LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/12
Poetry and Prose 12

Key messages

Successful responses:

*   show a detailed knowledge of texts
*   focus explicitly on the question
*   use relevant supporting textual references
*   explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

*   have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
*   introduce irrelevant material
*   make unsupported or speculative assertions
*   log or simply describe writers' techniques
*   offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than responses to the specific question.

General comments

There was much evidence of outstanding work this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poetry and prose texts they had studied. The majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. There were, however, instances of some candidates using solely the extract when answering general essay questions on the Prose texts; this approach was self-penalising as there was insufficient material for candidates to draw upon for their answers.

Textual knowledge

The strongest answers showed an extensive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Many candidates took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the printed poems and prose extracts to explore the detail of texts. Some candidates were able to recall and use with dexterity much direct quotation, a testament to their hard work and close study of texts. The absence of textual support inevitably led to overly assertive, explanatory and, at times, speculative responses.

Focus on the question

The more successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question from start to finish; these answers addressed directly those words designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'memorable', 'sad', 'movingly', 'vividly'. There were, however, many responses that made only a cursory reference, and sometimes no reference, to such words. Instead candidates responded with a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little reference to the question. It was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is…', regardless of the focus of the question.

Writers' effects

The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by writers' use of form, structure and language. Less successful responses sometimes commented discretely on effects without relating them to the content and meaning. In general, less confident responses were characterised by a tendency to explain and assert rather than analyse. Some responses made unproductive assertions about writers' use of structure.

Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions and explored the detail of texts in essays, showing insight and individuality. These essays were testimony to the hard work of candidates and teachers. There were fewer examples of answers that simply regurgitated ideas found in study guides, an approach that is seldom successful given that it does not provide focus on the question and does not allow for a candidate's own personal response. Less confident answers sometimes asserted that characters and situations were 'relatable', which demonstrated 'empathy' at a very basic level rather than a probing analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Candidates understood that the poem was about grief, though only the strongest responses explored the nature and cause of this. In these responses, there was also some effective exploration of Tennyson's use of imagery and of contrasting connotations: for example, in 'happy Autumn-fields' or 'dark summer dawns'. The opening words ('Tears, idle tears') presented some difficulties, with candidates not recognising that 'idle' was used in the sense of 'purposeless' rather than 'lazy'. Some responses picked out powerful words and images, though without linking them to the ways in which Tennyson conveys specific meanings. The least successful responses mentioned tears and sadness without analysing precise ways in which Tennyson achieves his effects.

Question 2

This question was answered well by many. Stronger answers described the grandfather as reserved and taciturn, with appropriate textual support. Most candidates grasped that the grandfather was physically strong, hard-working in youth, and unafraid of death in old age; the strongest answers focused on imagery such as 'the burning-glass of his mind' and 'the tongues of water spoke' in exploring the old man's closeness to nature. A majority of candidates stated that the title of the poem suggested a certain distance between the persona and his grandfather; a few noted that the title 'My Father's Father' also paid tribute to the grandfather's stature within the family hierarchy. The least successful responses simply paraphrased the poem.

Question 3

Comments that the speaker is 'depressed' or that he 'only feels happy in Spring' did not explore far enough the detail of the poem. Sophisticated responses proposed a convincing idea of reconciliation between the speaker's childish and adult self, prompted by the first signs of spring. Most candidates were able to explore at least to some extent the effects of the imagery, with the strongest responses focusing on 'the serene/Foreheads of houses' and 'Astonishing the brickwork'.

Question 4

A number of candidates did not understand the meaning of 'felled', interpreting this as a natural process of decay. However, many candidates produced strong personal responses and were able to explore a number of ideas about nature, such as its ability to regenerate after man has gone. Some discussed the significance of the word 'farewell' and its connotations of bidding goodbye to a friend. Some thoughtful answers explored the way in which the different elements of nature (trees, winds, river, birds) depend upon each other, so that an impact on one affected them all.

Question 5

Answers tended to be competent explanations rather than probing analysis in response to this question. Only a few candidates were able to explore the symbolism of the box and the significance of the line 'He made it out of winter nights'. Responses touched on the elements involved in creating a strong relationship (time, commitment, honesty) and how these elements are evoked in the poem.

Question 6

Too few responses were seen to make meaningful comment.

Section B

Question 7

Most responses offered valid reasons for being entertained, identifying both Mrs Norris and Lady Bertram as fruitful sources of amusement. In the strongest answers, Mrs Norris's interruption followed by vexed silence and Lady Bertram's serene indifference were both explored convincingly. An awareness of Austen's portrayal of these characters in the wider novel enhanced candidates' appreciation of how she makes them 'entertaining' in the printed extract. The least successful responses re-told the narrative and ignored the command word 'Explore'.

Question 8

Those who had a detailed knowledge of the character and the ways in which Austen presents him were able to provide successful responses. Without a range of textual reference, some responses tended to provide character sketches; indeed, a discriminating factor was the level of textual reference provided to support arguments. Candidates who were able to explore details such as Edmund's interventions on Fanny's behalf (for example, supplying her with writing materials or insisting she had a horse) were therefore more successful. The question asked 'How far?' – and stronger responses were able to recognise not only his principled nature and kindness, but also his lack of judgement as far as Mary Crawford was concerned. It should be noted that all lines of argument are accepted so long as they have relevant substantiation.

Question 9

Although candidates showed some understanding of the significance of the prairie and of Jim's homecoming, only a few were able to explore images such as the 'little circle' of man's experience, or the symbolism of the meandering 'old road'. Less effective answers fell back on either narrative or general statements about the nature of Jim and Antonia's relationship. In less successful responses, there was little evidence of a close exploration of the vivid description in the first paragraph or of other ways in which Cather achieves her effects.

