

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

**Paper 0408/01**  
**Portfolio**

## **Key messages**

- Teachers should refer to the 0408 Syllabus and Coursework Handbook during the planning stages of the course. Centres are reminded that the new syllabus should be referred to for the June 2022 series.
- Tasks for all assignments must be worded to enable candidates to fulfil the requirements of the band descriptors and be written clearly at the start of each assignment.
- Written assignments should include focused ticking and marginal annotation by the teacher which comment on strengths and weaknesses of candidate performance and should be clearly linked to the marking criteria.
- Candidate work should be securely fastened and presented without plastic folders.

## **General comments**

The observations in this general report should be read alongside the individual report to the centre.

### **The Critical Response**

Successful responses demonstrated clear critical engagement with the selected text in response to a well-formulated task. These responses analysed the ways writers achieve effects and were supported by well-selected and concise textual references.

Weaker responses were narrative or explanatory in approach lacking textual detail to support ideas and a response to the ways the writer creates effects.

For candidates to be able to meet the assessment criteria in their writing, effective tasks must be set. Examples of appropriately challenging tasks can be found in the 0408 *Coursework Handbook*.

### **The Empathic Response**

The most successful responses focused on a specific character and moment in the text, offering an engagingly authentic 'voice' for the chosen character. These responses were firmly rooted in the text. Less successful responses did not focus on a precise moment and relied on speculation rather than close details from the text. Often these involved some retelling of the story rather than conveying the thoughts and feelings of the chosen character. Examples of good and unsuitable empathic tasks are given in the 0408 *Coursework Handbook*.

### **The Recorded Conversation**

This is the final series for the present syllabus with the Oral response as a requirement of the Coursework portfolio.

It is pleasing to see that the objective of a 'recorded conversation' was adhered to. Candidates focused on the ways the writer *presents* a character, idea or theme and engaged fully with their chosen character or theme. The most successful responses were detailed with specific and much well-selected textual references to support their ideas.

Less successful responses were narrative in approach, lacking appropriate textual detail to support ideas: this approach does not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the higher bands.

### **Teacher annotation**

Teachers are reminded that all assignments should show evidence of having been marked to assist the moderation process. Focused ticking of key points, supported by brief reference to the band descriptors in marginal annotation and a detailed summative comment, are a prerequisite for all written assignments. These annotations allow external Moderators to understand how the final mark was awarded.

### **Administration**

Care should be taken over the presentation of the portfolios. The Individual Record Card should be fastened securely (e.g. by a treasury tag or staple) to the written assignments (and not placed in plastic wallets or cardboard folders) to ensure ease of access. Assignments should be organised in the order presented on the Individual Record Card.

**Centres are reminded that the new syllabus for 2022 should be referred for the June 2022 series and beyond.**

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

Paper 0408/21  
Paper 2: Unseen

## Key messages

- As candidates address areas suggested in the bullet points, those who can link these comments to their exploration of the main focus of the question are likely to be more successful overall. Those who methodically work their way through the bullet points alone without reference to the stem question tend to offer a more general appreciation of the text, forgetting about the key focus word(s) in the question itself.
- Candidates who are able to integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the way in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as, simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comment on these features work best when they are used to explore the way in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- Candidates who can integrate references from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by 'This shows ...' tend to lose sight of how, exactly the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the 'middle' missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should be willing to directly quote the words they are commenting on.

## General comments

In general, engagement with the materials was enthusiastic. Many responses demonstrated a breadth and a depth of understanding.

Some responses could have benefitted by covering the material more completely, particularly in the prose passage. In some cases only part of a passage was explored and though this can be sufficiently detailed to achieve good marks, planning out the timing of writing answers lends scope for even greater rewards.

