

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

<p>Paper 2010/12 Poetry and Prose</p>

Key messages

Successful responses will:

- answer the question that has been set
- focus on the key words of the question
- demonstrate a detailed knowledge of set texts
- substantiate points with pertinent textual reference
- comment on the detail of quotations
- explore how writers achieve their effects through language, structure and form.

In order to do well, candidates should be discouraged from:

- writing about the topic without addressing the key words of the question
- writing excessively lengthy introductions
- writing lengthy conclusions that repeat points already made
- including extraneous background information that does not illuminate either text or task
- making unsupported assertions
- logging literary devices without explaining their effects
- using inert quotation.

General comments

Thank you to all teachers and candidates who have worked hard for this examination; to the teachers who have helped candidates to be able to communicate their knowledge, understanding and response effectively and to the candidates who have studied their texts conscientiously and derived enjoyment from them.

In this examination session, there was a wide range of quality in the scripts submitted. Better responses demonstrated thorough knowledge, understanding of the sub-text and authors' intentions, and an ability to write fluently and convincingly in response to the questions. Weaker responses generally showed some evidence that the texts had been read and a general understanding of what they were about but were unable to develop ideas or to support them. In such answers to passage-based questions, responses needed to make more direct references to the extracts which are printed for the purpose of detailed examination. Middle Band answers could generally have been improved by using more of the material provided in the extracts and by concentrating on the effects created by the writers' word choices. Often answers started with assertions that a particular figure of speech, such as personification, was responsible for making a passage or poem moving or vivid or striking, but without going on to explore the reasons why. A large number of responses were seen which devoted a paragraph each to several poetic devices such as personification, similes, assonance and alliterations, giving examples, but avoiding discussion of the meaning of the poem or the mood that is created. Generic comments about the length of sentences, paragraphs and stanzas, without further discussion of their effects, added very little to precise analysis of texts.

The passage-based questions were more popular generally in this session. In some instances, candidates who know a text well, provided that they can organise their thoughts and keep them relevant to the question, would have perhaps benefitted from attempting the essay question. The same amount of quotation is not expected as for a passage-based question since this is a closed book examination, though detailed supporting reference is important. This can often be indicated by the citing of a small but relevant detail which indicates thorough knowledge.

There were very few rubric infringements, although in many cases candidates did not allow enough time to finish the second answer. There were some signs of planning, but responses would have benefitted in general from more time spent on planning and organising ideas and arguments before beginning.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Poetry

Responses were generally ineffective when making comments about punctuation, line length and line structure without any convincing or developed link to meaning. Examples include: '... uses commas to strikingly portray thoughts about love', '... the rhyme pattern is catchy and shows love has a sense of rhythm', '... the poet uses commas and full stops throughout the poem which is striking', or listing the rhyme pattern. Such comments can be effective if developed beyond simple observation or generalisation; better responses linked such points to the thrust of the question and to the wider meaning of the poem. Many in this series incorrectly called lines 'verses'.

Quotations were often well utilised, although copying out of large tracts of a poem does not demonstrate understanding or meet the requirements of the band descriptors.

There were many answers which showed real empathy with the poets' feelings and situations, leading to some original personal interpretations. Weaker responses often began by answering the question with sentences such as 'The poet makes his feelings clear through the use of adverbs' or adjectives or punctuation, etc. This approach skews a response when meaning is forced into an artificial construct. Successful responses will engage with the key words in the question rather than technique spotting without further exploration.

Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: from Part 5

Question 1: *Tears, Idle Tears*

Most candidates were able to articulate some meaningful ideas about how and why sadness is conveyed. There was some general confusion about the 'first beam glittering on a sail' and the 'pipe of half-awakened birds'. A number of responses spent considerable time mentioning techniques rather than words or language to explain their view. As a result, some answers did not analyse the language adequately to identify clearly the 'deep feelings of sadness'. Weaker responses, for example, might have stated that he finds the days 'fresh' or 'strange' without explaining what these words might convey about his sadness, or that 'divine despair' shows he is sad deep down without considering the use of 'divine'. Better responses discussed how the poet's language conveyed sadness, linking the ideas in the poem to the language used to convey them. As was the case with many questions in this section, quotations tended to be overlong; concise and relevant quotation followed by consideration of particular words is required to demonstrate understanding.

Question 2: *Attack*

This question produced generally strong responses which showed understanding and sensitivity. They were often able to focus clearly on the feelings of hopelessness within the poem. Language was considered in detail and depth, and candidates really seemed to engage with the poet's experience. As a shorter poem, most found time to consider all of the images in at least some detail. Many found it difficult to write effectively about Sassoon's use of militaristic vocabulary and the use of the final *cri de coeur*.

Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 1

Question 3: *Stabat Mater*

Some candidates commented effectively on the meaning and origin of the title and, when fully explored, it helped to inform their interpretations of the poem. Many responses failed to grasp the complexity of the relationship between the parents. A significant number of candidates felt that the phrase 'from his loving wife' was evidence of a poor relationship or that it showed fear and that she was 'under his thumb', but without explaining their interpretation. Some made a lot of the fact that the narrator calls his parents 'Mother' and 'Father' rather than 'mom' (sic) or 'dad', to show lack of a close relationship, without considering whether this might not be appropriate in the poem. Many largely ignored the need to discuss 'moving' or referenced it loosely in regards to any impressions, regardless of whether they were moving or not.