Question 10

Too few responses were seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

Most responses were able to chart Deven's feelings of fear, anxiety, panic and self-doubt and, in so doing, address the question's focus on the character's 'state of mind', usually with pertinent support from the extract. Most were able to place the extract satisfactorily within the wider framework of the novel. Many candidates commented on the symbolism of the dead fly and the cumulative detail of Deven's reaction to it. The most successful responses engaged with the key thrust of the question: 'How does Desai vividly convey…?' The least successful responses offered either narrative or overly assertive approaches.

Question 12

This question was generally well answered. Candidates were able to contrast Deven's idealised image of the great poet with the prosaic reality and to provide solid textual evidence. They considered how he treats others as well as how others, particularly his wives, treat him. There was sometimes a temptation to drift onto the subject of Deven and his shortcomings, however, without exploring the way in which readers' view of Nur is coloured by Deven's imagination. The least effective responses offered character sketches rather than a close focus on 'the ways in which Desai creates a vivid portrait of Nur'.

Question 13

Many responses were able to discuss Harthouse's manipulative strategies, particularly in attracting Louisa's interest by mentioning Tom, using appropriate support from the extract. Fewer responses showed sympathy for Louisa's situation. Where it was in evidence, the ability to place this scene within the context of the wider novel enabled candidates to grasp the dynamic between the two characters. In less successful responses, references were sometimes made to the 'fact versus fancy' theme without either explicitly linking points to the question or supporting the points by means of precise reference to the text.

Question 14

A clear understanding of the text and of this particular character was evident in most responses, which lifted them above the level of narrative re-telling and character sketch. The strongest responses included the widest range of reference enabling a detailed exploration of Stephen's situation, key events in the novel concerning him and his representative quality as a loyal and hard-working 'hand'. These effective responses were thus able to give equal attention to the two key words of the question, 'memorable' and 'significant'.

Question 15

Most answers were able to chart Thornhill's thoughts and feelings as they appear in the course of the printed extract, sometimes commenting on the contrast between his growing prosperity at Thornhills' Point and his fear of the indigenous population. Many responses focused on his reaction to the impassiveness of the native women and his embarrassment at their nakedness. The most successful responses explored the effectiveness of Thornhill's internal monologue and of other ways in which Grenville achieves her effects in 'powerfully conveying' Thornhill's thoughts and feelings.

Question 16

Of the few responses seen, many showed knowledge of Sal as a character but tended to slip into narrative re-telling and character sketches, which demonstrated knowledge rather than a clear understanding of pertinent issues. For example, some narrated much about Sal's earlier life in London without clearly focusing on the main thrust of the question: 'Sal's growing unhappiness in the course of the novel'. Those with a sufficiently wide range of relevant reference were able to concentrate on Sal's changing relationship with Will, focusing on the key words 'How' and 'movingly'. In responses where this focus was absent, Sal and Will were treated as real-life people rather than fictional constructs.
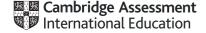
Question 17

Most responses showed an awareness of the context, that Leper has been unhinged by his experience in and dishonourable discharge from the army, with severe implications for the rest of his life. There was generally a clear understanding that Leper sees through Gene to the 'savage underneath'. The strongest responses were characterised by a willingness to probe critically the effects of Knowles's writing: for example, the emotional and violent nature of Leper's dialogue and the marked contrast of Leper here with his earlier persona. Less successful responses offered narrative and paraphrase, with some candidates unable to distinguish between the two characters and their respective dialogue and actions.

Question 18

Most answers argued that Finny was an admirable character, generally light-hearted and high-spirited in contrast with Gene, able to charm candidates and teachers alike, as well as being a natural leader. Many answers commented on the significance of the tree incident. Sometimes an insufficiently wide grasp of textual detail led to general and overly assertive responses: for example, many appreciated that the reader sees Finny through Gene's eyes but were unable to explore in detail how this affects the reader's judgement.

Question 19

The strongest responses identified key points, such as corruption, bribery, unsafe or unsanitary accommodation, with some exploration of the frequent use of unanswered questions and numbers to indicate the scale of the problem and the implication that such conversations are repeated many times over. They commented on the absence of a final answer. Some commented that the dialogue here pointed to the bigger picture of a wider crisis in the South Africa of the time. Less successful responses focused mainly or even exclusively on the wider context without addressing the key words of the question or the details of

Paton's writing in the printed passage. There was also evidence of confusion about who is asking the questions in the extract.

Question 20

Most responses had a working knowledge of Gertrude and what happens to her in Johannesburg and also of Stephen's caring nature and Christian forgiveness towards Gertrude and her son. Many candidates were able to situate the relationship within the wider context of the migration of people from Ndotsheni to Johannesburg with its attendant social problems. Some were sympathetic to Gertrude's plight, though others took a more censorious line. The least successful responses adopted a narrative approach, though understanding of Gertrude's story was sometimes not secure with some candidates maintaining that she returned home with her brother.

Question 21

Most candidates were able to point to sad aspects of the extract and noted the wider context: the death of the mother and the insecurities and loneliness of the father. Many commented on the sadness that the son was closer to his uncle than father. Few candidates noted that the female applicants so contemptuously dismissed as 'wrecks and battleaxes' might have a claim on the reader's sympathy. The most successful responses explored in detail the ways in which McGahern achieves his effects. Less successful responses attempted to incorporate material candidates had learned, such as the symbolism of the stoat and rabbit, without making it explicitly relevant to the question.