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem or passage before moving on to closer exploration of language, as this demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the key words of the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used, they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

#### *'Abandoned Farmhouse'*

**How does the poet vividly portray the abandoned farmhouse?**

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the way the poet describes the farmhouse and its surroundings
- the words and images the poet uses to describe the people who lived on the farm

- **the way the poet creates a sense of mystery.**

Stronger responses were able to remark the way in which we do not hear from the people themselves, nor do we hear from a narrator, about what these people were truly like. Rather, the farm and the objects in and around it, have been ‘given a voice’ and ‘tell us a story’ about the people – the size of the farmer, the fact that he is a *God-fearing man*; the bedroom wallpaper and the oilcloth on the kitchen shelves testifying to a woman’s presence and the sandbox and abandoned toys telling us that a child has been present. The strongest responses were able to comment on the way in which the style of the poem leads the reader to question who is narrating, especially when the ‘voices’ of the objects give way to a more omniscient voice that makes the judgement, *Something went wrong*. There were some candidates who were able to discuss the effects created by the poet’s use of repetitions of *Something went wrong* and *says*.

Many candidates remarked that it is the *broken back* of the Bible which tells us that the book was read often and this is what signifies a *God-fearing man*, and to speculate that the woman must have spent more time in both kitchen and bedroom so that she is moved to make those spaces as pleasant as possible. Most candidates were able to discuss the ways in which the poet portrays the family as poor - the rags in the window-frames, the kinds of toys strewn in the yard – particularly the home-made sandbox, and the fact that the man is described as *not a man for farming*, thus indicating that he’s been unable to make a success of the place, noting the fields *cluttered with boulders* and *the leaky barn*. Many candidates commented on the loneliness of the farmhouse, the way in which the poet ‘paints a powerful picture’ of an isolated place along the *narrow country road*, and speculated on how such isolation, having no near-neighbours or community, is hard to live with. Most were able to discuss how the scene gives us the appearance of a desertion that occurred long ago, with the tractor having grown rusty, the yard having become choked with weeds, and the Bible being covered with dust.

Those responses which did less well could have avoided becoming caught up in trying to make a whole story out of the scene. It can be apt to remark that this kind of a scene gives all of the appearances of the opening to a crime drama, or a horror movie, where the reader or viewer is ‘hooked’ by wondering what happened to the family – why did the woman leave *in nervous haste*? The poet is indeed attempting to lead readers to wonder what became of them all. But it can be too tempting to pursue an entire storyline, speculative of an abusive man from his size, or the flight of an abused woman because of her hasty departure. Some candidates were able to speculate that a storm had come to the farm, drawing this conclusion from the toys being described as being *strewn in the yard/like branches after a storm*. Many, having begun with this assumption, later in the essay began to question whether it had been an actual storm that had driven the family out or whether the poet intended only to say that the remnants made it look as if a storm had passed through – maybe it was a storm of a different kind that only affected the emotions of this family.

## Question 2

**The financial struggles of Avtar and his family.**

**Explore the ways in which the writer strikingly creates tension in this extract.**

**To help you answer, you might consider:**

- **the descriptions of where they live**
- **the way the writer presents relationships within Avtar’s family**
- **how the writer conveys Avtar’s thoughts and feelings.**

Most candidates were able to address the first bullet point by connecting the tension in the piece with the poverty of Avtar and his family as demonstrated by their surroundings. The stairway is so narrow that Avtar must *flatten himself against the wall* so that two men with a TV can get past him. The repossession of Mr Lal’s television set also points towards this being a building where other residents are also financially struggling. Avtar’s family eat around a *small fold-out table*, and their meal is *pitiful*. The apartments are so close together that when Avtar stands on the balcony he can hear Mr and Mrs Lal arguing next-door. Avtar’s brother is *emptying the bucket*, which might mean ‘they have no indoor plumbing’. Avtar’s mother snags her sari on a nail stuck into the counter which might suggest ‘a home-made repair to something’. Many pointed out that this is obviously a city apartment, with the *traffic glowering below...the city lay there roaring its indifference*.

The relationships within the family are characterised by the tension that comes from strained communications. Developed responses remarked that everyone seems to be holding back. Avtar only reveals half of the cost of the lawyer he's consulted about his student visa, and even though the family discuss how Avtar's plans might work out there is restraint in both the Father's extravagant offer to sell his shop and his Mother's sharpness over Avtar's remark that *there's nothing for me if I stay here*. The most developed responses noted that this restraint is linked to the family's poverty and the fact that they are so accustomed to going without and being in difficulties that 'talking about it doesn't help'.

