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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9695/32
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

- Successful responses focus on the writing of the texts and how the meaning and content is communicated to the reader.
- Responses which summarise the content of texts only are not successful.
- Successful responses use specific references and quotations to support points in essays. This should be particularly remembered for the **(a)** questions, where candidates select their own material to answer the question.
- Successful responses to **(b)** passage questions examine the writing of the selected poem or extract in great detail.

General comments

Most candidates showed knowledge of the subject matter of the texts, though were usually less confident in exploring ways in which the writers communicate their concerns through choices of language, form and structure. Essays would have benefited from a clearer focus on the writing of the texts.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Robert Frost: Selected Poems

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) Candidates understood the narrative of Frost's poem and the tragedy of the boy who loses his hand in the accident. There was some understanding of the rural location and the apparent aggression of the saw which 'snarled and rattled' before it 'Leaped out' to damage the boy's hand. Essays often also recognised the pathos of the ending of the poem, as the people 'turned to their affairs' after the boy's death. There are several features of the poem which candidates might have explored further, such as the contrast between the menacing descriptions of the saw and the idyllic setting; the narrator's own lament which creates anticipation in ll.10–12; the description of the boy's response, including his speech; the structure of the lines towards the end of the poem; and the tone of the final comment.

Question 2 Owen Sheers: *Skirrid Hill*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

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Question 3 *Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2*

(a) The most popular pairing was Browning's *If Thou Must Love* Me with Shakespeare's *Sonnet 19*, though candidates were not always able to relate these poems successfully to the question. Shakespeare's poem's references to 'Time' and the 'lines' drawn on the 'love's fair brow' allowed relevant focus for those candidates' alert to these references, but Browning's poem offers fewer opportunities. More successful answers looked at Bishop's *The Mountain* alongside Edmond's *Waterfall*, depending on very close and detailed readings of the poems. In *The Mountain*, the repetition of the final lines of each stanza create a constant suggestion of ageing over a long period, compared with shorter spans of time, while *Waterfall* accepts the passing of time and that 'youth' cannot be regained, but quietly celebrates 'the kindness we have for each other' in a mature relationship. Other poems which might have been considered include *When You Are Old*, *The Cry of the Children* and *On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year*.

(b) There was a greater number of responses to the extract from Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*. The dreariness of the job described and the poor working conditions of the shirt maker were generally understood, with some telling details selected, such as the 'crust of bread' and the 'shatter'd roof'. While some candidates commented on the repetition of 'Work—work—work', these comments would often have benefited from greater exploration, noting the unrelenting emphasis on labour which in itself is repetitive and dull, picked up again, for example in 'Band, and gusset, and seam, / Seam, and gusset, and band', identifying the parts of the shirt being manufactured. Candidates could have made much more of the patterning and rhythmical qualities of the poem. Some answers successfully noted the contrast between the seamstress' working life and the warm spring weather and freedom of the birds. There was little acknowledgement, though, that the 'Song' is sung by the seamstress until the final stanza, where the narrator comments on the woman and laments that her song is not heard by the 'Rich' for whom she makes the shirts.

Question 4E M Forster: *Howards End*

(a) Candidates wrote on issues of social class and status in the novel, usually describing three separate groups: the Wilcoxes, the Schlegels and the Basts. These were seen as representing, in turn, money and materialism, intellect and culture, and the working class. While these ideas were broadly sound, candidates might have done more to support the assertions with key references from the novel and to consider the effects of Forster's presentation of these different social groups.

(b) Responses to this question recognised Helen's letter as the opening of the novel. Stronger responses recognised the significance of the early presentation of Mrs Wilcox and the lack of affinity the other members of the Wilcox family have towards Howards End, portrayed symbolically by their hay fever sneezes. Candidates could have said more about ways in which the writing conveys Helen's character at this early stage of the novel.

Question 5 Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

(a) Answers to this question tended to focus on Queenie's friendships with Hortense, Gilbert or Arthur, choosing some appropriate detail for support. Other possibilities which might have been explored were Hortense and Celia, Bernard and Maxi, or Gilbert, Winston and Kenneth.