Question 22

Most candidates knew the story in general terms reasonably well and commented on its vision of an apocalyptic and technologically driven future. The lack of a range of relevant textual reference, however, led to some overly assertive responses. The enthusiasm for discussing how nature would beat men in the end was often at the expense of an analytical consideration of the detail of the story. The fire, which was often taken as representing nature, was in the story actually caused by cleaning fluid spilled onto the stove. There was, in less successful responses, a tendency to catalogue themes rather than directly address the question: '*In what ways* does Bradbury make *There Will Come Soft Rains* such a striking vision of the future?'

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 2010/13
Poetry and Prose 13

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* focus explicitly on the question
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Less successful responses:

* have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
* introduce irrelevant material
* make unsupported or speculative assertions
* log or simply describe writers' techniques
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The more successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question from start to finish; these answers addressed directly those words designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'memorable', 'sad', 'movingly', 'vividly'. There were, however, many responses that made only a cursory reference, and sometimes no reference, to such words. Instead candidates responded with a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little reference to the question. It was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is…', regardless of the focus of the question.

Writers' effects

The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by writers' use of form, structure and language. Less successful responses sometimes commented discretely on effects without relating them to the content and meaning. In general, less confident responses were characterised by a tendency to explain and assert rather than analyse. Some responses made unproductive assertions about writers' use of structure.

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There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions and explored the detail of texts in essays, showing insight and individuality. These essays were testimony to the hard work of candidates and teachers. There were fewer examples of answers that simply regurgitated ideas found in study guides, an approach that is seldom successful given that it does not provide focus on the question and does not allow for a candidate's own personal response. Less confident answers sometimes asserted that characters and situations were 'relatable', which demonstrated 'empathy' at a very basic level rather than a probing analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Candidates found this poem accessible and generally produced effective. The most successful answers responded to the question with detailed analysis of the poem, and kept their ideas firmly based on the text. Most candidates recognised Mew's strong feelings about the felling of the trees and noted her grief and sense of loss. A few candidates provided detailed biographical accounts of Mew's family; this does not attract reward as responses should be tightly focused on the question and poem. In most cases, these types of responses were unrelated to the question.

Question 2

Many candidates answered this question with engagement and enthusiasm. There were many strong responses, in which the candidates explored the figurative language showing critical and evaluative understanding. Nearly all responses were able to provide some meaningful comment about the poem and showed an understanding of Nichol's feelings towards her mother. Less successful responses tended to work through the poem, sometimes listing the identified features without explanation or further exploration. A few candidates were assertive, providing their opinions about the mother and the relationship with insufficient evidence from the poem.

Question 3

The poet here makes extensive use of metaphors and figurative language and these vividly convey the power and destructiveness of the natural elements. The personification of the sea in the poem is particularly effective and this was generally appreciated by most candidates. Better answers effectively probed the rich language in depth, showing clear and critical understanding. Candidates also noted the inefficacy of the gods in opposing the power of the sea and the plight of the villagers. Any exploration of language should, in order to achieve, go beyond simple feature spotting. References to a writer's use of figurative language or imagery should be followed by an exploration of the effects of these features. Simply identifying a metaphor or instance of personification does not, in itself, constitute analysis.

Question 4

A few strong answers recognised the naturalistic aspects and noted the celestial imagery. The strongest answers were aware of the poet's admiration of the bird, and the contrast between the bird and its song and the surroundings. Less effective answers often paraphrased or summarised. Candidates would be better advised to outline the development of the poet's view of the bird (i.e. the nature of its song, it's fragile yet beautiful physical appearance and the effect of these on the spirits of the narrator) and then select a manageable number of images to explore in detail.

Question 5

This question was generally well addressed by those who attempted it. Stronger responses highlighted the individually powerful and occasionally harrowing visual images presented by Clarke as a consistent thread running through the poem and the connecting idea of natural patterns of animal and human behaviour being destroyed by the effects of the disaster.

Question 6

Candidates found much to consider in this poem. Most recognised the sadness of the unnatural imprisonment of the bull and showed clear understanding of his anger and frustration. Stronger responses picked up on the language used to describe the stall, the references to the heifer, and the contrasting imagery of the summer and the meadows. Several responses commented on the 'message' of the poem, and what it suggests about the fair treatment of animals. Such comments are useful if linked closely to the question and poem.

Section B

Question 7

Stronger responses to this question understood the snobbery of Mrs Norris and her desire to take the credit when she sees that Mr Thomas has decided to look after Fanny. Many responses did not fully appreciate the extent of her hypocrisy or maliciousness and found it hard to communicate what a striking introduction this passage gives to her character. Many candidates found it quite difficult to 'unpick' the wordy speeches of Mrs Norris and there was a tendency to avoid detailed engagement with the passage. The least successful responses re-told the events and did not respond to the terms of the question.

Question 8

Most candidates responding to this question showed good knowledge of the novel and characters and supported their answers with appropriate and often detailed textual reference. Henry's philandering was highlighted and many recognised the play within the novel as an important element in this. Candidates appreciated Fanny's role and highlighted her clear perceptions about Henry and her steadfast refusal to marry him.

Question 9

Some candidates were able to identify the central relationship and noted the tone of nostalgia. Stronger responses focused on how Lena is seen through the eyes of Jim and were aware of her growth from a young girl to an independent and self-confident businesswoman. However, many candidates found it difficult to apply the key words 'memorable' and 'significant' to the extract and some were lacking in evidence of a close exploration of the vivid description in the first paragraph.