Many candidates looked at Avtar's thoughts and feelings through the description of him standing on the balcony tearing a branch from the amrood tree, ripping at it *until all that was left was the white wood*. This image conjures how torn Avtar feels about his situation: how desperate he is to get away and begin to live his dream and how conscious he is of the obstacles he faces before he can do that. When his Father offers to sell the shop Avtar laughs as if scornful of the grand gesture and how impractical it is. Avtar has evidently been able to think further than his Father to try and come up with a more practical solution of sending money home to pay for a loan on the shop. The opening paragraph also provides a view of Avtar's 'depression', as he 'trudges' up the stairs and has thoughts about the surrounding city's indifference, *What a world*.

Those responses which were less well developed were able to summarise the text in relation to the bullet-point steers with references to the text to support their work.

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

Paper 0408/22  
Paper 2: Unseen

## Key messages

- As candidates address areas suggested in the bullet points, those who can link these comments to their exploration of the main focus of the question are likely to be more successful overall. Those who methodically work their way through the bullet points alone without reference to the stem question tend to offer a more general appreciation of the text, forgetting about the key focus word(s) in the question itself.
- Candidates who are able to integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the way in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as, simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comment on these features work best when they are used to explore the way in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- Candidates who can integrate references from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by 'This shows ...' tend to lose sight of how, exactly the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the 'middle' missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should be willing to directly quote the words they are commenting on.

## General comments

In general, engagement with the materials was enthusiastic. Many responses demonstrated a breadth and a depth of understanding.

Some responses could have benefitted by covering the material more completely, particularly in the prose passage. In some cases only part of a passage was explored and though this can be sufficiently detailed to achieve good marks, planning out the timing of writing answers lends scope for even greater rewards.

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem or passage before moving on to closer exploration of language, as this demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the key words of the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used, they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

#### *'Abandoned Farmhouse'*

**How does the poet vividly portray the abandoned farmhouse?**

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the way the poet describes the farmhouse and its surroundings
- the words and images the poet uses to describe the people who lived on the farm

- **the way the poet creates a sense of mystery.**

Stronger responses were able to remark the way in which we do not hear from the people themselves, nor do we hear from a narrator, about what these people were truly like. Rather, the farm and the objects in and around it, have been ‘given a voice’ and ‘tell us a story’ about the people – the size of the farmer, the fact that he is a *God-fearing man*; the bedroom wallpaper and the oilcloth on the kitchen shelves testifying to a woman’s presence and the sandbox and abandoned toys telling us that a child has been present. The strongest responses were able to comment on the way in which the style of the poem leads the reader to question who is narrating, especially when the ‘voices’ of the objects give way to a more omniscient voice that makes the judgement, *Something went wrong*. There were some candidates who were able to discuss the effects created by the poet’s use of repetitions of *Something went wrong* and *says*.

Many candidates remarked that it is the *broken back* of the Bible which tells us that the book was read often and this is what signifies a *God-fearing man*, and to speculate that the woman must have spent more time in both kitchen and bedroom so that she is moved to make those spaces as pleasant as possible. Most candidates were able to discuss the ways in which the poet portrays the family as poor - the rags in the window-frames, the kinds of toys strewn in the yard – particularly the home-made sandbox, and the fact that the man is described as *not a man for farming*, thus indicating that he’s been unable to make a success of the place, noting the fields *cluttered with boulders* and *the leaky barn*. Many candidates commented on the loneliness of the farmhouse, the way in which the poet ‘paints a powerful picture’ of an isolated place along the *narrow country road*, and speculated on how such isolation, having no near-neighbours or community, is hard to live with. Most were able to discuss how the scene gives us the appearance of a desertion that occurred long ago, with the tractor having grown rusty, the yard having become choked with weeds, and the Bible being covered with dust.

