LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

> **Paper 0992/12**
> **Poetry and Prose**

Key messages

Successful responses:

*   show an extensive knowledge of texts
*   address directly the question that has been set
*   support their arguments with relevant textual references
*   explore sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

*   have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
*   do not address the question set
*   make simple assertions not rooted in the detail of the text
*   merely label and list writers' techniques
*   offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session, where candidates sustained perceptive and evaluative engagement with the texts they studied. Most candidates divided their time well across their two responses for the paper.

There were, once again, instances of some candidates using only the extract when answering the general essay question on Prose texts. As has been reported before, this approach is self-penalising as there is insufficient material for candidates to draw upon for their answers. It is not possible to make reasonably developed responses to general essay questions by relying solely on the content of the extract in the extract question. Centres should emphasise to candidates that there is a clear separation between the two questions on each Prose text.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question, where candidates selected relevant material and tailored it to the demands of the question. Detailed knowledge of a text cannot on its own achieve the highest reward as there must be a clear focus on the question set. Writing everything a candidate knows about the character or theme mentioned in a general essay question is not a productive approach as it can lead to character sketches or explanations of themes. Simply working through the poems in poetry questions or extracts in extract questions can result in a loss of focus on the question. Apt selection of material is the key to success.

Textual knowledge

In the strongest answers candidates skilfully embed both concise quotation and indirect textual reference to support their ideas. In answers to poetry and extract questions, candidates can take advantage of the printed text to support their ideas and to explore the ways in which the writer achieves their effects. The strongest responses to general essay questions showed detailed knowledge including much direct textual reference to support their ideas. Having recourse to learned direct quotations enabled candidates to explore the detail of the writing. Less successful responses showed only a basic and general grasp of the detail of the text, with little direct reference to enable them to explore a writer's use of language.

Writers' effects

The most convincing responses sustained a critical analysis of ways in which writers achieve their effects. In responses to poetry and extract questions, candidates embedded much well-selected, concise reference from the text printed in the question paper. Less successful responses had little evidence of direct quotation from the printed texts and missed the opportunity to explore the detail of the writing. Some less successful responses often commented discretely, and often mechanically, on connotations of specific words without relating them to the ways in which the words were used in the text or to the question. These responses sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, caesura and enjambment. In poetry responses, ABAB rhyme schemes were noted without analysis of how specific examples reinforced meanings. Often unconvincing generalised claims were made about the length of lines, stanzas and paragraphs.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal engagement with texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, showing insight and individuality. These responses directly addressed those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all, preferring instead to embark on a list of pre-learned themes. Some prose answers included the phrase 'Another theme is…' rather as if the candidate wanted to write about a topic they had revised rather than engage with the specific question that had been set.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Responses were characterised by strong personal engagement. The awareness of the narrator that he had not shown gratitude towards his father seems to have struck a chord with candidates. Successful responses explored the imagery depicting the cold, especially 'blueblack', and they addressed the darker side of the poem suggested by 'chronic angers'. There was understanding of the speaker's regret and self-criticism evident in the repeated 'What did I know', with many candidates exploring the idea that the father's love was shown in his actions, not words. Less successful responses tended not to appreciate the full power of the stark phrase 'austere and lonely offices'; indeed, some candidates took 'offices' literally rather than as a reference to duty.

Question 2

The most successful responses explored the extended metaphor of the wife as 'territory' or 'geography', with the darker connotations of 'territory' as a land to be invaded and conquered. Some castigated the husband for daring to 'learn' his wife as though she were an object in a school lesson. The strongest responses focused explicitly on the key words 'memorable impressions of the wife' and tailored their material accordingly. Less successful responses worked through the poem in order, pointing out the wife's unpredictability, or focused on impressions of the husband instead.

Question 3

Successful answers explored the poet's presentation of an elderly couple and the speaker's recalling the passion of youth compared with their later companionship and memories of a shared past. Only a few candidates picked up on the phrase 'without nostalgia' that implied there was no sentimentality or looking back, but rather acceptance. Most candidates were able to explore the extended metaphor of time as a waterfall. Less successful responses strayed from the specific detail of the poem to provide more generalised commentary on regretting the passing of youth into old age, paying insufficient attention to the nuances of the poem.

Question 4

The strongest responses explored the poet's stream-of-consciousness approach which helps to convey a palpable sense of anxiety and self-doubt. Many candidates acknowledged that the speaker's concerns go beyond the usual physical and social worries of a man approaching mid-life at forty (or extreme old age, in some candidates' eyes); they explored the idea of a poet with 'vision thickening', interpreted metaphorically as losing insight and inspiration. There was some appreciation of a more contemplative tone as the poem progresses: middle age may bring cynicism and sadness but also a sense of 'elation' when poetry goes well. Less successful responses might have benefited from exploring the tone of the poem rather than embarking on a list of devices the poet uses.

Question 5

The pain of the woman (some said 'menopausal') was generally understood. The most successful responses grasped the speaker's conversational style, the abrupt changes of subject matter and the impact of the one-word interjections about quiche, shallots and cheese. Some candidates used specific detail from the poem to explore perceptively the idea of how age affects women and how society perceives them. Most candidates commented on the contrast between the speaker's memories of youth and her present experience and self-image. Less successful responses worked their way through the poem without directly addressing the key words 'powerfully portrays growing old'.

Question 6

The most successful answers focused on the key words 'movingly convey', exploring sympathetically the sense of dislocation felt by the speaker and her siblings and charting the development of the speaker's thoughts and feelings. These responses quoted the statement 'All childhood is an emigration', acknowledging the significance of the statement in lending greater universality to the poem and context for the speaker uprooted and transported to a new life. Less successful responses identified the simile 'shedding its skin like a snake' though without exploring its connotations of ease and naturalness as well as possible darker associations of deception.

Section B

Question 7

The most successful responses explored sensitively the ways in which Adichie presents this disturbing moment in the novel, focusing on the description of Papa in the first paragraph and the presentation of his bigotry and extreme violence. These answers were able to contextualise the moment: the sense of liberation that Kambili and Jaja had derived from their visit to Nsukka and their new preparedness to stand up to Papa. There was much effective commentary on the latter's hypocrisy and the difference between his public persona as a man of the church and the private viciousness evident in his dealings with his family. Less successful responses explained what is disturbing about this moment without exploring ways in which Adichie achieves her effects.

Question 8

Candidates selected moments that included Ifeoma arguing with Eugene about their father's death and funeral and her confronting the police who come to her house to intimidate her. The most successful responses showed evidence of learning much well-selected relevant reference which enabled candidates to explore specific ways in which Adichie captures Ifeoma's fearlessness. Without such reference, candidates produced descriptive and overly assertive responses.

Question 9

Many responses showed an awareness of Jane being devastated at the idea of being separated from Rochester and of the latter playing along with Jane's misunderstanding. The strongest responses showed a clear understanding of the presentation of both characters and what makes this such a moving moment in the novel. These responses explored the exaggerated description of the Irish and Ireland, Rochester's acknowledgement of the strong bond between them and the image of the piece of string. Less successful responses showed an insecure grasp of Rochester's words and motivation, taking what he says literally, with little knowledge of the wider context of the novel as a whole.

Question 10

Those who attempted this question showed an understanding of the character's back story, her inherited madness, her being imprisoned in appalling conditions and her violent and animalistic nature. Many responses referred to relevant moments in the text, such as Mason's visit, the fire in Rochester's chamber and the wedding veil, though without the direct quotation that might have helped candidates to explore Bronte's presentation of the character.

Question 11

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

Question 12

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

Question 13

In the few successful responses seen, there was an understanding of Aunt Penniman's continued interference and her purporting to know more than she actually does about Morris's intentions towards Catherine. These answers recognised that this is a turning point in the development of Catherine's character as she finally sees through her aunt, with a 'consummate sense of her aunt's meddlesome folly'. Less successful responses might have explored in greater detail Catherine's vehement tone and how James uses dialogue to reveal Aunt Penniman's true self in making this a 'powerful moment in the novel'. These responses showed an insecure understanding of the moment and its position within the novel.

Question 14

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

Question 15

The strongest answers explored how Lahiri makes this moment in the novel so entertaining through the salesmanship of Ashima's mother, the silence of the interested parties, and in particular the presentation of Ashoke's appearance and attitude ('glumly', 'indifferent'). These answers showed an understanding of the cultural context which memorably affects Ashima's situation: she is given no choice and marries an unknown man in a matter of weeks. There was an awareness that this is the beginning to Gogol's story. Less successful responses identified details that were 'entertaining' but needed to explore the ways in which Lahiri makes them entertaining.

