciation of the effect of make-up and costume for the actor. In the context of this question some element of masking might be registered in the costume of the actor.

The excellent candidate will demonstrate an individual “style of writing”, sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.

2. Adequate to good responses to this question will identify passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will indicate its relevance to the question by placing it into the context of the novel; this may involve a summary of the details of the passage and their further relevance to the "significant event" mentioned in the question with particular reference to the subject of the descriptive writing and what event it is foreshadowing or back-grounding. Attention will be paid to the choices the question asks the candidate to make. The candidate will select the foci, namely the staging of the passage for an audience, by identifying the intention of the author which may condition the dramatic approaches to the selected passage. The adequate candidate may not immediately respond to this but the good candidate will already be narrowing his perspective around the consequences of a choice of passage that provides the "descriptive writing" which may trigger ideas for a "suitable stage setting for an important event". The atmosphere evoked by the descriptive writing is also an important factor to bear in mind especially in how this might provide a prevailing mood or a range of moods as a setting for the staging of the event.

Adequate to good responses will attempt to focus on the question but may not always succeed in doing so. They are likely to introduce references from the text. These will be general in character and may look closely at plot and events from the novel with a tendency to narrate these; the candidates who achieve "good" responses will be establishing some staging foci that are explicitly linked to the question. There will be quotations from the passage which will support rather than illuminate the argument and are likely to address general rather than specific issues; again specificity will distinguish the good from the adequate candidate. Since the question specifies "a passage of descriptive writing", the candidate's selection of this passage will condition the effectiveness of the response. Given the emphasis placed on staging of descriptive writing there is a strong design element in the question which will need to be continually addressed. The good candidate will be efficient in selecting the focus while the adequate candidate will be less certain in this area. The atmosphere registered in the descriptive writing might be conveyed effectively through design elements like costume or stage pieces and sets and through production effects like lighting designs or soundscapes. The precision and detail brought to bear on these elements and effects will distinguish adequate from good and good from excellent candidates.

Adequate to good candidates will differ in how they demonstrate the movement between genres; the former may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, while the latter will be more liable to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed by staging. The examiner might reasonably expect to see lighting and sound being used in conjunction with staging to enhance these representations for an audience. Staging effects like design, lighting and sound are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail again registering a difference in the quality of the response between the adequate and the good candidate. The good candidate will be able to see how use of the stage space can be manipulated to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. Attention to the role of sound, lighting, costume and movement to convey dramatic intention will vary between the adequate and good candidate. The question of how much acting is used to address the question depends on the selected passage which might combine descriptions of a location or an atmosphere with evocation of character and action.

Adequate to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for the staging's may rely on a generalized grasp of the production elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected from a good candidate. The ability to distinguish design features for their effectiveness in directing the attention of the audience will probably be attainable by an adequate candidate who will be able to "identify" a lighting or sound effect in a functional manner. The good candidate will be able to fit effects into aesthetic or dramatic purposes and make them work as part of subtle or forceful communications for the audience. The exploration of set design or the positioning of a set piece or the focus on movement on stage in the exploration of character in action may all typify ways "into" the question so how this might be achieved through dramatic means will also distinguish the adequate from the good candidate. The adequate candidate will recognize the importance of the choice of performance space, the design features and/or the

acting style as aids to communication, while the good candidate will be capable of building these elements as dynamic elements working towards effective presentations of the chosen ending for an audience.

Adequate to good writing will be legible and clear with the adequate candidate being able to express ideas reasonably well, there may be redundancy, and a lack of precision, technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