Those responses which did less well could have avoided becoming caught up in trying to make a whole story out of the scene. It can be apt to remark that this kind of a scene gives all of the appearances of the opening to a crime drama, or a horror movie, where the reader or viewer is ‘hooked’ by wondering what happened to the family – why did the woman leave *in nervous haste*? The poet is indeed attempting to lead readers to wonder what became of them all. But it can be too tempting to pursue an entire storyline, speculative of an abusive man from his size, or the flight of an abused woman because of her hasty departure. Some candidates were able to speculate that a storm had come to the farm, drawing this conclusion from the toys being described as being *strewn in the yard/like branches after a storm*. Many, having begun with this assumption, later in the essay began to question whether it had been an actual storm that had driven the family out or whether the poet intended only to say that the remnants made it look as if a storm had passed through – maybe it was a storm of a different kind that only affected the emotions of this family.

## Question 2

### The financial struggles of Avtar and his family.

Explore the ways in which the writer strikingly creates tension in this extract.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- **the descriptions of where they live**
- **the way the writer presents relationships within Avtar’s family**
- **how the writer conveys Avtar’s thoughts and feelings.**

Most candidates were able to address the first bullet point by connecting the tension in the piece with the poverty of Avtar and his family as demonstrated by their surroundings. The stairway is so narrow that Avtar must *flatten himself against the wall* so that two men with a TV can get past him. The repossession of Mr Lal’s television set also points towards this being a building where other residents are also financially struggling. Avtar’s family eat around a *small fold-out table*, and their meal is *pitiful*. The apartments are so close together that when Avtar stands on the balcony he can hear Mr and Mrs Lal arguing next-door. Avtar’s brother is *emptying the bucket*, which might mean ‘they have no indoor plumbing’. Avtar’s mother snags her sari on a nail stuck into the counter which might suggest ‘a home-made repair to something’. Many pointed out that this is obviously a city apartment, with the *traffic glowering below...the city lay there roaring its indifference*.

The relationships within the family are characterised by the tension that comes from strained communications. Developed responses remarked that everyone seems to be holding back. Avtar only reveals half of the cost of the lawyer he's consulted about his student visa, and even though the family discuss how Avtar's plans might work out there is restraint in both the Father's extravagant offer to sell his shop and his Mother's sharpness over Avtar's remark that *there's nothing for me if I stay here*. The most developed responses noted that this restraint is linked to the family's poverty and the fact that they are so accustomed to going without and being in difficulties that 'talking about it doesn't help'.

Many candidates looked at Avtar's thoughts and feelings through the description of him standing on the balcony tearing a branch from the amrood tree, ripping at it *until all that was left was the white wood*. This image conjures how torn Avtar feels about his situation: how desperate he is to get away and begin to live his dream and how conscious he is of the obstacles he faces before he can do that. When his Father offers to sell the shop Avtar laughs as if scornful of the grand gesture and how impractical it is. Avtar has evidently been able to think further than his Father to try and come up with a more practical solution of sending money home to pay for a loan on the shop. The opening paragraph also provides a view of Avtar's 'depression', as he 'trudges' up the stairs and has thoughts about the surrounding city's indifference, *What a world*.

Those responses which were less well developed were able to summarise the text in relation to the bullet-point steers with references to the text to support their work.



# WORLD LITERATURE

---

**Paper 0408/23**  
**Paper 2: Unseen**

## Key messages

- As candidates address areas suggested in the bullet points, those who can link these comments to their exploration of the main focus of the question are likely to be more successful overall. Those who methodically work their way through the bullet points alone without reference to the stem question tend to offer a more general appreciation of the text, forgetting about the key focus word(s) in the question itself.
- Candidates who are able to integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the way in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as, simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comment on these features work best when they are used to explore the way in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- Candidates who can integrate references from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by 'This shows ...' tend to lose sight of how, exactly the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the 'middle' missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should be willing to directly quote the words they are commenting on.

## General comments

In general, engagement with the materials was enthusiastic. Many responses demonstrated a breadth and a depth of understanding.

Some responses could have benefitted by covering the material more completely, particularly in the prose passage. In some cases only part of a passage was explored and though this can be sufficiently detailed to achieve good marks, planning out the timing of writing answers lends scope for even greater rewards.