Question 4: *Lovers' Infiniteness*

This was a popular choice and there was a wide range of responses; some showing little understanding and others making solid attempts at analysis in response to the question, with varying degrees of success. Many of those who did look at language discussed 'If yet', 'Or' and 'Yet' as showing his confusion and evolving

thoughts – this was an effective point but was often lengthy and excluded consideration of other language points. Few, for example, tackled the ‘ground, thy heart’ metaphor; those who did were often more successful in ranging across the poem.

GILLIAN CLARKE: from *Collected Poems*

Few responses were seen to this set text, making extended comment inappropriate. Those who had studied it showed real engagement with the poems and generally wrote about them effectively.

Question 5: *Neighbours*

The candidates who attempted this poem made good attempts to focus on language. Some were aware of the effects of the Chernobyl accident, though often at the expense of explaining ‘the democracy of the virus’. Contextual information should be used judiciously to support discussion of texts where appropriate; lengthy contextual explanation in itself does not meet the assessment criteria. In weaker responses, the impact of the experience in the poem was often underplayed and the signs of optimism ignored.

Question 6: *Still Life*

Candidates endeavoured to focus on ‘movingly’ and mentioned it frequently but many found it difficult to write about the emotion/feelings within a friendship with no explanation of the concept of ‘polishing’ a friendship, the central metaphor of the poem. Stronger responses focused well on the question and explored the imagery of the sea, the still life and the tree in some detail.

Section B: Prose

Generally candidates responded well to the texts and questions. Interesting personal responses to character and theme were evident, though there were some cases where appropriate knowledge was not used to answer the question. Most candidates moved away from a purely narrative approach, though there was still extensive recounting of narrative on some texts. Some used the extract to answer an essay question, even when instructed not to; this approach is self-limiting as it shows a lack of knowledge and confident understanding of the text and question. The new texts seem to be appreciated and were, in most cases, effectively explored. Sound efforts were made to comment on language and structure in both essay and passage-based questions, although there is room for further development here.

CHINUA ACHEBE: *No Longer at Ease*

Question 7

This question was generally answered well. Candidates showed secure knowledge of the context of the conversation but the temptation was often to write about this rather than the dynamic and drama of the exchange itself. Successful responses focused on features such as Obi’s hesitation, the comparison of his father’s laughter with that of a masked ancestral spirit, and both characters’ tactics in trying to direct the course of the conversation. Almost all mentioned the awful laugh, but few made much of this in their explanation, missing an opportunity to discuss language. Some misread the ‘miserable worm’ sentence, saying it was awful that Isaac should call his son such a thing to his face. A regular misunderstanding was over the Christianity versus traditional culture argument, which is at the heart of the latter part of the extract. A significant number of candidates thought that Isaac did not want Obi to marry Clara because this is not what Christians do, instead of understanding that Obi’s reference to the Bible is saying the opposite. This made it difficult for candidates to make sense of the last part of the extract, with many resorting to repeating long quotations without comment or simply ignoring the end of the passage.

Question 8

A significant number attempted this question. Nearly all showed sound knowledge and understanding of the text. Most were very scathing about Christopher, his womanising and perceived lack of support for Obi; better responses produced a more balanced view and were able to see his attractive qualities. Weaker answers were often characterised by a lack of detail or quotation from the text, though some candidates did use pertinent quotations and references to inform and support their ideas.

JANE AUSTEN: *Mansfield Park*

Few responses were seen to this set text, making extended comment inappropriate.

Question 9

Most responses were able to identify and support their view of the type of character that Mary Crawford is. Some, however, did not mention the letter that is central to the task. Focus on the task and close consideration of the passage were key features of strong answers here.

Question 10

Of the limited number of responses seen to this question, few were able to pinpoint specific characteristics they could use to write about Fanny's parents and textual detail was limited. Stronger responses tended to consider the contrasts between the Prices and Bertrams in some detail.

WILLA CATHER: *My Antonia*

There were insufficient responses to these questions to make meaningful comment.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Question 13

The 'powerful moment' element of the task was seized upon in some responses, with candidates able to choose effective quotations to support their comments. Candidates found the passage accessible enough to discern what was self-righteous about Godfrey but less so when considering the effect on Silas and Eppie. All understood the context, but many spent too long narrating the circumstances leading up to this climax and, in particular, why Godfrey does not deserve Eppie. Though all understood that it was a powerful moment, weaker answers tended to describe or narrate the extract rather than look at language and technique, which were characteristic of better responses.

Question 14

Few responses were seen to this question. Most fell into narrative in places in order to respond to the task, appearing to find it difficult to mention specific areas of the novel in which we see Dolly Winthrop as likable. All understood and articulated that she was 'kind', 'helpful' and therefore very likeable, and all came up with suitable examples but few developed these sufficiently or used quotation to support these points.

MICHAEL FRAYN: *Spies*

Question 15

Although candidates understood that Stephen was acting and talking childishly, frequently they could not articulate why or to what effect. There were lots of comments such as 'It is childish when Stephen says his father is a German spy/that grown-ups can be sisters', without then adding an explanation or exploring how Frayn conveys this childishness. Successful answers identified his vivid imagination and his short attention span, with the most successful focusing on the language and syntax of his thoughts in revealing his childishness.

Question 16

Responses to this question often demonstrated detailed knowledge of the text and most were able to produce a balanced response supported with relevant references and apt quotations. The best answers were able to show how the reader's view is conditioned by Frayn's portrayal of Keith through Stephen's consciousness.