Question 10

Too few responses were seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

Most candidates had some understanding of the context of Deven's predicament. Candidates noted and commented on his awkwardness and lack of assertiveness. However, most responses tended to simply list the humiliations inflicted upon Deven and did not fully grasp the scale of his disillusionment with his hero,

Nur. Few commented on the humour or picked up on the comic aspects of his appearance and behaviour e.g. his attention-seeking cries of pain caused by his piles.

Question 12

Too few responses were seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 13

Many candidates provided confident responses to this question. Candidates showed good knowledge of the novel, characters and themes. Most candidates found examples in the passage that were both 'emotional' and 'significant' and provided engaged answers. Mr Gradgrind's penitence was recognised and well-documented. Stronger answers conveyed the sheer enormity of his shame and guilt by noting the omniscient narrator's comments. Weaker responses used much of the time in recounting in detail events outside of the passage, some of which had little relevance to the question.

Question 14

Most candidates who answered this question clearly agreed with the statement although a few managed to convincingly argue for some sympathy for Tom. Candidates generally showed a clear understanding of the text and of character. Stronger responses were able to go beyond narrative and description and explored some of the possible reasons for Tom's lack of moral sense. The strongest responses also included a wide range of reference and referred to some specific instances to provide evidence for their argument. Weaker responses often listed Tom's crimes and misdemeanours with little reference or close analysis.

Question 15

There were a few strong answers in response to this question which identified the dramatic shock of the moment and provided a response to the writing effects such as the contrasting use of language of the clerk and Turnkey. Strong answers noted and commented effectively on Thornhill's physical reaction to the news of his reprieve and understood that this moment was a turning point in the novel and in Thornhill's life. A number of candidates did not fully understand the passage. There was some misreading, especially in interpreting the contemptuous turnkey and clerk. Some thought the context was in the courtroom and some tended towards a narrative approach, working through the passage recounting the actions.

Question 16

Blackwood was clearly a memorable character for many candidates who expressed admiration for his integrity and humanity. Nearly all candidates showed thorough knowledge and understanding of his character and his significance in the novel. Candidates provided detailed and accurate quotations from the text to back up their arguments with the strongest responses including close analysis of how the writing works. Responses were generally well balanced and convincing.

Question 17

There were some strong answers which showed detailed knowledge and understanding of the passage, overall novel and characters. These commented sensitively on Gene's mixed and changing thoughts and feelings during the passage. Some recognised the unreliability of the narrator. Stronger responses also focused on the structural features of the passage and the deeper implications of the war imagery. Some showed an awareness of the intricacies of both adolescent mind and author's craft. Less successful responses used narrative retelling at the expense of thorough analysis of the text and question.

Question 18

Stronger responses recognised the symbolism of Finny's innocence and the problems this causes Gene whose thoughts and feelings seem petty and more grudging by contrast. Most presented reasonably convincing arguments, which were well supported with apt quotation and/or examples from the novel. A few weaker answers tended to ignore the question and provide a straightforward character sketch of Finny.

Question 19

Candidates demonstrated knowledge of the context, events and characters of the text as a whole. A few answers probed the emotional impact of the extract and explored some of the literary features such as the absence of names or use of personal pronoun. Most effective were those responses that explored the effects of these features rather than just identifying them. Many, however, presented answers that were lacking engagement and detail. Some were rather repetitive, suggesting a lack of detailed knowledge and understanding. A few spent an unnecessary amount of time in presenting their opinion about the historical context of apartheid in South Africa without close reference to either the text or question.

Question 20

Too few responses were seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 21

Many candidates wrote with engagement and expressed some sympathy for the key characters. Most candidates recognised the significance of the relationship between the narrator and Mary and the breach of trust between them but they were less secure in analysing the letters from John to her. Stronger answers noted the intimate quality of the language of the letters, their increasing bleakness and the harshness of the war and its impact on John. These responded to both the key words, 'moving' and 'significant'. In some weaker responses the progressively desperate nature of John was not fully appreciated. Some tended to re-tell the story or to focus on one aspect of the extract alone, for example the conditions of the war, or the love story between John and Mary. A few candidates thought John had died in the war and/or did not understand the 'sacrifice' he made.

Question 22

This question was generally well answered and candidates who attempted it knew the text well. They were clearly able to engage with the question and the key word 'horrifying'. Stronger responses developed relevant arguments and comments from the text and linked their points sensitively to the context. These candidates provided relevant and often detailed textual reference.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

> **Paper 2010/22**
> **Drama 22**

Key messages

- The most successful responses focused on the key words in the question, remained focused and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Responses to passage-based questions which understood the context of the passage in the play but also explored the passage itself, in some detail, were the most successful.
- Many responses would have been improved by avoiding a retelling of the whole plot and then only attempting to link this information to the question in the conclusion.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of references.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage were features of the most successful answers.

General comments

Many candidates knew and understood their set drama texts well. Explicit focus on the question is fundamental to a relevant answer. Only the strongest responses deconstructed the question, focusing on the key terms, for example, 'memorable' or 'disturbing', to choose their material judiciously. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. Less successful responses often relied on lengthy, narrative accounts of the text with little textual detail or direct link to the question. Where there was some reference to the text this was frequently inaccurate, or the text quoted not explored.

Successful responses demonstrated a constant awareness of the text as drama, referring to the 'audience', rather than 'reader' and the 'play' rather than 'novel', as well as exploring the author's methods to convey the texts' main concerns. The ability to read closely and analyse linguistic and dramatic effects is key to successful responses. Whilst some candidates understood and used literary terminology correctly, for example, foreshadowing and dramatic irony, there remains the tendency to point out terms that do not relate to the question or help to develop a point or argument constructively.