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was concerned, it appeared to be the result of not reading carefully enough. Particularly where poetry is concerned, it is always worth stressing that time spent in a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem or passage before moving on to closer exploration of language, as this demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material upon which to build comment relating to the key words of the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used, they can be liable to overlook or misread what is being communicated by the text.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

***'Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now'***

**How does the poet powerfully convey ideas about the impact of humans on the environment?**

To help you answer, you might consider:

- **the way that the poet presents ideas about the future**
- **the way that the poet conveys his thoughts and feelings**

- **the impact the final two stanzas (from ‘I’m saying...’).**

The most detailed and developed responses addressed the idea that the *letter* of the poem makes predictions from the poet’s present into the future of fifty years hence and can therefore be viewed as a ‘call to action’ to the reader, since these predications have not come true yet. It was also noted by many, however, that the use of the past tense enhances the impact of the message, suggesting to the reader that environmental devastation *has* already occurred and there is nothing left to be done to prevent it, while simultaneously implying that ‘it hasn’t happened yet’, so that the reader can be provoked into an emotive reaction. The repetition of *back then* adds to this impact.

Stronger responses looked carefully at the power created by key words in the poem. They noted the alliteration in *harpooned or hacked*, and the vicious imagery that these words conjure, along with the power of the imagery in *seagulls rippled with jet fuel and plastic*. Many candidates remarked that the style of a letter creates power because it seems to be addressed directly to the reader, ‘as if the poet is having a conversation with us’. They might have continued in this line to talk about the way the poet uses *you* to great effect; there were some who were able to note that the use of *we* suggests that everyone is responsible for the state of the planet. Some candidates were able to discuss the free verse style, the effectiveness of the repetitions of *Absolutely*, and the way in which setting the final line of the poem by itself gave it a great deal of power, ‘like a full stop for the planet’.

Many candidates remarked that linking the elephant with the already extinct *thylacine* in the first stanza suggests that the elephant also became extinct in this version of the near-future described in the poem, and that this adds to the urgency transmitted by the poem. Many noted that the poet conveys their own thoughts and feelings through a varying tone, from that of a plea to their readers, to a sarcastic or cynical tone about the way the planet has been destroyed. Most felt that the poet is trying to ‘guilt the audience into doing something’. There was some confusion over how to interpret the idea that the night sky is somehow different. Candidates were able to comment on the loss of the *illuminated doodles* of constellations but had some difficulty with imagining ‘losing’ the night sky, rather than losing sight of the stars.

Most candidates were able to discuss the impact of the final stanza, many arguing that the poet points to the way in which nature could save the planet, until he reaches the final line when *all the bees were dead*. Most commented on the use of *euphoria* to describe the flowers, some arguing that this is a word that we would usually associate with drug-use, yet here, nature is the drug we would crave – the ‘simplicity of all that we take for granted now’.

## Question 2

**The isolated life of Nanda Kaul.**

**How does the writer create striking impressions of Nanda Kaul?**

To help you answer, you might consider:

- **Nanda Kaul’s thoughts and feelings about the postman**
- **the descriptions of where she lives**
- **the way the writer conveys her desire to be left alone.**

The majority of responses took each bullet point in turn and began with a focus on the description of Nanda Kaul’s view of the postman *closing in, with his swollen bag*, and the way that this sight *rolled a fat ball of irritation into the cool cave of her day*. This was generally taken as a summation of the way in which the postman stands for everything that she wishes to avoid – other people, disruption, *demands, request, promises and queries*. Stronger responses were able to comment on the metaphoric use of the *cool cave* for Nanda Kaul’s peaceful daily existence, particularly as she lives in a landscape where the sun would burn down on the *plain stretching out, flat and sere*: in such a landscape the cool cave creates a potent expression of all that Nanda Kaul craves, as affirmed by the *great, cool flowering of relief* that she had felt on her first day at Carignano.

It was remarked by many that she attempts to fix the *plodding* postman with a *piercing stare*, and stronger responses noted how this portrays the image of a strong individual with a 'dynamic' character; not someone easily cowed by circumstances. By thinking of the postman as a *bullock man*, an *oafish ox*, Nanda Kaul reduces him to an animal, 'a beast', unthinking and unfeeling, 'someone able to bear a burden but not with much of an intellect'. By comparison, the author tells us that Nanda Kaul is *grey, tall and thin*, fancying that she can *merge with the pine trees and be mistaken for a tree*, which creates such a contrast with the way she regards the postman: she is a part of the landscape, where he plods through it as an unwanted intrusion.