KATE GRENVILLE: *The Secret River*

Question 17

Responses often engaged with the writing in the extract and most understood how to tackle the task. They were able to choose valid quotations to support the tension, noise and action central to the passage. However, there was often not enough attention given to the effects of the words used by Grenville to increase the intensity of the situation as the passage progressed.

Question 18

Of the limited number of responses seen to this question, some were able to show in detail how Will lost as much as he gained in his victory over the native Australians. Others needed to range more widely across the text to demonstrate knowledge. Weaker responses would have benefitted from greater inclusion of textual detail to support ideas.

R K NARAYAN: *The English Teacher*

Question 19

This question had a wide range of responses. Better responses used all of the extract and were able to answer the question with suitable examples and some understanding of how the relationship had altered since Susila's death. A significant number spent too long narrating the story up to this point, without a focus on the passage or consideration of the language. Careful reading was required to avoid, for example, thinking that Susila's words from the past are spoken by Krishna. Analysis of the relationship needed to be expressed precisely; weaker responses made use of simplistic terms such as 'good', 'nice' or 'cute', often without supportive evidence or analysis of language.

Question 20

This question was mainly well-answered. Candidates showed sound knowledge of the text and the two systems with a good range of examples and quotations.

From *Stories of Ourselves*

Question 21

This passage-based question provided a wealth of material from which to choose, but very few detailed responses were seen. Responses generally ignored the ending of the question 'to Da-duh' and wrote about why it was a striking introduction; weaker answers hardly mentioned her at all. Successful responses will focus clearly and precisely on the terms of the question and respond to what is being asked. Many candidates here focused instead on 'themes', such as 'urbanisation versus traditional or rural', and these invariably had little to offer as a response to the question. Those that did focus on 'Da-duh' made straightforward comments, such as 'she is shown to be very old' or not a 'nice' person, without looking in detail at the language or what phrases such as 'unrelenting struggle', 'painfully erect' and 'like a lizard's tongue' might suggest about her character. Many fell into narration, sometimes to the end of the story; focus on the ideas and language in the passage is needed to succeed in passage-based responses.

Question 22

Few responses were seen to this question. Those seen showed secure knowledge of the story, though they often needed more focus on the words 'vivid impression' and on the complexity of the narrative viewpoint in order to achieve highly.

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In many cases candidates did not allow enough time to finish the second answer. There were some signs of planning, but responses would have benefitted in general from more time spent on planning and organising ideas and arguments before beginning.

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Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: from Part 5

Question 1: *Friend*

The strongest responses explored the ways in which Tuwhare vividly conveys the speaker's memories of the landscape, the building of the fort and the tree-climbing. These responses showed a keen appreciation of the sense that the past was a much better time than the present, and they explored the use of direct address, the language suggesting finality and the speaker's need for reassurance from his friend. Less effective responses tended to describe the content without reference to the question's key word 'vividly', sometimes making generic comments about the poem's structure that could be true of most poems.

Question 2: *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

The most successful responses addressed the question's key focus on how Owen 'powerfully communicate[s] feelings about war'. Less successful responses tended to work through the poem, explaining its content and occasionally some of the techniques Owen uses to convey it. There was often competent analysis of the description of the noises (the personification of the guns and rifles) and less often analysis of the description of the mourners in the sestet. Stronger responses tailored their analysis to the specific demands of the question. In less effective responses, language features were listed rather than explored, and general effects of the rhyme scheme were asserted but with little regard to the question. In a few responses, Owen's supposed feelings were described but without convincing textual support from the poem.

Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 1

Question 3: *Father Returning Home*

There was, in successful responses, a sensitive and perceptive appreciation of the father's tiredness and the sense of estrangement from both his family and wider modern-day life. These responses explored the use of similes, the references to the father's eyes, and the significance of the poem's title and the father's dream at the end of the poem. Most responses captured the monotony and bleakness of his life: the silent commute, the mud-stained raincoat, the weak tea and stale chapatti. Some candidates offered speculative readings, assuming that the father was a labourer because of his soggy and muddy clothes, and that he worked long hours purely for the love of his family and that the books in his bag were to help him secure better employment but these interpretations were rarely substantiated by close reference to the text. Interpretation and personal response are encouraged if supported by apt textual detail.

Question 4: *Last Sonnet*

This was a less popular choice than **Question 3**. Most responses were able to comment on the description of the bright star and what it does and the cosmic nature of what the bright star watches over. Only the strongest responses were able to engage with powerful effects of Keats's use of simile and religious imagery, and the contrast between permanence and transience. The least successful responses described the content of the poem in the order it appears without reference to the question and occasionally with insufficient regard to the actual detail of the poem.

GILLIAN CLARKE: from *Collected Poems*

Question 5: *Musician*

There were only a few responses to this poetry text. The strongest responses explored the striking ways in which Clarke captures her son's obsessive playing, cut off from the world against the almost surreal backdrop of the falling snow in that 'bitterest winter'. Some responses strayed from the focus on the musician to explore at length the presentation of the mother.

Question 6: *Journey*

There were few responses to this question, which tended to be quite specific in their interpretation, where the darkness refers to a crisis in the speaker's relationship with the driver. This interpretation was most often asserted, without the candidate supplying references to areas of the poem that might support such a reading.