Excellent responses will choose a passage that is immediately suitable as a response to the question. There will be a powerful understanding of why the descriptive passage is significant and how it conveys the atmosphere of the fictional world it is designed to evoke. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of analyzing the dynamic between the performance space, the design features and/or the character acting. The communication of meanings through different approaches to staging will capture the potential of the chosen passage. The essence of the work will capture the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging it is taken up. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question. The excellent candidate is likely to have a very clear purpose for the passage and have selected the specific kind of atmosphere to be conveyed. The way staging effects, design and/or styles of acting combine to dramatize this for an audience will be registered in concise language which reflects a dynamic approach to the task.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology, the candidate will make staging and acting/action choices on the basis of conveying the intention of the author in the chosen performance space for an audience. Therefore communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre and the possibilities inherent in the application of the production and design elements to the staging concept. The candidate will be aware of the text as a fluid entity and the performance space as a location where action and movement may combine to register meaning and intention for the audience. The aesthetics of performance will be keenly felt through the candidate examining approaches to designing the passage and the encouragement this question gives to the creation of interesting performance spaces will not be neglected. The use of lighting and sound may be enhancements to these effects as may an appreciation of the effect of make-up and costume for the actors. There may well be a connection established between the performance space, the actors and the design features of the staging. The excellent candidate will be skillful in associating the two parts of the question combining an appreciation of how an important event might be staged but also establishing the dramatic atmosphere for the audience.

The excellent candidate will demonstrate an individual “style of writing”, sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.

3. Adequate to good responses to this question will identify a passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will indicate its relevance to the question by placing it into the context of the novel; this may involve a summary of the details of the passage and their relationship to the chosen theme. Attention will be paid to the choice the question asks the candidate to make. The specificity of the treatment of the chosen theme and the detail associated to it in the passage will be partially seen by the adequate candidate while the good candidate will be more in control of this material. The good candidate, in contextualizing the passage, will outline its centrality to the chosen theme whereas this link will be more tenuously registered by the adequate candidate.

Adequate to good responses will vary on what aspects of staging, acting and design effects the candidate will focus on. This makes for an open-ended approach to these elements. The examiner may expect the candidate to designate a performance space and explore how design elements and acting skills might best convey the importance of the “major theme” which the candidate has selected. The adequate candidate will tend to identify broader effects and possibilities, while the good candidate will focus on specifics through analysis of the scene. The adequate candidate may be detained longer than necessary on reflections on plot, whereas the good candidate will be more selective in the approach taken, looking to respond more quickly to the question. There is a difference between “plot” and “major theme” which the adequate candidate may find it difficult to establish but the good candidate will not be confused by. In the case of the adequate candidate there will be quotations from the passage which will support rather than illuminate the argument and are likely to address general rather than specific thematic issues; specificity will distinguish the good from the adequate candidate.

The adequate candidate may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, while the good candidate will be more liable to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a stage language that reflects not only the chosen theme but will also go some way to capturing its dramatic significance through the design and performance choices made by the candidate. Staging effects like lighting and sound and use of space and acting are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail again registering a difference in the quality of the response from the adequate to good candidate. Design elements will be distinguished using the same criterion. The good candidates will be able to see how use of the stage space can be manipulated by the actor to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. They will also be able to move beyond simple identifications of acting style to how style may function in performance to communicate the importance of the theme for the audience. Recognition of the audience is an important part of the task.

Adequate to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for staging may rely on a generalized grasp of the production and design elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected in a good candidate. The ability to distinguish design effects for their value in demonstrating the theme for an audience will probably be attainable by an adequate candidate who will be able to “identify” a lighting or sound effect in a functional manner. The good candidate will be able to fit effects into an aesthetic or dramatic purpose and make them work as part of a subtle communication for the audience. The question is general and gives the candidates much freedom in their response to it but good and excellent candidates will be able to associate the major theme selected to other aspects of the narrative thereby establishing why it is, according to their judgment, a “major” theme. The adequate candidate may struggle to demonstrate this.

Adequate to good writing will be legible and clear with the adequate candidate being able to express ideas reasonably well. There may be redundancy, and a lack of precision, technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

Excellent responses will choose a passage that is immediately apposite. There will be a powerful understanding of why the theme is important to the narrative and the staging. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of dealing with the question. The essence of the work will capture the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging, design and acting is taken up through how these elements complement each other. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology. The candidate will make staging choices, beginning with the stage design for which there will be justification. The communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre and the possibilities inherent in the application of the performance and design elements to the staging concept used for the dramatization of the chosen theme. The candidate will be aware of the text as a fluid entity and the stage as a location where design and action will combine to register meaning for an audience. Ways of dramatizing the theme so its importance is conveyed will be clearly and practically explored.

The excellent candidate will convey ideas and proposals in an individual “style of writing”, sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.