(b) Candidates usually wrote with some appreciation of the presentation of Arthur Bligh in the extract from Chapter 28. The context of his shellshock from the First World War was understood and several essays pointed out that he is revealed more fully in this episode than earlier in the novel. Candidates noted that Arthur is said to develop in the absence of Bernard's 'fussing' and some noted the appropriateness of the metaphor of 'unfurl as sure as a flower' for a man who is so successful as a gardener. Queenie's recognition of him as a 'magician' was noted, though the apparent impossibility of his growing vegetables from 'rubble and stone' could have been further explored. Some picked up the other hidden elements of Arthur's character, like his proud revelation of the second onion and his skill at Monopoly. The passage repaid careful consideration of the writing, though few answers really explored Levy's craft here.

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Question 6 ***Stories of Ourselves***

(a) In discussion of the presentation of the tensions between family members, the most favoured stories were *The Hollow of the Three Hills*, *Elephant* and *Sandpiper*. While the stories were on the whole remembered well, many of the essays progressed little further than recounting the narrative and describing the relationships. Few responses engaged with how the different writers presented the relationships to the reader or ways in which the tensions are portrayed.

(b) Candidates attempting this question were able to describe the relationships the swallow has with the reed and the statue of the Happy Prince. Some responses lacked appreciation of the genre of Wilde's text. Candidates seemed to miss the fairy-tale like nature of the story and take the swallow's relationships literally, which meant that they often missed the symbolism of the narrative. Candidates need to read closely and be alert to style in order fully to appreciate a text.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9695/42
Drama

Key messages

- Candidates need to be aware that if they are tackling **(b)** type questions, they are expected to be able to examine language and action in detail. These questions are not a springboard for a more general appreciation of the play under consideration.
- Candidates should name the author and consider the text that is being shaped by the writer.
- Candidates could reflect more on how the texts might appear on a stage, as works to be performed.

General comments

With **(b)** type questions, it is vital that candidates engage in detail with the passage that they have in front of them. Specifically, they need to be prepared to talk about the extract as drama, as something to be performed. In other words, they need to analyse genre issues involved in the printed extracts. Beyond that, candidates should talk about detail, about the precise way in which characters speak and about the effect that the speakers have (or intend to have) on the other characters on the stage.

Candidates must read the questions carefully. Questions often ask for 'dramatic effects' or 'dramatic significance', and these prompts are nudges towards the sort of answer that is required.

With a number of responses, it was clear that the candidates had a sound knowledge of the text under consideration but found it difficult to take a strategic view of the question. This sometimes led to lengthy essays that were only partially relevant, or to discussions that did not directly address the particular focus of the question.

The best answers dealt with specific detail of form, structure and language and made it clear throughout that they were responding to all aspects of the question. Thus, knowledge of the play (plot, understanding of characters and situation) moved to a deeper level because the responses were able to demonstrate understanding of detail and an ability to analyse, rather than simply to report.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Arthur Miller: *All My Sons*

(a) The answers to this question tended to focus on the Keller family and on internal tensions. When they went beyond this to consider the detail of the question, there was often discussion of the Kellers as a notionally ideal American family, a representation of the American dream. To improve candidates could have taken the opportunity to consider the central issue of Keller's mistake and its consequences, or the tension between personal aspiration and business morality.

(b) Most responses were able to give an account of the scene, and there was often consideration of the symbolism of the tree. Less successful responses discussed in general Chris's relationship with his father. The best responses were able to see how the scene works dramatically and point to the ways in which Keller dominates over his son.

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Question 2 William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*

(a) Most responses were able to outline the tempestuous relationship between Beatrice and Benedick. There was, however, a strong tendency to narrate rather than analyse. The words 'present' and 'dramatic action' in the question are triggers to suggest to candidates that they should consider particular moments, or look at technical aspects, such as the constant use of wordplay and insults between the two. Candidates also might have looked at the way the two continue the 'merry war' even when the other is not present.

