

# ENGLISH LITERATURE (9 TO 1)

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Paper 0477/01  
Paper 1 Poetry and Prose

## Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

Successful responses:

- demonstrate a detailed knowledge of poems and prose texts studied
- address the question from the start of the answer and throughout
- provide pertinent textual support for points made
- sustain convincing and perceptive analysis of the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts studied
- lose focus on the question set, e.g. by including extraneous context material
- make unsupported assertions
- describe or simply identify writer's techniques without further comment or explanation.

## General comments

Examiners reported much evidence of candidates' personal engagement with, and enjoyment of, the poems and prose texts that had been studied.

## Textual knowledge

The most successful responses offered a commanding knowledge of the text, with candidates able to integrate well-selected textual references to support their ideas and line of argument. The strongest responses selected judiciously from the poems or prose extracts printed on the question paper and avoided attempts to write exhaustively on every aspect of either poem or extract. In the strongest answers to the general prose essay questions, direct, concise quotation and indirect reference was integrated into essays. In less successful answers, where reference to the text was insufficient, responses tended to rely on unsubstantiated assertion and explanation. This was particularly evident in prose general essays, where a lack of detailed knowledge made it difficult for candidates to develop convincing responses to the ways in which writers conveyed and developed their ideas. In some cases, candidates answered the poetry question well but appeared to have little knowledge of the prose text studied. Lack of knowledge of the context of what was happening in passages was clear in some cases.

## Focus on the question

A common feature of more successful responses was the sustained focus on the question. These essays began addressing the terms of the question from the start and maintained a clear focus on the question throughout. Less successful responses often showed an impressive understanding of the character or theme in the question but did not tailor their material to the specific demands of the question. Candidates should take note of the key words in IGCSE Literature questions such as 'memorably', 'vividly' and 'strikingly', as these are used to elicit personal responses to the writing. If these are ignored, there is a danger that candidates produce general overviews or character sketches rather than consider in detail the writer's presentation of ideas and characters. Equally, a better balance in both the use of evidence and in reference to key words in questions would enhance success: some responses to extracts were either line by line run-

thoughts with little analysis, or demonstrated competent understanding but with limited detail in support; there were also often two extremes in relation to key words – repetition of the question without convincing evidence to support, and competent responses to the text as a whole, but without explicit reference to key question words.

Focus was lost in some essays by the inclusion of extraneous background material, often in a lengthy opening paragraph. This approach is ineffective as historical, biographical and social context are not included in the band descriptors or assessed in relation to any assessment objectives. The use of lengthy conclusions which merely repeat points made in the body of the essay are also ineffective. Candidates should be made aware that answering the question is more important than following a pre-conceived idea about what constitutes a model essay.

### **Writers' effects**

The most perceptive responses offered a sustained engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects and had a clear appreciation of writers' use of language, structure and form. Candidates who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were also more able to probe closely and convincingly specific effects. Less successful approaches included the logging of devices and explanation rather than analysis. Literary features were sometimes identified but rarely explored meaningfully in terms of the effects created by the writer. Use of the terms 'lexical field' and 'semantic field' often preceded a list of quoted words and phrases followed by general description rather than a probing critical analysis. Some candidates explained the connotations of words they had quoted (e.g. 'red connotes blood or danger') but needed to expand on their comments to analysing how the words are used within the specific context of the poem or extract. Commenting in simple terms on punctuation, structure and versification was often at the expense of exploring ideas. Many candidates began their answers with comments such as 'X makes this poem moving by use of punctuation' without considering the ideas that the poet communicates. A significant number of answers never progressed beyond describing techniques. The listing of features with little or no reference to key word meaning or key ideas is unlikely to achieve highly in this assessment.

### **Personal response**

Strong individual responses were characterised by thoughtful and perceptive comments argued and supported with care. These responses engaged directly with those words in the questions designed to elicit a personal response to the writing. In some responses to poems, there was evidence of candidates adopting an overly assertive style of writing which gave the impression of there being only one 'correct' reading of the poem. Some less confident responses demonstrated empathy with characters by simply suggesting that the 'reader' experiences the same anguish as a particular character or that a particular predicament was 'relatable'; such comments need to be linked to textual detail and expanded upon in terms of how the writer is creating such responses in readers.

There was, generally, some very good work produced this session. Most demonstrated an enjoyment of and engagement with texts. There were very few rubric infringements.

### **Questions on individual texts:**

#### **Section A: Poetry**

#### ***Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: from Part 5***

#### **Question 1     *The Trees***

Candidates were generally able to select appropriate examples of uncertainty in Larkin's language: for example, 'a kind of grief' and 'seem to say'. Most candidates were also able to recognise that Larkin's concerns focussed around life and death. Discussions which centred upon his jealousy of the trees, suggested by the word 'green', proved not to be particularly fruitful. Many responses interpreted 'trick' as a deceit: stronger answers were able to perceive its alternative meaning of 'wonder', referring to its connotations of wizardry and magic. Some less successful answers selected phrases and explained why they suggested uncertainty, without discussing any larger meanings or ideas. The strongest answers engaged with the paradox of the trees' apparent immortality and the way in which it relates to human life and were able to successfully analyse the tone and language.