Many noted that she appears to be so much a part of the landscape that the wind throws the branches of the pine about *so as to curtain her*, as if the landscape is aware and attempting to shelter and protect her. There were various reactions to Nanda Kaul's desire to *merge with the pine trees and be mistaken for one*. Some viewed this as the writer's effort to express how she has become a part of the landscape she cherishes, while others discussed how this reflects a tendency in her to be 'a lone wolf', desiring an 'almost inhuman isolation'.

Most candidates did well with describing how the writer has portrayed the landscape. Weaker responses made a summary of the scene from the high mountains to the flat plain, and Nanda Kaul's white walled home with its open windows. More developed responses remarked that there is a purity, a cleanness and a simplicity to the way that the Himalayas are *flowing* 'like an ocean', and the white walls that echo the snow on the mountains. Some candidates remarked that the plain, stretching out barren and *sere* is something like Nanda Kaul herself, with her desire for a clear empty space all around her.

There were some comments on the way that Nanda Kaul does not like to watch the hoopoe feed its young because even the shrill sounds of the nestlings disrupt her peacefulness. Many remarked that her desire to be alone is extreme, and commented that the reader naturally wonders what has caused her to leave the world and society behind in this way. Her desire to be alone was generally linked to her love for the barren landscape that *pleased and satisfied her so*.

The least developed responses were able to make a summary of the scene and of Nanda Kaul's wish to be left alone, with reference to the trees, the mountains and the plain. Nanda Kaul's reactions to the postman's approach was generally seen as the strongest indicator both of her character and her need for isolation, and the image of the postman's steadily plodding journey towards her allowed many candidates to assess just how averse she is to any kind of disturbance to her peacefulness.

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

**Paper 0408/31**  
**Paper 3: Set Text**

Successful responses:

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

Less successful responses:

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

## General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied. Most candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. The most common problems were:

- lack of focus on the question set
- insufficient close analysis of the detail of the extract in extract-based questions
- a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points made in **Section B** essay questions.

The strongest answers showed an impressively detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating concise direct quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Successful answers in **Section A** explored the detail of the printed extract (or the poem in **Question 5**) whereas weaker responses explained the content of the extract in general terms and made too few attempts to analyse the detail closely to show how the writers achieve their effects.

The most successful responses to the **Section B** general essay questions demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text and had a wide range of reference at their disposal. Those candidates who were able to recall much direct quotation were better able to explore qualities of the writing. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish. These answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'striking', 'dramatic', 'memorably', 'vividly'. There were, however, many responses that showed only a limited engagement with such key words. The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by a writer's use of form, structure and language.

In less successful responses, candidates sometimes embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Again this session, it was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be made aware that, in answering questions, they need select relevant material from their knowledge to focus directly on the specific requirements of the question set.

### **Comments on specific questions**

The paper had a small entry this session. The comments below are on the questions which candidates answered.

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

**How does Mishima create striking impressions of Shinji's mother at this moment in the novel?**

Most responses commented on the different worlds known to Shinji's mother: the home, childbirth and diving. They noted her experience and expertise as a diver respected among the other women and her scoffing at superstition. More successful responses considered her own sadness at the limited opportunities afforded by her life as a woman on the island; there were convincing, well-supported responses to the way her various roles were dictated and defined by gender. Less successful responses worked through the extract in an explanatory way without focusing on the ways in which Mishima 'creates striking impressions' of the character.

##### **Question 4**

**Explore how Sophocles make this moment in the play so dramatically powerful.**

Most candidates made the contrast between the earlier Oedipus (his 'priceless glory', his victory over the Sphinx and his role as saviour of Thebes) with his position in the extract ('your life ground down to nothing'). Successful responses selected details from the extract to address the question directly as to how Sophocles makes this moment in the play 'so dramatically powerful'. They explored the ways in which Sophocles portrays Oedipus's anguished reaction to having his fears confirmed, the metaphorical references to his sins and the language used to report the Messenger's news. Less successful responses made statements about the play's themes and charted the tragic hero's *hamartia* and *peripeteia* but without focusing on the dramatic impact of this moment.