(b) Responses to this question varied widely. At one end, candidates demonstrated an ability to give an account of what happens in the scene. At the other end, candidates were able to analyse how Beatrice might feel when she overhears what she thinks is an impartial view of her behaviour and starts to realise that her friends think that (amongst other things) 'she is too disdainful' and that she makes 'sport' of Benedick's feelings. There was also some comment on how Beatrice might be shocked to hear that her friends see her as stubborn and unwilling to listen to them ('she would mock me into air') which becomes the revelation later on that she now appreciates that she is 'condemned for pride and scorn'. To improve, responses could have considered that Ursula and Hero's discussion is shaped to have precisely this effect and is an exaggerated view of their true beliefs. On the whole, the responses required a closer sense of the dramatic potential and development of the scene.

Question 3 William Shakespeare: *Henry IV Part 1*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 4 Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King's Horseman*

(a) There were some strong responses to this question. Candidates were able to see that the Jane and Simon represent and symbolise both the strengths and weaknesses of a colonial regime. The best responses were able to detail this by talking about their lack of understanding of Yoruban traditions and world view, perhaps most vividly illustrated by their wearing of the death masks at the fancy-dress ball. Candidates often discriminated between the two characters, seeing Jane Pilkings as the more open and the more willing to try to understand.

(b) Some weaker responses to this question focused on reporting the situation and narrating the passage; others took a long time to contextualise before beginning to analyse. The best answers were able to discuss Elesin's feelings of guilt ('I more than deserve your scorn') and to see how Iyaloja speaks both personally and on behalf of the people in her scathing criticism of Elesin's self-indulgence and cowardice: 'You have betrayed us.' These answers were also able to discuss Elesin's journey towards self-knowledge in the passage and to respond to Elesin's sensual evocation of why he wanted to hang onto life. There was often useful discussion of the imagery of the passage, particularly as used by Iyaloja, in order to demonstrate the level of Elesin's offence against the rules of nature.

Question 5 Tennessee Williams: *Sweet Bird of Youth*

(a) This question asked candidates to compare Boss Finlay and Princess in the play. There was the potential for discussion of them both as manipulators, as fading in their powers, as egocentrics, as ambitious, as unscrupulous, as obsessive, as lovers, as media dependent for a sense of the self. The best responses took this strategic view, whereas less successful answers dealt with one character, then the other, with remarks about each. In such answers the comparison was often brief; they could have been improved by pulling together what the two characters have in common. The best responses looked closely at particular moments in relation to the characters in order to deepen the comparison in relation to the question's instruction to consider 'dramatic effects.'

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(b) Most responses gave a clear account of the scene, with better answers analysing in detail the way that Scudder's resentment and Chance's glib self-confidence are placed in tension with each other. The most responsive answers discussed detail – the predominance of the first-person pronoun in everything that Chance says, his casual resting of a foot on the chair in order to demonstrate dominance together with his blocking of Scudder in line 27. This was set against Scudder's worried tone, his verbosity. The best responses were able to locate the incident early on in the play and make comments about how much of what is revealed here sets up the audience's reaction to these characters elsewhere in the play.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9695/52

Shakespeare and Other Pre-20th Century Texts

Key messages

- Candidates should take the time to plan their essays to avoid generalisation and irrelevancies.
- Candidates should show how their selected texts might be interpreted differently by different readers.

General comments

The general standard was satisfactory with all learners showing at least a sound knowledge of the set texts. There were very few rubric errors in this session and very few responses which showed evidence of mismanagement of time. The quality of expression was at least acceptable in nearly every case, although there were some candidates with expressive weaknesses which can impede communication at this level. Answers reflecting a wide range of performance were seen on each of the texts attempted by the learners.

There are two specific issues to be addressed in this session:

(a) Learners should consider all of the question, take the time to consider which relevant material to discuss and then plan their essay carefully before starting to compose their answer. This would help them to ensure all the material they write is relevant to the task and set out in a logical and structured way.