Question 16

There were few responses seen. The best showed at least some understanding of the importance in Bengali families of having both a 'good name' and a 'pet name'. There was an awareness that the first time he uses the name Nikhil is when he kisses Kim and some sense of the wider theme of struggles with identity from Gogol's perspective. Generally, candidates needed a more extensive range of reference from the novel which would have enabled them to explore in greater detail ways in which Lahiri 'powerfully conveys' Gogol's feelings about his name. The least successful responses adopted a narrative rather than analytical approach.

Question 17

A focus on the key word 'impact', with examples of how Pi is affected both physically and emotionally, was a feature of more successful responses. In these responses, there was both an understanding of Pi's present suffering and predicament and also the implications for his future safety: the loss of the raft and the discovery of the one remaining whistle. Less successful responses merely identified aspects of language and structure (such as pathetic fallacy, onomatopoeia, repetition and listing) whereas stronger responses explored the ways in which Martel 'powerfully depicts the impact of the storm'. The least successful responses commented on the extract as a discrete piece of writing isolated from the rest of the novel.

Question 18

Successful responses showed an ability to draw upon moments in the text where Pi and Richard Parker are presented as potential allies or enemies and responded sensitively to the ways in which Martel portrays the two 'characters'. Some referred to the alternative potential interpretation of the story and considered Richard Parker as symbolic of Pi's 'dark side' and therefore an 'enemy'. Less effective responses gave character sketches of the two, without the range of direct textual detail both to support points and to explore ways in which Martel 'vividly conveys' that Pi and Richard Parker are both enemies and allies.

Question 19

The strongest answers explored the contrast between the vivid picture of decay, the 'grimy', 'rotting', 'sagging' buildings for the proles and the 'startlingly different', impressive and well-maintained Ministries which dominated London. The best answers explored what this contrast shows about the Party's values and the care for the people it governs. Perceptive comments on how the 'chicken-houses' show the dehumanising of the proles were sometimes linked to the inhuman and terrifying 'gorilla-faced guards'. Less effective answers tended to lack focus on the key words 'striking impressions' or concentrated too much on one aspect of the extract (such as the slogans) or focused on general background information.

Question 20

There were many successful responses to this question showing a perceptive and evaluative engagement with the text and task. These responses addressed the key prompt 'methods of controlling thoughts' with an extensive range of textual reference to the Thought Police, the Ministry of Truth, the Two Minutes Hate, the role of party spies and the function of Newspeak ('The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought.'). There was much sensitive exploration of the loss of individuality and the inability to show emotion, as enforced by the Party. Less successful responses described examples of Party control without focusing on 'people's thoughts'. Other responses lapsed into narrative or extraneous background material on Stalin and Hitler without focusing clearly on analysis of relevant textual detail to answer the question.

Question 21

Many of the stronger responses commented on the forbidden as something that is exciting for all children, on the idea of rebellion, particularly as part of a gang which explores and confronts the unknown, contrary to the edicts of adults. There was an appreciation of childhood naivete, with close analysis of the childish perspective in both thought and diction. Many candidates wrote engagingly about imagination, mystery and fear, the idea of a quest and links with myths / fairy tales. Less successful responses offered narrative and an over-reliance on assertion rather than a close analysis of language, structure or narrative viewpoint.

Question 22

The strongest responses included analysis of the narrative structure leading up to the ball, the passage from innocence to experience and from excitement to disappointment and despair. They analysed the force and impact of the words 'She didn't take.' Candidates showed sympathy for Dolly in the expectation to please men regardless of her own feelings, compounded by her aunts being complicit in this. The most successful responses explored the presentation of societal expectations and the rank unfairness of a patriarchal society, though it should be emphasised that these responses were rooted in the detail of the text. Less successful responses commented on these issues with little reference to the text or question or lapsed into re-telling the story. For high reward, candidates needed an extensive range of direct reference to the text to address the question and to explore features of Richardson's writing.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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        Paper 0992/22
        Drama
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Key messages

- Successful responses focused on the key words in the question and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Opening paragraphs should be brief and avoid lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writers' techniques to be addressed. Conclusions need to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Successful answers to passage-based questions briefly contextualised the passage, selecting relevant material from across the whole passage and analysed both content and the writer's methods effectively.
- Identifying technical terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and intended impact on the audience is an unproductive response to the set task.
- All questions require a response to the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain. There was a lot of excellent work seen. The most successful responses showed detailed appreciation of texts and made perceptive comments on characterisation and stagecraft. The most popular texts across all syllabi were *Twelfth Night* and *Othello. The Crucible* and *Journey's End* were popular on the 0992 syllabus. There were two new texts this series, *Othello* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy.*

Candidates should be made aware that in answering questions on *The Crucible*, introductions about the religious, socio-historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism are not a prerequisite to answering the question. Similarly, in *Othello*, comments on the role of Elizabethan women should be relevant and brief; how wives were expected to be obedient is a sound point as this, ironically, is the quality that undoes Desdemona but there is little to reward in arguing that '*Emelia is a feminist'*.

Many candidates wrote lengthy, general introductions, summarising the plot or listing irrelevant social, cultural, historical or biographical details of the writer, as mentioned above. Others wrote a list of the things to cover, for example, the techniques the writer had used, including punctuation, which they would analyse in their answer. In an examination with 45 minutes to write a response these are unproductive ways to start an answer and there is little to reward in responses which list the range of punctuation the writer uses in the text.

The most successful answers wrote a brief introduction, focusing on the key terms of the question, for example, 'disturbing', 'dramatic', 'revealing' or 'entertaining' and sustained a link to the question throughout their answer. 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. 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. Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and used a range of precise textual references from across the whole text.

A common approach for less successful answers was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text with little or no attempt to link this to the question. Retelling the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question wastes valuable time which should have been spent answering the question. These responses were self-penalising as little time was left to spend on the set passage.

Candidates need to remember that drama is visual and uses language that has an impact on an audience. The most successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as performance, referring to

the 'audience' rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book'. These were able to explore stagecraft and the authors' methods to convey the main concerns of their chosen texts.

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. Many candidates used juxtaposition incorrectly as a synonym for 'contrast'. Simply asserting the playwright uses a technique is unlikely to be rewarded; techniques identified should be relevant, supported and the effects achieved analysed. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language', 'diction', 'end-stopping' or 'caesura' to convey ideas or to write a list of techniques they will be writing about in their introduction.

There are lessons candidates need to learn about quotation. Most know that close reference to the text and quotations are needed to support ideas to achieve highly. However, some candidates work through the extract, line by line, writing out a quotation and then offering paraphrase, sometimes followed by the statement: 'which makes it such a significant moment in the play'. To achieve a coherent, relevant response to the question, the argument should come first, followed by a supporting quotation, containing a link to the task. For example, as one candidate wrote: *'Abigail focuses on accusing the weakest person in the room in order to deflect attention away from herself: "She makes me drink blood". This demonstrates her cunning, and ruthlessness but also starts a process that will only lead to violence and destruction. This makes this a very significant moment in the play.'*

There were some rubric infringements on where candidates answered on two passage-based questions instead of one passage-based question and one discursive. In these instances, both essays are marked but only the higher mark awarded. Time management was good with very few unfinished responses seen. Candidates are reminded not to refer to line numbers instead of quoting from the text and to remember to label their answers clearly, with the question number at the top of the response.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

(a) Candidates were able to identify both the amusing and serious: the racism Lily has experienced; the lack of black representation in the film industry; societal expectations of women and the girls needing a mother figure. They understood how Nottage approaches these serious issues with humour and the joking between characters. More successful answers explored how Ernestine is making fun of herself, adopting her film star pose, knowing she will never be a movie star.

(b) More successful responses commented on Gerte's racial and national contrast with the Crumps and Godfrey's religious views over Father Divine. Her sympathetic personality was approved by the few who wrote about her. There was little mention of the attack on Godfrey because he was with a white woman, or the shock of the marriage for both the girls and the audience. Less successful responses did not fully grasp that Gerte was a white woman, missing a key aspect of Nottage's portrayal of the character. Very few candidates understood the significance of her being German or the Nazi connection with its racial undercurrents.