Section B: Prose

Generally candidates responded positively to the texts and questions. Interesting personal responses to character and theme were evident, but there are still some cases where knowledge is not used to answer the question. Responses demonstrated a welcome move away from narrative retelling, but there were still instances of narrative being the focus rather than sound analysis. Some candidates used the extract to answer an essay question, even when instructed not to. Doing this will be self-limiting as it does not demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the set texts. There were some sound efforts to comment on language and structure in both essay and extract questions, although there is still room for further development here.

CHINUA ACHEBE: *No Longer at Ease*

Question 7

Stronger responses explored the extent to which Obi's alienation is conveyed by his inability to communicate with honesty about his feelings to his father and Obi's sense of powerlessness to change their circumstances. The most successful responses analysed closely Achebe's use of narrative viewpoint. Most responses were able to comment on aspects of the description of the physical condition of Obi's parents and the shock Obi feels at seeing their physical deterioration. There was generally an understanding of the sense of Obi looking at this once familiar world with the eyes of an outsider. Some answers, however, tracked the content of the extract very closely without selecting pertinent details of Achebe's writing that might address the question's key words 'so moving'.

Question 8

There were insufficient responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

JANE AUSTEN: *Mansfield Park*

Question 9

The few responses to this text were answers to **Question 9**. Most candidates readily recognised Mrs Norris's selfishness, duplicity and self-pity, qualities revealed in abundance in the extract. Stronger responses explored aspects of the dialogue by which means her character is revealed in the extract, and were able to address how Austen 'entertainingly reveals' her character at this particular moment. Attention was paid to the length of Mrs Norris's utterances compared with those of Lady Bertram and her tendency to use clichéd

expressions ('dear departed', 'sole desire'). All responses noted some key character traits, though weaker answers did so in a descriptive way without linking their points to the question.

Question 10

There were insufficient responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

WILLA CATHER: *My Antonia*

There were insufficient responses to **Questions 11** and **12** to make meaningful comment.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Question 13

The 'moving' nature of the extract was generally understood, with most commenting on the heart-warming change of Silas's status in the village and noting the significance of the moment in marking a step towards Silas learning to trust again. The strongest responses explored the language used to describe the baby, Dolly's homespun philosophy given in her distinctive dialect, and occasionally the impact of the authorial voice. Most responses were aware of the context: the way Eppie found her way to Silas's cottage and his intention to keep her. Less successful responses showed at least some basic knowledge of plot and character but struggled to select material from the extract with which to address the question directly or convincingly.

Question 14

There were insufficient responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

MICHAEL FRAYN: *Spies*

Question 15

Most candidates were able to explain why Mr Hayward was so disturbing at this moment in the novel and were aware of the significance of the 'thermos' in the wider plot. There was a general dislike of Keith's father, with most able to comment on the simile 'like an ogre in his cave', the thin smile with its veneer of humour, the undertone of menace when addressing Keith as 'old bean' and the imminence of the beating. Stronger responses explored precise ways in which Frayn's writing reveals Stephen's fear, creates sympathy for Keith and portrays the malign nature of the father.

Question 16

There were few responses to this question. Common choices of moments which Frayn makes 'particularly entertaining' were the moment Stephen and Keith are going through Keith's mother's diary and interactions between Stephen and Barbara Berrill. Answers tended to narrate and describe the chosen moments without explicitly tailoring their material to the key words of the question.

KATE GRENVILLE: *The Secret River*

Question 17

Most responses to this question were able to comment on what is revealed of the characters of Lucas and Yates, and the cleverness of Mr Knapp. Only the strongest responses explored how Grenville powerfully conveys the inherent drama and tension of this criminal trial. The torment of Yates, perhaps because coming later in the extract, was often overlooked or dealt with in a perfunctory manner: few pointed out that he is a picture of misery on the witness stand, caught between the potential wrath of his employer and his reluctance to condemn a man to death. Some candidates reflected effectively on Will's realisation that his very life is dependent upon the outcome of a verbal battle between Knapp and Lucas.

Question 18

There were insufficient responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

R K NARAYAN: *The English Teacher*

Question 19

Most candidates noted the significance of the fact that Krishna's life is about to change forever; he is beginning to realise how trivial and petty his time at college has been in comparison with the promise of a new life with his wife and child. Many candidates pointed out his new seriousness which contrasts with the general flippancy of his interactions with his colleagues. The dry and arcane debate he is asked to arbitrate on makes him even more purposeful in seeking a home for his family. Stronger responses explored the language used in Krishna's comments about his room and the effect of the first person narrative voice through which his thoughts and feelings are conveyed.

Question 20

There were few responses to this question. They tended to offer a character sketch rather than a considered argument in response to the question set. Mention was made of Susila's pride in her housekeeping, her conversations about literature and poetry, and her forbearance when ill. Few responses, however, explored with confidence her posthumous role as a spirit communicating with Krishna. Generally, answers were narrative in thrust, with assertions added about Susila's likeability rather than a detailed evaluation of Narayan's presentation of the character.

From *Stories of Ourselves*

Question 21

Most candidates were able to find much to write about in response to this question. Most understood the concept of prison as it relates to Tommy's situation and also his purpose in trying to intervene in the girl's life. Less successful, however, was the attempt by many to convey the dramatic nature of the final incidents in the shop. In particular, many overlooked the significance of the girl sticking her tongue out at him and how this is likely to have impacted upon Tommy.