(b) Learners should be aware that at A Level it is necessary to explore different interpretations of their selected texts. These may be based on critical or academic opinions, or different types of readers, such as modern or contemporary to the selected text. The key point is that learners show they understand how a text might be interpreted differently by different audiences or readers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 William Shakespeare: *Richard II*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 2 William Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale*

(**a)** Answers to this question often had at least a sound grasp of the text and were able to select relevant material with which to address the task. Most answers focused on the contrast between Sicilia and Bohemia, both as courts, with different moods, and also with the country scenes in Bohemia as a contrast to the Sicilian court. Better answers explored how the settings were also symbolic of winter and spring, or death and regeneration. Other good answers considered how Shakespeare used the settings to develop his characterisation, often contrasting Leontes and Polixenes, but with some answers developing this approach into considering Hermione and Perdita, for example. Very good answers were alive to the nuances, noticing how there is evil, such as bears and jealousy in Bohemia, as well as goodness such as that shown by Camillo and Paulina in Sicilia. Those answers which focused on Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of such issues often did very well.

(b) Answers to this option nearly all had at least a secure understanding of the significance of the passage, with better answers discussing the dramatic tension in some detail. Nearly all saw this as the climax of the beginning of the play, many noticing the dramatic shift in action and in Leontes. There was some reference to the wider text, often using the oracle's prophecies as a link, and this was at times integrated relevantly into the discussion of the passage. Good answers explored some of the literary features in detail, noticing the contrast between the language, tone and mood of the main speakers here, Leontes and Hermione. Very good answers often showed sustained analysis of language, and at times the dramatic tone. Others gave very detailed analysis of the characterisation, often well linked to the dramatic moment and even the court within the court setting. When such arguments were supported by detailed reference to the passage and appropriate links to the wider text, the answers did very well.

Question 3 Jane Austen: *Northanger Abbey*

(a) Answers showed a sound knowledge of the text and essays were able to select relevant material to offer at least a contrast between General Tilney and John Thorpe, though mostly in terms of their characters and their relationships with Catherine. There were only a very few references to their roles in the text and how Austen used them in very different ways to develop Catherine's characterisation and the novel's plot.

(b) Answers usually recognised the passage as the ending of the novel and were able to explore how Austen quickly brings some of the plot's difficulties to what is for some, a rather unsatisfactory conclusion. Others noted the General's focus on wealth and especially status, seeing that as a key concern in the novel as a whole. Very good answers noted the variety of narrative voices.

Question 4 Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Knight's Prologue* and *Tale*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 5 Charles Dickens: *Oliver Twist*

(a) All responses had a secure and often very thorough knowledge of text and were able to make relevant points. Selection of the material was a key skill in this essay and some less successful essays paraphrased or retold some key events, particularly in Oliver's own story. Better answers focused on some of the key concerns, often choosing a symbolic figure to represent the learner's view, most often Fagin and Sikes, with some seeing Nancy as 'a fallen angel', often linked positively to Oliver. Good answers explored how Dickens used such figures to present his concerns about crime and criminals, but also about justice, noticing social injustice and hypocrisy. Others thought Dickens was often more sympathetic to some of the criminals. Such arguments, when supported with telling reference to the text and awareness of Dickens's methods, often did very well.

(b) Nearly every response was able to give a sound context to this passage. Weaker answers tended to offer an accurate paraphrase or to give a detailed account of Mr Bumble, Mrs Corney and their relationship. Better answers were able to discuss this passage in terms of Dickens's methods of characterisation, with some thoughtful discussions on the role that each of the characters play in Oliver's narrative. Good responses were able to explore Dickens's methods, including his use of dialogue and narrative voice, with some able to identify and analyse the humour and the irony of the writing. Where such responses also linked ideas into relevant reference to the wider text, they often did very well.