ARTHUR MILLER*: The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context: to distract attention from her own guilt and the dancing in the wood, Abigail has accused Tituba of calling up the Devil, which starts the accusations of witchcraft in Salem. Brief reference to the Puritan theocracy were made providing an important background in which extreme beliefs in God and the Devil would make the idea of witchcraft very threatening. Hence Abigail's determination to deflect blame from herself onto someone more vulnerable, a black slave from another culture, alien to the white, Puritan society of Salem. Abigail's cunning and lying manipulation of the situation was effectively explored, starting with her wild accusation, '*She makes*

me drink blood!' with Hale and Parris immediately seizing on this. Her realisation of her power over Tituba and Hale was noted, leading to further accusations of dreaming 'corruptions', difficult to substantiate, but enough to convince the onlookers of Tituba's guilt and evidence of her working for the Devil. Hale's naivety in accepting the accusations and the dramatic pace of his aggressive interrogation were effectively analysed with some insight into his questioning in that the answer he is looking for is already in the question and all she can do is to agree to save her life and, when pressed, name others. The dramatic impact of Tituba's shock and terror at being betrayed by Abigail with the threats of whipping and hanging were established as powerful and significant factors for the later witch trials. The most successful answers made brief, pertinent reference to McCarthyism where naming others was necessary to save oneself, moving from individual actions to the bigger themes of the play including betrayal, self-preservation, hysteria and the abuse of power. The best answers focused closely on the writing, the accusations, pauses and exclamation marks, for example, Abigail's '*Do not lie!*', then observing the powerful impact of her remaining silently on stage watching during the interrogation.

Many less successful answers started with a lengthy recap of the play, Miller's intentions in writing the play with reference to Senator McCarthy and Communism, and the history of the Salem Witch trials themselves. Others worked through the passage, commenting on the situation and punctuation, particularly exclamation marks but without understanding these reflect a tone of voice, or linking comments to the terms of the question. There was little sense of drama and there were many half-true assertions. Some thought the scene takes place in court and Tituba is innocent but confesses, forgetting the key point that she is dealing with witchcraft but at Abigail's insistence and it is the attempt to deflect from this that starts the accusations and interrogations.

(b) There were fewer responses to this question with many finding it difficult to go beyond a narrative overview of the relationship or character studies of Proctor and Abigail, without looking at the consequences of the relationship in the wider context of the play. The most successful answers considered Proctor's adultery, Abigail's determination to replace Elizabeth and the disturbing consequences of Abigail's ruthlessness in attempting to achieve this. These included: the witch trials and framing of Elizabeth with the most disturbing aspect being the deaths of innocents and, ironically, Proctor himself. The disturbing way in which Proctor thinks he can cast Abigail off without consequences and to preserve his reputation led to justifiable condemnation of Proctor. Better answers observed the similarities between them and how their lust and adultery made them both 'villainous' prepared to defend their reputations at all costs. Well-selected textual detail and awareness of the dramatic impact of their meetings, and dialogue, were features of these responses. However, few explored Proctor's guilt and refusal to expose Abigail and the effects of this dilemma on his own conscience and his family.

Candidates had mixed feelings about Abigail and Proctor. Many sympathised with Abigail as a victim, due to her childhood and background, claiming she was taken advantage of by an older man and effectively abandoned when no longer needed. This was contrasted to Proctor's greater status and maturity. His clear ambivalence towards Abigail was well-supported and his view of his 'sin' being a minor error, partly caused by Elizabeth, led many to sympathise further with Abigail. Some candidates applied modern ideas to the relationship including the fact that it was 'grooming' and Proctor was a 'paedophile' which undermines engagement with both the relationship and the text as there is so much evidence to support Abigail's malice.

Less successful answers adopted a narrative approach to the relationship and focused on the age difference and the personal relationship, seeing the characters as real rather than constructs. This limited exploration of its disturbing effects on stage. Abigail was frequently depicted as an abused child with little close reference to the text or textual detail to support ideas.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

(a) This question focused on a profoundly 'moving' moment at the end of the play which most candidates were able to engage with, eliciting many detailed, personal responses. There were many sensitive responses to Raleigh's innocence and youth with understanding of the dramatic impact on audiences who had witnessed the arrival of the hero-worshipping young boy, just out of school, now fatally injured. Comparisons to his 'rugger' injuries and expectations that he would soon re-join the men were explored and brief contrasts drawn between his heroic qualities and Hibbert's lack of them. The most successful answers contextualised the passage: Stanhope and

Raleigh's strained relationship before the attack and previous comments on the use of first names. Most found tenderness in Stanhope's ministrations and pathos in Raleigh's slow realisation of the seriousness of his injuries with '*the different note'* in his voice and inability to move his legs. There were perceptive comments on Stanhope's kindness and euphemisms in making light of the moment and giving hope to Raleigh so as not to panic him. There was understanding of the more friendly use of 'Jimmy' and 'Dennis' at this moment, contrasted with Stanhope's previous anger at the use of his first name as Stanhope provides comfort despite the battle raging outside. Stanhope's tone, proximity to Raleigh and perceived desperation to keep him comfortable, 'rising quickly' to get water, were effectively commented on. There was understanding of his attempts at humour with the water and tea leaves. There was much to explore in the stage directions, the silence and the pauses in speech. There was close analysis of the language, the symbolism of the rose light in the dawn sky, Raleigh's request for a light and the dark and cold. More perceptive answers commented on the losing battle above ground with Stanhope's response that the guns were *'Mostly theirs'*, symbolising a losing battle both above and below ground.

Less successful answers did not know the context with some unaware that Raleigh dies and did not comment on the changes in Stanhope. There was limited focus on 'moving', or the passage, with lapses into descriptions of the war and Stanhope's previous behaviour and some misconception that Stanhope survives.

There was some misunderstanding of the use of first names, with some calling them 'nicknames'. The terms 'old boy' and 'old chap' were often understood as Raleigh's experience having aged him, rather than being terms of endearment at a sensitive and moving moment. There was confusion of the guns making a 'row' with this understood as an argument between the men.

(b)   There were fewer answers to this question. The relationship between Stanhope and Osborne was one in which candidates were able to empathise and there was some sensitive detail to the friendship, particularly following the death of Osborne when Stanhope grieves for his lost friend. Most answers traced the friendship in a chronological manner. The most successful answers knew the text well and were able to identify key scenes where the relationship is clearly portrayed: Osborne's admiration and loyal defence of Stanhope and his drinking in front of Hardy; him putting Stanhope to sleep when he was drunk; the father-like image which Osborne had and the fact that Osborne gives Stanhope his personal possession when he goes out on the raid, and the effect his death has on Stanhope. They recognised the trust Stanhope has in Osborne and the compassion shown by him. Better answers explored the powerful moments when Osborne comforts and supports Stanhope after Raleigh's arrival, and by reading what Raleigh has written about him. Stanhope's powerfully dramatic reaction to Osborne's death and furious conflict with Raleigh were effectively explored.

Less successful answers were unable to recall specific textual details to support points. This resulted in general comments on their friendship and much retelling of the scenes where Osborne puts Stanhope to bed or calms him down when he is angry over the prospect of Raleigh informing his sister of Stanhope's drinking problem. Weaker answers focused entirely on Stanhope's drinking or wrote character sketches of the men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

(a)   There were some very impressive answers to this question but also many of the weakest. This is a pivotal scene which shows Malvolio, having previously found Maria's fake letter, setting in motion the sub-plot, effecting his own downfall in a most amusing manner. There was little sympathy expressed for Malvolio but considerable enjoyment at the success of the prank. It is dramatically effective and entertaining as the audience anticipates Malvolio's appearance and behaviour, dictated by the contents of the letter. The most successful answers anticipated and eagerly awaited Olivia's reaction to the change in her previously '*sad and civil'* steward. The dramatic irony of the moment featured highly with effective focus on Olivia's present state of mind, and her shock and confusion upon seeing Malvolio and at his attempts to remind her of what she had supposedly written in the 'letter'. Maria's contribution was neglected by most, but better answers saw her role in setting up the scene with her warning Olivia to be on her guard as he was in a '*strange'* manner and surely *'possess'd'*. The humour in her pretence at not knowing the reasons for his behaviour whilst questioning his *'ridiculous boldness'* was well-noted. There was engagement with the hilarious visual impact of Malvolio's yellow stockings, cross-gartered, smiling and kissing his hand.

There was some confusion over Olivia's words on how best to court Cesario as she awaits his arrival, with some thinking she says this to Malvolio himself. The language provided plenty of material to explore with many commenting on the perceived madness of Malvolio and the significance of '*greatness*', the sexual element and misunderstanding of going '*to bed*' and his being a '*nightingale'*. Better answers linked status to form: Olivia speaks in blank verse whereas Maria and Malvolio speak in prose, showing their social class, and were able make the link to wider themes of class, disguise, appearance versus reality, and madness in love. A few answers showed some sensitivity, seeing the humour in the gulling of Malvolio but also the cruelty in his humiliation and being '*notoriously abused',* leading to his later incarceration.