**Question 2** *Cold in the Earth*

Candidates had obviously been well prepared for this poem. The last three verses tended to be less well handled than the first five; candidates appeared to feel more confident in writing about the more straightforward declarations of suffering and loss than the more abstract ideas of the later stanzas. There were many comments about metre and structure which were not always helpful (e.g. 'the metre is like a heartbeat which is ironic'); where such references are made, there needs to be a clear purpose, explanation and link to the question. There were some excellent comments on the use of time and the wave metaphor, as well as the sun/stars metaphors. Strong responses often included comment on the paradox of being afraid of forgetting but wanting to remember, despite the pain memory brought, focussing on oxymorons such as 'rapturous pain' and 'divinest anguish', identifying the spiritual dimension of the persona's grief. Strong candidates also wrote convincingly about the various stages of grief described in the poem.

**Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 1**

**Question 3** *For My Grandmother Knitting*

This was a popular choice among candidates, and many wrote movingly about the grandmother's loss of purpose and the role that knitting played in her old age. Candidates were able to identify the way Lochhead used hands as a symbol throughout the poem and to expand on the dual meaning of 'your grasp of things'. Less successful responses asserted that the relationship between grandmother and grandchildren was hostile or completely broken, missing such clues as the hint of concerned affection in 'gran you do too much'. Some responses contained misreading/misunderstanding as those candidates thought that it was the grandmother herself who was reminiscing rather than the granddaughter and attributed feelings to her that are not supported by the text. Some candidates searched for evidence of malevolence or cruelty on the part of the grandchildren in trying to persuade the grandmother that she need not knit them any more clothes but perceptive responses recognised the connection between a lifetime of providing and the sense of her having lost that role as she ages. Some candidates spent a long time discussing the hardships of the grandmother's early life, often neglecting the importance of knitting and the sadness of her old age. Many successful responses saw the implications of the way the elderly are treated in society but often such discussion could have been more closely focused on textual detail.

**Question 4** *Lion heart*

Many responding to this question gave a stanza-by-stanza explication without focusing on 'powerful changes'. Most answers identified the transition from sea to land and the powerful contribution of Chong's imagery to the overall effect. Some answers were of very good quality, identifying the changes/transition/celebrating the birth of a nation. These often took full advantage of the opportunity to explore the allegorical aspects of the poem in particular. A few appeared to rely on memorised notes or pre-prepared responses which did not allow for full exploration of the question set.

**Section B: Prose**

**No Longer At Ease**

**Question 5**

The extract question was more frequently selected than the general essay. There were various points which made this passage a 'revealing moment'. In it we can discern Obi's earnest desire to use his education for the betterment of his country, his wanting to break away from what he sees as outmoded concepts and protocol (preferring to stay with his friend rather than the hotel chosen for him) and his idealism as a schoolboy. Strong answers commented on Obi no longer being 'at ease' with Nigerian culture, in terms of his comment about them 'having a long way to go', and the ultimate irony of this statement. However, we then recognise the ominous symbolism of the De Soto and the sight of Clara. Many candidates identified the significance of the anecdotes about Obi's schooldays and the appearance of Sam Okoli. Stronger answers were able to explore the clash between two cultures represented by the Union's arrangements for Obi's accommodation and his own choice. Some candidates were able to write about the ideas above but without making connections between them on the whole. As always with the extract question, focus on the techniques (use of dialogue, use of narrative voice ect) and language was essential for the higher bands, though only if explored fully and convincingly.

### Question 6

Candidates who chose to answer this question showed secure knowledge of the novel and were able to refer to key scenes involving Obi and Isaac, such as the occasion in the chapter in which Obi is re-united with his father after his stay in England. Less successful responses did not always focus on ‘powerful’ and simplified the nature of the relationship, without exploring the wider reasons for the tensions between father and son.

### *Mansfield Park*

### Question 7

Most were familiar with the passage and wrote about it enthusiastically, with many appreciating the symbolism of the locked gate and the flirtatious exchange between Henry and Maria. Austen’s dialogue presented opportunities for close engagement with language and tone and the most successful responses were able to take full advantage of this. Candidates were aware, in the main, of the shocking behaviour of the couple in relation to the mores of the time. The symbolism of passing round the gate was generally recognised also but there were few comments about the ironic tone of the narration at the start which is so important in preparing us for what is to come. Almost all candidates who attempted this had some very strong personal views of Maria’s and Henry’s behaviour and what was considered proper for an engaged woman and a single man within the context of the wider novel. There was evidence of knowledge and understanding of the text and its deeper implications.

### Question 8

Candidates had obviously given some thought to the role of the Bertrams as parents and generally provided strong personal responses; however, assertions needed specific support for a reasonably developed response. Most candidates referenced Lady Bertram’s pug and Sir Thomas’ return in the middle of a ‘Lovers’ Vows’ rehearsal, but other details were lacking in places. Answers tended to give verdicts about the lack of parenting skills of both characters but only a few saw the rather more nuanced portrayal of their kindness to Fanny and of Sir Thomas’s realisation of the way in which he has contributed to the fates of his children. Strong responses were very detailed and engaged with both the text and the question; these tended to support their ideas with an impressive quantity of textual reference.

### *My Ántonia*

### Question 9

Candidates wrote convincingly about the accumulation of tension as the passage progressed, they were able to respond to body language and dialogue of both the protagonist and antagonist and the violence of the fight, identifying features such as Ambrosch’s provocative manner and language and the impact of Antonia’s ‘No friends any more!’ upon Jim. Most managed to go beyond the fight at the heart of the passage to consider the aftermath, in particular the reaction of Antonia and its significance in terms of the novel as a whole. Quite a few gave a line by line explanation without any thread to their argument; there was a tendency to drop into narration, undeveloped comment and generalisation such as: ‘the sound of Jake hitting Ambrosch was like the crack of an axe so this was a tense moment’. Stronger answers looked for the contrast between the two families’ attitudes and the context of the settlers’ hierarchical social background.