Question 22

A few responses to this question were seen, showing some basic knowledge of the story but insufficient consideration of the horror of war and the extremes to which it makes people go.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/22
Drama 22

Key messages

- Strong candidates showed detailed knowledge of their set texts and could make a confident response to the language.
- The most successful responses considered the key words in the question and avoided narrative.
- Convincing answers revealed implicit knowledge of the context in passage-based questions and the ability, in discursive answers, to select relevant material, using direct quotation in support.
- Well-prepared candidates considered the text in detail in answer to passage-based questions, commented on the author's effects and used quotations from the passage in support.
- Successful answers avoided redundant introductions which gave excessive historical/cultural/contextual information at the expense of a sharp focus on the question.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage, watched by an audience, enlivened the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates this session showed a lively engagement with their set texts.

Successful answers showed detailed knowledge supported by an ability to place a passage and to use direct textual evidence in the form of quotation. Such responses went beyond an ability to merely decode meaning to comment on both dramatic and literary effects. The key elements of the question were answered directly, without the use of redundant introductions, giving Examiners information of which they are aware, such as the names of the author and the characters. Strong passage-based responses kept a sharp focus on the extract itself and, when links were made to the wider text, these were fully focused on the question. An implicit knowledge of the context of the scene and an ability to analyse the language and dramatic effects of the passage were the characteristics of high level responses. Effective responses to discursive questions referred to specific moments in the play to support their well-constructed arguments, with some direct quotation from the text.

Some candidates could have performed more successfully if, in passage-based responses, they had focused on the passage itself and not on what happened before it and after it or only commenting on the themes that they thought emerged in the passage. There was some evidence, in the Shakespeare texts in particular, that candidates did not understand what was being said in sufficient depth to answer the question. There were answers which understood what was happening but described this instead of writing an analysis of it based on the question asked.

The ability to read closely and critically analyse linguistic and dramatic effects remains the hallmark of the strongest responses.

There was evidence this session of some candidates not knowing the plot of their set text in sufficient detail and some confused the names of the characters.

Strong candidates showed awareness of authorial intention, particularly in writing about *An Inspector Calls*. Responses to *The Merchant of Venice* were hampered regularly by lengthy comment on how an Elizabethan audience would respond compared to a modern audience, when it is the candidate's own personal response that is required.

There were fewer rubric infringements on Paper 22 this session, but these still occur and candidates need to be made aware that they cannot answer two passage-based or two discursive questions. There were also instances of questions being labelled incorrectly. The importance of labelling the responses as identified in the paper cannot be underestimated.

Candidates should be seriously discouraged from using line references in lieu of quotations. Examiners cannot discern which words and phrases the candidate thinks are relevant and this approach does not allow for close consideration of the language.

A significant number of candidates are using material from the printed passage in order to answer the discursive question. This limits the range of material they consider and usually leads to low achievement.

Few candidates ran out of time and there was evidence of brief, useful planning.

Comments on specific questions

J LAWRENCE AND R E LEE: *Inherit the Wind*

Question 1

The strongest responses to this question knew the context of the passage and considered both the drama and the significance of the moment. They considered Drummond's dramatic change of tactic, the responses of the spectators and reactions of Davenport and Brady. The significance to the play of the expert witnesses being dismissed, Brady never having read Darwin and his willingness to take the stand, with disastrous consequences for him, were fully understood. Less competent responses wrote about the general issues in the play rather than relating these closely to the passage and made limited comment on the dramatic effects of the scene.

Question 2

There were many well-developed responses to Bert Cates, supported by specific reference to the text. Most candidates chose to admire his kindness in preventing Rachel from being cross-examined, his anger at the treatment of the Stebbins family, his integrity in sticking to his beliefs, persistence when the town is against him and independence of mind. These points were supported by quotation or close textual reference. Less effective responses made rather bland and repetitive comments about his courage and humility, as if there is no development in his character during the play, and made erroneous and unsupported assertions about him never doubting and keeping quiet throughout the trial. Some candidates thought he won the case.

ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 3

This is a key moment in the play and strong candidates recognised the powerful imagery and foreshadowing, the symbolic use of the phone booth and the nature of the conflict between Eddie and Alfieri. Responses were less effective when candidates explained the context in great detail, without concentrating sufficiently on the passage itself, or when they speculated at length about Alfieri's role as narrator and the role of the law, forgetting to answer the question itself in the process.

Question 4

There were many generalised answers to this question which made assertions about the caring nature of their relationship and the women's support for one another, with only limited textual support. Effective answers understood that Beatrice may be encouraging Catherine's independence and marriage out of self-interest and commented on the crucial scene between them where Beatrice reprimands Catherine for inadvertently encouraging Eddie's attraction to her. Few answers looked at the relationship from Catherine's point-of-view and some focused almost exclusively on the women's relationships with Eddie. The word 'memorable' in the question aimed to steer candidates towards the more dramatic moments between them and some took this up by considering the moment when Beatrice is torn between loyalty to Eddie and attending Catherine's wedding.

J B PRIESTLEY: *An Inspector Calls*

Question 5

It was important here for candidates to know what had happened immediately before the passage at the end of Act One, but this was often not mentioned; many candidates either did not know, or had forgotten, that Sheila has already worked out that Gerald knew Eva/Daisy and that was why he was absent the previous summer. Because this was missing from some responses, it resulted in the main argument, that Sheila and the audience had no idea what Gerald was about to say, being flawed. There were a number of candidates who successfully explored the dramatic impact of the Inspector's standing at the door in silence, but few were able to comment effectively on Sheila's words 'You see? What did I tell you?' instead focusing on her 'hysterical laugh' and often misunderstanding it.

