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PAPER 3

(for general administrative matters, please refer to separate examiner documents)

Notes on the assessment of Paper 3 (Unseen) Answers

The syllabus aims at encouraging candidates to make some personal response in their reading. Therefore, while examiners may have legitimate expectations as to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at all times be prepared to meet candidates on their chosen ground.

Examiners will encounter a wide range of performance in this examination, and must be prepared to use the full range of marks available.

Examiners must at all times when necessary tease out what a candidate might be trying to say to us. This is a literature not a language examination. We must recognise that it is possible for a candidate whose technical command of language is limited, but who still manages to communicate an understanding, to receive high marks. Nor should we reward fluency and display of literary terms if we find little or no evidence of such understanding. We are looking for and assessing *literary* response, not language skills.

Prescriptive notes are not provided because that is to suggest that we can have a fixed idea at this stage of how this passage will work – and this is an unseen exercise, and not a pre-tested one. The photostats of the range of candidate answers circulated for discussion at the co-ordination meeting will be central to deciding appropriate levels of expectation for response to the passage.

It is vital that examiners are constantly aware that this is unseen work – we should not be over-critical of an occasional false note or misunderstanding. The approach is embodied in the grade band descriptors. The passage offers ample opportunity for candidates to respond; candidates who, in addition to grasping the central content of the passage, can demonstrate an appreciation of other valid qualities will be rewarded highly. A perception of the literary qualities of a piece of writing seen for the first time, and a sensitive and well-expressed response to its force, constitute a very considerable achievement, and must be rewarded accordingly.

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Marks and band descriptors

Award a mark out of 20, in line with the following table (and in the light of coordination meeting discussion). These general descriptors are an attempt to guide examiners to an understanding of qualities normally expected of or 'typical' of work in the band. They must not be interpreted as hurdle statements. The photostats of sample work produced in the examination will be the principal means by which we shall standardise the marking. It should be noted that grade equivalents are notional.

Band u	0-1	The answer does not meet the criteria for Grade G
Band g	2-3	Candidates will -- show just a very little awareness of...
Band f	4-5	Candidates will -- make a few straightforward points about...
Band e	6-8	Candidates will -- make straightforward points about... show a little understanding of...
Band d	9-11	Candidates will -- begin to develop a response... show some understanding of...
Band c	12-14	Candidates will -- make a sensible response... begin to develop a response... show reasonable understanding of... show a little awareness of the way language works...
Band b	15-17	Candidates will -- make a considered, sustained response... show clear understanding of... show some awareness of the way language works...
Band a	18-20	Candidates will -- sustain a perceptive, convincing reponse... show extensive understanding... respond sensitively to the way language works...