There was some evidence that less successful candidates do not have detailed knowledge of the set texts to answer the questions in enough depth. This was particularly obvious in the passage-based questions where some candidates did not know the context of the passage or were unable to recognise the events referred to in the passage, relying on writing all they knew about the text with scant reference to the actual question.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

Knowledge of the text and character was not always secure in response to this question. To answer the question fully candidates needed to focus on how the writing portrays Walter's 'thoughts and feelings' rather than to simply work through the passage. Walter's feelings are accessible through his behaviour and the language used. Successful responses knew how Walter had been feeling before this moment and that he would lose the money mama had entrusted him with. They were able to show understanding of his hopes and dreams and the over-optimistic way he expressed himself towards Travis, comparing this with Walter's previous misery before he gets his hands on the money. His increasing excitement and exaggerated flights of fancy were also dealt with, as well as his obsession with money and status. The strongest responses managed to explore the stage directions and what they reveal of Walter at this moment.

Less successful responses worked through the passage, paraphrasing or explaining his behaviour, with little focus on the question or understanding of how unrealistic his hopes and dreams were. These responses took the passage at face value and thought Walter was going to be successful in achieving his dreams.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to make some comment on why Karl Lindner was unpleasant though many found it difficult to recall specific details of his visits to the Youngers. Most only focused on his first visit and understood his prejudices make him unpleasant. Only a few stronger responses recognised the irony of his role as Chairman of the Clybourne Park 'Welcoming Committee' and commented on his second visit where Walter rises to the challenge and has the chance to triumph over Lindner. The weakest responses showed little understanding of who Lindner was and a few confused him with the character, Willy.

ARTHUR MILLER: A View from the Bridge

Question 3

Few responses provided or alluded to the relevant context to the passage. The dramatic irony that Eddie has informed the Immigration Bureau about Marco and Rodolpho and that he is unable to speak to Catherine following his kissing of Catherine and Rodolpho was missed in many cases, meaning that candidates did not always understand Eddie's actions described in the stage directions. The focus was on Eddie's relationship with Beatrice. This motivated many candidates to adopt a narrative approach to their relationship in the past, with the frequent inclusion of the quotation, '*when am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?*' and this detracted from a focus on the extract. Many candidates referred to the '*shootin' gallery',* and, the '*guy ain't right',* but the latter gave rise to some misinterpretations of how Eddie viewed Rodolpho. Beatrice's role in the play, in terms of her being the peace-maker, attempting to persuade Eddie to attend Catherine's wedding, was noted by some candidates: only the strongest candidates commented on Catherine's appearance at the end and Eddie's dramatic words, *'I can not talk to her'*, and how this contributed to make this such a 'memorable moment'. Many responses mentioned Eddie's restlessness and agitation, but few explored the possible reason for this or the rising tension in the scene.

Less successful candidates paraphrased the passage and discussed Eddie's possessive behaviour towards Catherine both here and earlier in the play. Some candidates mistakenly stated that Eddie goes out for a walk at the end of the passage in order to make the call to the Immigration Bureau.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to present a personal viewpoint about the rapid development of the relationship with some comment on Catherine's age and naivety. Eddie's objections to the relationship were discussed and stronger responses considered how his death might affect the couple's future happiness once they were freed from his opposition. Many candidates felt hopeful that the relationship would succeed as it was based on an intense attraction: Catherine had moved out with Rodolpho and the marriage had been arranged. A few candidates agreed with Eddie that Rodolpho was only *'bowin' to his passport'* and saw no hope for their future happiness. Many candidates found it difficult to support their ideas with close reference to the text and were narrative in approach. Less successful responses became speculative, losing sight of the question, and ideas were not always rooted in the text.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 5

Responses to the passage needed to focus on what made the scene 'tense' rather than just describing what happened in it. The tension built by the immediate context of the passage - Ronnie's expulsion from Osborne is unknown to Arthur Winslow and Catherine had forgotten they had a guest for lunch – was often not noted. This led to missed opportunities to talk about the tension on stage with appreciation of the dramatic irony with Ronnie hidden upstairs. More successful answers were aware of the conversation between Catherine and John and appreciated the awkwardness and embarrassment here rather than a more intense and melodramatic encounter. Most understood Desmond: his pained reticence, interspersed with his pointed remarks, for example, *'Am I? Am I, indeed?'*. Stronger answers examined the language, the stilted dialogue and the pauses. The politeness in talking about the weather was noted in strong responses and the moment John and Catherine speak at the same time to try to bridge the silence. However, few commented on how the others arriving, Arthur especially, change the mood. Desmond's former cricket prowess and present

signs of ageing, causing considerable change to John's behaviour towards Desmond, were only recognised in a few responses.

Less successful answers wrote more generally about the 'love triangle', ignoring the fact that Desmond's love for Catherine is unrequited, *'a family joke'*. Some tended to exaggerate, commenting on the 'hatred' between John and Desmond and viewing Catherine's treatment of Desmond as a 'betrayal'. Less successful responses relied on paraphrasing the passage with little understanding or focus on the tension.