Most candidates recognised the conflict between the Gerald and Sheila, the tension created by the fact that the play had started off as a happy occasion celebrating their engagement which was now ironically coming to an end. Less successful answers relied on a generalised narrative overview of the passage, without sufficient focus on the tension and how it is created.

Question 6

The strongest answers focused on the key words in the question: 'memorable...victim', whereas less successful responses retold Eva's story and did not pay sufficient attention to the question. Many answers would have been improved by addressing the text as drama and not referring to it and writing about it as a novel. The focus for 'memorably' often became the political / social issues rather than any dramatic impact on stage, though there were also convincing responses to her 'symbolic' significance as an oppressed woman and member of the working class. The strongest answers were able to respond successfully to the impact of the Inspector's emotive words when describing Eva's death or to its impact on the plot, rather than stating that everyone was involved with her and this drove the plot in general terms.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V*

Question 7

This question was answered effectively when candidates understood that Cambridge, Scroop and Grey are traitors who have conspired with the French against King Henry. Strong responses could then select the irony and ambiguity in Henry's speeches, comment on the tension of the test he sets up for the three men and comment on their 'false flattery'. Some candidates explained the situation clearly but without any focus on the question. Others seemed unaware of the plot of the play and therefore found little to say of any relevance.

Question 8

Most candidates wisely chose Henry's Harfleur speech, the Agincourt speech or the night before Agincourt. Few, however, looked at Williams's dramatic speech about battle or the Chorus's and the Constable of France's description of the state of the English troops and what the French would do to them in battle.

Many chose the tennis balls scene, which does have powerful descriptions of war, and was a good choice if candidates were able to make specific reference to the text. Less successful responses seemed to interpret the question as meaning 'preparation for war' and wrote about the Archbishops and their motives for persuading Henry to invade France.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Merchant of Venice*

Question 9

There were some very strong answers to this question which considered the contrasting presentation of Portia and Shylock. Such responses explored in detail the language of Portia's plea for mercy, Shylock's stubborn refusal to give it and the way in which both characters expressed their views. Too many candidates, however, did not pay sufficient attention to the passage. They spent too long giving the context and moving on to what happens next or too long establishing what we already know about Portia and Shylock.

There were some misconceptions and misreadings such as: Portia was asking for justice; that she did not offer Shylock the money as the law would not allow it; that Jews do not believe in God or heaven; that she criticised Shylock for wearing an odd suit. If candidates had understood and written about what Portia says, how she says it and why she says it, their answers would have been more successful.

Strong responses saw that Portia is beginning to manipulate Shylock but many wanted him to be sympathetic here which was counter to how Shakespeare portrays him in this passage. Perceptive candidates understood this and commented on his terse, stubborn responses and his obsession with revenge. Only the strongest commented on 'crave' and his triumphalism when he thinks that Portia is on his side.

Question 10

There were many strong answers to this question which showed knowledge of the issues surrounding Bassanio and balanced their response accordingly. The strongest looked at the language, especially his propensity to use the imagery of finance and his various linguistic contributions to the theme of appearance versus reality. They weighed up his spendthrift, risk-taking quality, his 'use' of Antonio, his awareness of Portia's wealth and his giving away the symbolic ring against his choosing the right casket, his obvious attraction to Portia, his loyalty to his friends.

Less successful answers also used some balance but structured their essays so that the first positive view of him was then contradicted by a negative view without any comment of conclusion. The least successful answers misinterpreted the question as meaning whether other characters in the play liked him; wrote unsupported praise; made unsubstantiated claims about his willingness to risk his life for Antonio or asserted that he was never unpleasant to Shylock.

Most candidates found plenty to say, gave some balance in their assessment and clearly found Bassanio an interesting character.

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Key messages

- Strong responses showed detailed knowledge of their set texts, including the chronology of the plot, and could make a confident response to the use of language.
- The most successful responses considered the key words in the question and avoided narrative.
- Convincing answers showed explicit knowledge of the context in passage-based questions and the ability, in discursive answers, to select relevant material, using direct quotation in support.
- Strong candidates looked at the text in detail in answer to passage-based questions, commented on the author's effects and used quotations in support of points.
- Successful answers avoided redundant introductions which gave excessive historical/cultural/contextual information at the expense of a sharp focus on the question.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage were commonly seen in the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates this session showed enjoyment of the texts in their personal responses to the characters, the ideas and the drama of the texts. Candidates often showed a detailed knowledge of the text in their selection of relevant material to support their personal response. A notable feature of strong answers was the ability to integrate apt quotation and make clear how the text supports the answer. In the most successful responses, candidates expressed their views in well-developed and reasoned argument.

Successful answers addressed the question asked. Where candidates were asked to consider two aspects of a passage, they needed to make a response to each one, such as in **Question 9**, where candidates were asked to consider both the drama and significance of the passage, or in **Question 7**, where candidates were asked about both the English army and the French knights in *Henry V*. Candidates who only made a response to one aspect of a question limited their answer. Strong answers focused on the terms of the question, including terms such as: 'vividly', 'strikingly' and 'powerfully', which are intended to help the candidate to consider the writing and the author's intent. There was a tendency for some to veer away from the question asked. For example, in answer to **Question 6** on *An Inspector Calls*, some candidates wrote at length on how they found Eva Smith's painful death moving, when the question asked them to consider the drama of the Inspector's investigative methods. Candidates who lost focus on the question limited their answers.