### Question 10

There were fewer answers on this question, but those candidates who chose it displayed confident knowledge of the novel and thoughtful engagement with Cather’s portrayal of Jim and Antonia’s relationship.

### *Hard Times*

### Question 11

Candidates generally showed understanding of the significance of this scene within the wider context of the novel. Personal engagement was particularly strong in responses to this question and many wrote moving personal responses about the factors which made the scene disturbing, exploring the despairing passivity of Louisa’s responses and the inability of her father to understand her. The revulsion felt for Gradgrind’s plan to allow his daughter to marry Bounderby and his oblivious reactions to Louisa’s distress were present in many cases. The symbolism of the Coketown chimneys, of the fires, and the closing of her hand by Louisa at the

end were well understood. The most successful answers were able to link arguments about the relationship to details of dialogue, gesture and image from the passage.

### Question 12

There were few responses to the question about Tom Gradgrind but these responded thoughtfully to the qualified nature of the question (*Does Dickens make it possible for you ...*) and showed secure knowledge of Tom's character and role within the novel, particularly in relation to Louisa and Stephen Blackpool. There were some good responses commenting on Dickens' contrast between Tom and Louisa, on Tom's consistently being described as a 'whelp' but also on Dickens' partial sympathy because at the end, Tom is 'allowed' to feel remorse.

### Spies

### Question 13

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. Knowledge of the context of the passage within the text was demonstrated and candidates wrote convincingly about Frayn's withholding of the identity of the 'tramp', the narrative voice of the older Stephen and the many implications of Uncle Peter's 'it's over'. Success depended on the sharpness of focus on why it is 'powerful' and appreciation of why this is a turning point in the novel. It was evident where candidates were not prepared or who were unfamiliar with the text. Most candidates recognised the need to comment upon the shifts in narration without having a clear idea of what has been achieved through it and on the use of the Haywards' nicknames by the tramp. Most candidates seemed to identify the range of feelings, focusing on Stephen's 'fear' and the interplay between older/younger Stephen and the tramp/Uncle Peter though the pathos surrounding the adult and the predicaments for both child/adult within the extract were often overlooked. Strongest answers recognised the emotional paralysis that initially overcame Stephen and the way the author tracked his emotions through his rhetorical questions. Some very good answers commented on Stephen's inability to recognise the 'German' as Uncle Peter, with all the attendant understanding of adult relationships, fallen heroes and his own part in Uncle Peter's situation. Most candidates recognised the use of 'It's over then' to the foreshadowing of Uncle Peter's death. They saw the change in Uncle Peter from the glorious RAF pilot and hero to a sick tramp and what this says to us about war.

### Question 14

Candidates had generally prepared well. General remarks about the dual narration were, however, not always sufficient: more capable responses identified the role of characters such as Barbara Berrill and Mrs Hayward in opening Stephen's eyes to the reality of the adult world. The best answers focused on specific incidents, especially the excruciating (from Stephen's perspective) first conversation with Mrs Hayward in the hide-out and some referred to Stephen's conversations with Barbara in the same place. Although a child herself, she manages to give perspectives about adult behaviour that make Stephen uncomfortable or confused. Weaker answers were able to identify relevant examples of Stephen's lack of understanding such as the 'x's in Mrs Hayward's diary, but were not able to make very much comment. Some candidates used the extract from Q 15 which was self-limiting.

### *The Secret River*

### Question 15

This was a popular question and was generally well answered though a few were not sufficiently focused on the extract itself. Most focused well on the question and were able to find evidence to support assertions and analyse at least some of the language features. Successful responses focused on 'mysteriousness' and worked closely with the detail of the passage, exploring images such as 'naked as worms' or 'like the snakes or the spiders'. Strongest answers gave a brief context (before and after the extract) and then explored the Aborigines' closeness to nature. The best responses were those that focused closely on language analysis alongside an acknowledgement of the clashes of culture. They established that the view of the 'mysterious' nature of the aboriginal people was not a fact in itself but a merely a perspective of the newcomers of a different culture; that it is from Thornhill's perspective, as a result of his experiences from his life in London. Good points were made about how the passage presages events that will lead to the massacre at the end. Many candidates were able to discuss the difference between the aboriginal and the European view of land and ownership and its wider significance within the novel.

### Question 16

Responses here showed good understanding of Sal's journey from London to Thornhill's Point. Candidates identified Sal's heroic characteristics and went beyond a character sketch to show understanding of her role in the novel, particularly in relation to Will and her impact on his life from childhood.

### *The English Teacher*

### Question 17

Answers here were often less successful than for most of the passage-based questions in that many lapsed into narrative or explanation of the situation without focusing on Narayan's ways of making this a powerful moment. The extreme agitation felt by Krishna and the heart-rending sobs of his wife are powerful in the context of the settled, humdrum life that he had led thus far and he is shocked by an intensity of emotion that was alien to him. This is closely connected to the underlying theme of Krishna's personal growth. Better answers produced thoughtful personal responses, exploring Narayan's depiction of Krishna's anger and Susila's distress and were able to place the episode within the wider context of the novel and the characters' developing marriage. Weaker answers paraphrased the extract rather than focusing on the question.

