

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/12
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts, including a wide range of references
- support their views with relevant textual reference
- focus directly on the question
- explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- narrate or explain aspects of texts rather than answer the question
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely log or explain writers' techniques
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session. There were few rubric infringements, and most candidates divided their time successfully across the paper.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear evaluative engagement with the key words of the question whereas less successful responses needed to tailor their material more explicitly to the specific demands of the question. Some candidates offered mere character sketches or explanations of themes without addressing the question directly. Similarly, some answers to prose extract questions began by listing themes present in the extract without direct consideration of the question's key words. Less successful poetry responses often worked their way through the poem explaining its content and, thereby, lost focus on the question.

Textual knowledge

The strongest answers showed not only a detailed knowledge of the text but also a wide range of reference, with candidates skilfully integrating both concise quotation and indirect textual references to support their ideas. Successful poetry and extract-based answers analysed the detail of the printed poems or prose extracts whereas weaker responses explained the content of the poem or extract in general terms and made too few attempts to analyse the detail closely to show how the writers achieve their effects. The most successful responses to general essay questions were written by candidates who were able to recall much direct quotation; this enabled them to explore qualities of the writing. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation.

Writers' effects

In successful responses to poetry and extract questions, candidates showed skill in integrating much well-selected reference from the text printed in the question paper to address the key words of the question. Less successful responses often bore little evidence of direct quotation from the text printed in the question paper and were, consequently, less able to analyse writers' effects closely. In prose general essay questions, those who had a detailed knowledge of their texts (including direct quotation they had learned) were better able to produce sustained critical analysis. Some less successful responses commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to the ways in which the words are actually used in the text; these responses sometimes simply logged devices.

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, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'strikingly', 'memorably' and 'entertaining'. In less successful responses, candidates embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Again this session, it was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be made aware that, in answering questions, they should select relevant material from their knowledge to focus directly on the specific requirements of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The most successful responses focused on the key word 'strikingly', engaging with the ways in which Bhatt achieves her effects. These responses considered the impact of the smells in conveying the memory captured in the poem; they explored, too, the effects of the repeated 'I have thought so much' and the mystery of the poet's unwillingness to 'use her as a metaphor'. Many candidates understood the poet's admiration for the girl performing a menial task with grace and dignity, and how this connected with the title of the poem and the idea of womanhood. Less successful responses explained the content of the poem, simply listing the various smells or wrote discursively about poverty without a close analysis of the poetry.

Question 2

The strongest responses explored the ways in which Millay 'memorably conveys her thoughts and feelings'. They analysed closely the impact of the comparisons of love to natural events and the violence implicit in 'wreckage'. Most responses noted the shift from 'Pity me not' to 'Pity me' and what this revealed about the speaker's sadness that she is no longer loved. Less effective responses tended to explain rather than analyse the imagery in the poem, and the very weakest answers simply logged devices used without comment. Some candidates wrote in very general terms about the sonnet's rhyme scheme (ABAB etc.), but they rarely linked their comments on structure to specific ways in which Millay's thoughts and feelings are revealed in the poem.

Question 3

Most responses pointed out the parallel between the skylark and man, and the idea of imprisonment and restriction. The most successful responses offered convincing analysis of the poem's final three lines and the idea of the spirit liberated after death and the optimism of the ending. There was also an appreciation in these scripts of Hopkins's coinages such as 'dare-gale', 'bone-house' and 'day-labouring-out'. Less successful responses showed a basic response to the poem, explaining its content and identifying its rhyme scheme, though without meaningful analysis.

Question 4

The most successful responses noted the obsessive nature of the urge to see dolphins and focused on what the descriptions of the tourists reveal about their longing for 'epiphany'. There was also in these answers an exploration of the language used to describe the imagined dolphins and of the way the passengers'

disappointment is conveyed in the final stanza. Less successful responses tended to work though the poem in a narrative fashion without attending to the key words of the question: ‘How does Constantine powerfully convey...?’