This session there were some highly successful answers on passages from all texts, most notably from Miller's *A View from the Bridge* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. These strong answers showed an awareness of context, an understanding of the dialogue, and considered how characters speak and react to one another on stage. They analysed the author's intended effects and likely audience response. They used detail from the passage, including many short quotations, and considered their effect in the passage. Weaker answers often spent too long at the start narrating events from the play, or giving extraneous details on the author's life or the historical and cultural period of the play. Sometimes they ended with lengthy conclusions which repeated much of the answer. This limited the amount of the answer which was focused on answering the question.

There were some very successful responses to discursive questions: especially notable were some on Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, and Shakespeare's *Henry V* and *The Merchant of Venice*. These answers used a well-constructed argument developed over a range of points, supported by brief and apt quotations from the text. Candidates needed to know the whole text well to be able to select the most suitable material to answer a particular question. For example, when answering **Question 8**, candidates who selected material from Henry's soliloquy before the battle of Agincourt were able to offer the insight of Henry's own thoughts on the conflict between his role as king and his personal feelings, as interpreted by Shakespeare.

An appreciation of the dramatic staging of the text, as indicated by language and structure, lifted answers at all levels. These answers included an explicit response to the success of dramatic features, such as the setting of the play, the action on stage, dialogue between characters and likely audience response. For example, candidates answering **Question 3** on Miller's *A View from the Bridge* often quoted the stage direction which shows that Eddie 'paces up and down'. Good answers related this to the question on tension, by saying that it shows the audience Eddie's discomfort at the thought of Rodolpho and Catherine dating, thus causing conflict.

Comments on specific questions

J LAWRENCE and R E LEE: *Inherit the Wind*

Question 1

Good answers set the passage briefly in context: the verdict of the trial has been given and Cates has been found guilty. Some candidates gave a lengthier narrative account which was not needed. Most candidates found these aspects moving: that Cates is uncertain whether he has won or lost, that Rachel develops as an independent thinker, and the death of Brady. Strong candidates developed their analysis to show how the authors make them moving. For example, there were developed personal responses to Rachel's comparison of a thought to a child which 'has to be born'. Some candidates focused on the moving announcement of Brady's death, 'quiet' as it is, amongst the celebrations, together with Drummond's honest acknowledgement of Brady's standing as he 'can't imagine a world without Matthew Harrison Brady.' The use of Brady's full name here gives him dignity in death. Weaker responses often expressed confusion over whether Cates won or lost the trial; some explained creationism, evolutionism or freedom of thought at the expense of a consideration of what is moving. Some candidates provided a general commentary on the text: these responses were limited because of their lack of focus on the question.

Question 2

Strong responses here were able to compose a cogent argument. They often equated his greatness with his popularity with the people of Hillsboro, who claim: 'If it's good enough for Matthew Brady, it's good enough for us'. The fact that he ran for Presidential candidate three times was seen as an indication of his sense of public service; or alternatively as an example of his determination to pursue fame at all costs. He was mostly appreciated as a voice of reason when he intervenes as Reverend Brown's zealotry gets out of hand. Candidates' arguments were more convincing when they were closely supported from the text. The best responses selected the most appropriate material and integrated brief quotation. Basic responses gave a general character study which were limited because they ignored the question of Brady's 'greatness', while other responses were limited because textual reference was not used to support the views expressed.

ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 3

Candidates found much tension in the passage. Stronger answers showed an understanding of context and staging. They commented on Eddie's insult to Marco's wife, with heightened tension in Eddie's mocking laughter contrasting with Marco's 'blushing' innocence. They identified conflict between Eddie and all the other characters, because of Eddie's dislike of Rodolpho's dating Catherine, because Marco and Rodolpho need to be grateful to Eddie, and because Beatrice forcefully criticises Eddie. Some answers focused on the tension shown in stage directions for Eddie: 'paces up and down', 'holding back a voice full of anger', 'freezes'. Weaker answers often simply listed stage directions, while better answers placed them in context and showed how they create tension. Thus, Eddie freezing when Catherine asks Rodolpho to dance makes the tension clear to the audience because Eddie shows his horror at Catherine choosing to defy him. Some candidates provided a general commentary on the text, sometimes identifying patterns of speech such as pauses and ellipses, or punctuation such as question and exclamation marks, and asserting that they caused tension. These responses were often limited because candidates needed to consider their context and effect.

Question 4

Basic answers to this question took a narrative approach and tracked the events leading to Eddie's death, often taking as their main point the fact that Eddie took a knife to the confrontation with Marco, so it was his own fault he was killed. Better answers were able to consider aspects of Eddie's character which led him to behave as he does; they considered Eddie's attitudes to his wife, to family, and to honour in his Red Hook community. The strongest answers explored how Miller has structured the play, using Alfieri as a chorus to create a fatalistic atmosphere by suggesting from the start that events will run their '*bloody course*'; Alfieri conveys the sense of inevitability by his powerlessness to intervene and by his sensible legal advice to Eddie, which Eddie then ignores. The best answers supported their points with brief, apt quotation from the text.

J B PRIESTLEY: *An Inspector Calls*

Question 5

Good answers set the passage briefly in context: Birling has just described his sacking of Eva, but Gerald, Sheila and Eric are unaware of their involvement. Some candidates gave a lengthier narrative account which was not needed. Strong answers looked at the subtleties of the stage directions and explored the writing carefully. They considered the Inspector's authority in his dealings with the Birlings, as evidenced in his speech and stage directions. He does not try to be polite but states the truth: '*The girl's dead though*'. He challenges the truth of Gerald's assertion that they don't know anything and the stage directions in which he looks slowly at each character reinforce his omniscience by implying each one is guilty. His terse brief answers to Mr Birling show he cannot be deflected from his duty. Mr Birling's attitude to the Inspector changes to apologetic when he realises he is not the only one involved. Sheila shows compliance with the Inspector's views by criticising her father and sympathising with Eva, as does Eric. Many candidates found it difficult to focus on the question, and wrote at length about the socio-historical background to the play, or Priestley's ideas of socialism, which limited their answers.

Question 6

This question asks candidates to explore how the Inspector conducts his investigation. Strong answers selected from a range of his methods. Popular choices were: his '*one person and one enquiry at a time*' approach, which not only focuses all attention on each guilty person in turn, but also allows for the dramatic build-up of intensity during the play; Priestley's use of dramatic irony as the audience increasingly understands that each character is guilty before they admit it themselves; how the Inspector dramatically makes use of Eva's photograph and diary; his persistent asking of questions coupled with his omniscience; the shocking lack of deference for the middle classes shown in his blunt, almost rude replies to the Birlings; and the dramatic way he makes Eva's life experiences universal. Successful answers focused on 'powerfully dramatic' and supported their points with brief quotation or brief reference to the text. Some weaker responses ignored the instruction not to use the passage from **Question 5** in answering **Question 6**, and so limited their answers. Others lost focus on the drama of the Inspector's investigative methods and retold the story, or wrote at length about Priestley's ideas of socialism.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V*

Question 7

Most good answers began by briefly confirming the context of the passage as the moment before the battle and before Henry's Agincourt speech. They identified the characters in the passage as French commanders showing overconfidence in their own fighting abilities, together with an underestimation of the English. Having established the context, good candidates were able to explore the passage in detail and analyse selected parts of the writing and the effects accurately. Strong answers explored the vividness of the language in boastful phrases such as: '*your fair show shall suck away their souls*' or '*The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them*'; and they explored the effects of images such as '*Big Mars*' as a mocking reference to Henry and the English horsemen ridiculed as '*fixed candlesticks*'. A common misreading was '*poor jades*' as referring to the Englishmen rather than their horses. Good responses considered Shakespeare's dramatic purpose of making the English victory more remarkable. Weaker answers here mistook the context or thought one of the speakers was English; not all were able to analyse the language in detail, and simply paraphrased a few lines. Some were not certain of the general meaning.

Question 8

Candidates needed to know the play well in order to make the best selection of material to answer this question. Some candidates spent too long contrasting Henry's youth with his role as king, which was only relevant up to a point. Candidates often selected the unmasking of the three traitors and their sentencing,

and the hanging of Bardolph as examples of moments where Henry has to hide his personal feelings and act as king. Strong answers explored these moments in detail and quoted briefly to support points. Candidates who aptly selected Henry's soliloquy before Agincourt were able to use Henry's own thoughts on the burdens of kingship to answer the question. The best answers showed an awareness of Shakespeare's methods, such as the use of soliloquy for Henry to dramatically address the audience directly.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Merchant of Venice*

Question 9

Good answers briefly placed the passage in context: this is the first choice of a casket in the play. They saw the situation as dramatic because the stakes for the suitor are high: the suitor who makes the correct choice gains the right to marry Portia, but if he fails, he is unable to marry anyone. They saw the significance as being that the correct choice would change the plot: Portia would be unable to marry Bassanio. Weaker answers gave a lengthy explanation of the casket text. Many candidates commented on the suspense as Morocco debates his choice, while stronger answers explored Morocco's language. They analysed his high-flown language on the hardships of crossing sea and desert, and of Portia, described as '*so rich a gem*' and '*angel*', and the significance of his equating the worth of Portia to the value of gold. Stronger answers saw a contrast between Morocco's overblown language and the mocking couplets on the scroll. Many candidates pointed out the significance of the theme of appearance versus reality, with stronger responses developing their comments to explore the proverbial '*All that glitters is not gold*'. Portia's dismissal of Morocco tended to be seen as 'racism', with many missing the ambiguity of '*complexion*'.

Question 10

This was a popular question and most candidates were able to offer a reasoned personal response supported by textual reference. Candidates knew the play well and most were able to make a relevant selection of supporting material, with many quoting aptly. The strongest answers formed well-constructed arguments in support of their choice. Most felt more sympathy for Shylock, citing anti-Semitism especially from Antonio, whose treatment of Shylock as he spat and kicked him, and promised to do so again, was often quoted. Candidates felt that Shylock was betrayed by his daughter, who did not even leave him his wife's ring as a memento. They considered his treatment in court to be unfair, as he is cheated out of his '*pound of flesh*', his fortune and his religion, and ends up with nothing. More balanced answers considered how far Shylock's treatment was deserved. Some felt more sympathy for Jessica, because of her father's oppressive treatment of keeping her indoors, and thought she was forced to run away. Weaker answers became narrative; some became side-tracked into comparing the possible reactions of Elizabethan and modern audiences, without tying this directly to the question.