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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/12
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts tailored to the specific demands of the question
- use relevant textual references to support their arguments
- engage with the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- include extraneous biographical material
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- label and list writers' techniques
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was some outstanding work this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poetry and prose texts they had studied. There were very few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper.

Textual knowledge

The strongest answers showed an impressively detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating both concise quotation and indirect textual references to support their ideas. In answers to extract questions, these candidates used the detail of the extract to support their ideas and to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects. The strongest responses to general essays also showed an extensive knowledge and included much direct quotation. Less successful responses, lacking a sufficiently wide range of textual references, tended to be overly assertive and explanatory. Some candidates began their answers by including biographical information that did not relate to the question.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question throughout the response. Less successful answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the text but without tailoring their material to the specific demands of the question. Detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward. Some candidates embarked on an explanation of themes regardless of what the question asked for. This often led to an exhaustive explanation of a poem or extract whereas more confident candidates were able to *select* relevant material and explore it in some detail.

Writers' effects

The most convincing responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by writers' use of form, structure and language. Those who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were better able to explore closely the effects of the writing, and for this reason tended to produce more successful general prose essays. The strongest responses were able to link their comments on form, structure and language to the ideas and impressions conveyed by the writer. Less successful responses often commented discretely on effects without relating them to the content and meaning, sometimes simply logging features such as alliteration and hyperbole. This simple kind of labelling was often evident in general comments about ABAB

rhyme schemes. There were many instances of generic and unproductive comments about 'making the reader want to read on', 'brackets adding in extra information' and dashes or ellipses variously slowing or speeding up the pace of reading. Such assertions on their own add little to a response. A number of candidates routinely used the terms 'poem', 'play' and 'novel' as if they are interchangeable. Candidates should be aware of the formal features of a text right from the time they start to study a particular text.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions and explored the detail of texts in essays, showing insight and individuality. These responses addressed directly those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful, 'vivid', 'distressing', 'memorable', 'moving'. Less successful response made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all. In such responses, candidates offered pre-learned points, usually in relation to 'themes' they had learned, without pausing to explore writers' effects in the way that the question directed them to.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates noted at least some of the 'admirable' qualities about the girl, such as her physical strength, elegance and her attitude to the task. Stronger answers offered some evaluation of the writing features, particularly the sensory images (the smells), the physical descriptions of the girl and the location, and the use of repetition. A few of the more successful answers commented on the poet's thoughts and feelings about the girl's attitude. Less successful answers simply noted or listed writing features without exploring their significance. In a few instances, candidates did not fully understand the phrase, 'unwilling to use her for a metaphor'. Several candidates spent too much time unproductively describing the poet's background.

Question 2

This question produced a wide range of interpretations about what the moonlight may have represented – for example, nurture and healing, nature, or qualities such as mothering or gentleness. Stronger answers enjoyed delving into the rich imagery and effectively probed a range of the writing features. They understood the central idea of the poem and were able to explain what amends were being made and how this was being done. Some of the stronger answers noted the impact of the last line. Some less successful answers did not fully understand the idea of 'Amends' and made no reference to this at all. Some of the less successful answers tended to run through the poem and identify features but did not link their comments to the question.

Question 3

Most responses were able to comment on the cumulative effect of the poem's images and the overall mood of the poem. The most successful responses explored closely the ways in which Smith achieves her effects when describing the general darkness, the sense of isolation, and the significance of the 'lucid line' and 'dubious ray'. Some responses attempted to impose a particular reading on the poem, for example, about good and bad paths taken in life, though without providing relevant and detailed substantiation from the poem. Such overly assertive answers needed to focus more explicitly on the key words of the question 'vivid effects'. This question attracted much inclusion of biographical information (about Smith's unhappy marriage) which did not address the question set and could not be credited through application of the mark scheme.

Question 4

This was a popular choice and most candidates responded with some degree of engagement and enthusiasm – they seemed to enjoy the poem. Most candidates noted the meaning of the title, the varied descriptions of the whales and the matter-of-fact tone. More successful answers explored language in much detail, with evaluative comments on the use of specific terminology such as the nautical and architectural vocabulary. These answers often noted the poet's feelings about the whales. The least successful responses tended to work through the poem, sometimes listing the identified features with limited attempt to analyse closely. A few candidates confused the question – how the poet creates 'powerful impressions of the whales' – with 'powerful whales'.

Question 5

Most candidates were able to comment on the general effect of the unusual image of the onion used in contrast to the more traditional expressions of love and affection such as a cute card or kissogram. The detail and understanding of the development of this conceit was key to differentiation. Many candidates provided biographical information on Duffy which detracted from the response to the actual question.

Question 6

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Section B

Question 7

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

Successful responses focused explicitly on the ways in which Desai creates 'powerful impressions' of Nur and his wife. These explored the exaggeration and melodramatic nature of Imtiaz Begum's dialogue, the effects of the snake imagery, the description of her appearance and also of Nur's attempts to placate her. Less successful responses often noted the use of imagery and other devices though without exploring precisely the ways in which Desai achieves her effects. These responses tended to work through the extract in an explanatory fashion, without achieving a clear focus on the question; such answers read like character sketches rather than a close analysis of Desai's portrayal of character.

Question 10

There were fewer responses to the general essay question than for the extract-based question on Desai's novel. The question focuses on the candidate's response to Desai's presentation of Sarla: how far does Desia make it possible for *you* to feel sympathy for her? The strongest responses evaluated the ways in which Desai presents Sarla's subservient status and her sullenness and resentment at how Deven treats her. Many responses simply listed aspects of her character and relevant moments in the novel (such as Deven's return from Delhi), treating her as a real-life person rather than a fictional construct. A wider range of relevant textual detail would have helped many candidates to explore with greater sensitivity the ways in which Desai presents this character.