Question 5

There was much evidence of enjoyment and engagement in the strongest answers to this question, with candidates offering convincingly argued responses to the dramatic monologue in which Duffy presents the Head of English: the snide comments; the jealousy; the barely disguised contempt for the poet; her sarcasm; her dismissiveness. Many candidates noted Duffy’s mocking of the teacher’s old-fashioned ideas about poetry: ‘for not all poems, / sadly, rhyme these days...’ Not all interpretations of the phrase ‘winds of change’ were soundly rooted in the poem. Less effective responses worked through the poem in an explanatory way, without really focusing on the key words ‘so entertaining’.

Question 6

The strongest responses explored the contrast between the two worlds of the war photographer: photographing war zones and developing the photographs at home in ‘Rural England’. These answers were alert to the ways in which Duffy powerfully captures the photographer’s memories and to the ways in which she depicts the editor of the newspaper and its readers. Lack of knowledge about analogue darkroom photography – ‘spools’, ‘the only light is red’, ‘Solutions slop in trays’ and the way the image magically appears – hampered some responses.

Section B

Question 7

Stronger responses showed understanding of the extract and its place in the overall novel, with some comment on Mrs Reed’s attitude towards Jane, as unacceptable to a child under her care. Most candidates considered the dialogue in the extract and, in particular, Mr Brocklehurst’s questioning of Jane about hell as being inappropriate when directed at a young girl. There was some sensitive analysis of language with many commenting on how Jane was ‘intimidated and trembling’, with most candidates considering the description of Mr Brocklehurst as ‘a black pillar’ with a face ‘like a carved mask’. Some responses commented on the use of Jane as first-person narrator standing in front of this nightmarish figure with his ‘large prominent teeth’. Less effective responses tended to narrate or explain the extract without focusing on the key word ‘disturbing’.

Question 8

The strongest of the relatively few responses to this question argued that Rochester was both victim and villain, showing excellent knowledge of the text and how he had been deceived by Bertha’s family. Most professed sympathy for Rochester and seemed relieved at the happy ending to his story. Stronger responses provided some well-chosen quotations which enabled them to explore closely qualities of the writing. Weaker responses tended to make generalised and overly assertive comments.

Question 9

Most candidates showed some understanding of the context and Deven’s worship of Nur, but many candidates seemed very unsure of what exactly is happening in the extract and where it appears in the novel. Only the most successful responses explored the ways in which Desai achieves her effects in making this moment in the novel so dramatic, commenting on Deven and Imtiaz who both ‘hissed’ at each other, the screaming and howling of Imtiaz, her appearance as an ‘apparition of fury and vengeance’ and Nur’s disgusting situation as he ‘wallows in such filth’ and whimpers in agony. Less successful responses tended to narrate without focusing on the key word ‘dramatic’, and the weakest responses showed evidence of misunderstanding.

Question 10

There were too few responses to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

Many candidates were able to deduce what the men's comments reveal about Joe and Janie. The more successful responses were keen to discuss Janie's mistreatment at Joe's hands and how it is perceived by those in the town; the difficulty for them of reconciling Joe's arrogance with his undoubted improvements to the town was also well-handled and supported. The best answers also managed to focus on the key word 'memorably' and understood the context of this extract within the wider novel. Less successful responses tended to paraphrase and paid insufficient attention to Hurston's use of language.

Question 12

Of the relatively few responses seen to this question, the majority worked methodically through Janie's life with comments relevant to the task. Understanding was more secure on her time with Logan Killicks and Joe Stark. Most of the responses considered her return at the end of the text as the best evidence that she has finally fully become her own woman. Weaker responses had only a sketchy knowledge of the text and tended to make general points rather than provide close support from the text.

Question 13

There were too few responses to make meaningful comment.

Question 14

There were too few responses to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Most responses recognised Finny's exuberance when talking his way out of trouble and how it disarms the schoolmaster, Gene the narrator and the reader. They explored the entertainingly outrageous excuses, and some commented on the more manipulative, troubling undertone ('Finny pressed his advantage'). The strongest responses noted the association of Finny with light and brightness, the breathlessness of his speeches and the irony of his physically lively character here set against his later injuries. Less successful responses offered a character sketch or worked through the extract in a narrative or explanatory way.

Question 16

The most successful responses sustained a clear focus on the key word 'pitiful' and had a sufficiently wide range of reference to support their ideas and to use as an integral part of their response to the ways in which Knowles presents the character of Leper. Most recognised that Leper is regarded as something of an oddity, not really accepted by the other boys. The strongest responses explored the visit that Gene makes to his home in Vermouth and the feverishness of his dialogue at that moment. Less successful responses offered a character sketch, with little reference to the detail of the text and with insufficient, or no, focus on 'pitiful'.

