

Marking notes

November 2017

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 performance are generated from the text and should not be independent of it. The textual “justification” required to support the “ideas for performance” 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. Credible 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 that clearly identifies the clash of culture. Attention will be paid to the staging choices the question encourages the candidate to make in order to show the differences between the two cultures. The credible candidate may respond to the question in quite general terms but the good candidate will already be narrowing perspective around the clash, how it might be staged and how the design motifs may visually demonstrate the differences between the cultures for an audience. The way acting might register this dramatically for an audience is also likely to be important. There may also be references to different production effects that may provide further ways of dramatizing the action. The culture clash might be apparent on a number of different levels: material, spiritual or emotional.

Credible 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 that support the importance and significance of the clash of cultures. Specificity will distinguish the good from the credible candidate.

Credible 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 be more liable to explore both text and stage. Thereby showing how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a dramatic scene that 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. The good candidate 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 credible 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 clash of cultures in an effective way.

Credible 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 from 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 representation of contrasting cultural elements. How they combine or conflict 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 credible candidate who is likely to make reference to the audience, but in a less strategic manner.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear. The credible 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 clash of cultures is important in a wider context of the novel and how acting, staging, design 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 that 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 that reflects an understanding of both literature and performance. 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 possible resonance and dramatic implications of the two cultures. 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 a strong contrast will be explored on stage. 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.

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 in relation to the subject of the question, namely the clash of two cultures.

2. Credible 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 connection to the “change of atmosphere” which has impact on characters and/or events. Attention will be paid to the choices the question asks the candidate to make. There should be some detail on what the candidate understands by the term “atmosphere” and reference may well be made to changes to the tone and mood of the passage. 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 staging an event or sequence of action that has “atmosphere” as a focus. 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 for the change and how it effects the characters involved in it or affected by it.

Credible 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. Given the likelihood of the emphasis being placed on the staging of descriptive writing, there is a strong design element in the question that will need to be continually addressed. The good candidate will be efficient in selecting the focus while the credible 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. Masks may play a role in establishing intrigue and special effects might be harnessed to convey a sense of the abnormal or supernatural. The precision and detail brought to bear on these elements and effects will distinguish credible from good and good from excellent candidates.

Credible 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 credible 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 credible and good candidate. The question of how much acting is used to address the question depends on the selected passage. This might combine descriptions of a location or an atmosphere with evocation of character and action. It is likely that suspense will be used to affect the audience and rhythm, pace and timing may also be important factors brought into play by the good candidate.

Credible 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 creating effects for the audience will probably be attainable by a credible candidate who will be able to “identify” a lighting or sound effect in a functional manner. The good candidate will be able to, at least, begin 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 credible from the good candidate. The credible candidate will recognize the importance of the choice of performance space, the design features and/or the acting style as aids to communication. The good candidate will be capable of building these

elements dynamically through production ideas that succeed in conveying a strong dramatic sense of a change of atmosphere for the audience.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear with the credible 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 passage is suitable and how it conveys the changing 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 dramatizing the atmosphere for the audience. 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 that 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 that reflects a dynamic approach to the task.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology that demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of literature and performance. 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 refined 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, masks 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 dramatization will be carefully paced in order to maximize tension, shock or suspense for the audience if the chosen register calls for this.

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. Credible 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 a synopsis of the comic features inherent to the dramatic situation. Attention will be paid to the choice the question asks the candidate to make. The specificity of the comic treatment and the detail associated to it in the passage will be only be partially noted by the credible candidate. By comparison, the good candidate will be more in control of this material. The good candidate, in contextualizing the passage, will demonstrate its comic potential. This credible candidate will register this less convincingly.

Credible to good responses will vary on what aspects of staging, acting and design effects the candidate focuses 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 entertainment value of the comic situation. The credible candidate will tend to identify broader effects and possibilities, while the good candidate will focus on specifics through analysis of the scene. A focus on what constitutes humor in the comic situation that is being dramatized is important and the good candidate will convey an understanding of how this humor might be conveyed through the use of theatrical elements. A credible candidate will be less assured in doing this. A sense for the pace of the scene, for stark incongruities, for status games and quick transactions and for farcical action that varies between frenetic movement and stasis may all be used as staging ploys by the candidate with varying levels of effectiveness.

The credible 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 comic situation, 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 credible 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 entertain an audience. Strategic manipulation of the audience can be an important part of the task.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear with the credible 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 chosen situation is comic and what can be drawn from it by way of humor to entertain an 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 the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of dealing with the question. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a compositional device that 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. Approaches to staging which clearly dramatize the comic elements mentioned before will be confident and assured. The candidate will demonstrate a control of the medium and find entertaining ways to register the comic potential of the passage on stage.

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.
