

Marking notes

May 2018

Literature and performance

Standard level

Paper 2

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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 4, you should ensure that these are well founded before awarding a 3. The broadness of achievement in level three sometimes makes examiners reluctant to award 4.

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:

- identify with some precision references to time past included by the poets
- provide details of the events or memories addressed in the poems
- argue for the particular attitude to the materials that the poems deliver
- show how the poets have presented their recollections in the poems through their use of word choice, and other poetic techniques such as structure, imagery, sound effects and the like.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- choose poems that effectively compare different approaches or personal experience as well as wider concerns, or probe more deeply one approach
- distinguish with greater sophistication the varying attitudes the chosen poets evince about the past
- structure the essay in such a way that each poet's particular style is foregrounded
- provide a persuasive analysis of the literary techniques that offers not only the identification of such features but addresses their effects.

2. An adequate to good answer will:

- select poems in which the endings either offer resolutions/answers or withhold them, *i.e.*, finish in an ambiguous or inconclusive way consider
- describe the endings in relation to either or both possibilities
- explain the way the poet has built up the material of the poem to result in such endings
- explore in some detail the way the poets have delivered their materials through the use of conventional literary techniques.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- provide a more precise argument about the nature of the poems' endings
- show persuasively how the materials of the poem lead cohesively to the endings or how they manage a reversal of expectations
- provide compelling detail about techniques that affirm the positions the candidate has taken, going on to assess the effect of these features.

3. An adequate to good answer will:

- identify poems that contain notable sound effects created by meter, rhyme, anaphora, alliteration, consonance or other techniques
- describe in some detail where and how these features are operative
- connect the way sound enhances meaning or adds complexity
- show how interest or stimulation can be possibly experienced by the reader, owing to such effects.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- focus attention on a few significant sound effects, comparing their usage in poems by the different poets
- provide close and convincing analysis of how sound effects operate together to produce their effects
- consider the question of silent reading of poems: what effect can sound choices produce in this kind of reading?
- provide a more sophisticated analysis of the relation of sound to meaning.

4. An adequate to good answer will:

- select poems where the candidate's definition or classification of violence can be seen to obtain in a valid way
- explore the content of the poem as it relates to violence
- explain the role of tone in relation to content in the poems
- show how other chosen literary techniques work to convey the poet's treatment of violence.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- parse more carefully the nature and meaning of violence as it appears in the chosen poems
- show more precisely how tone carries significant weight in conveying an attitude to violence
- examine more subtle elements of the poem that contribute to complexity about matters related to violence
- provide close exploration of both well-selected literary techniques in the poems and the effects they produce.

5. An adequate to good answer will:

- write either about paradox in its strictest definition or explore 'internal contradictions' of various kinds; the question accommodates both of these approaches
- describe effectively the intellectual, emotional or verbal contradictions that appear in poems or form the basis for the poem itself
- attempt to show how the contradictions can appear in different forms in the chosen poems
- assess the way literary techniques work to present or support such paradoxes and contradictions.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- display some acuity about the nature and use of paradox or contradiction in poetry or address the prompt of Heaney
- choose highly apt examples of paradox as opposed to simpler contradictions
- identify places in poems where the poet has prepared for, led up to or developed ideas with the use of a pithy or central paradox
- show how other stylistic features of the poem work to enhance the power of paradox.

6. An adequate to good answer will:

- identify elements of the natural world that appear in the poems' particular settings
- identify both the depiction of the landscape features and the contemplations included in the poems
- discuss the connection of these natural elements to the musings of the poet
- explore the ways the poet has used the literary tools to connect natural elements to such things as memories, regrets or insights in an effective way.

A very good to excellent answer may also:

- focus judiciously on elements that may be compared or contrasted in the chosen poems
- exhibit some acuity about the shaping and delivery of both natural features and emotions to create impact
- probe more deeply some techniques that have served to convey the external and internal perceptions of the poet.