Question 17

Successful responses reflected on the striking way in which the opening provides a backdrop to the totalitarian world of the novel, analysing the depressing atmosphere and sense of unease. They commented on the decrepit state of Winston (with his ulcerous leg an indication of a poor lifestyle) and the irony of the name 'Victory Mansions' where he lives. Most candidates understood the implications of the intrusive nature of Big Brother and of the tension arising from the idea of constant surveillance. Less successful responses missed the deeper implications and offered narrative accounts of what happens in the extract.

Question 18

There were fewer answers to the general essay question on *1984*. The strongest responses showed a detailed knowledge of the novel and had a wide range of reference that enabled them to address the question convincingly. Central to these answers was an understanding of Newspeak with its aim to narrow the range of thought and Doublethink – the ability to hold two contradictory ideas at the same time so the citizens will believe anything the Party tells them. These responses included reference to Winston's work re-writing history in the Records Department and Symes's enthusiasm for destroying the old language. Weaker responses adopted narrative or explanatory approaches.

Question 19

The most successful responses had a clear understanding of the position of the printed extract within the novel as a whole: Stephen Kumalo has visited Absalom in prison and learnt about the young woman expecting the latter's baby. These answers understood Stephen's shame at the way he treated her previously and his compassion for her now, the girl's humility and desire to please, the strong bond that arises between them and the hopefulness of the ending of the extract. Less successful responses worked through the extract explaining the content in general terms rather than exploring how Paton makes this such a moving moment in the novel. The weakest responses focused solely on the extract, responding to surface meanings that could be grasped from reading its content, without linking the material to the novel as a whole.

Question 20

The few responses to this question tended to explore the wider context of Absalom's poverty and the way in which the legal system, largely run by white men, is stacked against him. Answers showed some understanding of the situation in which he finds himself, charged with murder and sentenced to death whilst his accomplices are let off. In general, there needed to be a closer focus on Paton's writing: 'How far does Paton convince you...?'

Question 21

Most responses commented on the correspondent's fear, the captain's courage and the sad death of the oiler who had seemed to be one of the stronger men. The most successful responses, however, directly addressed the ways in which Crane makes this such a memorable ending to the story. They explored the immediacy of the descriptions of the sea, the impact of the brief dialogue in the extract and the significance of the final paragraph. Less successful responses explained the content of the extract and made some attempt to address the way Crane uses language, though without addressing explicitly the key words 'memorable ending'.

Question 22

This was less popular than the extract-based question on *Stories of Ourselves*. Candidates had a choice of three of the ten stories in the current selection. Those candidates who knew their chosen story in detail and who had a wide range of relevant reference were able to explore the ways in which their chosen writer creates vivid impressions of the narrator. Many remembered brief direct quotations from their chosen story, which they were able to deploy as part of their close analysis of the ways in the writer achieves their effects. By comparison, those with only a sketchy knowledge of their short story fell back on narrating the story or explaining its content in general terms without focusing on the key words 'vivid impressions'.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/22
Drama

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

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/32
Drama

Key messages

- The most successful responses focused on the key words in the question, sustained the link in the response, and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- In passage-based questions, successful answers briefly stated the context of the passage and explored the passage itself in some detail.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and could refer to specific incidents from across the whole text.
- All questions require a response to the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage.

General comments

Candidates showed knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and understanding of the characters, ideas and themes they contain. The most successful responses showed detailed appreciation of texts, and made perceptive comments on characterisation, stagecraft, mood and tone. The most popular texts were *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Crucible*. Whilst there was an increase in responses to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, there were still very few responses to R C Sherriff's *Journey's End*. Candidates should be reminded that it is not a productive use of examination time to introduce responses to *The Crucible* with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text. Similarly, questions on to *A Raisin in the Sun*, do not necessitate a general account of racism, feminism or gender inequality.