Less successful answers referred to the letter, Olivia's obvious confusion and Malvolio's conviction that she is in love with him, without supporting or developing how this is dramatic. Some stated that he was indeed insane and that it was right he should be locked away. The weakest answers retold the plot up to and beyond the moment, with minimal engagement with the question and passage. There were some attempts to explain what happened in the passage where it was clear the play had not been studied.

(b) There were fewer answers to this question. The more successful answers were able to go beyond Feste's intelligence and witty banter, quite unexpected for a 'Fool', and supported their argument and observations with textual evidence including, 'better a witty fool than a foolish wit' to show Shakespeare's true message through this character. There were many aspects of his role considered 'fascinating' and explored: his role in moving between households and social levels, being accepted in both; his part in the plot against Malvolio and disguise as Sir Topas, and the insight and melancholy of some of his songs which open and close the play. Better answers observed his almost omniscient nature as a mouthpiece for Shakespeare and a link with the audience, as a kind of 'Master of Ceremonies' who presides over the whole tangle of love stories, misunderstandings and pranks. He sees through Viola's disguise and wittily chastises Olivia for mourning a brother who is in heaven, getting away with calling her a 'Fool' and is the only character who could mock Maria.

A few less successful answers used prepared character studies of Feste which would have benefitted from closer links to the question and the ways in which Shakespeare makes him such a fascinating character. The weakest answers were undeveloped with many stating little more than Feste works at Olivia's court and he is witty and intelligent which is fascinating for someone employed as a 'Fool'. Some were able to identify moments in the plot when he appears, but these were narrative in approach and lacking in specific detail. There was much repetition of his being witty and intelligent but with very little textual detail to support this.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

(a) There were some engaging responses with the most successful candidates demonstrating clear understanding of the dramatic irony and that it was Shakespeare doing the foreshadowing and not Desdemona. The most successful were able to contextualise the passage and understood that Othello has changed, convinced by Iago of Desdemona's infidelity and planning to kill her that night. There was close focus on how this was made a 'sad' moment with sensitive comments on her love and loyalty to Othello even though in the previous scene he had called her names and hit her. Better answers referred to the inevitability of impending doom as conveyed through references to time, driven by Othello's insistence that his orders are carried out the '*th'instant'*, '*forthwith*'. Fear is aroused by his instructions to '*dismiss'* Emelia, leaving Desdemona vulnerable to his wrath and there was some effective analysis of her uneasiness and premonitions. Her words to Emelia, '*If, I should die…'* were understood with emphasis on the '*If'*. Less successful answers argued she has accepted her death and wanted Emelia to use her wedding sheets, from happier times, for her '*shroud'.* Better answers understood that the 'Willow' song eerily parallels her situation, recognising that they are not her words but the words of a song which she could not get out of her mind. The symbolism of the willow and the pathos of the song: '…*sighing…moans…salt tears'* were effectively explored.

There were many misconceptions in answers to this question, such as: Desdemona knows she is going to be killed, her mother sang the song and then dies, Barbary relates to barbary horse as well as Desdemona being attracted to Ludovico so not as innocent as the audience thinks. Less

successful answers seemed quite confused over who was who in the extract and over the 'willow' song, believing Desdemona was mourning for her dead mother and that is why she is sad in this scene. These responses stated that she knew she was going to be killed and accepted her fate, exonerating Othello's behaviour with, *'Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve-.'*

The weakest answers attempted a linear analysis of the passage showing little understanding of the text or question or simply lapsed into retelling the plot. Some tended to lose focus on the passage completely and drifted into discussion of such general matters as the patriarchal society in Venice, male and female roles in Shakespeare's time and toxic masculinity.

(b)   There were very few responses to this question but those who did attempt it demonstrated varying degrees of textual knowledge and understanding of Cassio's dramatic role. The more successful answers knew Cassio and his importance to the plot. There was a focus on his qualities, most of which were the opposite of Othello's. His charm and success with ladies were recognised as was his respectful manner when discussing Desdemona. They understood his manipulation and the reasons why he was so easy to use for Iago's purposes. Better answers were able to link him to Othello, Desdemona and Emilia and how this contributed to the plot. Less successful answers struggled with the question and described the plot instead of how Cassio drives the plot as a victim of Iago's jealousy and hatred of both Cassio and Othello. The weakest answers focused more on Iago and his motives, becoming speculative in nature, commenting mainly that Cassio should not have been so gullible.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

> **Paper 0992/32**
> **Drama**
> **(Open Text)**

Key messages

- Successful responses focused on the key words in the question and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Opening paragraphs should be brief and avoid lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writers' techniques to be addressed. Conclusions need to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Successful answers to passage-based questions briefly contextualised the passage, selecting relevant material from across the whole passage and analysed both content and the writer's methods effectively.
- Identifying technical terms and individual punctuation without consideration of the context and intended impact on the audience is an unproductive response to the set task.
- All questions require a response to the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain. There was a lot of excellent work seen. The most successful responses showed detailed appreciation of texts and made perceptive comments on characterisation and stagecraft. The most popular texts across all syllabi were *Twelfth Night* and *Othello. The Crucible* and *Journey's End* were popular on the 0992 syllabus. There were two new texts this series, *Othello* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy.*

Candidates should be made aware that in answering questions on *The Crucible*, introductions about the religious, socio-historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism are not a prerequisite to answering the question. Similarly, in *Othello*, comments on the role of Elizabethan women should be relevant and brief; how wives were expected to be obedient is a sound point as this, ironically, is the quality that undoes Desdemona but there is little to reward in arguing that '*Emelia is a feminist'*.

Many candidates wrote lengthy, general introductions, summarising the plot or listing irrelevant social, cultural, historical or biographical details of the writer, as mentioned above. Others wrote a list of the things to cover, for example, the techniques the writer had used, including punctuation, which they would analyse in their answer. In an examination with 45 minutes to write a response these are unproductive ways to start an answer and there is little to reward in responses which list the range of punctuation the writer uses in the text.

The most successful answers wrote a brief introduction, focusing on the key terms of the question, for example, 'disturbing', 'dramatic', 'revealing' or 'entertaining' and sustained a link to the question throughout their answer. 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. 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. Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and used a range of precise textual references from across the whole text.

A common approach for less successful answers was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text with little or no attempt to link this to the question. Retelling the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question wastes valuable time which should have been spent answering the question. These responses were self-penalising as little time was left to spend on the set passage.

Candidates need to remember that drama is visual and uses language that has an impact on an audience. The most successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as performance, referring to the 'audience' rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', 'text' or 'book'. These were able to explore stagecraft and the authors' methods to convey the main concerns of their chosen texts.

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. Many candidates used juxtaposition incorrectly as a synonym for 'contrast'. Simply asserting the playwright uses a technique is unlikely to be rewarded; techniques identified should be relevant, supported and the effects achieved analysed. It is unhelpful for candidates to be stating the obvious, that the writer uses, 'language', 'diction', 'end-stopping' or 'caesura' to convey ideas or to write a list of techniques they will be writing about in their introduction.

There are lessons candidates need to learn about quotation. Most know that close reference to the text and quotations are needed to support ideas to achieve highly. However, some candidates work through the extract, line by line, writing out a quotation and then offering paraphrase, sometimes followed by the statement: 'which makes it such a significant moment in the play'. To achieve a coherent, relevant response to the question, the argument should come first, followed by a supporting quotation, containing a link to the task. For example, as one candidate wrote: *'Abigail focuses on accusing the weakest person in the room in order to deflect attention away from herself: "She makes me drink blood". This demonstrates her cunning, and ruthlessness but also starts a process that will only lead to violence and destruction. This makes this a very significant moment in the play.'*

Time management was good with very few unfinished responses seen. Candidates are reminded not to refer to line numbers instead of quoting from the text and to remember to label their answers clearly, with the question number at the top of the response.

Comments on specific questions

LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Question 1

(a) Candidates were able to identify both the amusing and serious: the racism Lily has experienced; the lack of black representation in the film industry; societal expectations of women and the girls needing a mother figure. They understood how Nottage approaches these serious issues with humour and the joking between characters. More successful answers explored how Ernestine is making fun of herself, adopting her film star pose, knowing she will never be a movie star.