Question 11

This is the moment in the novel where Louisa is seeking advice from her father after he has just relayed the news to her that Mr Bounderby has made her an offer of marriage. It sets in place the events that will follow. Most responses showed an understanding of how her upbringing was devoid of fancy and full of facts and that it is the purely factual and utilitarian route that Mr Gradgrind employs as he seeks to influence Louisa to accept Mr Bounderby. Fewer responses picked up on the lack of balance in the conversation with Louisa almost muted and the lack of response to her brief but significant questions. The hopelessness and isolation of her situation tended not to be developed.

Question 12

Many responses provided a reasonable character study of the young Tom Gradgrind, commenting on his closeness to Louisa and their emotionally deprived upbringing, his role at the bank, his acquaintance with James Harthouse and his 'setting up' of Stephen Blackpool in the robbery. Responses often lacked the detail of the effects employed by Dickens to portray the confused, often ungrateful 'whelp' that he is.

Question 13

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

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Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

The question asked how this moment was 'tense', and there was much in the extract for candidates to write about. Stronger answers focused clearly on the tension and selected points such as atmosphere of the Assembly Room, the unawareness of Gene and Finny, Gene's growing anxiety and physical reactions. Many candidates produced strong personal responses and expressed their feelings about Gene, Finny and Brinker. Weaker answers tended to re-tell the events in the passage, without exploring their deeper implications or how they created tension. Some answers included very long and unnecessary introductions with excessive details about the war, the author's education or views and the college he attended.

Question 16

Those who answered this question were generally able to explain the difference between Leper whilst at Devon and the transformation in him caused by his spell in the army. The tension arising from Leper's statement that Gene was essentially a 'savage underneath' and that he knew the truth about Finny's fall was noted in many responses. Details regarding Gene's viewpoint, the conversation between the two boys and the setting tended to be overlooked.

Question 17

The key word here is 'distressing', and most candidates who chose this question made some attempt to consider this. The strongest answers engaged deeply with the extract, exploring details such as the menacing environment, the condition of Ampleforth and Winston and their conversation. Less successful answers tended to work their way through the extract, pointing out some of the key events and features without meaningful exploration of effects. A few answers were distracted by the opportunity to discuss at length the aims of the Party, totalitarianism or the parallels to communism with less direct reference to the question.

Question 18

A few candidates were able to present convincing arguments which went beyond a character sketch. These stronger answers were able to show Goldstein's role in the novel, considering aspects such as his function for the Party to create fear. Less successful answers usually showed some understanding of who he was but did not go on to consider his impact in the novel. As for the extract-based question, some candidates spent too much time writing about totalitarianism or communism without providing solid points that were supported from the novel.

Question 19

Candidates were able to contextualise the passage. There was an awareness of the irony that Arthur Jarvis died whilst writing a paper about how to address 'native crime'. Most recognised that ultimately some good resulted from the murder in that the elder Jarvis established support for Kumalo's village. There was an awareness too of the closeness and interdependence of the characters in their grief. The detail of the dialogue and the simplicity of the narrative with its biblical tone were commented on in the most successful responses.

Question 20

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

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Question 21

Most responses showed knowledge of the immediate context: Mr Grancy's return from self-imposed exile after the death of his second wife. They commented on the depth of his grief, the importance to him of the portrait and his sense of living in limbo. The strongest answers explored with some perception the emotional quality of Grancy's monologue, the self-questioning and the narrator's implied viewpoint. Less confident answers tended to re-tell the content of the extract, sometimes by paraphrasing, without selecting material that answered the question. These answers sometimes read like biographies of Grancy's life. Some candidates offered generalised comment on the relative roles of men and women 'in those times' but without tailoring their comments to the demands of the question.

Question 22

There were far fewer responses seen to this general essay question on *The Stoat* than to the extract-based question on *The Moving Finger*. Answers revealed knowledge of the basic plot but a generally insufficient grasp of the detail of McGahern's portrayal of Miss McCabe. Without this knowledge, it was difficult for candidates to address the question's key words 'strikingly portrays'. It is worth reminding candidates that they need to know the stories in the anthology in detail so that they have sufficient textual reference when answering questions. Some candidates wrote about pre-learned themes and the symbolism of the stoat and rabbit without making their comments relevant to the wording of the question. Candidates need to be reminded of the need to answer the question set rather than a question they would have liked to answer.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22
Drama

Key messages

Strong responses targeted the question at the very beginning, over three or four well-developed points and in the conclusion.

Successful answers consisted of key points which were supported by evidence from the text in the form of direct quotations and carefully selected, precise material.

A common feature of good answers was a response to the text as drama on stage.

The strongest responses analysed the effectiveness of the text with an awareness of the author's intent.

General comments

There were answers to all texts and questions which showed detailed knowledge and appreciation of the chosen text. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was new to the paper this session. Candidates responded well to how Miller builds tension on stage in the interaction between characters before the hanging of yet more of Salem's villagers at dawn. There were also well-evidenced reasons for sympathy expressed for other characters, such as for the Younger family's poverty in *A Raisin in the Sun*, for Dickie's loss of an Oxford education in *The Winslow Boy*, and for both of Juliet's lovers, Romeo and Paris, in the passage from *Romeo and Juliet*. Macbeth elicited less sympathy for his fear of Banquo's ghost, and many candidates explored the compelling relationship between Macbeth and the witches, relishing the unsavoury ways in which the witches' evil ensnaring of Macbeth is made plain to the audience. Every question expected candidates to view the text as drama on stage. Answers were rewarded where candidates showed a clear understanding of the significance of dramatic effects such as: on-stage action, dialogue between characters, entrances and exits and audience reaction.