Question 6

Many adopted a narrative approach or wrote a character profile of Arthur and Grace Winslow with little focus on what makes their relationship a 'fascinating part of the play'. Greater analysis of their interaction would have been useful here. More successful candidates had a grasp of the conventional nature of the relationship at the beginning of the play and how it then changed. Many did not support points with quotations or closer reference to the text. Stronger responses focused on how Grace supported the court case despite reservations, noting the changing dynamics in the relationship when she finally confronts Arthur about the sacrifices the family has made for the case and the strains it has placed upon their relationship. A few contrasted Grace with Catherine to good effect. There was little response to the caring nature of Grace, worrying about how Arthur's health has deteriorated, or the humour and loyalty that exists between them.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Macbeth*

Question 7

Successful responses often briefly contextualised the passage, commenting on the echo of the witches' words when Macbeth refers to the fair and foul day. These showed understanding of the dramatic irony and knew that Macbeth had already become Thane of Cawdor commenting on the 'disturbing' prospects created if the prophecy of Macbeth becoming King were to come true. There was much to explore in the passage which was 'disturbing' to both the audience and characters themselves: the coincidence of the witches 'waiting' for Macbeth, the description of their appearance, the confusing prophecies made to Macbeth and Banquo and their sudden disappearance, were all raised. Stronger answers explored the implications of the prophecies and how this foreshadows the murder of both Duncan and Banquo, as well as how this meeting impacts on Macbeth's ambition. Such responses were able to quote extensively and analyse the language, with some effective detail concerning the description of the witches, the three '*Hails'* and '*insane root'*. Less successful candidates often retold the plot up to this point before paraphrasing the passage, then continued to narrate how Macbeth goes on to kill Duncan & Banquo. Candidates need to maintain focus on the question, keeping the key word, 'disturbing' in mind and linking it closely to points made. There is little to reward in answers which narrate the plot or passage, attempting to link their answer to the question in the concluding paragraph with a general comment, for example, *'This shows that the passage is disturbing'*.

Question 8

The most successful responses were aware that the terms of the question, 'To what extent', encouraged both a personal and balanced view of Lady Macbeth and whether the audience felt pity for her or not. Most candidates found reasons for both sides of the argument and tried to balance earlier impressions of Lady Macbeth with her later suffering. Some confident responses took the view that it was all her own making and she deserved all she got. The main areas covered were her manipulation and encouragement of Macbeth to kill Duncan with '*unsex me here'* frequently quoted and her sleep walking, guilt and suicide at the end. Most sympathised with her deteriorating mental condition. However, there were frequent misinterpretations with some candidates commenting that she had killed Duncan due to her intense desire to be queen and even that she met the witches, supported by her being considered 'the fourth witch' but without further commentary. Only the strongest answers were supported by well-selected references to the text and relevant quotations fully analysed.

Less successful answers wrote character sketches of Lady Macbeth and lost sight of the question, except to mention it at the end. When used, references to the text supported a narrative approach and lacked the detail concerning the effect and implications of the language quoted. Some retold the plot or Lady Macbeth's part in the play with limited focus or understanding of the requirements of the question. It was clear that some candidates referred to film versions of the play, particularly when referencing Lady Macbeth's suicide which takes place offstage.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Romeo and Juliet*

Question 9

Many candidates found it difficult to comment on what makes this a 'dramatic' moment in the play due to difficulties in placing the passage in context and insecure understanding of the causes of Juliet's 'death' with many thinking she had indeed died. Stronger responses showed understanding of the dramatic irony and that Juliet's death was 'fake' whilst also acknowledging Friar's Lawrence's role in the plan, examining the irony of a wedding where the bride is found 'dead'. These showed clear understanding of the audience's complicity with the Friar's plan. They were aware that the Nurse was closer to Juliet than her mother and commented on her exclamations and the humour in her comments to Juliet. The best answers explored the Nurse's mood and language as it changes from her cheerful, bawdy chatter to her genuine grief. Many candidates felt that both Lord and Lady Capulet were only lamenting the loss of a financially beneficial marriage citing their behaviour in forcing Juliet into marrying Paris. Very few responses referred fully to the language of the passage and the dramatic impact for the rest of the play.

Less successful responses thought Juliet was dead and placed the passage at the end of the play with some mistakenly thinking that the Nurse is involved in the plot with Friar Lawrence. Weaker responses narrated the plot and what follows this scene with little focus on the question or the passage.

Question 10

To answer this question well candidates had to explore how Tybalt's character and behaviour make him 'memorable' in driving the plot. His infrequent appearances caused problems for some candidates who did not have a detailed knowledge of the character or text, resulting in many narrative and repetitive responses. Stronger candidates were able to see Tybalt's function with his volatile, aggressive nature, his constant fighting as a reminder of the feud between the Capulets and Montagues and this being a cause of the tragedy. The most successful answers engaged with Tybalt's words to Lord Capulet and his defiant attitude. They could see the killing of Mercutio and Tybalt's death as catalysts, shifting the play totally into tragedy. Successful answers explored the impact of his death on the Capulets, with Lady Capulet's cry for revenge. This was considered 'memorable' as he must have been loved by his family to the extent that Lord Capulet brings forward Juliet's wedding to Paris to 'cheer her up'.

Less successful responses gave a character study with little or no reference to the question. Some lapsed into generalisation and narrative usually limiting textual detail to his propensity for fighting. Some were speculative in approach, interpreting Juliet's tears for her cousin to indicate a much closer relationship than that seen in the play. The least successful responses confused Tybalt with Mercutio or Benvolio, commenting on when he appears in the play but without linking this to why he was a 'memorable' character.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Key messages

The most successful answers analyse the writing of the play by using the prompt given in the question in words such as: 'powerfully', 'vividly' and 'dramatically'.

To analyse the writing of a text, candidates need to assess what effect the author aimed to achieve, how they intended to achieve it and how far the effect was achieved.