### Question 18

Candidates showed some skill in identifying the roles of the main female characters in this text, from Susila to the Headmaster's wife, and made fairly reasonable evaluation of their roles. A few glossed over the role of women more generally and concentrated on Susila. There was often a lack of the well-selected detail needed to address the task fully.

# ENGLISH LITERATURE (9-1)

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Paper 0477/02  
Paper 2 Drama

## Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

- Successful responses selected the most pertinent and significant material in order to reflect the focus of the question.
- Responses would have been improved by considering the dramatic content of the set passage over the listing of literary features.
- Successful answers explored and analysed, and avoided excessive explanation, description and narrative re-telling.
- Stronger responses refrained from giving excessive historical/cultural/contextual information at the expense of a sharp focus on the question and set text.
- A personal engagement with the text, ability to evaluate and an appreciation of the play on stage enlivened the most successful answers.

## General comments

Most candidates showed a sound knowledge of their set texts and engagement with character, genre, structure and ideas. In answer to the passage-based questions, the strongest responses selected the most dramatic, powerful, tense or significant moments in the passage as required, rather than going through it line by line, giving explanations and contextual details that were not relevant to the question. Setting passages briefly within their textual context was often useful, though excessive reference to other parts of the play at the expense of close analysis of the passage did not allow candidates to address the given tasks.

There were some very strong answers to discursive questions. These were characterised by a strong overview of the play and an ability to support points by close textual reference in the form of accurate quotation. Many candidates responded effectively to the question and structured a convincing argument but did not know the play in sufficient detail to support the points made.

A significant number of candidates showed insecure knowledge of technical terms, or used them to substitute genuine analysis. Blank verse and iambic pentameter; simile and metaphor, for example were often confused or misused. The most significant misuse this session was of dramatic irony when the candidate either meant proleptic irony or just irony. Candidates referred to end stop, when they meant an exclamation mark or a full-stop and cited this as dramatic effect even when it simply indicated the end of a sentence. Caesura was confused with a pause in the dialogue and candidates often wrote about the effect of short sentences when the sentences in the text are often long and complex. There was still the tendency to try to answer a question by working through punctuation and literary techniques as a starting point, without showing understanding of the context, ideas and what is actually happening in the text. The initial focus should always be on the events on stage, on the action, characters, ideas and staging, followed by a jargon free analysis of the effects of the techniques used.

Whilst the historical and cultural context of the text is a useful aspect of teaching, candidates tended to display this knowledge in the examination at the expense of a focus on the question, sometimes to the extent of writing several paragraphs of background information. Speculation as to how a contemporary audience

would have reacted to the play, though interesting, is not what is required on this paper. It is the candidate's own personal response which is of paramount importance. Conversely, some contemporary concerns, such as gender equality, are unhelpfully applied to historic texts if discussed at the expense of textual analysis.

Candidates should be dissuaded from using line numbers instead of writing quotations. This is inadequate textual support and prevents high achievement as it is then difficult to consider effective word choices or techniques. It is particularly counter-productive as the candidates have the passage printed on the paper and should select the quotation they wish to use.

There were many sophisticated responses this year which showed a thorough exploration of the complex issues these plays present and the ways in which they provide a powerful impact on an audience.

Some candidates do not number their questions correctly or at all, especially on typed scripts. It would be helpful to both candidate and Examiners if the importance of this is emphasised. There were few brief or imbalanced scripts.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V***

##### **Question 1**

Most candidates maintained a secure focus on the question but were less successful at looking at the vividness of Shakespeare's effects in the passage. Candidates did not always explore the rhetoric of this well-known speech. Most recognised that Henry's oratorical powers played a major part in his leadership but seemed less able to explore these powers. The strongest answers were aware of the immediate context. They knew that this is prior to the battle of Agincourt, the English are tired, demoralised, ill and outnumbered. Henry has discovered what his troops think by visiting them in disguise and uses what he learns in the speech. Comment included the repetition, alliteration and augmentation in '*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers*', skilfully dealing with egalitarianism and the fearful odds in one phrase. The motivational force of '*All things are ready if our minds be so*,' was often noted. His ability to change Westmoreland's viewpoint was cited, as well as how he offered the men everlasting fame. Few, however, explored the vivid projection Henry makes into the men's future and the visualisation of St Crispin's days to come. Weaker answers thought that the day was named after the battle and that this was the post battle celebration.

##### **Question 2**

Although the majority of candidates understood what the question was asking and made valid points about dramatic impact, fewer could support his with detailed knowledge. Many wrote at some length but rather generally about Henry's past, his transformation on becoming King and his rejection of Falstaff but concentrated less on the events of the play. Most mentioned the hanging of Bardolph, though often not knowing his name, and that Henry's rejection of his boasting, lying, thieving and cowardly former companions reflected his new role. Some mentioned both comic relief and that the antics of Pistol and company showed a darker undercurrent in the play. References to their behaviour at Harfleur, Pistol's comic encounters with M. Le Fer and Fluellen and the fates of Nym and the boy were rarely employed, though successful responses often ranged across these points.