Successful answers began by stating the main points to be addressed, went on to develop each of these points in turn, and arrived at a reasoned conclusion in which an answer to the question was clearly given. In contrast, less successful answers began by summarising the plot or by giving irrelevant cultural or biographical detail, lost focus on the question, or did not provide evidence from the text for their claims. The strongest answers evaluated the author's methods and supported comments with apt and brief quotation from the text.

Strong responses to passage-based questions identified the main points they were going to use. It was often relevant to give a short context of the passage without narrating the plot. This showed knowledge of the play and informed comments on its structure, such as foreshadowing or contrast in tone between scenes. Good answers then developed each of their main points and supported them with evaluated quotation from the passage to show understanding of the ways in which the authors achieve their effects. Audience response was often considered. The best answers ended with a clear and reasoned answer to the question.

To answer discursive questions well, candidates needed a good knowledge of the whole text so that they could select the most appropriate material with which to construct a response. Candidates' answers were marked highly when they selected three or four main points and then developed each one fully, with textual support, and arrived at a reasoned conclusion. All questions required candidates to consider the text as a play performed on stage, so that references to dramatic features such as character interaction and action immediately helped to answer the question. References to audience response, rather than a reader's response, helped the candidate to visualise the play on stage.

Some did not appear to know their plays well enough to select apt material to support their answers, or they did not make clear how the textual reference supported the point they were making. Some answers included

irrelevant material such as social or cultural details, narrated the plot, or did not answer the question. There were some very long answers, some of which contained unnecessary information, repeated points and often lost sight of the question. Answers do not need to fill the answer booklet to be successful.

There were some scripts on component 22 where the rubric was infringed, in which candidates answered two passage-based or two discursive questions. In these cases, only the higher mark was credited.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) Good answers explored what was satisfying in the characters' situation: Walter has just rejected Lindner's offer to buy their new house, and the Youngers are moving out of their cramped apartment into a house large enough for the growing family. Stronger answers focused on how this satisfaction is dramatically conveyed; they noted the Youngers' dismissal of Lindner as he is 'almost ignored'. The audience notice Ruth's shouted excitement and the strength of her language, unusual for her quiet character. Candidates explored how Mama and Ruth are proud of Walter's satisfying maturation, with stronger candidates confidently analysing the effect of the simile of 'a rainbow after the rain.' Beneatha and Walter's argument was often seen as an indication of the play's structure, that normal family life had turned full circle. The staging of Mama grabbing her plant at the end was well explored as a symbol of her continuing to nurture the family. Perceptive answers often tempered their satisfaction at this ending with concern over a probable rocky future for the Youngers in the white neighbourhood, supported by Lindner's threat. Some answers did not make enough direct reference to the passage, but narrated how Walter earlier lost the insurance money, or how Beneatha did not want to marry George. These did not answer the question.

(b) Successful answers considered the stage setting of the shabby apartment as well as how poverty impacts the family's life choices. The furniture is described as 'worn out', and stronger answers likened it to Ruth and Mama, who are both 'worn out' by making ends meet. The author dramatically portrays how poverty restricts the family's lives, such as Travis being unable to take 50 cents to school, Ruth's pregnancy viewed as such a burden that she explores abortion, and Walter's depression at not being able to earn enough money to keep his family adequately housed. The strongest answers offered a range of well-supported key points. Others tended to narrate parts of the play without making a clear point or linking to the question.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Candidates did well when they clearly identified the context of the passage as just before dawn when John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse are to be hanged, amongst others who will not confess to being in league with the devil. The sense of time running out raises tension, with each character's desperation to avoid hanging such well-regarded citizens. Candidates showed understanding of Parris, who is frightened for his own safety, and Hale, who regrets his earlier witch-finding. Perceptive candidates also understood Danforth's dilemma: he is reluctant to hang morally upright citizens, but equally he believes it is his God-given duty to uphold law and order, and they have been found guilty. Tension is raised as the interaction between the characters becomes more heated, as Danforth rejects each plea for leniency in turn, and culminates in Hale's dramatic descriptions of rebellion on the streets and the highly symbolic 'blood' on his head. Other candidates tended to explain Parris's fears and did not explore how tension mounts through use of time constraints and increasingly heated dialogue.

(b) Answers tended to focus on the earlier part of the play, when Elizabeth is unsympathetically portrayed as jealous of Abigail and cold towards John. More balanced responses showed an overview of the text by also considering Elizabeth's fear at being falsely accused due to the 'poppet', her distressing situation in prison where she is sentenced to die after her baby is born, and how she tries to protect John by lying about his affair. Some answers showed good understanding of how Elizabeth's actions are influenced by her sincere religious beliefs. The most perceptive pointed to the pathos of how Elizabeth explains her apparently cold behaviour to John too late – she thought herself unworthy of being truly loved, so couldn't believe John when he

declared his love for her. Other answers needed to use more detailed textual support, and some focused mainly on Abigail and John.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates began by stating that Catherine is not only a suffragette and a radical, but also a fiancée. Better answers went on to show understanding of Grace's more conventional views about the role of women being more in the home than in politics. Candidates commented on Catherine's strength of character in sticking to her beliefs, rather than pretending to be what John would like, with some pointing out how this foreshadows future events with the trial. Catherine does not talk constantly about her future husband, as Grace expects of a young woman in love: but Catherine does declare her love for John with an intensity which embarrasses Grace. Catherine was sometimes seen as disrespecting her father by threatening to elope; but these answers missed the subtle humour and ease of her relationship with her father. Stronger answers used stage directions as support for their views: Catherine familiarly perches on the arm of his chair, and Arthur takes her hand. Perceptive answers considered how Rattigan uses Grace to provide dramatic contrast to Catherine, with the generation gap in their relationship indicated in Grace's sighs and Catherine's patience.