When analysing dramatic effects, candidates should consider how the writer uses features of the genre such as: interaction between characters, stagecraft and likely audience reaction, as well as structural features such as: foreshadowing, contrast and dramatic tension. The most successful candidates select the most appropriate features for the question and text.

Strong responses to discursive questions construct a clear argument which is well-developed and supported by apt and detailed reference to the text.

In the strongest answers to passage-based questions, candidates focus on the passage and select the most appropriate material from it to answer the question.

General comments

In this series, there were some excellent answers gaining full marks in which candidates conveyed a clear critical understanding of the text. Candidates at all levels frequently showed their enjoyment of their set texts in their close engagement with the characters and situations. What characterised the strongest answers was a sensitive and detailed response to the way the writers use dramatic features to achieve their effects.

Successful answers began by identifying the issues raised by the question and the main points to be used in the answer. The most appropriate textual material was selected to support the answer. Some able candidates potentially limited their marks by using examination time to write lengthy and general introductions. Weaker answers needed to focus more on the question and avoid narration of the plot and general character sketches. Others wrote about historical or cultural details which are difficult to credit in an answer on English Literature.

Strong answers to passage-based questions used the prompts in the question to analyse the writing and selected apt material to use, rather than providing a general commentary. Thus, a good answer to **Question 7** on *Macbeth*, which asks: 'How does Shakespeare powerfully portray Lady Macbeth at this moment in the play?', not only identified that Lady Macbeth is manipulative, but showed how this is powerfully conveyed by analysing such features as her relentless and insulting questioning of her husband, the effect of which is to provoke him to murder King Duncan. Some candidates wrote more generally about the characters or themes in the passage with little reference to the question. The key to achieving highly is to make a considered response to the question which is focused on the dramatic effects of the writing.

The best responses to discursive questions constructed a clear argument consisting of a number of points which were well-developed and supported by apt and detailed reference to the text, usually in the form of brief quotations. They began by addressing the question directly, and focused on its key words such as: 'powerfully', 'revealing' and 'dramatic impact'. Some candidates did not know the play well enough to select supporting material, which limited their answers. Others needed to make clear how the reference supported the point they were making. Some answers needed to avoid using irrelevant background information and needed greater focus on the question.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

Successful answers directly addressed the question on 'dramatic climax' and showed how the passage gave a resolution to the play's main themes: the struggle of an oppressed minority in the face of racism, and the family's refusal to give in to assimilation. Strong answers briefly stated the context of the passage, that Lindner thinks he is here to give the Youngers money not to move to Clybourne Park, and then selected material to illustrate 'dramatic climax'. Some commented on how Walter was 'like a small boy' at the start of the passage, but by the end faced Lindner 'eye to eye', and that this visual growth on stage mirrors his internal growth to be a 'man' capable of asserting his family's pride and refusing the money. Strong answers considered examples of tension in the passage, such as Walter 'starting to cry', Lindner 'confused' and Mama 'rocking back and forth'. They analysed how these stage directions conveyed the character's heightened emotions, but sometimes needed to link them to the context to show greater understanding. Others wrote about Walter's difficult life, often with a sense of his pride, but without relating it to context.

Question 2

Candidates knew the characters well and often saw Ruth as stoic and embodying common sense and good values, whereas Walter is self-centred and obsessed with unachievable materialistic dreams. Weaker answers tended to treat the characters separately. Stronger answers addressed the question and explored how the relationship is powerfully portrayed through some of their conflicts, often over money, such as when Travis asked for fifty cents for school or Walter's plans to open a liquor store. The most successful answers recognised the contribution their circumstances make to the conflict in their relationship, and also their underlying love and how they both make an effort to repair their fractured relationship, such as when they go to the movies and hold hands. Some candidates lost focus on the question and wrote about the hardships caused by poverty instead.

ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 3

Strong answers established the context of the passage, with Eddie anxiously waiting up for Catherine and Rodolpho to return from the cinema, and explored the exchange with Beatrice which establishes Eddie's concern for Catherine and Beatrice's disapproval. Most candidates explored the attitudes shown by Mike and Louis to Marco and Rodolpho. Some candidates found Louis and Mike's ambiguous reaction to Rodolpho difficult to analyse. Strong answers referred to Eddie's feelings for Catherine as the reason for Eddie's unease, which is shown by the ellipsis and the repetition of 'he's just a kid'. Weaker answers often only considered Rodolpho, with some losing focus on the passage; or they identified Eddie's emotions from stage directions without showing understanding of their cause. Others misunderstood comments about Marco, believing Eddie to be jealous of his strength. The strongest answers focused well on the question and the writing to show how Eddie's attitudes are revealed.

Question 4

Successful answers recognised the reasons for Eddie's visits to Alfieri: to find a way of stopping Rodolpho's relationship with Catherine. They saw the dramatic impact of the visits as conveying a growing tension leading inexorably towards Eddie's tragic fate, enhanced by Alfieri's powerlessness. They considered that Alfieri sets the context for Eddie's action of snitching on the illegal immigrants. Candidates who knew the text well were able to select detailed material to support their answers. They showed how Alfieri ironically implants the idea of snitching in Eddie while warning him of the consequences. He conveys the intensity of Eddie's despair by describing his eyes as 'like tunnels'. He warns Eddie of the danger of his feelings for Catherine as 'she can not marry you' – and we see Eddie's furious reactions. The dramatic impact is heightened on stage by Alfieri calling after Eddie as he 'walks into the darkness', towards a glowing phone booth. Less successful answers needed to use detailed textual support and to address 'dramatic impact' directly, rather than giving a general explanation of Alfieri's role in the play.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 5

Strong answers focused on what is powerful in terms of plot significance and stagecraft. They identified the aggression of Sir Robert's interrogation and the strongest answers explored the writing to show how this was achieved. They commented on Sir Robert's brusque questioning and threatening manner conveyed in 'malevolently' and 'with utmost venom'. They also considered Ronnie's developing distress as he sobs 'hysterically'. The best answers considered the power of the dramatic contrast of John's innocent interruption, unaware as he is of the highly charged situation, and also the power of the twist at the end when Sir Robert jumps out of role and declares Ronnie's innocence, leaving the characters and audience shocked. Weaker responses showed less awareness of Sir Robert's intentions here, or narrated the story of the charges against Ronnie.