(b) More successful responses commented on Gerte's racial and national contrast with the Crumps and Godfrey's religious views over Father Divine. Her sympathetic personality was approved by the few who wrote about her. There was little mention of the attack on Godfrey because he was with a white woman, or the shock of the marriage for both the girls and the audience. Less successful responses did not fully grasp that Gerte was a white woman, missing a key aspect of Nottage's portrayal of the character. Very few candidates understood the significance of her being German or the Nazi connection with its racial undercurrents.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context: to distract attention from her own guilt and the dancing in the wood, Abigail has accused Tituba of calling up the Devil, which starts the accusations of witchcraft in Salem. Brief reference to the Puritan theocracy were made providing an important background in which extreme beliefs in God and the Devil would make the idea of witchcraft very threatening. Hence Abigail's determination to deflect blame from herself onto someone more vulnerable, a black slave from another culture, alien to the white, Puritan society of Salem. Abigail's cunning and lying

manipulation of the situation was effectively explored, starting with her wild accusation, '*She makes me drink blood!*' with Hale and Parris immediately seizing on this. Her realisation of her power over Tituba and Hale was noted, leading to further accusations of dreaming 'corruptions', difficult to substantiate, but enough to convince the onlookers of Tituba's guilt and evidence of her working for the Devil. Hale's naivety in accepting the accusations and the dramatic pace of his aggressive interrogation were effectively analysed with some insight into his questioning in that the answer he is looking for is already in the question and all she can do is to agree to save her life and, when pressed, name others. The dramatic impact of Tituba's shock and terror at being betrayed by Abigail with the threats of whipping and hanging were established as powerful and significant factors for the later witch trials. The most successful answers made brief, pertinent reference to McCarthyism where naming others was necessary to save oneself, moving from individual actions to the bigger themes of the play including betrayal, self-preservation, hysteria and the abuse of power. The best answers focused closely on the writing, the accusations, pauses and exclamation marks, for example, Abigail's '*Do not lie!*', then observing the powerful impact of her remaining silently on stage watching during the interrogation.

Many less successful answers started with a lengthy recap of the play, Miller's intentions in writing the play with reference to Senator McCarthy and Communism, and the history of the Salem Witch trials themselves. Others worked through the passage, commenting on the situation and punctuation, particularly exclamation marks but without understanding these reflect a tone of voice, or linking comments to the terms of the question. There was little sense of drama and there were many half-true assertions. Some thought the scene takes place in court and Tituba is innocent but confesses, forgetting the key point that she is dealing with witchcraft but at Abigail's insistence and it is the attempt to deflect from this that starts the accusations and interrogations.

(b) There were fewer responses to this question with many finding it difficult to go beyond a narrative overview of the relationship or character studies of Proctor and Abigail, without looking at the consequences of the relationship in the wider context of the play. The most successful answers considered Proctor's adultery, Abigail's determination to replace Elizabeth and the disturbing consequences of Abigail's ruthlessness in attempting to achieve this. These included: the witch trials and framing of Elizabeth with the most disturbing aspect being the deaths of innocents and, ironically, Proctor himself. The disturbing way in which Proctor thinks he can cast Abigail off without consequences and to preserve his reputation led to justifiable condemnation of Proctor. Better answers observed the similarities between them and how their lust and adultery made them both 'villainous' prepared to defend their reputations at all costs. Well-selected textual detail and awareness of the dramatic impact of their meetings, and dialogue, were features of these responses. However, few explored Proctor's guilt and refusal to expose Abigail and the effects of this dilemma on his own conscience and his family.

Candidates had mixed feelings about Abigail and Proctor. Many sympathised with Abigail as a victim, due to her childhood and background, claiming she was taken advantage of by an older man and effectively abandoned when no longer needed. This was contrasted to Proctor's greater status and maturity. His clear ambivalence towards Abigail was well-supported and his view of his 'sin' being a minor error, partly caused by Elizabeth, led many to sympathise further with Abigail. Some candidates applied modern ideas to the relationship including the fact that it was 'grooming' and Proctor was a 'paedophile' which undermines engagement with both the relationship and the text as there is so much evidence to support Abigail's malice.

Less successful answers adopted a narrative approach to the relationship and focused on the age difference and the personal relationship, seeing the characters as real rather than constructs. This limited exploration of its disturbing effects on stage. Abigail was frequently depicted as an abused child with little close reference to the text or textual detail to support ideas.

R C SHERRIFF: *Journey's End*

Question 3

(a) This question focused on a profoundly 'moving' moment at the end of the play which most candidates were able to engage with, eliciting many detailed, personal responses. There were many sensitive responses to Raleigh's innocence and youth with understanding of the dramatic impact on audiences who had witnessed the arrival of the hero-worshipping young boy, just out of school, now fatally injured. Comparisons to his 'rugger' injuries and expectations that he would soon re-join the men were explored and brief contrasts drawn between his heroic qualities and

Hibbert's lack of them. The most successful answers contextualised the passage: Stanhope and Raleigh's strained relationship before the attack and previous comments on the use of first names. Most found tenderness in Stanhope's ministrations and pathos in Raleigh's slow realisation of the seriousness of his injuries with '*the different note*' in his voice and inability to move his legs. There were perceptive comments on Stanhope's kindness and euphemisms in making light of the moment and giving hope to Raleigh so as not to panic him. There was understanding of the more friendly use of 'Jimmy' and 'Dennis' at this moment, contrasted with Stanhope's previous anger at the use of his first name as Stanhope provides comfort despite the battle raging outside. Stanhope's tone, proximity to Raleigh and perceived desperation to keep him comfortable, 'rising quickly' to get water, were effectively commented on. There was understanding of his attempts at humour with the water and tea leaves. There was much to explore in the stage directions, the silence and the pauses in speech. There was close analysis of the language, the symbolism of the rose light in the dawn sky, Raleigh's request for a light and the dark and cold. More perceptive answers commented on the losing battle above ground with Stanhope's response that the guns were '*Mostly theirs*', symbolising a losing battle both above and below ground.

Less successful answers did not know the context with some unaware that Raleigh dies and did not comment on the changes in Stanhope. There was limited focus on 'moving', or the passage, with lapses into descriptions of the war and Stanhope's previous behaviour and some misconception that Stanhope survives.

There was some misunderstanding of the use of first names, with some calling them 'nicknames'. The terms 'old boy' and 'old chap' were often understood as Raleigh's experience having aged him, rather than being terms of endearment at a sensitive and moving moment. There was confusion of the guns making a 'row' with this understood as an argument between the men.

(b)   There were fewer answers to this question. The relationship between Stanhope and Osborne was one in which candidates were able to empathise and there was some sensitive detail to the friendship, particularly following the death of Osborne when Stanhope grieves for his lost friend. Most answers traced the friendship in a chronological manner. The most successful answers knew the text well and were able to identify key scenes where the relationship is clearly portrayed: Osborne's admiration and loyal defence of Stanhope and his drinking in front of Hardy; him putting Stanhope to sleep when he was drunk; the father-like image which Osborne had and the fact that Osborne gives Stanhope his personal possession when he goes out on the raid, and the effect his death has on Stanhope. They recognised the trust Stanhope has in Osborne and the compassion shown by him. Better answers explored the powerful moments when Osborne comforts and supports Stanhope after Raleigh's arrival, and by reading what Raleigh has written about him. Stanhope's powerfully dramatic reaction to Osborne's death and furious conflict with Raleigh were effectively explored.

Less successful answers were unable to recall specific textual details to support points. This resulted in general comments on their friendship and much retelling of the scenes where Osborne puts Stanhope to bed or calms him down when he is angry over the prospect of Raleigh informing his sister of Stanhope's drinking problem. Weaker answers focused entirely on Stanhope's drinking or wrote character sketches of the men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

Question 4

(a)   There were some very impressive answers to this question but also many of the weakest. This is a pivotal scene which shows Malvolio, having previously found Maria's fake letter, setting in motion the sub-plot, effecting his own downfall in a most amusing manner. There was little sympathy expressed for Malvolio but considerable enjoyment at the success of the prank. It is dramatically effective and entertaining as the audience anticipates Malvolio's appearance and behaviour, dictated by the contents of the letter. The most successful answers anticipated and eagerly awaited Olivia's reaction to the change in her previously '*sad and civil*' steward. The dramatic irony of the moment featured highly with effective focus on Olivia's present state of mind, and her shock and confusion upon seeing Malvolio and at his attempts to remind her of what she had supposedly written in the 'letter'. Maria's contribution was neglected by most, but better answers saw her role in setting up the scene with her warning Olivia to be on her guard as he was in a '*strange*' manner and surely '*possess'd*'. The humour in her pretence at not knowing the reasons for his behaviour whilst questioning his '*ridiculous boldness*' was well-noted. There was engagement with the

hilarious visual impact of Malvolio's yellow stockings, cross-gartered, smiling and kissing his hand. There was some confusion over Olivia's words on how best to court Cesario as she awaits his arrival, with some thinking she says this to Malvolio himself. The language provided plenty of material to explore with many commenting on the perceived madness of Malvolio and the significance of '*greatness*', the sexual element and misunderstanding of going '*to bed*' and his being a '*nightingale'*. Better answers linked status to form: Olivia speaks in blank verse whereas Maria and Malvolio speak in prose, showing their social class, and were able make the link to wider themes of class, disguise, appearance versus reality, and madness in love. A few answers showed some sensitivity, seeing the humour in the gulling of Malvolio but also the cruelty in his humiliation and being '*notoriously abused',* leading to his later incarceration.