To write a successful answer, candidates need to deconstruct the question carefully, focusing on the key terms, for example, 'movingly', 'powerfully', 'dramatic', or 'tense' and to sustain a link to the question throughout their answer. Briefly referencing the question in the introduction, or asserting it at the end of the answer, losing focus on the question in the body of the response, is unlikely to achieve high reward. A brief plan to help to select the most important points to include, and the most suitable material to use to support these points, is helpful. Some candidates wrote lengthy, general introductions, summarising the plot or listing irrelevant social, cultural, historical or biographical details of the writer. Others wrote a list of the things to cover including a list of the techniques the writer had used, including punctuation, which they would be analysing in their answer. In an examination with 45 minutes to write a response these are unproductive ways to start an answer. The most successful answers wrote a brief introduction, referencing the question, giving three or four key points developed in detail and supported with brief, well-selected references or quotations, analysing the references fully. In answering a passage-based question, a few sentences to contextualise the passage before exploring the passage itself in detail was helpful in demonstrating a candidate's understanding of the structure of the text.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, and formulaic approaches, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulted in unnecessary repetition and valuable examination time being wasted. This session there were clear examples of candidates basing their answers on film versions, rather than the printed texts, which was self-penalising as little real understanding of the texts was demonstrated. This was particularly relevant to *Romeo and Juliet*, resulting in some inaccurate details on characters and scenes.

Successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as drama, referring to the 'audience', rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book', as well as exploring the author's methods to convey the texts' main concerns. The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology

correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms, and particularly the use of punctuation, that is not explored in context or helpful in developing an argument constructively. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language' or 'diction' to convey ideas.

Though there were some brief answers, very few candidates appeared to run out of time. Candidates are reminded not to refer to line numbers instead of quoting from the text.

Centres are reminded that for June 2022 *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Raisin in the Sun* will be replaced by two new texts, Lyn Nottage's *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* and William Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular text and question but though candidates wrote very well about the relationship, only the most successful focused on the actual terms of the question and explored how Hansberry, 'movingly' portrayed Walter and Ruth's relationship. These candidates read the passage closely and successfully tracked Walter's changes of mood, looking carefully at the language, for example: 'It's been rough, ain't it, baby?' Successful responses appreciated the writer's skill in manipulating the audience's sympathies and used the extensive stage directions to explore the reactions of Walter and Ruth as well as non-lexical features such as ellipses and fragmented syntax. Many candidates were able to identify such features; those who scored highly demonstrated how the writer uses them to convey the characters' feelings. They commented on the poverty and racial issues which led to the tense and strained relationship. The majority recognised the passage's context and the impact that their living conditions had on Walter and his dreams.

Only the most successful candidates were able to link their comments on the way Ruth speaks and moves on stage, for example her tone of weariness, her 'standing and looking at him helplessly' to why this was so moving. Very few understood that Ruth's line, 'I do not know where we lost it' is said 'more or less to herself' and not directly to Walter. The use of context and background also differentiated between candidates. Better answers used it sparingly to inform the situation, for example in respect of Ruth's pregnancy, without losing focus on the passage; weaker ones tended to get side-tracked into the details of the \$10,000 and who wanted it for which reason.

Less successful responses tended to oversimplify the conflict and ignored the terms of the question, often believing the relationship was terminally broken and frequently did not get to the end of the passage where the mood changes. Weaker responses also tended to exaggerate the protagonists' characteristics: Walter's aggression and Ruth's passivity, or her occasional sarcasm, digressing from the passage and simply retelling the plot. There was some misreading of Ruth's comment on going 'into the banking business', with some taking this literally.

- (b) This was far less popular and often disappointingly done with generalised comments on the generation gap. Close focus on how the conflict was so 'powerful' on stage was needed to achieve highly rather than a systematic recall of events. Successful responses explored generational differences and attitudes, and they looked at Beneatha's more modern outlook as opposed to Mama's traditional views. Some candidates took one person's side and expressed dismay about Beneatha's rebellion or Mama's inflexible approach. Some were confused about the cheque, erroneously believing that Mama had favoured Walter and ignored Beneatha's ambitions. Better candidates understood the build up to the clash about Christian beliefs and noted the slap, with some well-selected textual detail and quotation to support this. Other areas covered were their differing opinions on marriage and which of Beneatha's two suitors was most appropriate – George or Asagai. Mama's chastising Beneatha over her treatment of Walter and habit of taking up interests and quickly dropping them, were also featured in these responses. Only the most successful responses recognised Mama's love for all her family and her desire to care for them all, which is the foundation of the relationship, opting to focus entirely on areas of conflict and disagreement.