(b) Candidates agreed on Dickie being rather fun-loving, and felt sorry that he had to give up his Oxford degree when the Winslow's money ran out. Some explored Dickie's treatment at the hands of his family, claiming that they neglected him, leading to his insecurity and loss of self-esteem. The Winslows draw unfavourable comparisons with Ronnie, who passed the school entrance exams whereas Dickie did not. Dickie complains that he is labelled as the 'bad boy', and could strangle Ronnie when he realises he has to leave Oxford. However, he is always kind to Ronnie, and he agrees that he probably would not have got his degree anyway: he is often shown enjoying music and dancing with girls rather than studying. Dickie's good nature is seen when he makes the best of a routine job; and his popularity when he takes his boss on an enjoyable day to the races. Perceptive candidates commented on the significance of the setting of the play, before the war; Dickie intends to volunteer, and return to the bank after the war; but the audience sadly knows that so many young men like Dickie did not return.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) Most candidates knew the context: the Macbeths are holding a banquet in celebration of becoming King and Queen. Macbeth has previously ordered Banquo's murder. Perceptive candidates focused on the question and explored the power of the passage. They identified three key ways in which the moment was powerful. Firstly, that this moment forms the pivotal point in the structure of the drama: Macbeth has attained the crown but his decline begins here as his feelings of fear and guilt stagger him. Secondly, the dramatic tension on stage of whether Macbeth's guilt will be revealed, his terrified reaction to the ghost, Lady Macbeth's quick thinking in covering up, the lords questioning and raising doubts, and Macbeth's ominous dismissal of his scare as only 'the initiate fear'. Thirdly, some of the powerful imagery was analysed in detail, such as the vivid 'blood will have blood', or Lady Macbeth's reference to sleep. Strong answers used aptly-selected material from the passage with which to answer the question, and analysed the use of language in detail. Instead of focusing on the powerful moment, some weaker answers selected one idea, such as the use of 'sleep' or 'blood', and wrote about how it was used throughout the play; others picked out Macduff and the Weird Sisters and narrated the plot involving them.

(b) There were some strong responses which focused on the relationship. They explored how the witches are portrayed as having evil intent towards Macbeth. The witches' evil appearance and language was evaluated, how they ensnare Macbeth into believing in the prophecies once the first comes true, and how he subsequently trusts the witches. Macbeth's attraction to them was considered in detail, with some candidates contrasting Banquo's reluctance to have any dealings with them. Macbeth's desire to revisit the witches was commented on, and Hecate's appearance and significance too. Some perceptive responses considered how an audience also finds the witches compelling; like Macbeth, they want to know how the prophecies will play out. Some answers lacked focus on the relationship. Some of these included long sections, often in introduction, giving irrelevant information on Jacobean attitudes to witches. Others asserted that

the witches showed the theme of appearance versus reality, quoting 'fair is foul and foul is fair', but without any explanation of the relevance of the theme to the answer, or how the witches or quotation illustrated the theme. Others related in detail each prophecy and explained them without direct reference to the question.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Most candidates knew the context: that both Paris and Romeo believe Juliet is dead. Paris is grieving for her at the Capulet vault when Romeo arrives, intending to see Juliet's body then commit suicide with the poison he has bought. Many candidates commented on the distressing stage setting, in the dark at night, and at the Capulet's vault; and on the dramatic irony that both Juliet's lovers believe her to be dead, but the audience know she is alive. This is disastrous timing. Paris is distressed in his grief at Juliet's death. He doesn't know Juliet does not return his love, and is married to Romeo. He is outraged at Romeo's presence, believing he has come to dishonour Tybalt's body; his language insults Romeo as a 'condemned villain'. The fight he instigates with Romeo is unnecessary, as is his own distressing death. Romeo's extreme grief for Juliet is distressing. His language is shocking, describing the vault as a 'detestable maw' waiting to receive 'more food', and the violence of his grief is evident in describing himself as 'savage-wild', a 'desp'rate man'. Some answers narrated events, but understanding of the text was sometimes not secure.

(b) The strongest answers addressed the dramatic impact of the feud on the play as a backdrop and as a catalyst of events. From before the beginning, in the prologue, we are told of the hatred between the two families, and the opening scene dramatically shows the escalation of violence from servants to youths up to the heads of each family. This atmosphere of danger heightens the drama; Romeo and Juliet's forbidden love is more attractive and intense because Romeo is in danger of his life. The sudden violence in the streets creates a sense of urgency which feeds into the tight timescale of the play and the Prince's ultimatum creates suspense. Most candidates focused more on the effects of the feud on the plot; how the Friar agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet to end the feud, and how Romeo's killing of Tybalt results in his banishment. Some considered how the hatred is brought to an end by the families after Romeo and Juliet's deaths. Weaker answers referred to the effect of the feud on the plot in a more superficial way, pointing out that each event wouldn't have happened if it weren't for the feud.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/32
Drama (Open Text)

Key messages

Strong responses targeted the question at the very beginning, over three or four well-developed points and in the conclusion.