Question 6 Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) These answers were able to give a clear context to the passage and showed awareness of its significance in the development of the plot and the relationship between Tess and Alec. There were clear links to the rest of the text, particularly their developing relationship and how what happens in the passage affects both of their lives and characters. There was knowledge and understanding shown, but the answers would have been improved by a greater awareness of Hardy's methods, such as his use of dialogue and language for example.

Question 7 John Milton: *Paradise Lost, Books IX and X*

(a) Answers has at least a sound knowledge of the text and often revealed understanding of Milton's concerns and, to a lesser extent, his characteristic methods. Candidates were able to select relevant material to address the task. Many focused on the depiction of Eden itself, though some discussed the serpent and, before the eating of the apple, even Adam and Eve, as key elements in Milton's use of the 'natural'. Those answers which considered his poetic methods as well as addressing the concerns often did very well.

(b) Most answers recognised the context for this passage and were able to explore the meaning in some detail, often analysing the concerns and at times the methods, with often secure links to the rest of the text. Some better answers considered the poetic methods here, the voice and tone, for example, with others concentrating on language and imagery. Where the analysis was linked to a clear argument and the wider text the answers often did very well.

Question 8 Percy Bysshe Shelley: Selected Poems

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9695/62
1900 to the Present

Key messages

- Successful responses demonstrate candidates' command of detailed knowledge of the text, including quotations, which they deploy relevantly to address questions.
- Responses of a basic standard refer mainly to plot and characters. Demonstrating understanding of themes and concerns will attain a higher level.
- The best answers incorporate detailed commentary on the ways writers shape meaning, which involves the writer's use of language, form and structure. These answers often refer to critical opinions to support or contrast with candidates' own opinions on texts. Such answers use these opinions as part of the argument in response to a question.
- Personal response to a text should be supported by evidence, preferably with a quotation.
- Clarity of expression and a clearly structured, coherent line of argument are more important than over-elaborate language.
- A short plan is often useful before starting an answer; however, candidates should not spend time writing pages of notes before embarking on an essay.
- Knowledge of biographical, historic, social or literary context is useful in understanding a text but needs to be deployed with discretion and have some direct relevance to the question.

General comments

Nearly all candidates produced work of at least a solid standard with many performing competently or with proficiency. Answers were nearly always clearly expressed, showing enthusiasm and engagement with the texts. All candidates were able to complete the paper in the allocated time, producing two essays of at least reasonable length with no rubric infringements.

The two main indicators of good responses are the way in which the essay has been shaped and the ability to move around the text, using a command of detail to support the points being made. This applies to passage questions as well as to essays. In this examination, the most successful candidates moved easily from one point to the next, building up a coherent response. Less successful responses were often more static, moving through an essay or passage, sometimes making the same point in different ways. To improve, candidates need to show contrasting ideas or balanced argument. Furthermore, they should apply detailed knowledge to support ideas rather than to construct a narrative summary.

While most candidates appreciate the need to link the set passages to the main themes and concerns of a text, some did not use detailed reference to the wider text to make comparisons or connections with details from the passage. When a question asks 'how characteristic' the passage is of the writer's methods and concerns, candidates can often identify characteristic features; to improve they need to give examples of these from elsewhere in the text.

Some candidates were able to make good use of the views of critics which they either supported or refuted with evidence from the text. Less successful answers tended to attribute obvious assertions to critics, such as, 'Amanda always behaves in an over-dramatic way'. Critical assertions should be supported by evidence and examples of these occasions from the text.

Most candidates used an appropriate register to express their ideas. Less successful responses used expressions such as '*Woolf is trying to say*', or over-casual phrases. It should be noted that at Level 3, expression is expected to be 'appropriate' and at the highest levels to be 'accomplished and appropriate'.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*

Learners demonstrated a pleasing engagement with some of the central philosophical and religious ideas of the poems. The passage question was more popular than the essay question though the latter afforded many opportunities for candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding.