Weaker responses limited themselves to religious beliefs, and the slap, but then ran out of ideas with some drifting into slavery regarding mama or Beneatha's appearance, and especially her hair,

but without sustaining the link to the question. There was some misunderstanding of Mama not supporting Beneatha's dream to be a doctor and of the way Beneatha wanted the money spending.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

- (a) This was a very popular text and question and produced some of the most successful responses in this series.

To achieve highly, candidates needed to comment on the writing which shows the characters as shocked and behaving in an unexpected way. Stronger candidates were able to analyse and evaluate this extract in depth. There was close focus on stage directions, particularly those associated with Cheever: 'embarrassed', 'carefully' and 'gingerly'. Regarding Proctor there was a focus on 'angrily, bewildered' and his tone of voice. Stronger candidates commented on the use of punctuation, exclamation marks and question marks, to indicate a tone of voice. Elizabeth's ironic tone, Proctor's confusion and anger, Cheever's dramatic retelling of Abigail's performance made the writing full of detail for comment. Most candidates were able to comment on Abigail and her manipulative ways and on Elizabeth's innocence. However, stronger candidates also focused on Hale and his situation in this extract and recognised the implication of this scene in the text. They acknowledged what it revealed about hysteria in Salem, Abigail's capacity for deceit, the escalation of accusations and how logic and sense are being overrun. Cheever's awkward and then animated manner, Hale's ignorance of events, Proctor's assertion and Mary's fear also provided rich material. There were some perceptive comments on language, for example in Cheever initially addressing Elizabeth as 'Goody Proctor' and, after the discovery of the poppet, dramatically as 'woman'. Some of the best work explored Cheever's reaction to the finding of the needle; it is shocking to observe the hold that superstitious fear has on him and responses that quoted his 'wide-eyed trembling' for example, benefited. There was some confusion and uncertainty over Mary's role and how much she knows of Abigail's plan.

In less successful responses there was some confusion regarding 'shocking' with many writing about what was surprising. Weaker responses spent time narrating the events which led up to this moment, retelling the story of the girls and of John Proctor and Abigail's affair or in providing a narrative overview of the passage with little, or no focus, on the question. There was often an overlap between this and **Question 2b** where candidates commented on John Proctor being a fraud. There was much confusion over Mary Warren's position in the Proctor household with some candidates believing she was Proctor's wife and others convinced that she was complicit and had 'planted' the poppet at Abigail's bidding.

- (b) This was less popular and some candidates struggled to define 'fraud' even though it is used in the text. Candidates approached the question in two ways: Proctor's view of himself as a fraud, agreeing or disagreeing or by the candidate/audience examining Proctor and whether they agree or disagree that he is a fraud: either interpretation, of the question was rewarded. There was evidence of previous essays being reproduced here, for example, on Proctor's adultery. Whilst a strong candidate may be able to modify such a response to fit the question, less successful candidates were unable to achieve highly as there was a limited range of textual detail offered. Many candidates agreed that Proctor was a fraud and a hypocrite and, in their view, remained so. The evidence is his infidelity and his reluctance to go to court earlier in the play. His opposition to the witch hunt, his courage and his sacrifice were often ignored altogether. The best answers took a balanced view and embraced Proctor's suffering and his elevation into a tragic hero at the end. All recalled the adultery in detail, and the better ones could reference his rejection of Abigail but also his admission of still being attracted. The most successful responses understood John Proctor's character and his predicament, starting with brief comments on the nature of the society and the pressures which this imposes on men like John Proctor. They were then able to relate and comment on his actions in the light of this. Stronger candidates focused not only on his reputation but his legacy for his sons, recognising how he redeems himself and his integrity. Most candidates concluded that he was a changed man at the end and, as a result, felt that he was not a 'fraud'.