Question 6

Reasonably developed answers focused on Arthur's fight for justice for Ronnie, noting the sacrifices he makes, such as: his health, the family's money, Dickie's education and Catherine's marriage. Stronger answers explored the selfishness of these sacrifices designed to save the family's reputation. The strongest answers also considered Arthur's relationships with Catherine and Dickie as well as Ronnie. They often commented that Arthur shows his respect and regret when he gives Catherine the choice of carrying on with the case, and more nuanced answers considered the odds of Dickie actually gaining a degree before criticising Arthur for withdrawing funding. Weaker answers tended to refer generally to the text, rather than select detailed support.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 7

The strongest answers often began by identifying the context, when Macbeth has just decided not to kill Duncan, and Lady Macbeth persuades him to do it. They established that Lady Macbeth is portrayed as manipulative and determined at this moment in the play, then analysed the writing of the passage to show the power of this portrayal. Good answers selected brief quotations to illustrate her relentless and insulting questioning of Macbeth's courage and manliness, and also her quick-fire responses which give Macbeth no pause for thought. The violent image of her murdering her own innocent baby was often quoted, with strong answers considering its power in conjuring a loving picture of a suckling baby, only to shatter it dramatically with the disturbing 'dash'd the brains out', portraying Lady Macbeth's ruthlessness and determination to achieve what she has promised to do. Many also commented on her detailed and practical planning of the murder, showing her intelligence, and her immoral readiness to blame the chamberlains for the murder, as well as her intention of loudly proclaiming her grief at Duncan's death to avert suspicion.

Less successful answers needed to focus in more detail on the writing of the passage and to explore how Lady Macbeth uses a variety of powers of persuasion. Some copied text without analysing language and its effects. Others spent too much of their answer away from 'this moment in the play', considering Lady Macbeth's earlier appeal to 'unsex me here', or her later suicide caused by guilt. While brief references to the bravery of Macbeth as a warrior, the nature of masculinity or the social context of the role of women could be seen as relevant in emphasising the success of Lady Macbeth here, some answers devoted too much of their answer to these topics at the expense of focus on the detail of the passage.

Question 8

Most answers recognised that Macbeth was influenced by the witches, Lady Macbeth and his own ambition to varying degrees, all of which propelled him to his inevitable doom. Good answers selected apt supporting material from throughout the play. There were perceptive and convincing responses, which constructed a clear argument and often explored the idea of free will in more depth to consider whether Macbeth could have avoided his fate if he had made better choices, like Banquo, who was seen as a foil representing moral fortitude. A few candidates referred to the form of the play, recognising that the fate of tragic heroes is inevitable by definition. Answers which saw Macbeth as insane or evil tended to be restrictive in that they lacked development beyond this point or their arguments lacked convincing depth. Weaker answers tracked Macbeth's downfall and asserted that it was inevitable, or made a case in response to the question without detailed support from the text.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 9

Strong answers tended to outline the context of the given passage: the Nurse has been sent by Juliet to Romeo to find out where and when their marriage is to take place. Some candidates considered the structure of the tragedy, with this passage providing a lighter tone as dramatic contrast to future sorrow. Most candidates explored the liveliness of the scene in the mocking and bantering tone used by the youths as they make fun of the Nurse's appearance and affectations ('a sail!'…'ancient lady'), and of Mercutio's insulting song as he plays on 'hare/hoar'. The Nurse's indignant response to his 'ropery' and her protestations that she is 'none of his flirt-gills' was also seen as humorous, with strong answers exploring her language in detail. The image of the older Nurse 'taking down' the vigorous Mercutio was also seen as entertaining, as was Peter's pretensions to gallantry. The Nurse's protectiveness of Juliet at the end reminds the audience of her devotion to Juliet. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase parts of the passage without commenting on language use; others showed insecure understanding of the text.

Question 10

There were some thoughtful personal responses to this open question. Candidates tended to sympathise most with Juliet, because she is young, innocent and inexperienced, living in a patriarchal society with little control over her own life. The forced marriage, distant parents, a closeted upbringing with an older Nurse as her only companion, the violent murder of her cousin, the banishment of her husband, and her own suicide by stabbing were all cited as reasons to sympathise with her. Romeo was seen as having an easier life as a man with an active social life, who had some experience of love already, as well as caring parents and friends, and respect for the Friar who could provide guidance. However, some candidates made the case for Romeo deserving more sympathy, because he is reluctantly caught up in extreme violence which was not of his own making, but which he felt compelled to continue, with disastrous consequences. His anguish by Juliet's side in the vault, leading to his death, prompted much sympathy. Most answers were able to refer to supporting aspects of the text; stronger answers selected apt detail and explored the effects of language whilst weaker answers used general or vague reference, or asserted their views without support.