(a) Some candidates were able to make use of both general and detailed knowledge of the poems to answer this question. The four natural elements of air, earth, water and fire and the changing of the seasons which lie at the heart of these poems were mentioned by some candidates. Some responses could have been improved by ensuring that they fully explained the significance and the effects created by Eliot. Some candidates identified the 'vibrant air' as a subtle feature of *Burnt Norton*. However, candidates also could have commented on: the 'earth feet, loam feet…long since under the earth' in *Little Gidding*; the sustained reflections on the river and the sea in *The Dry Salvages*, and the 'tongues of flame' in *East Coker*. As these references are more obviously linked to their respective elements, commenting on these would have enabled many candidates to develop their responses. Other candidates chose to focus on some of the many natural references scattered throughout the poems, such as the rose garden in *Burnt Norton* and its significance. Some related the rose garden to childhood innocence or the Garden of Eden. Some responses were hampered by a limited range of examples. Other responses could have improved by taking the opportunity to examine the symbolic significance of natural features such as the 'fire and the rose' as well as the way Eliot employs natural imagery in his philosophical passages as a kind of simplifying or clarifying device. One example of this device is in the third movement of *Little Gidding*, 'There are three conditions which...flourish in the same hedgerow…and growing between them indifference,...unflowering, between the live and the dead nettle'.

(b) Most candidates who attempted this passage question were able to shape a coherent reading of the extract and provide some commentary on the ways Eliot shapes meaning through his use of: extended metaphor ('As, in the theatre' and 'As, in an underground train'); antithesis (So the darkness shall be the light), and chiasmus (for hope would be hope for the wrong thing). Some noted the use of first person singular in this passage and the way in which Eliot sometimes speaks directly to the reader as 'you' and sometimes uses first person plural 'we' throughout these poems. Here the use of 'I' links to the beginning of *East Coker*, 'In my beginning is my end' which is appropriate in the context of the church where his ancestors had worshipped and from where his family originated. Most candidates attempted to write a critical appreciation of the passage and the most successful responses addressed 'how characteristic' this passage is of Eliot's poetic methods and concerns. This involved making connections between this passage and the wider text, such as Eliot's frequent use of darkness and light both in this passage and in many other areas of the text such as the opening of *Little Gidding* with its description of the 'brief sun flaming' in 'the dark time of the year'. The most successful responses identified that one of the chief characteristics of Eliot is his use of a didactic tone in expounding some of his central beliefs that mankind must divest himself of all such things as hope, belief and love before attaining true spiritual fulfilment. Some candidates recognised that this characteristic is seen in other areas of the poem such as 'In order to possess what you do not possess/ You must go by way of dispossession'. In weaker responses, candidates tended to explain the poem, relying heavily on paraphrase or to refer generally and assertively to Eliot's philosophical and religious ideas.

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Question 2 Athol Fugard: *Township Plays*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 3 Kazuo Ishiguru: *Never Let Me Go*

This text affords opportunities for students to express a personal response to the dystopian world depicted and the ethics of cloning and harvesting organs. Most responses were balanced and moved beyond personal reflection to remain largely focused on the question in hand while still demonstrating engagement.

(a) Many candidates referred appropriately to Kathy's fondness of the song on the Judy Bridgewater tape, her distress at its loss and the reaction of Madame when she sees Kathy dancing to the song. Competent answers went on to develop a link between the title of the novel and the importance of memories to which Kathy, in particular, clings. The way in which Kathy's memories are presented through the use of the first-person narrative was discussed by more successful candidates, mentioning her concern with the accuracy of her accounts and the way her efforts and uncertainties make her character realistic, evoking empathy from the reader. Some candidates expressed difficulty in being sure her story is a reliable account, as if they were discussing reality rather than a construct. Kathy's tendency to preserve the past was contrasted with Ruth's decision to get rid of all her souvenirs of Hailsham. The significance of the title was also viewed in the light of the way Kathy and her friends never let each other go as they remain connected until 'completion' and at the end Kathy still holds on to her memories of them. The idea of 'letting go' was also linked to the training received at Hailsham, or 'brainwashing' to encourage students to let go of their precious artwork in preparation for making donations of their organs later in life. Good responses detailed the ways the novel gradually unfolds the truth of what is being 'let go', the ways euphemisms are used and how they are 'told and not told'. Connections were made to the final revelation that that the gallery was used 'to prove you had souls at all', which leads to Tommy and Kathy having to let go of their last hope of a deferral. Connections were made between the situation of the clones and that of humans who face the inevitability of death and acceptance of the inevitable. Relevant use was made of critical views, particularly of comments made by the author. Less successful answers were restricted by a weak command of detailed reference and a tendency to narrate. To improve, such answers need better development and candidates need to ensure that their responses are coherent and supported by relevant examples.