Weaker responses struggled with the main thrust of the question, focusing on his actions, for example, his adultery and his impatience with Elizabeth, rather than his opinion of himself. They adopted a narrative approach, tracing his life from the beginning through to the end and saw him as selfish for dying and leaving his family simply for his 'name', missing the implication of his defaming other innocent people.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

- (a) There were very few responses to this text, and this was the more popular of the two questions. The more successful responses knew the context of the passage, some including reference to the fact Osborne had just given his ring, watch and a letter for his wife to Stanhope as evidence that he feared he would not come back from the raid and showing awareness that the audience knows the danger of the mission. Most were able to demonstrate some knowledge of why the situation was tense as well as some understanding of how Sherriff's writing conveyed this tension on stage. Stronger answers appreciated how Osborne's attempts to calm Raleigh and divert him while having '*one last look at the map*' conveyed the increasing tension. Nearly all were able to comment on how the silence on stage made it tense along with the frequent pauses in their conversation. Better answers noted the way the constant talk of time builds up the tension and explored Raleigh's inability to not talk about it, contrasted with Osborne's tactic of deflecting fear through a focus on banal chat. Some noted Osborne's calmer state contrasted with Raleigh's naïve excitement, and a few able candidates saw the irony in his attempts to play down the danger, while at the same time being the one with the more realistic conception of their chances of survival.

Weaker responses provided narrative accounts of the passage or asserted it was a tense moment and then paraphrased what was being said.

- (b) Too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 4

- (a) This was the most popular text and question. There were some very impressive responses but also many of the weakest on this paper. Candidates would do well to engage with the opening lines of chosen passages rather than plunging in to the first line spoken by the character referred to in the question. A failure to do so here caused some confusion with the context, with many candidates unaware that Romeo had climbed into the Capulet orchard looking for Juliet, having totally forgotten Rosaline, and being oblivious of his friends looking for him. Many focused on Mercutio and Romeo: writing as if Mercutio was speaking to Romeo as if he were present. Some of these candidates clearly knew about Mercutio as a character but did not focus on the extract. Others found his sexual innuendoes vulgar and concluded Mercutio was a vulgar man without seeing the humour or comic relief he provides in such scenes.

Strong challenges were presented for candidates, principally in terms of Mercutio's bawdy language and innuendos. Some candidates chose to approach this through total avoidance, focusing only on the limited speeches where he is not being crude, or rather disconcertingly going to the other extreme and giving the full anatomical details. Better answers recognised Mercutio the entertainer, the cynic, and the reckless danger-seeker happy to be shouting at the top of his voice right beside the property of the enemies of the Montagues. There were also some very good answers from candidates who were confident even with Mercutio's most obscure utterances and detected the note of concern and affection under his mockery. These answers showed understanding of the realism and cynicism about love, though at times, they were very contemporary in their discussion of Mercutio's 'objectification' of women.

Less successful responses were very general with little supporting textual reference. Some acknowledged the sexual nature of Mercutio's language but either became too concerned with analysing the literal meanings or became very confused by the language. Some did recognise how Romeo's love for Rosaline is being mocked. The ones who only took the 'good friend to Romeo' approach struggled to convince as their attitudes to love are diametrically opposed, as better candidates pointed out.

The weakest answers were uncertain about where we are in the plot, thinking that Romeo is still in pursuit of Rosaline or that Mercutio is already aware of his switch of allegiance. Other weaknesses included not focusing enough on the passage and mistaking Mercutio's tone for one of disdain rather than affection. It seemed that some candidates had watched films and had a general idea of Mercutio's character but had not studied the text closely.

- (b) Those who understood the social context of Lady Capulet and recognised the contrast provided by The Nurse, who is far more motherly, did well, citing the early scene when Lady Capulet needs the presence of The Nurse to raise the issue of marriage. Successful answers showed knowledge and understanding of how the patriarchal society in which Lady Capulet lived, and the fact that she was also married young, possibly impacted on how she was expected to behave. Many criticised her for having a wet nurse; some simply criticised her lack of knowledge of Juliet's love for Romeo and her lack of defending Juliet against her father's outrage only knowing her lines '*I would the fool were married to her grave*' or '*I have done with thee*'. The best candidates knew she had attempted to calm her husband down '*Fie, fie, what, are you mad?*' Some accused her of putting on a melodramatic act when Juliet has 'died' rather than genuine grief on the death of her only daughter. Those who argued that theirs was a cold and distant relationship provided evidence of understanding. Some, however, argued she was a wonderful mother and took Juliet's wishes into account. The best responses focused on the '*How far...?*' of the question and wrote a balanced response. Of all the questions on the paper this was one where knowledge of a film version, rather than knowledge of the printed text, resulted in some inaccurate details on characters and scenes.