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Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

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(b) Successful answers considered the stage setting of the shabby apartment as well as how poverty impacts the family's life choices. The furniture is described as 'worn out', and stronger answers likened it to Ruth and Mama, who are both 'worn out' by making ends meet. The author dramatically portrays how poverty restricts the family's lives, such as Travis being unable to take 50 cents to school, Ruth's pregnancy viewed as such a burden that she explores abortion, and Walter's depression at not being able to earn enough money to keep his family adequately housed. The strongest answers offered a range of well-supported key points. Others tended to narrate parts of the play without making a clear point or linking to the question.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Candidates did well when they clearly identified the context of the passage as just before dawn when John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse are to be hanged, amongst others who will not confess to being in league with the devil. The sense of time running out raises tension, with each character's desperation to avoid hanging such well-regarded citizens. Candidates showed understanding of Parris, who is frightened for his own safety, and Hale, who regrets his earlier witch-finding. Perceptive candidates also understood Danforth's dilemma: he is reluctant to hang morally upright citizens, but equally he believes it is his God-given duty to uphold law and order, and they have been found guilty. Tension is raised as the interaction between the characters becomes more heated, as Danforth rejects each plea for leniency in turn, and culminates in Hale's dramatic descriptions of rebellion on the streets and the highly symbolic 'blood' on his head. Other candidates tended to explain Parris's fears and did not explore how tension mounts through use of time constraints and increasingly heated dialogue.

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TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates began by stating that Catherine is not only a suffragette and a radical, but also a fiancée. Better answers went on to show understanding of Grace's more conventional views about the role of women being more in the home than in politics. Candidates commented on Catherine's strength of character in sticking to her beliefs, rather than pretending to be what John would like, with some pointing out how this foreshadows future events with the trial. Catherine does not talk constantly about her future husband, as Grace expects of a young woman in love: but Catherine does declare her love for John with an intensity which embarrasses Grace. Catherine was sometimes seen as disrespecting her father by threatening to elope; but these answers missed the subtle humour and ease of her relationship with her father. Stronger answers used stage directions as support for their views: Catherine familiarly perches on the arm of his chair, and Arthur takes her hand. Perceptive answers considered how Rattigan uses Grace to provide dramatic contrast to Catherine, with the generation gap in their relationship indicated in Grace's sighs and Catherine's patience.

(b) Candidates agreed on Dickie being rather fun-loving, and felt sorry that he had to give up his Oxford degree when the Winslow's money ran out. Some explored Dickie's treatment at the hands of his family, claiming that they neglected him, leading to his insecurity and loss of self-esteem. The Winslows draw unfavourable comparisons with Ronnie, who passed the school entrance exams whereas Dickie did not. Dickie complains that he is labelled as the 'bad boy', and could strangle Ronnie when he realises he has to leave Oxford. However, he is always kind to Ronnie, and he agrees that he probably would not have got his degree anyway: he is often shown enjoying music and dancing with girls rather than studying. Dickie's good nature is seen when he makes the best of a routine job; and his popularity when he takes his boss on an enjoyable day to the races. Perceptive candidates commented on the significance of the setting of the play, before the war; Dickie intends to volunteer, and return to the bank after the war; but the audience sadly knows that so many young men like Dickie did not return.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) Most candidates knew the context: the Macbeths are holding a banquet in celebration of becoming King and Queen. Macbeth has previously ordered Banquo's murder. Perceptive candidates focused on the question and explored the power of the passage. They identified three key ways in which the moment was powerful. Firstly, that this moment forms the pivotal point in the structure of the drama: Macbeth has attained the crown but his decline begins here as his feelings of fear and guilt stagger him. Secondly, the dramatic tension on stage of whether Macbeth's guilt will be revealed, his terrified reaction to the ghost, Lady Macbeth's quick thinking in covering up, the lords questioning and raising doubts, and Macbeth's ominous dismissal of his scare as only 'the initiate fear'. Thirdly, some of the powerful imagery was analysed in detail, such as the vivid 'blood will have blood', or Lady Macbeth's reference to sleep. Strong answers used aptly-selected material from the passage with which to answer the question, and analysed the use of language in detail. Instead of focusing on the powerful moment, some weaker answers selected one idea, such as the use of 'sleep' or 'blood', and wrote about how it was used throughout the play; others picked out Macduff and the Weird Sisters and narrated the plot involving them.

(b) There were some strong responses which focused on the relationship. They explored how the witches are portrayed as having evil intent towards Macbeth. The witches' evil appearance and language was evaluated, how they ensnare Macbeth into believing in the prophecies once the first comes true, and how he subsequently trusts the witches. Macbeth's attraction to them was considered in detail, with some candidates contrasting Banquo's reluctance to have any dealings with them. Macbeth's desire to revisit the witches was commented on, and Hecate's appearance and significance too. Some perceptive responses considered how an audience also finds the witches compelling; like Macbeth, they want to know how the prophecies will play out. Some answers lacked focus on the relationship. Some of these included long sections, often in introduction, giving irrelevant information on Jacobean attitudes to witches. Others asserted that the witches showed the theme of appearance versus reality, quoting 'fair is foul and foul is fair', but without any explanation of the relevance of the theme to the answer, or how the witches or