#### **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth***

##### **Question 3**

There were many high quality responses which considered the sound and movement on stage; Macduff's desire for vengeance; the imagery of evil; Macbeth's surprising show of guilt and avoidance of causing Macduff further harm; his mistaken belief that he is invincible; the dramatic reversal of this following Macduff's revelation; Macbeth's response to the witches' equivocation and his restoration of some honour and audience sympathy in his refusal to yield. The best answers explored the balance of sympathies; concisely contrasted Macbeth here to the man at the beginning of the play; commented on the restoration of his honourable warrior qualities and his 'release' from the evil charm that has held him spellbound and discussed the differences in Macduff 'haunted' by his family's death and Macbeth's haunting by Banquo. The power of the language was fully analysed in the best answers, for example the connotations and thematic significance of '*tyrant*', '*hell-hound*', '*bloodier villain*', '*juggling*', '*haunt*' and '*untimely ripp'd*'.

In less successful and in some strong answers, there were common misconceptions. 'Beest' in 'If thou beest slain and with no stroke of mine' was often read as 'beast', leading candidates astray. 'My soul is too much charg'd with blood of thine already' was misinterpreted as Macbeth taunting Macduff, with 'charg'd' seen to mean 'fired up' rather than laden with guilt. This interpretation makes little sense in the context of the speech. 'I bear a charmed life' was taken not in the sense that he had been under the witches' protective spell but that he had been having a great time. Some candidates thought that the audience already knew that Macduff was not of woman born and many were confused by the concept. Some otherwise sound answers spent too much time on the context or on Macbeth's history in the play at the expense of looking at the crucial drama in the second half of the passage.

#### Question 4

Perceptive candidates homed in straight away on the contrast between the characters and reactions of Macbeth and Banquo and the compelling reversal of their friendship. They commented fully on Banquo as a foil. He sees the evil trickery in the witches, he is not without ambition but will not play foully for it. He remains loyal to both Duncan and (out of fear and wise caution) to Macbeth, whilst suspecting his friend of regicide. Their initial closeness was explored with apt textual reference and comment on the language. Macbeth's suspicion and subsequent murder of Banquo by hired assassins was seen as evidence of his moral deterioration and his estrangement from his wife. The dramatic impact and psychological and symbolic significance of the ghost's appearance was fully explored. Macbeth's reasons for killing Banquo could have been more fully documented as compelling insights into his fear, emptiness and paranoia.

Less successful candidates did not fully grasp the significance to Macbeth of Banquo's children carrying on the royal line. Many did not select the fact that Macbeth murders his best friend, then publically exposes his own guilt by seeing that friend's ghost at a state banquet, as a significantly compelling aspect of their relationship.

#### J.LAWRENCE AND R.E.LEE: *Inherit the Wind*

#### Question 5

Strong answers to this question understood Brady's desire for celebrity, manipulation of the press, rather blinkered religious faith and dislike of criticism. Other striking aspects of his portrayal were cited by many, such as his love of oratory, his relationship with Drummond and the fact that he calls his wife 'Mother'. Such responses looked at the language Brady uses, such as the grandiose ideas and oratorical alliteration in: 'fighting the fight of the Faithful throughout the world'. Less successful answers took him at face value, perhaps betraying a lack of secure knowledge, as also exemplified by candidates thinking that he was in Hillsboro with his mother.

#### Question 6

There were many engaged and thoughtful responses to this question. Secure responses considered the outcome of the trial; Rachel's 'conversion' to free thinking and the satisfactory conclusion of her romance with Bert; Brady's downfall; Drummond's trouncing of Hornbeck and weighting up of Darwin and the Bible. Less successful answers misunderstood the verdict or made reasonable points but without any textual support.

#### ARTHUR MILLER: *A View from the Bridge*

#### Question 7

Strongest answers demonstrated understanding of the irony and foreshadowing inherent in the passage and hence its significance in the play. They combined comment on this with an analysis of how Miller conveys Eddie's controlling relationship with Beatrice and Catherine through his repetitions, imperatives and interruptions and the underlying significance of his calling Catherine 'baby' and 'kid'. The ironic significance of the Vinny Bolzano story, along with what it reveals of the code of the community, was fully appreciated. The power of the language used to convey the brutal treatment Vinny received was explored in some detail. Strong candidates understood that this is not dramatic irony. Although we know from the start that Eddie will die, we do not know how or why. Candidates appreciated that an audience will remember what happened to Vinny as the depiction is so striking and will see how Vinny's fate mirrors Eddie's. The strongest candidates understood that Eddie betraying his most strongly held beliefs later in the play reveals the extent of his obsession with Catherine and inability to alter his fate. Less successful responses were often imbalanced –

looking at the drama in the dialogue but not the significance or vice versa. The least successful answers made no mention of the Vinny Bolzano story and its significance or did not refer to the passage in any depth or detail. One relatively common misconception was that Eddie, at this point in the play, disliked the cousins and did not want them to stay, candidates therefore missing his concern for their safety.

### Question 8

Sophisticated responses considered the extent to which Eddie was responsible for his death by looking at the role of fate and/or the culpability of the other characters as well as giving a rigorous account of Eddie's fatal flaw/s. Some strong answers concentrated purely on Eddie but the strongest made an evaluation of the extent to which he was aware of or understood his feelings for his niece. Other strong answers looked at the codes of masculinity, honour and revenge which also play a part in the tragedy.

Less confident responses tended to narrate events quite accurately but without sufficient comment and evaluation. There were few neutral answers. The play engaged most candidates and strong opinions and feelings were fully expressed.

### TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

### Question 9

Knowledge of the play as a whole played a part in the strongest answers. Successful responses showed awareness that Catherine, a suffragette, was prejudiced against Sir Robert for his reactionary views on Trade Unions, understood that she thought he was taking the case for selfish reasons and knew that this prejudice is overcome during the course of the play. They could consequently understand her irritation with his desire to escape to Devonshire House, his unwillingness to discuss the case with her and her provocative smoking. Most candidates grasped the striking description of Sir Robert's elegance and superciliousness, the awkward pauses, his apparent rudeness and Catherine nearly losing her temper. Less successful answers either did not look closely at the dialogue and Rattigan's effects in sufficient detail or were unaware of the context.

### Question 10

Most candidates who answered this question were firmly in support of Arthur Winslow. His championing of Ronnie's innocence at great personal cost, his determination and his principled stance were all applauded. Stronger responses were clear on the principle at stake and the concept of letting right be done. The strongest answers combined the above with an evaluation of the cost to Grace, Dickie, Catherine and to Arthur himself. Few candidates considered that there were less admirable aspects to Arthur's fight, though many noted that Catherine supported him even though it cost her the marriage to John. Some answers made relevant general points but could not support these by close reference to the play.

# ENGLISH LITERATURE (9 - 1)

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| <p><b>Paper 0477/03</b><br/><b>Paper 3 Unseen Comparison</b></p> |
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## **Key messages**

- The key skills for this paper were well understood in this second year, with comparison taking priority.
- Comparison was most effective when interwoven throughout the response, but with enough individual consideration of each text to make interpretative sense of them.
- Context is well understood as integral to the implicit meaning of the texts, and the ideas and attitudes they express.
- Language is comprehensively analysed but candidates are usually less sure-footed in analysis of structure and form.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessed holistically. Most candidates use subject terminology accurately and are ambitious in the vocabulary of their arguments.

## **General comments**

The cohort of candidates entered for this paper appeared to have been extremely well-prepared and most of the work was of a high quality. There was better understanding that the paper is assessed holistically, and consequently quality of argument and personal response is assessed alongside appreciation of underlying meaning, apt textual support and detailed analysis of language. Candidates appreciated the need to incorporate comparative analysis within an overall evaluative appreciation of the writers' purposes and impact on the reader. Comparison of both similarities and differences was usually skilfully interwoven throughout responses, while allowing interpretations of each text to emerge individually. Candidates were generally confident in expressing personal judgements both about the texts and their contexts. They used the question and bullet points to contextualise texts by theme, form and choice of method and rightly ignored extraneous biographical, social or historical speculation. Good management of the comparison also led to skilfully constructed arguments, which attracted high reward under Assessment Objectives 4 and 5.

Most candidates were able to achieve at least good overall understanding of one of the texts, with some relevant response to language, context and form. Discrimination came from the degree to which the development of texts was fully understood, the subtlety of response to language and critical appreciation of the writers' different achievements and impact on readers. Sustained, interwoven comparison and well-balanced consideration of each text individually marked out scripts in Band 7 and above. At a higher level, the differences between texts usually emerged as more important than their superficial similarities, and aided personal response and argument. Strong responses were also distinguished by seamlessly embedded textual reference, keeping quotation short and apt, and integrated within the grammar of their own sentences.

Candidates generally have an impressive array of technical subject terminology at their command, and usually remember that they attract marks not merely for the use of such terms, but through critical appreciation of why they are effective in the context of these texts. Good answers showed critical understanding of writers' purposes and perceptive, detailed consideration of expression and the relationship of text to context. Evaluation was evident, as well as analysis. Many answers were very well planned, setting out a clear initial rationale for comparison, progressing through the two texts side by side while commenting on differences between the ways in which they developed before concluding with an individual judgement about their impact on readers. Many answers were very long indeed, and some of the longest were also unfinished. Length is not a criterion for assessment, nor must answers be exhaustive. Those who took time to plan, paused to reflect on how to link different stages of their arguments, and checked the accuracy and consistency of argument and expression at the end generally achieved much higher marks than those who had written at great length but without a clear sense of direction and purpose.

Some candidates thought it was necessary to separate language from structure or form from content. Paragraphs based wholly on choices of rhyme scheme, punctuation and syntax, or decontextualized structural features were often unsuccessful. A stronger approach was to integrate comment on language and structure, through sensitivity to the rhythms of both poetry and prose and to link expression explicitly to content and the reader's response to it. Structural comment was much more effective when it showed sensitivity to the rhythms of both poetry and prose, rather than an enumeration of rhyme schemes or sentence lengths. Larger units of structure, such as syntax in both prose and poetry, are likely to reveal more than choices of punctuation, while English poetry usually places far more emphasis on stress than syllables, so syllable counts and a listing of rhyming words are not always useful.

The Prose question proved far less popular in this paper. Candidates should be prepared to answer either question and should not simply assume that the poetry is more accessible. Preparation for the paper should involve a variety of genres and styles of writing, with clear thematic and contextual links. It would be a good idea to practise planning responses, and effective introductions and conclusions, as overviews showing personal engagement with the texts and how to argue about them alongside one another tended to distinguish stronger answers. These candidates often thought about how to link their observations, and how to draw conclusions based on a synthesis of ideas about each text, and the reasons for differences in their treatment of comparable thematic material.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

The question asked candidates to consider and compare W. B. Yeats's 'Down by Salley Gardens' to W. H. Auden's 'The More Loving One'. In terms of the latter, weaker responses only achieved partial understanding of the poem's literal narrative as well as struggling with its deeper implications, often only writing about part of the poem. While it proved less challenging to write about the whole of Yeats, there were some misreadings here too. Some thought Salley was the name of the beloved, many seemed to think the poem was making an allusion to the Disney film 'Snow White', some believed the poem was in 'free verse' and many misread the reference to 'loss' in the introductory rubric and overall question and assumed the poem was an elegy to a dead lover. 'Regrets the loss' implies rejection rather than mourning, and links the context of the Yeats more explicitly to the kind of unsuccessful relationship portrayed in Auden. Those who realised that both speakers had not proved equal to their lovers made a much more successful start to the comparison. Candidates able to identify and compare the more deliberately archaic and lyrical voice of the Yeats to the more colloquial and reflective voice of the Auden were also better able to appreciate and contrast tone and mood.