Weaker answers were very general and vague, with little, if any, textual support. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and seemed to feel obliged to present Lady Capulet as caring. These responses struggled to present a strong case and focused on small details such as the fact that Lady Capulet often calls for Juliet. They often confused Lady Capulet with the Nurse and spent time narrating the events of the play. There was considerable misreading in the answers to the question for example, many weaker candidates stating that Lady Capulet knew about Juliet's marriage to Romeo.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 5

- (a) In general candidates understood the question and what was required. To achieve highly candidates had to bring in what makes this moment 'satisfying', focusing on individual characters and their reactions to the revelations in the scene as well as exploring the end of the plot. The most impressive responses tended to focus on Viola - and to a lesser extent Sebastian - whose personalities and histories did evoke some sympathy and whose happy ending did persuade some candidates to feel a sense of satisfaction. Awareness of the genre and romantic comedies resulting in happy endings was a feature of the best responses with some perceptive comments on the fact that though a comedy, Malvolio does not have a happy ending – although he does not appear in the extract. There was also understanding of the slow build-up of Viola's revelation and the dramatic tension created.

Stronger candidates focused on particular aspects of the ending and commented on the impact that having everyone on stage would have on the audience. Most focused on the reunion of the twins, some on the reunion of Antonio and Sebastian, and some, in great depth, on the forthcoming marriage of Viola and Orsino. Most candidates were aware of the love triangle and how this was the resolution of the confusion which this had caused. A few candidates attempted an analysis of Shakespeare's critique of society's attitude to same sex relationships being prohibited, considering Antonio being left out, and Orsino's true attraction to the 'Boy' Viola being an affirmation of same sex love.

Weaker candidates adopted a narrative approach to this question. Many told the story of the whole play leading up to this point so that they could then explain in detail how all the loose ends are tied up. They did not focus on how it was 'satisfying' except for the fact that the ending was happy.

- (b) This was not as popular as the passage question but most of those who did attempt were able to demonstrate varying degrees of textual knowledge and understanding. Awareness of the genre of the play and how the audience is positioned to see characters as comic or tragic, inviting mockery or pathos, rather than seeing them as real people but constructs, would have enhanced many responses. Although most started well, citing the first lines of Act 1 Scene 1, many became narrative in approach. Orsino is much absent from the play except for in the early and late stages and is not a prime mover in the plot so weaker candidates found it hard to find material. They also found it difficult to engage with what Orsino represents in terms of the excesses of Courtly Love or detect any satirical purpose in his presentation. The most successful responses recognised the

self-absorbed love exhibited by Orsino and his arrogant assumption that a man's love is deeper, often saying that he is in love with the idea of being in love and he does not really love Olivia. They commented on the deficiencies in his wooing technique and occasionally his rather theatrical approach.

Some candidates argued that Orsino was self-centred in his continued efforts which ignored Olivia's grieving for her brother's death and were critical of his continued sending of messengers; many argued that his sudden about turn at the end of the play was evidence of his homo-erotic tendencies, especially as he refers to Viola as 'Boy' rather than by her name. The imagery of music as food and the hart/heart were explored by the best candidates and the final shift in affection was well referenced. Stronger candidates also explored his and Olivia's characters and explored his sudden change of mind and impact which this had on his relationship with Olivia. Some candidates did try, unsuccessfully in most cases, to explore Orsino's love for Olivia in terms of the love triangle. Quite a few argued that he was quite well-matched in his love for Olivia as they both behaved rather '*stupidly*' and because of this they felt that he did not deserve Viola at the end of the play.

Weaker responses were narrative with many starting with '*If music be the food of love...*'. but not showing understanding of the language. Some weaker candidates then focused on Orsino and music in their answers without giving specific detail. There were some comments on reasons to doubt his love and the fact that he sends messages to Olivia but does not visit her himself and, how swiftly he transfers his love from Olivia to Viola. The weakest responses merely narrated the course of his wooing and eventual marriage to Viola.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/42
Unseen

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

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/05
Coursework

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