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quotation illustrated the theme. Others related in detail each prophecy and explained them without direct reference to the question.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Most candidates knew the context: that both Paris and Romeo believe Juliet is dead. Paris is grieving for her at the Capulet vault when Romeo arrives, intending to see Juliet's body then commit suicide with the poison he has bought. Many candidates commented on the distressing stage setting, in the dark at night, and at the Capulet's vault; and on the dramatic irony that both Juliet's lovers believe her to be dead, but the audience know she is alive. This is disastrous timing. Paris is distressed in his grief at Juliet's death. He doesn't know Juliet does not return his love, and is married to Romeo. He is outraged at Romeo's presence, believing he has come to dishonour Tybalt's body; his language insults Romeo as a 'condemned villain'. The fight he instigates with Romeo is unnecessary, as is his own distressing death. Romeo's extreme grief for Juliet is distressing. His language is shocking, describing the vault as a 'detestable maw' waiting to receive 'more food', and the violence of his grief is evident in describing himself as 'savage-wild', a 'desp'rate man'. Some answers narrated events, but understanding of the text was sometimes not secure.

(b) The strongest answers addressed the dramatic impact of the feud on the play as a backdrop and as a catalyst of events. From before the beginning, in the prologue, we are told of the hatred between the two families, and the opening scene dramatically shows the escalation of violence from servants to youths up to the heads of each family. This atmosphere of danger heightens the drama; Romeo and Juliet's forbidden love is more attractive and intense because Romeo is in danger of his life. The sudden violence in the streets creates a sense of urgency which feeds into the tight timescale of the play and the Prince's ultimatum creates suspense. Most candidates focused more on the effects of the feud on the plot; how the Friar agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet to end the feud, and how Romeo's killing of Tybalt results in his banishment. Some considered how the hatred is brought to an end by the families after Romeo and Juliet's deaths. Weaker answers referred to the effect of the feud on the plot in a more superficial way, pointing out that each event wouldn't have happened if it weren't for the feud.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/42
Unseen

Key messages

- Engagement with an unseen text requires frequent but brief quotation
- Understanding beyond surface meaning should include critical appreciation of the emotions which the writer conveys to the reader
- Candidates should not simply identify language and techniques. This should be accompanied by discussion of their effects on the reader and an analysis of that effect
- Personal response at a high level requires interpretation of the writer's purpose and the mood and tone of the writing.

General comments

The texts in this session were the poem 'Bathing Off Roseland' by Anne Ridler and an extract from Doris Lessing's memoir *Under My Skin*, describing her very early childhood. Many of the stronger responses were to the poetry, and candidates who choose to write about the prose extract need to be aware that they must demonstrate similar qualities of close reading, thoughtful analysis of language and interpretation of the effect of the writing on the reader as they would in response to the poetry question. Candidates who simply paraphrase the events of the prose text without exploring language choices and implicit meaning will not progress to the higher mark bands. Both poetry and prose are likely to be rich in descriptive writing, but stronger answers will analyse the language of description in order to explain its emotive and symbolic effect on the reader. Personal response to an unseen extract may involve adventurous interpretation going beyond surface meaning. Many interpretations are valid if supported by textual reference and sensitivity to the tone and mood of the writing.

The Unseen paper tests all four Assessment Objectives. **AO1** requires candidates to demonstrate surface knowledge of meaning, genre and the detail of texts. Most candidates realised that this requires frequent, brief quotation. Weaker scripts tended to paraphrase texts, sometimes incorporating unacknowledged quotation. It is essential that candidates can differentiate between the writer's viewpoint and their own; effective use of quotation is a key part of this skill. Quotation should be introduced or followed by valid interpretation or argument, with exploration of how the language of the quotation supports that argument. It is important that quotations should support points about the meaning of the text and introduce exploration of language, tone and the effectiveness of writer's techniques (AO3).

AO2 requires reading beyond surface meaning to explore underlying ideas and attitudes. Thus, to achieve highly, it is not enough simply to say that the writer enjoyed swimming in the sea, or disliked some of her early experiences with adults. Strong scripts explored the poet's free encounter with the elements in psychological, ecological, romantic or spiritual terms, drawing on her choice of imagery to support their interpretations. Equally, strong scripts on the prose considered the reliability of memory, and the difficulty of disentangling what you remember about early childhood from what you have been told; some considered differences between an adult's and a child's viewpoint and perspective, especially in retrospect. Literary texts aim at an emotive effect, and understanding beyond surface meaning means the ability to connect with implicit thoughts and feelings, exploring emotions beyond the surface narrative meaning.

Most candidates realised that **AO3** asks them to comment in some detail on language, structure and form. Candidates who read the text carefully before beginning to write, divide it into sections and then highlight interesting or unusual examples of language choices, imagery or sound effects are likely to address A03 well. Thinking about the structure of a piece of writing helps you to structure your own response. The bullet points provided in this paper after the stem question often help candidates to see the structure of the texts, and to structure their own writing. Some initial appreciation of overall mood and tone is also helpful in identifying the effect of language choices.

Some answers demonstrated that there is some confusion about identifying imagery. Imagery means figurative language, such as metaphors, similes and personification, and not simply descriptive appeals to the senses. Some responded sensitively to ways in which writers invoke feelings, textures, sights, sounds and even smells. But identifying the effect of comparisons, and looking at non-literal language will help candidates to identify underlying meaning and the writer's implicit emotions and thoughts. The quality of analytical comment which follows quotation is a key discriminator. Strong scripts show comments on the effects of writing and explore the reasons for writers' choices. They comment on what language reveals about the tone and mood of the text.