(b) Competent answers often began with an overview of the passage, giving some idea of context and the subject matter as well as outlining the chief concerns and themes of the wider text which are dealt with in the passage. Many candidates were able to identify the development of friendships, conflicts of loyalty, the bullying of Tommy and the overshadowing hints of the future for which the clones are being prepared. Good answers noted the way the tone of the passage shifts from light-hearted if rather distasteful and ghoulish to end on a 'sombre and serious' note as the Hailsham students gradually move from being 'told and not told' to a fuller understanding of the implications of donating their organs in the future. The most successful candidates commented on the developing relationship between Kathy and Tommy and the ways Kathy tries to help Tommy control his temper tantrums, with reference to the wider text. There are indications of Kathy's later career as a carer in the concern she shows for others and her sensitivity to their feelings. Some pursued the topic of Tommy's significance in the novel as a whole, as a character who rebels to some extent against the system at Hailsham, not sharing the enthusiasm for artwork prevalent amongst most of the pupils and perhaps exhibiting his frustration at their situation through his tantrums. Some referred to Tommy's final outburst against the system after he has learned that deferrals do not exist. At the heart of the passage is the development of Kathy's character, intensified by the use of the first-person narrative, with its informal, direct address to the reader increasing the sense of intimacy in phrases such as 'But you've got to remember' and the casual register used in 'But I've gone off a bit'. The repulsive image of 'you unzipped your liver, say, and dumped it on someone's plate' was viewed by some candidates as typical childish humour but others saw the darker side in its reference to their later lives and interpreted this as a sinister way of familiarising themselves and becoming passively accepting of their fate. Very good responses argued that this parallels the ways young people joke about death as a kind of coping mechanism as they adjust to its inevitability. Weaker responses mainly consisted of narrative accounts of the passage with some comments on the character of Kathy and the bullying of Tommy.

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Question 4 Barbara Kingsolver: *The Poisonwood Bible*

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 5 Derek Walcott: Selected Poems

(a) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 6 Tennessee Williams: *The Glass Menagerie*

Some responses made relevant use of critical opinions and showed an awareness of social and economic context and of the biographical connections to Williams's own life. Less successful candidates tended to make too much assertive reference to details such as the supposed similarity between Williams's mother and Amanda. The best answers showed engagement with the text with detailed knowledge and understanding of dramatic techniques which help to shape the meaning.

(a) The few who attempted this question could write confidently about the seventeen gentleman callers so frequently mentioned by Amanda. Some were able to analyse the reasons for Amanda's need to reminisce about her youth and refer to the way Laura is affected by her mother's expectations. The pressure put upon Tom to supply a gentleman caller was mentioned together with the way this affects the relationship between Tom and Amanda but surprisingly brief attention was paid to Jim and his significance in providing a contrast to Tom and as a representative of those inspired by the American Dream. Opportunities were missed to discuss Amanda's appearance and behaviour during the visit as well as the way Laura's character is developed by her response to Jim and the way audience response to Jim changes through his interaction with Laura. The structural importance of Jim's visit as the long-anticipated climax of the play and the use of plastic theatre in the form of screen legends such as 'Annunciation', 'Terror', 'Souvenir' and the way the music changes could have been discussed. Candidates could also have referred to some of the many conflicting critical opinions of Jim and the effect of his visit on Laura. Some answers included the catalytic effect Jim's visit has on the final departure of Tom.