Strong answers to this question picked up the bucolic and fairy-tale allusions of the first poem, linking them to an idealised love, which the lover struggled to 'take ...easy' or approach as equal or natural. Some thought the 'salley gardens' a personal Eden, and contrasted it interestingly with the 'hell' of indifference which Auden alludes to in his first stanza. Those preoccupied with the identification of lexical fields tended to see Yeats's speaker as immature and naïve, which is valid, but also to see Auden's speaker as angry and upset, expressing fury at what many called a toxic relationship by referencing 'dread', 'beast', 'hell' and 'burn' as if the lover were Satanic. Not only did this ignore the surface meaning – the poet is actually talking about his admiration of the stars – but also the reflection that indifference isn't the worst thing we have to face. Those who appreciated the philosophical tone of the Auden, as well as the extended metaphor comparing his lover to the stars which candidates were guided towards by the rubric, tended to write much better about that poem. They realised that it is possible that the poem is about the stars and the beloved at the same time.

Similarly in Yeats, the garden stands for an idealised pastoral relationship which should grow (and implicitly fade) as naturally as the leaves on a tree. However, the speaker 'would not agree' and good responses saw that there is just as much disagreement and misunderstanding about the nature of the relationship here as in Auden. The repetitions in the second stanza were fairly seen as an indication that the speaker has not moved on in his view of the relationship, and the move to the present tense in the final line as an indication that he is still devastated by its failure. Stronger candidates also showed awareness of the change of scene. While the first stanza seems set in springtime ('leaves grow on the tree'), the imagery in the second is more autumnal: the field is bleaker than the gardens, the grass growing on the weir a metaphor for time and the current, and the gesture of her snow-white hand could be patronising as well as consoling. Some realised that 'take life easy' was a very different message from 'take love easy' and that the beloved may actually be saying farewell. Those who appreciated the structure of the poem as a contrast between the place where love began and where it ended were more successful than those seeking for an esoteric interpretation of the

poet's choice of rhyming couplets. Those who focused more on rhythm were better at capturing its essential melancholy, and the effect of the poet's use of caesura than those who thought an end-stopped line was a 'terminal caesura'.

Good answers often spent some time making sure they were confident of the meaning and tone of one poem before comparing it with another. The Auden is not wholly contrasting, as there are some similarities of theme and a comparable melancholia of tone, as well as a comparably flexible use of rhythm and rhyming couplets. However, as many pointed out, it is more accepting of the inevitability of loss 'though this might take me a little time'. Some perceptive readers questioned the confidence of this, and found some bitterness in the description of an unequal partnership. Many saw the star as an apt metaphor for a bright, adored but distant lover. Some saw this as a hint that perfection in love is unattainable, or as indifferent as the heavens. Most understood that this beloved, like the stars, did not 'give a damn', but it was rarer to see appreciation of the rhetorical question in the second stanza and what it invites us to consider. Some thought it was the poet who was indifferent to the burning passions of the stars, and did not realise the hypothetical nature of this question. Others thought the poet 'missed one terribly all day' without reading the previous line, and so did not appreciate that the writer is negating such burning passions, and, whether in good faith or not, downplaying the melodrama of the break up. Those who understood this were much better placed to make a contrast with the self-dramatising and self-pitying speaker of the Yeats.

An interesting contextual consideration for many candidates was the way in which both poets treat the natural world as an analogy for human love, whether on a terrestrial or supernatural plane. Both deploy shifts of tense, in Auden's case into the future, in order to meditate on the loss of love and the passing of time, but Auden seems determined to avoid the tragic mode invoked by Yeats. Some very good answers were able to appreciate the paradox of finding 'the total dark sublime' and to see how, beneath the canopy of the universe, Auden's speaker can appreciate the break-up of a once passionate relationship as part of a natural process of entropy.

Some strong answers pointed out the different nature of the relationships. There is personal, and sensual, contact between the lovers in Yeats (albeit at the moment of parting) while Auden eschews the third person and writes about love through abstraction and distance. Candidates did not tend to make hetero-normative assumptions, and generally realised that the gender of the beloved is deliberately ambiguous. There were interesting contrasts between the fairytale romantic conventions of the first poem, and the way these are subverted and challenged by the tone as well as content of the second.