AO4 asks for personal response and strong answers need to show qualities of critical and evaluative engagement with the text. A critical response shows understanding of the text as a construct, and explores the relationship between writer and reader. It is therefore the result of developed and considered response to language and form. Stronger scripts are expected both to be detailed and relevant and to show individuality of interpretation. The strongest scripts in this session showed that candidates could synthesise their insights into the writer's choices and come to conclusions about the impact of the text on them, with sensitive appreciation of the qualities of the writing and what makes it effective.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The poem, *Bathing Off Roseland* is one of several poems about Cornwall by the twentieth-century British poet Anne Ridler. The poem can be viewed as celebrating the power of the natural world or as a more spiritual or religious meditation on freedom and purpose. Like the prose passage, it is in three distinct sections, and these are clearly set out in three stanzas. The poem is personal and lyrical. Although Ridler does not use rhyme, it is incorrect to say that the poem is written in 'free verse', as each stanza follows the same rhythmic pattern with alternation of longer and shorter lines, with similar use of stress, but varying use of enjambment and end-stopping. Stronger scripts explained and supported interpretation of the structure of the poem as reflecting the waves of the ocean, or the movements of a sea swimmer. Interpretations that saw the poem as a physical rather than rhythmic pattern were less convincing.

The first stanza presents several images. The first visualises the transformative power of the sea 'that turns old bottles into gems'. Some candidates linked this to messages in the bottles, or maps of buried treasure, while others thought this was eco-commentary on recycling. This showed individual engagement with the poem's metaphor but sometimes over-literal reading. When she describes herself as 'a bird' stronger candidates explored the implications of freedom and a return to nature, as well as physical description of the poet's movements suspended in the water as if flying through the air. When poets use enjambment, it is essential that candidates follow their meaning over the line ending, so the reference to her 'four wings outspread' (rightly seen by most candidates as alluding to her four limbs) makes clearer sense when linked to the four verbs describing her movement. Some candidates wanted to see the reference to 'vacillate, recover' as a description of her waiting to dive into the sea, but the language of the poem and her choice of tense suggest that she is already in the water. It was even more important to read for meaning over the line-ending to understand the contrast between how she had 'on the cliff with conscious tread/Moved to some purpose' and the unconscious purposelessness of drifting in the water 'lulled and directionless'. 'Lulled' suggests that it was soothing to be in the water, and many strong candidates noticed that she is willing herself to enjoy the sea's embrace and to lose, however temporarily, her sense of purpose. Some also noticed that the notion of 'purpose' returns in the final stanza and in consequence were able to see pattern and direction in the poem.

Reflection is physical in the second stanza, where the central conceit is the comparison of the blue-green waves of the sea with the 'firmament' of the heavens. This comparison becomes more metaphysical in the third stanza, but at this point of the poem, the poet is concentrating on what she sees as she swims, both the watery element which reflects the sky but 'curves below', and 'the wheeling world and the sails careening' above her head. Strong answers noted the natural qualities of the comparison of the sea's shades to brightly coloured vegetables, or the active force of the participles 'feeling...wheeling...careening' capturing the swimmer's spinning movements among the tidal waters. Many linked the adjective 'wayward and flippant' to the writer's feelings of bird-like freedom, and there were some effective commentaries on how the swimming poet's movements reflect the way seabirds wheel in the sky. Some linked the curve of the horizon when you look out to sea to the 'firmament that curves below'. Those who read the idea of the world 'wheeling' above the poet's head both literally and figuratively could use this stanza to prepare the ground for interpretation of the final stanza. Many liked the idea of the poet being 'in her element' in the water: not just at home, but in a fluid state which suited her state of mind, waiting for direction, or happy to be 'flippant' rather than purposeful.

However, the third stanza suggests that this sea-drift is meant to be temporary and that the poet discovers ‘another’s love’, ‘some good’ and a purpose which was ‘hidden’ to her before this experience of free drift. This metaphysical turn suited many stronger candidates who wanted to find an overarching interpretation of the poem; an ability to understand the poem as a whole and reflect on the meaning of the experience of her ocean swim marked out stronger scripts from less successful. A few interpreted it as about a personal experience of romance (‘another’s love’), some as the poet experiencing the restorative qualities of the natural world (‘sustained by powers not my own’), and many as a spiritual (‘the tide of prayer’) or moral (‘some good that of myself I would not’) revelation. The strongest showed ability to link their interpretation to the poem’s imagery and movement, alluded to through reference to ‘tide’, ‘sway’ and the powers that ‘drive’ ships forward. Those attentive to movement were able to hear the rhythmic thrust of the penultimate line and the clipped purposeful syllables in the final image of ‘parting’ to suggest that the poet had moved on from previous imagery of drift.

Strong answers to this question demonstrated an impressive synthesis of close reading and observation, combined with an overarching sense of purpose and direction, reflecting the way the poet’s own descriptions transition from recreative hovering to a strong sense of involuntary yet deliberate movement. As one candidate put it: ‘everything in the poem is described methodically, deliberately – the motion of the sea, the ships and the sails ... all except the poet herself. The poem seems to be about the poet’s search for deeper meaning’. Strong responses where credited for the quality of engagement with making meaning out of literary texts, and this interpretation shows undoubted insight and individuality.

Question 2

The prose extract from early in the autobiography *Under My Skin* (1965) by the British-Zimbabwean novelist Doris Lessing described her upbringing when her father was working in Kermanshah - now in Iran, but in the period immediately after World War One still called Persia and occupied by British forces. The writing is striking for recapturing the child’s hostility to, and discomfort in, the world of adults. The writer’s view of her early childhood, based on her ‘real’ and visceral memories, is sharply at odds with her mother’s more sentimental interpretation of her colonial upbringing, with its horse-riding and swimming parties. Lessing’s depiction of the very young girl’s perspective on these experiences is shockingly physical and unpleasant. It poses questions about how our memories are distorted by the stories which others tell us, and asks us to rethink how children view adults and adult pleasures. She therefore begins with some general reflections about childhood memories which are addressed to us, in the second person, before looking at the differences between her mother’s understanding of the child’s horseback rides with her father and her own memory of her feelings of danger, and the contrast between the child’s-eye view of adult bodies and behaviour at the swimming parties and her mother’s bland assurance that ‘they were such fun’ and ‘you always loved it’.

While many candidates wanted to see the child’s perspective reflected in the fairy-tale comparison of adults to ‘careless giants’, there is also a more disturbingly Swiftian disgust at the physical attributes of adulthood – ‘great, ugly, hairy faces’ with ‘big dirty teeth’ and hands that ‘squeeze the breath half out of you’. The reader is invited to share this perspective, through the writer’s unusual use of the second person in what most candidates only noticed as a first-person narrative. Later on another voice intrudes, that of the writer’s mother addressing her daughter in rather coercive conversation and attempting to reshape her memories, but here it is the writer who wants to coerce us into agreement through declarative sentences: ‘these are the real childhood memories ... that is the truth of childhood.’ Some candidates engaged sympathetically with the small child’s view of clumsy and oppressive adults, while a few questioned it. The child seems to resist their attempts to manipulate them, finding even their shows of affection a danger. Many candidates enjoyed the accurate details of the child’s perspective, which sees a foot ‘almost as bit as you are’ as something to keep an eye on, and is frustrated that nothing is the right size or ‘level’ for her, reinforcing what many saw as irritation at her inferior and vulnerable state.

Many weaker scripts spent focused solely on the physical descriptions of the first paragraph, without noticing that the purpose of the writer is not just to recreate a child’s eye view of the world but also to assert that this is the truth of memory. Stronger scripts understood that the first paragraph is intended as an introduction to two specific memories, the horse-ride and swimming parties, in order to portray these in terms very different from her mother’s memories. They are both unpleasant, overwhelming physical and vaguely threatening experiences, and stand as a metaphor for how alienated the child felt during her childhood. Every descriptive detail was observed in stronger scripts as a reinforcement of the child’s lack of comfort. The horse too is ‘enormous’ and ‘dangerous’ and her father ‘still higher’, ‘somewhere in the sky’. Candidates enjoyed the hyperbole of these descriptions, with some seeing them as the child getting things out of proportion and others seeing her as overawed or scared. Many sympathised with the child ‘trying not to cry’ while not sure

whether she pitied her father's 'big hard slippery hidden' wooden leg or was frightened by it. Most picked up the sense of threat, and the discomfort of the 'hard jutting edge', 'hot pungent smells' and 'jerking jotting motif'. The description is literally visceral as Lessing wants to recreate the 'reeling' feeling in her stomach. Many candidates shared this discomfort, and some noticed the disconcerting use of the present tense which the writer uses to place the reader in the child's position at that time.

In contrast, the mother's memories are firmly located in the past tense, and in direct speech, comfortably insulated from the messy physicality of the grown-up child's 'real' memories. Some strong candidates noticed how even the photograph, with its 'graceful' arch, becomes 'threatened by sharp edges' when Lessing focuses on it. Some read the description of the sharp steep stone steps too literally, not noticing that the writer uses the same technique of hyperbole when her simile compares them to 'boulder on a mountainside' in order to create another vision of danger. When the writer tells the reader she was 'two and a half' when they left Kermanshah, it makes the exaggerations and surreal nature of the descriptions more compelling, as we realise that she is attempting to recreate a pre-literate time when she would not have had the words to articulate her feelings.

The relationship between words and feelings is central to the unpacking of any unseen passage. Candidates seemed to find the final memory, of the swimming bath, disconcerting. Weaker scripts tended to report what the child sees quite literally, often with lots of quotation but limited commentary. Stronger responses picked up on the choice of adjectives meant to upset and disturb – the adults are not really 'naked' but might as well have been for the child, used to seeing them in 'long-sleeved clothes' even in bed. Several noticed that what her mother describes as 'such fun' is 'rowdy and noisy' to the child, who instead focuses on the pitiful and peripheral figure of her maimed father and his shrapnel-scarred stump, at the edge of the pool. Even the reflections of the sky were observed here to be 'broken', and nature to be 'drying or rotting'. Some noticed that it was not only the things in children's world which 'deceive, lie' but perhaps the adults too, who attempt to make nostalgia out of the child's vision of 'bulging breasts' and 'whiskers of hair ...streaming water like sweat'. For the mother, these were 'the best years of her life' whereas, as one candidate pointed out, for the child they seem the worst: 'the juxtaposition of how the mother was 'mourning' the 'best days of her life' is in stark contrast to the writer's feelings of abhorrence, thus highlighting the theme of old versus new'.

Many candidates pointed out that the child's-eye view of the parties was 'not the best' but the strongest answers considered why the writer wanted to present them to us in this way. They realised that she is aiming to present the child's sense of alienation, and her desire as an adult to recreate that discomfort in a world to which she didn't seem to belong. Some explored with insight and perception the rift between this and her mother's vision. Good responses had a critical response to the writer's presentation of different perspectives and wanted to understand why she chose to portray her childhood in such a ruthlessly unsentimental fashion.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/05
Coursework

There were too few candidates for us to be able to produce a meaningful report.