(b) Competent responses gave an overview of the context and concerns of this passage, often referring to the previous quarrel between Tom and Amanda which ended through Laura encouraging Tom to apologise. Some explored the ways the themes of escape and dreams are developed in the passage, with connections to other areas of the text, while some identified the significance of the screen legend as foreshadowing Tom's announcement of his success in finding a gentleman caller. There were some insightful comments on the stage directions with some analysis of the significance of the women's formalised movements and their comparison to moths or of Amanda gazing at her husband's picture. Most candidates missed the ironic significance of 'Franco Triumphs' but did identify the way in which the music, 'The World is waiting for the Sunrise', reflects Tom's hopes for a different life. The breaking of the fourth wall by Tom as he speaks directly to the audience was noted by several candidates as a characteristic feature of Williams's methods, but few connected this example with the wider text. The context of the Spanish Civil War and the imminent Second World War attracted little attention. There was some insightful comment on the complexity of Amanda's character as she is shown to be at first overbearingly tyrannical towards Tom (sometimes linked to other areas of the text such as her instructions to Tom on chewing his food properly) and later displays her maternal, caring side in her wishes for her children. Competent responses incorporated relevant, perceptive critical views into their arguments. Weaker responses tended to remain within the passage, often resorting to narrative commentary, with only general or assertive links to the wider text. To improve, candidates should ensure that critical opinions move beyond the obvious and that all assertions are supported by precise examples from the text.

Question 7 Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

Candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of Woolf's narrative technique as well as knowledge of the literary, social and historical context of this novel. Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of some critical writing on this text and were able to use it judiciously.

(a) Candidates who attempted the essay displayed some competence in selecting appropriate material. They recognised that the novel's structure comprises constant fluctuation between memories of the past and the events of a single day in the present, narrated through a third person omniscient author but focusing on the stream of consciousness of various characters. Clarissa's reflections include some key moments of her life, such as her decision to marry Richard, rather than Peter Walsh, and her experiences at Bourton with Sally Seton. Candidates went beyond an account of these memories to demonstrate how they allow the reader to see beneath the superficialities of Clarissa's day to understand her internal conflict as she is prompted by Peter to consider whether she had made the right decision in marrying Richard. Clarissa's memories were viewed by some as a form of escape from her mundane life and a contrast to the memories which Septimus is urged to suppress of his experiences in the war and the death of his friend Evans. Some argued that the contrast between Clarissa's memories of Sally and Peter and their now much less interesting personalities justifies Clarissa's choice of her life with Richard and this is symbolised by her watching the old lady climb the stairs at the end of the day, suggesting Clarissa can now put her memories safely to bed and feel at peace with herself. The most successful responses showed a command of relevant detail and an understanding of Woolf's stream of consciousness technique.

(b) Successful answers identified this passage as part of the only scene in which both Clarissa and Septimus appear. The prevalent attitude towards mental illness as a taboo subject, demonstrated by Lucrezia's embarrassment and her fear that 'people must notice' was recognised as characteristic of Woolf's social criticism in an era when shell shock was regarded as the male equivalent of hysteria in women. Competent responses made connections between the passage and later opinions of Dr Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw. They commented on the smooth transition from the stream of consciousness of Septimus to that of Lucrezia and the contrasting use of short, choppy sentences to describe the dramatic impact of the car suddenly stopping. There was some detailed analysis of the language describing Septimus's thoughts and their link to his wartime experiences with particular attention to 'the world has raised its whip; where will it descend' and 'the world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames'. Some candidates considered the significance of nature in the passage and the novel as a whole, connecting the curious pattern like a tree on the blinds of the car, used to conceal the occupant, and Lucrezia's desire to take Septimus to a park to conceal him from public gaze. Weaker answers focused mainly on a sympathetic response to Lucrezia, with insufficient attention to the details of the writing, or a more general consideration of the whole text, claiming that none of the characters achieve what they wish for and that both Clarissa and Septimus lack any real purpose.

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There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.