Less successful answers referred to the letter, Olivia's obvious confusion and Malvolio's conviction that she is in love with him, without supporting or developing how this is dramatic. Some stated that he was indeed insane and that it was right he should be locked away. The weakest answers retold the plot up to and beyond the moment, with minimal engagement with the question and passage. There were some attempts to explain what happened in the passage where it was clear the play had not been studied.

(b)   There were fewer answers to this question. The more successful answers were able to go beyond Feste's intelligence and witty banter, quite unexpected for a 'Fool', and supported their argument and observations with textual evidence including, 'better a witty fool than a foolish wit' to show Shakespeare's true message through this character. There were many aspects of his role considered 'fascinating' and explored: his role in moving between households and social levels, being accepted in both; his part in the plot against Malvolio and disguise as Sir Topas, and the insight and melancholy of some of his songs which open and close the play. Better answers observed his almost omniscient nature as a mouthpiece for Shakespeare and a link with the audience, as a kind of 'Master of Ceremonies' who presides over the whole tangle of love stories, misunderstandings and pranks. He sees through Viola's disguise and wittily chastises Olivia for mourning a brother who is in heaven, getting away with calling her a 'Fool' and is the only character who could mock Maria.

A few less successful answers used prepared character studies of Feste which would have benefitted from closer links to the question and the ways in which Shakespeare makes him such a fascinating character. The weakest answers were undeveloped with many stating little more than Feste works at Olivia's court and he is witty and intelligent which is fascinating for someone employed as a 'Fool'. Some were able to identify moments in the plot when he appears, but these were narrative in approach and lacking in specific detail. There was much repetition of his being witty and intelligent but with very little textual detail to support this.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Question 5

(a)   There were some engaging responses with the most successful candidates demonstrating clear understanding of the dramatic irony and that it was Shakespeare doing the foreshadowing and not Desdemona. The most successful were able to contextualise the passage and understood that Othello has changed, convinced by Iago of Desdemona's infidelity and planning to kill her that night. There was close focus on how this was made a 'sad' moment with sensitive comments on her love and loyalty to Othello even though in the previous scene he had called her names and hit her. Better answers referred to the inevitability of impending doom as conveyed through references to time, driven by Othello's insistence that his orders are carried out the '*th'instant'*, '*forthwith'*. Fear is aroused by his instructions to *'dismiss'* Emelia, leaving Desdemona vulnerable to his wrath and there was some effective analysis of her uneasiness and premonitions. Her words to Emelia, *'If, I should die…'* were understood with emphasis on the *'If'*. Less successful answers argued she has accepted her death and wanted Emelia to use her wedding sheets, from happier times, for her *'shroud'.* Better answers understood that the 'Willow' song eerily parallels her situation, recognising that they are not her words but the words of a song which she could not get out of her mind. The symbolism of the willow and the pathos of the song: '*…sighing…moans…salt tears'* were effectively explored.

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well as Desdemona being attracted to Ludovico so not as innocent as the audience thinks. Less successful answers seemed quite confused over who was who in the extract and over the 'willow' song, believing Desdemona was mourning for her dead mother and that is why she is sad in this scene. These responses stated that she knew she was going to be killed and accepted her fate, exonerating Othello's behaviour with, *'Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve-.'*

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(b)   There were very few responses to this question but those who did attempt it demonstrated varying degrees of textual knowledge and understanding of Cassio's dramatic role. The more successful answers knew Cassio and his importance to the plot. There was a focus on his qualities, most of which were the opposite of Othello's. His charm and success with ladies were recognised as was his respectful manner when discussing Desdemona. They understood his manipulation and the reasons why he was so easy to use for Iago's purposes. Better answers were able to link him to Othello, Desdemona and Emilia and how this contributed to the plot. Less successful answers struggled with the question and described the plot instead of how Cassio drives the plot as a victim of Iago's jealousy and hatred of both Cassio and Othello. The weakest answers focused more on Iago and his motives, becoming speculative in nature, commenting mainly that Cassio should not have been so gullible.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0992/42
Unseen

Key messages

- Most candidates address AO1 and AO2 very successfully by selecting brief quotation to show knowledge of texts and most moved beyond surface meaning to explore ideas and attitudes.
- AO3 is best addressed through developed analysis of how the writer achieves effects.
- Less successful candidates list devices, or use technical terminology without exploring effects, or make very generalised comments.
- Personal engagement with some interesting, insightful interpretations (AO4) was evident across the ability levels.
- Candidates should practise writing focused introductory overviews of the text and conclusions that do not simply repeat points already made.

General comments

This was a successful session for this optional paper, which remains a popular alternative. The large number of outstanding scripts seen by examiners confirmed that candidates' ability to read closely and to respond personally to Literature texts which offer quite a high level of demand have not been adversely affected by the disruptions of the last two years. Clearly candidates remain well taught and appreciate this paper as a final opportunity to bring together all the skills involved in the study of Literature, as it tests all the Assessment Objectives for the subject, but has no pre-learnt content, so demands flexibility and an individual approach. Most candidates were able to express a thoughtful individual personal response, with varying levels of critical engagement, and the paper is a good discriminator of candidates' ability to respond to literary language.

Most candidates confidently approach supporting their understanding of the meaning of a text by selecting supporting evidence (AO1). Quotation is best kept short and both preceded and followed by commentary. Effective word-level analysis enabled candidates to demonstrate knowledge and explore the connotations or possible meanings of individual words in order to demonstrate understanding of deeper meaning. This leads to precise analysis which was lacking in middle band responses. Where there were significant misunderstandings, this was usually because candidates had not read the introductory rubric carefully enough, as this explains any necessary context.

Deeper understanding of ideas and attitudes (AO2) can be achieved through more appreciation of the overall structure and cohesion of a text, looking more at linked images, the development of an idea or narrative structure and contrast. The 'building blocks' that a writer uses create meaning and are not just devices to log. Hence stronger candidates do not just work through texts line by line or paragraph by paragraph but move backwards and forwards to comment on the connection and development of ideas. Less confident candidates are helped by the advisory bullet points but should observe that these do not simply work through the text chronologically but also encourage the development of ideas about the writing and the reader's personal response to it.

Appreciation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects (AO3) remains central to success in this paper. However, it is not the only Assessment Objective, and the full wording given here points out the role of language in making meaning (AO2) and shaping a personal response (AO4). Many candidates showed an impressive knowledge of wide-ranging subject specific vocabulary, especially for poetry. It was also encouraging to see greater numbers overall choosing to write about prose and demonstrating they had good tools for analysing narrative viewpoint and description. However, middle-range scripts often prioritised quantity of technical analysis over quality and depth, spotting devices and listing techniques but sometimes stopping with identification instead of exploring effects. Others

made very generalised comments, such as 'it makes the reader excited'. Comment on language is more successful when linked to clear understanding of deeper meaning, through the influence on mood and tone.

There were some adventurous and ambitious personal interpretations of texts (AO4). However, some strong scripts did not reach the top levels due to the 'over-thinking' of their interpretation of 'big ideas' in the texts, such as environmentalism, or humans and the natural world. Some made tenuous links between the text and these ideas and, as a result, moved away from close textual analysis. Responses need to be rooted firmly in the critical analysis of the text and the way the writer achieves effects, with interpretation coming out of close analysis of language, imagery, sound effects and narrative structure. All the Assessment Objectives are assessed but they need to be closely linked.