#### **Section B**

##### **Question 7**

**In what ways does Mishima memorably depict the lives of the islanders?**

Candidates explored what the novel reveals of the lives of men and women and the lives of those from different classes on the island. Many contrasted life on the island and the sense of living in harmony with nature with life in the city as represented by Tokyo. Successful responses analysed the ways in which Mishima depicted the traditional values of the islanders regarding arranged marriages, sex before marriage, roles of men and women, authority and social hierarchy. The strongest responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text and deployed a wide range of relevant reference to support their ideas. Less successful responses offered general explanations of themes without considering the ways in which Mishima achieves his effects.

##### **Question 10**

**Explore how Sophocles strikingly portrays the relationship between Jocasta and Oedipus.**

There was an awareness among most candidates of the way the discovery of patricide and incest overwhelms both Jocasta and Oedipus. Those candidates who had a detailed knowledge of the play and a range of direct quotations were better able to explore how Sophocles 'strikingly portrays' the relationship. Successful responses considered the build-up to the revelation that changes everything for both characters as well as Jocasta's stubbornness in refusing to believe that Oedipus had murdered Laius. Close attention to detail enabled some candidates to explore the way Jocasta's death is reported in the dramatic and moving words of the Messenger. Less effective responses offered mere character sketches and made much reference to terms relating to Greek tragedy, without achieving a clear focus on the question.

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

Paper 0408/32  
Paper 3: Set Text

## Key messages

Successful responses:

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

Less successful responses:

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

## General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied. Most candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. The most common problems were:

- lack of focus on the question set
- insufficient close analysis of the detail of the extract in extract-based questions
- a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points made in **Section B** essay questions.

The strongest answers showed an impressively detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating concise direct quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Successful answers in **Section A** explored the detail of the printed extract (or the poem in **Question 5**) whereas weaker responses explained the content of the extract in general terms and made too few attempts to analyse the detail closely to show how the writers achieve their effects.

The most successful responses to the **Section B** general essay questions demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text and had a wide range of reference at their disposal. Those candidates who were able to recall much direct quotation were better able to explore qualities of the writing. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish. These answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'striking', 'dramatic', 'memorably', 'vividly'. There were, however, many responses that showed only a limited engagement with such key words. The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by a writer's use of form, structure and language.

In less successful responses, candidates sometimes embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Again this session, it was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be made aware that, in answering questions, they need select relevant material from their knowledge to focus directly on the specific requirements of the question set.

### **Comments on specific questions**

The paper had a small candidature this session. The comments below are on the questions which candidates answered.

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 3**

**In what ways does Richardson vividly capture Laura's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel?**

Many responses showed an understanding of Laura's shame as an outsider, with an acute awareness of her humiliation ('comet-like she drew all eyes upon her'). Successful responses selected details judiciously from the extract to explore the ways in which Richardson vividly captures Laura's thoughts and feelings. They recognised the gently mocking tone of the narrative voice: 'the unpropitious advent of the purple threatened to undo her' and 'On the fatal morning...'. Less effective answers worked through the extract tracking Laura's thoughts and feelings in an explanatory way without close analysis of the ways in which Richardson achieves her effects.

##### **Question 5**

**How does Lindsay make *The Flower-Fed Buffaloes* such a moving poem?**

The responses showed a strong understanding of the historical context of the poem, appreciating the impact of change on the environment, in particular the arrival of the locomotive and growing of wheat. Candidates' awareness of climate change may be informing their awareness of environmental issues and leading them to stray from the content of the poem. There was evidence of sensitive response the use of language, in particular the repetition and the refrain.

##### **Question 9**

**'In the novel, Laura only ever gets what she deserves.'**

**How far does Richardson's portrayal of Laura support this view?**

Candidates reflected on Laura's troubled character, her cheating at school and her enthusiastic fabrications. They also considered her role as the social outsider in the boarding school, as victim of bullying and her exclusion from candidate cliques. Her treatment at the hands of the wilfully cruel headmistress, Miss Gurley, also featured in answers. In reaching their conclusions, the most successful responses explored the ways in which Richardson portrays Laura at home and, particularly, at school as a girl who struggles to fit in. Less effective responses offered character sketches or narrative accounts with little acknowledgement of the irony of the narrative voice.

##### **Question 11**

**Explore how Clare vividly captures the experience of falling in love in *First Love*.**

Candidates were less secure without the text than in their **Section A** response to poetry, often being able to articulate the key ideas but not support or develop their analysis. The weakest responses thought that Claire/Clare was a girl and gave very simple explanations of what love can do, without any explicit reference to the poem. Only a few understood what Clare is saying about the intensity of first love and were able to explore the imagery, in particular the pathetic fallacy in the final stanza. Centres must ensure that their candidates learn key quotations to support and develop their ideas and to inform a close analysis of a poet's use of language.

# WORLD LITERATURE

---

Paper 0408/33  
Paper 3: Set Text

## Key messages

Successful responses:

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

Less successful responses:

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

## General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied. Most candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. The most common problems were:

- lack of focus on the question set
- insufficient close analysis of the detail of the extract in extract-based questions
- a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points made in **Section B** essay questions.

The strongest answers showed an impressively detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating concise direct quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Successful answers in **Section A** explored the detail of the printed extract (or the poem in **Question 5**) whereas weaker responses explained the content of the extract in general terms and made too few attempts to analyse the detail closely to show how the writers achieve their effects.

The most successful responses to the **Section B** general essay questions demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text and had a wide range of reference at their disposal. Those candidates who were able to recall much direct quotation were better able to explore qualities of the writing. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish. These answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'striking', 'dramatic', 'memorably', 'vividly'. There were, however, many responses that showed only a limited engagement with such key words. The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by a writer's use of form, structure and language.

In less successful responses, candidates sometimes embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. Again this session, it was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the thrust of the question. Candidates should be made aware that, in answering questions, they need select relevant material from their knowledge to focus directly on the specific requirements of the question set.



### **Comments on specific questions**

The paper had a small candidature this session. The comments below are on the questions which candidates answered.

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

**How does Mishima strikingly portray Chiyoko at this moment in the novel?**

The responses that were seen showed a straightforward understanding of Chiyoko's loneliness and desire for the city as well as her jealousy, commenting on the damage she inflicts on the relationship between Shinji and Hatsue's. There was some awareness of Chiyoko's status as an outsider, with her lack of affinity for life on the island and her desire to be back in Tokyo with its elevators and automobiles.

##### **Question 4**

**In what ways does Sophocles make this such a dramatic and significant moment in the play?**

Responses generally showed a secure and sometimes critical understanding of Oedipus' growing realisation of the killing of the old man and its implications for him if he is revealed to be Laius. Many not only referenced Apollo's prophecy, remembered by Oedipus in this moment, but also mentioned how Oedipus had set himself up as a hero who could hunt down Laius's killer. Themes of sight versus blindness, the use of dramatic irony and explanations of foreshadowing were regular features of responses, with the strongest responses exploring the structure and language of Oedipus' speeches to show the horror and fear he is experiencing. One candidate noted how Oedipus' 'running, always running' reflects how his fate is constantly pursuing him. Less successful responses embarked on a list of pre-learned themes without achieving a close focus on the question.

#### **Section B**

##### **Question 10**

**Explore two moments in the play which Sophocles makes particularly dramatic.**

Popular choices were the beginning of the play where Oedipus addresses the Chorus, the tension-filled scene between Tiresias and Oedipus, where Oedipus demands the truth, and the Exodus. The use of discriminating textual reference to support and develop their critical understanding was often very impressive. The strongest responses connected the two moments in terms of Oedipus' tragedy, exploring how his character and situation changes through the play. The very best considered the use of language and staging (for example, the account of Jocasta's suicide and why this takes place off stage) to show how Sophocles not only makes their moments dramatically significant, but also compelling theatre.