## Question 2

The prose comparison offered an interesting comparison of subject matter and contrast in treatment. The extract from Lionel Shriver's short story *The Self-Seeding Sycamore* portrays the invasive qualities of the natural world from the viewpoint of a still-raw and grieving widow, Jeanette; John Steinbeck's Doc is a marine biologist and his view of the natural world in the extract from *Cannery Row* is professional and non-judgemental, although full of passion and wonder. Larger contextual questions arise out of the relationship of humans to nature, and how the 'murderous' propensities of the natural world might place human passions in perspective, or show how alienated we have become from the process of natural selection and survival of the fittest. However, the focus of the question was on what is striking and vivid about the writing itself, and it was quite enough for candidates to engage with the qualities of the two descriptions and what they implied about the two observers. Some commented on how the Shriver showed a hostile response by a human towards nature while the Steinbeck suggested that such hostility was intrinsic to nature itself. Most candidates assumed that the viewpoint of the second passage was that of Doc himself, and that assumption worked very well indeed, as it allowed a contrast of his engaged but objective interest with the anger and violent subjectivity of Jeanette's attitude to her garden.

Jeanette is initially anxious and ends up expressing 'violent loathing'. Some thought her anger was directed towards a husband who had cared more for his 'beloved something-or-others' than himself, but most deduced that she is transferring the impotent anger of her grief towards the army of invaders which she can eradicate. A few candidates thought she was ripping up the flowers rather than the weeds. Some perceptive writers linked the idea that 'nature abhors a vacuum', to her fury that the weeds had taken advantage of the space left by her husband's death and 'the passivity of her grieving' over the last 'seventeen months'. The weeding clearly allows her grief to become active and her anger to have a target. The sinister and malicious aspects of nature dominate through these weeds: they are 'malevolent', 'pretend-attractive', 'devious' and 'crafty' and can only be defeated through a war of attrition. Many followed up the military metaphors which referred to Jeanette's 'scorched earth policy' and 'genocide' likening her to a twentieth-century totalitarian dictator. Some of these candidates could appreciate her desire to take back control in an area of her life where she could assert herself, however destructively.

In the descriptive sections, candidates noticed the spitefulness of her 'uniquely flavoured dislike' for the 'stupid', 'gangling' and 'insipid' plants, and some rightly found a grim humour in her hyperbolic description of their plot to take 'over the world'. Some were disturbed by these analogies, and Jeanette's discovery of her 'murderous' side bent on 'extermination'. Others, making a comparison with Steinbeck's equally 'murderous' rockpool saw this as Jeanette coming to terms with entropy, death and destruction. Both interpretations showed insight. Fewer wrote about the rhetorical qualities of the writing in the second two paragraphs, where Jeanette seems to be making a direct appeal to the reader, and we hear her sardonic voice: 'Oh, on its own, a single sample of this anonymous item seemed innocuous and easily vanquished'. Many enjoyed analysing the military metaphors (such as the seedlings marking their newly gained territory with tiny flagpoles) and the vocabulary of deception and subterfuge. Some thought Jeanette's attitude paranoid, while others enjoyed the humour of her assertions, protesting against the 'gross' uncontrolled profusion of nature, and the 'blind, ignorant bunching' of the seedlings, which showed such a crass indifference to human suffering.

In contrast, the scientist Doc, through Steinbeck's descriptions, implicitly seems to accept the principles of natural selection exemplified in the abundant life of the little rockpool. It is at once 'fabulous' and murderous, and candidates contrasted his celebration of diversity with Jeanette's desire for control. The writing is full of contrasts, between the 'wave-churned basin' and the 'quiet and lovely' rockpool at low tide, and between the 'fantastic' sea bottom, with coloured nudibranchs 'gracefully' waving their skirts 'like the dresses of Spanish dancers' and the more sinister activities of the fratricidal crabs and the deceptive anemones. Candidates engaged well with the way the brilliant 'purple invitation' of these anemones is just as deceptive as the 'innocent-looking seedlings' of Jeanette's gardens. Once they have captured their prey, the 'stinging cells shoot tiny narcotic needles' and 'searing caustic digestive acids' in alliterative direct action just as malicious as that of Jeanette and probably more effective. However, observant readers noticed that this is not just a late development in the passage: the 'hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals' are from the beginning 'lovely and murderous' at the same time. The starfish squat over their prey, and envelope their food, while eels and snapping shrimps lie in wait. The hermit crab needs to expose himself 'to the enemy' before adopting his new shelter. Thus destruction and hostility are here seen as intrinsic to the natural process, which Doc and Steinbeck seem to celebrate rather than caricature. Similes and sound effects add to the poetic celebration of diversity in contrast to the satirical mockery of Shriver's writing, driven by Jeanette's anger and embattled feelings of isolation.

The passages both suggest that how we view the natural world perhaps tell us as much about us as it does the things we observe, and that is certainly a helpful context for detailed observation, attentive to details of language, sound and rhythm. Language is used in both passages to mirror emotions: while Shriver adopts Jeanette's sardonic distaste for 'late-life gardening', Steinbeck shows Doc's passionate enthusiasm for each species, however devious or parasitic. The best comparisons went well beyond a comparison of choices of adjectives and investigated underlying attitudes. They explored the way changes in syntax and word order show both observers growing increasingly animated, albeit in very different ways and to different effect. Jeanette's aggressive action was contrasted with Doc's morbid admiration of natural destruction. For some, Jeanette's attempts to rid the bounds of her garden of weeds seemed a futile endeavour given the abundance and potency of unwanted growth. In contrast, the apparent wild energy and profusion of life in the tide pool was actually seen as belonging to, and being controlled by, a natural order – a hierarchy of organisms struggling to survive and obeying the laws of the food chain. Good answers also needed to be alert to the subjective nature of prose narrative and to the ways in which prose can have rhythm, imagery and irony, just as much as poetry.