Finally, candidates would benefit from more advice on good introductions and conclusions. Good introductions are short and show an overview of the writer's probable purpose and the overall structure of the text. Dividing the text into three sections and giving an overview of the development of meaning and the reader's response over those three sections would be a good start. Weak introductions simply repeat the terms of the question and bullet points. While this can help some candidates to focus, there is nothing for examiners to reward here. Another popular but unsuccessful tactic is simply to list all the literary devices that may (or may not) be present in the text. There is no reward for simply identifying devices without comment on effects. Likewise, too many conclusions gain no extra credit because they simply repeat points made earlier. A strong conclusion draws together observations in a personal response to the text as a whole, appreciating how language and structure have shaped the reader's thoughts and feelings, and their reaction to the experience described. It links all the Assessment Objectives by making direct connections between language, form, meaning and effect on the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The poem '*House at Sea*' by Kate Miller proved to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. They understood the meaning of this poem and were able to explore deeper implications and show critical appreciation of the methods used by the poet. The poem presents a personal view of the experience of being flooded and many saw this very much as the fears of a child or young person. Some perceptively linked this to the choice of title: the house is not 'by' the sea but appears to be about to sail away. A few realised the title can also be interpreted metaphorically as an allusion to how much the lives of the house and its inhabitants is upset by the encroachment of the waters. A few, who had not read the rubric carefully, thought the family lived on a boat or houseboat. Good responses saw the overall structure of the poem which zooms in from harbour to house to cellar, ending with a particular and individual human encounter with a terrifying personification of the force of the sea. Stronger scripts noticed that the poet uses the present tense throughout so that the reader relives the experience as it happened. The approach was generally to deal with the poem in chronological order using the bullet points as prompts.

Most candidates commented on the opening line and many wrote effectively about the impact of the verb 'hoisted'. Candidates confident in word-level analysis were able to show the ability to analyse on a deeper level with this word, linking it to other nautical imagery, or to ways in which nature is compared to human actions. For example, one candidate wrote that 'you only hoist heavy objects implying that at some point it will have to fall and wreak damage'. Another candidate wrote 'Flags of countries are hoisted up in invasions so this is symbolic of the rampage throughout the harbour that the water is taking'. The most frequent citations in the first stanza were 'swirling rotted rope', 'milky as an oyster' and the 'stew-brown tarpaulin' which led to some particularly effective analysis that linked these to gustatory or olfactory imagery. Analysis of the 'oyster' simile relied on some knowledge of oysters but many candidates were helped by 'milky' and so likened this to the white froth of the sea. Stronger candidates linked 'rotted', 'oyster' and 'stew' often drawing out negative connotations. For example: 'This simile presents an oxymoron, although oysters do have light colours, they are often dark, grimy and pungent and are often seen as repulsive – this could be an allusion to the harbour itself'. However, other candidates were rewarded for seeing a natural beauty in the oyster imagery, recognising oysters as delicacies or the home of pearls, and used these observations to develop interpretations which set the strength and beauty of nature at odds with the human world which had exploited the resources of the sea. Many wanted to see this stanza as the beginning of the sea's revenge. It was notable when a candidate made a perceptive comment about the 'caul' linking it to birth imagery. Only strong candidates did this and many struggled with this image, despite the attempt to help them with a gloss, unable to make the connection with the tarpaulin in the previous line. Many candidates made comments on the alliteration of 'dry dock' and contrasted this with the high tide, but without understanding what a dry dock is. Those more familiar with nautical vocabulary could make more sense of the portrait of the harbour, but most

were able to understand that this was a threatened and possibly archaic way of life subject to the moods of the ocean and larger forces than the merely human.

In this poem, the first stanza is probably the most difficult, and those who wrote best about it tended to have already developed an overview of the whole text. The second stanza, describing the house, was more accessible, with plenty of descriptive imagery. This was also a stanza in which the poet's use of enjambment really did equate to the movement of the water as it threatened the house's very existence. Candidates who developed their ideas further showed perception in linking ideas rather than writing about lines singularly. For example, some candidates linked the verb 'tugs' to the verbs 'stomp and smack' comparing these verbs to the personified sea whose behaviour could be interpreted as childlike and demanding – one candidate likened it to the 'flood represents a raging child' or the motif of an angry child. Many commented on the 'salt-swollen doors' and many made effective comments linking 'swollen' to personification, the doors 'metaphorically injured by protecting its owners from the sea'. The 'cummerbund of fog' also brought interesting interpretations – the glossary enabling candidates to consider the deeper meaning of this image such as 'encircling the occupants waist, holding them tight and shrouding them in fog'. Candidates appreciated that the house, and implicitly the family within it, had their very existence threatened by a battering force, conveyed through alliteration and sibilance mimicking the force of the waves, and increasingly personified as a threatening and angry creature. Many saw this personification as beginning with the way 'sea' lacks a definite article in the first line of the stanza, and so is an undefined but unstoppable antagonist, undermining the house and the family within it, and making their living conditions intolerable. Interestingly, some linked this to their own experiences of the global pandemic, not least because they interpreted the phrase 'we must sit out the winter' as a family confined to their home for a whole season – an experience which they could identify with, showing understanding both of potential underlying family tensions and the wider implications of human existence threatened by nature.

The vast majority of candidates found the animalistic imagery of the third stanza especially engaging. They commented in detail on the personification of the 'dark green creature' and the verbs 'rears, recoils and lunges'. How far this imagery was analysed beyond recognition of the sea as a dangerous animal often gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate critical understanding. Some saw the sea as like a crocodile, perhaps drawing on their own cultural background, and some as a mythical best, such as a Kraken. Again, recognising the development of ideas was especially effective such as these examples: 'winking' shows the personified qualities of cunning' or 'the flood is personified as a primal monster' or 'the personification of the water as an antagonist is almost gladiatorial'. Many focused on the colour of the creature, as possibly signifying envy or the revenge of nature or some kind of sea dragon, some linked this to sound effects in this stanza and the previous one, or the malevolent way in which it is shown to 'claw' and 'mount' the steps, threatening to advance further. Many appreciated the dramatic impact of the short phrase 'My father lifts the hatch'. They saw the caesural pause that follows as the moment when the child takes in the conflict between father and 'monster'. Many commented on the Gothic element of this confrontation, especially as the sea monster appears to be mocking the human beings while 'winking' and 'spitting'. This was seen as both the movement of the water and the revenge of nature for being ignored or ill-treated. Many wanted to see the lantern as a symbol of light and hope threatened by dark forces. Certainly the monster seemed to have a whole number ('doubling') of malevolently winking eyes and 'o's, connoting voracious mouths, perhaps; 'Uneasy' is placed both emphatically and awkwardly at the end of the line and used ambiguously – it certainly applies to the monster's reaction to the light but also seems to describe the onlookers too – and the creature responds like some cornered, yet venomous creature. There were different responses to the father: most saw him as brave and protective of his family, heroically confronting and seeing off the 'beast' but others thought the 'swinging' lantern betrayed his nervousness and lack of authority and a few, more fancifully, conflated him with the beast and saw him as in league with the dark forces which undermine the house.

Finally some candidates set the nightmarish and unstable elements of the experience in contrast to the relatively secure and regular structure of the three stanzas, although they found that the lack of rhyme and the use of enjambment and, at times, extended sentences running over a series of lines, suggested a degree of instability and fluidity. There were interesting overall interpretations of why this experience might have been formative for the poet, and what it showed about the family's precarious existence or the vulnerability of human life when dependent on the caprice of the sea. Some questioned whether the sea is the true aggressor. One very strong answer saw the poem as an allegory about climate change and concluded by saying, 'this also suggests that it is now too late to make a change as global warming has gone too far. The indifference to nature from human society is irreversible'.

Question 2

Most candidates understood this extract from the opening of the novel *Tar Baby* by Toni Morrison and were able to write meaningful comments about it. Stronger candidates often addressed how the writer uses characterisation, description, tension and lack of closure to hook readers in and develop their interest and emotional engagement in the opening section of a novel. Most candidates read the rubric carefully and understood the man's motives, and many saw him as a fugitive from injustice or racism, making links to contemporary concerns about refugees and asylum seekers. Many commented that what made his experience so poignant was that he was so alone, dependent on the fickle tide for support. It is good to see the prose response becoming a more popular option but candidates need to avoid a purely narrative focus, and must address the writer's purpose and methods with the same kind of critical attention as in the poetry question. There were certainly many opportunities to comment on language and imagery, as well as structural contrasts, in this text. Good answers tended to focus on the transition of the sea from a calming influence into a volatile force.

Nearly every candidate wrote about the first sentence: 'He believed he was safe.' This was an effective way into the text as the analysis of 'believed' and 'safe' created immediate opportunities to analyse the situation the man was in, and the expectations the phrase develops in the reader, who retrospectively sees a potential for irony here. There was much analysis of why his heart is pounding in 'sweet expectation'. Most concluded that this is building up both his and the reader's hopes that a better life awaits him in Queen of France. Some felt that he is more nervous than he likes to pretend, and that his tension is revealed when he 'sucked in great gasps of air'. The personification of his destination led to some interesting readings: she appears to be luring him with the promise of a better life, almost flirting with him. According to one candidate she is 'something beautiful and untouchable...like the presence of a stunning and beautiful queen that cannot be reached'. Good responses developed the significance of feminine imagery to describe both the town and the rip tide which sucks him away from it. Some saw this as a battle between two women for the man, wondering if this revealed something about the anonymous character's past life or future desires. Arguably, it reveals how he sees the world, as the narrative voice is more 'close third person' than omnipotent – we largely see and think what the character sees and thinks. In this way, descriptions of the port, the sea and the sunset reflect his own feelings. Not only is the town flirtatious but the cruisers are 'girlish', contributing to what at first seems a notably unthreatening atmosphere for an illegal migrant.

The bullet point considering how the man behaved before he got in the water led to analysis of 'carefully casual', the list of 'no things to gather' and the shoes knotted through his pants. This, together with his 'hesitation' enabled candidates to consider the effect of how the writer had presented the man and his situation. He seems mentally well-prepared but lonely and desperate, and with doubts beneath his surface confidence. He is clearly keen not to be caught, and he has no attachment to the ship or to people, so is able to 'simply' step away. There were many examples of close language analysis of descriptive language with terminology used appropriately, making this bullet accessible to all candidates.

The description of the sea also led to much detailed and effective analysis. At first the water is 'soft and warm' and appears to be welcoming him in its embrace. Some found a maternal or even erotic charge here, which they were able to develop further later in the passage, when it takes a darker turn. Many noted another effective short sentence 'He swam well' which appears to communicate confidence but may have an underlying irony given how quickly that confidence is undermined. Quite a few perceptively noticed that the man, whose identity remains a mystery, noticed his 'skin blended well with the dark waters' and that he welcomes the camouflage (perhaps hinting at the reason why he is a migrant) without noticing the more ominous implications. His care 'not to lift his arm too high' was observed to reveal his fear of being discovered.

Nearly every candidate wrote about the metaphor of the 'bracelet of water', rightly seeing it as the turning point of the passage. It is followed by violent verbs such as 'scissored', 'yanked, 'tossed' and 'swallowed'. This led to very many interpretations of how this was an image of entrapment – it was an image that candidates could address from the lower levels upwards. Stronger candidates linked the imagery together (recognising the cohesion in the text) so focusing on the personification and feminine imagery used in the text overall: the bracelet was seen as a stereotypical feminine item, the sea has a wet throat and the water is 'soft and warm' all linking with the flirtatious but possible deceptive feminine images in the first stanza. For example, one candidate wrote that 'the metaphor is extended making Mother Nature not only appear powerful but a relentless boundary the man would never be able to cross'. Candidates in the higher levels wrote about the way the 'Queen of France' was personified to represent the man's attraction to the town and then contrasted this with the personification of the sea's entrapment of him and linked this with the simile 'like the hand of an insistent woman' or the dubious attentions of the 'water lady' who has him at her mercy later in the passage. Some candidates did veer into stereotypical assumptions when writing about feminine

imagery, while others wondered if the stereotypes were in the man's own imagination. Whirling in a 'vortex', he loses control and many saw how this is dramatised in the repetition of 'down, down' into the 'wide, empty tunnel' only to be cancelled out by the way he finds himself 'riding its top' at the end of the paragraph, to suggest a (temporary) triumph.

The final two paragraphs are especially rich in suggestion, so it was important for candidates to pace themselves and leave enough time for them. Prose responses need a more selective approach than poetry, and more synthesis of observations. The man's mastery of the situation is short-lived as he feels a 'gentle but firm' pressure on his whole body, developing again the imagery of seduction. However, this time it is the sea which is luring him, not the town. A few became confused here and did not see that he is being forced 'away from the shore'. The interest of the ending is that it is ambiguous – we do not know if the man will be rescued or not (he is) – but there certainly is no happy ending in sight yet. The image of 'blood tinted' water was explored effectively by many. It describes the sun setting but many saw it in terms of foreshadowing the man's death, especially as the sun is described a 'like a fresh heart' almost offered up for sacrifice. Some made the connection with the imagery of a predatory female.

Tension is sustained in the final paragraph through short sentences which some saw as mimicking the man's breathlessness. A few commented on unpleasant and potentially toxic 'ammonia-scented air' while others considered the continued use of sensual language linking this to the seduction of some kind of poisonous siren. Growing darkness was seen as figurative as well as literal, although only a few realised the reference to 'never known twilight' describes a tropical latitude where the sun sets fast. Hopes for the man seemed to be setting quickly too for most readers. The final images of light and dark were explored in terms of contrast between hope and despair linked to 'teardrops' and 'weeping'. There were strong responses to the highly poetic images of a 'sky pierced to weeping by the blade tip of an early star' – conveying both the emotions and the violence of this passage – and the persistent attentions of the 'water-lady'. While a few wanted to see this as a providential rescue, most realised he is simply being pushed ever further out by the tide, which appears to be driving him away from his intended destination, for reasons we can only speculate about.

Just as in response to **Question 1**, candidates wrote about the text using a range of terminology and showed confidence with writing about the devices used to create effects in narrative prose. Precise comments about effect and linking ideas in the text were the features of higher-level answers rather than line-by-line analysis. For example, one candidate wrote: 'The way in which the Queen of France is said to have 'blushed' evokes a sense of its attraction to the man which of course stems from his attraction to it. His 'gaze' is a powerful description as well because it allows us to picture this man staring at freedom something he has clearly desired for a long time and essentially being in awe of its beauty'.Those who were then able to contrast the lure of freedom and the capriciousness of fate battling for control of this man were able to construct especially strong responses.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

> **Paper 0992/05**
> **Coursework**

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- select relevant material to meet the requirements of the task
- substantiate their arguments with relevant, concise references to the text
- analyse in detail and sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- write exhaustively and lose focus on the task
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- list writers' techniques without close analysis
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the writing.

General comments

There was evidence of coursework of a high standard this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the texts they had studied; this was a testament to the hard work of both candidates and teachers in another challenging year.

In successful assignments, candidates selected relevant material from the text to address the task that had been set. Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text, sometimes at considerable length, but needed to address more directly the specific requirements of the task. In many poetry assignments candidates worked through the poem offering a line-by-line commentary, without organising their material in a way that focused on the task. These candidates should have taken advantage of re-drafting to sharpen the focus of their assignments.

The most convincing essays sustained a critical engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects (Assessment Objective 3), relating their points to the task. Less successful assignments often commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to their use in the text; others simply logged or explained features such as anaphora, caesura and enjambment in poetry essays, regardless of the focus of the task.

Some centres submitted empathic responses, with most providing the necessary information: the name of the character and the precise moment in the text that the interior monologue takes place. The most successful responses captured a convincingly authentic voice for the chosen character and moment, and they were recognisably rooted in the world of the text.

Guidance for teachers

This section on guidance is re-printed from the June 2021 report.

Guidance on task-setting can be found in the Coursework Handbook, which stresses the importance of **(a)** wording tasks that direct candidates explicitly to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects and **(b)** avoiding insufficiently challenging command words such as 'Describe' and 'Explain'. Teachers within the centre should together discuss the appropriateness of proposed tasks before they are given to candidates. This means that any problems can be resolved early in the course.

There follows a reminder of what constitutes good practice in the presentation of coursework folders:

- Start each assignment with the full wording of the task. In the case of empathic responses, the chosen character and moment should be clearly stated. This is important since it allows the Moderator to determine how successfully the candidate has captured an authentic voice for the character at the specified moment.
- Use focused ticking in the body of the text to indicate valid and thoughtful points, together with concise marginal and summative comments which relate to the wording of the level descriptors.
- Provide a brief explanation on the assignment or cover sheet in cases where marks are changed during internal moderation. Such purposeful annotation aids transparency and contributes to the robustness of the assessment as it enables a centre to justify its award of particular marks. It is, therefore, not appropriate to send clean (i.e. unannotated) copies of assignments.

The following examples of unhelpful annotation should be avoided: excessive ticking (e.g. of every paragraph or every line); hyperbolic praise of work of indifferent quality; labelling by assessment objective. Simply putting the supposed relevant AOs in the margin is of very little benefit to the Moderator as it does not reveal the *extent* to which a particular assessment objective has been addressed; instead, more specific reference should be made to the relevant level descriptors.

Most centres carried out administration efficiently. Cover sheets (individual record cards) were secured by treasury tag or staple which allowed easy access to candidate work. In these centres care had been taken to:

- include all candidates' details on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form
- transcribe totals accurately across the various documents.

All centres are advised to include a clerical checking stage in their moderation procedures before submitting their paperwork to Cambridge. This check should be carried out by a different person from the one who originally completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets.