

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/01
Coursework

Key messages

Effective task-setting is essential to success in this component. When framing tasks, teachers should check that the wording allows candidates to meet the relevant assessment criteria.

Teacher annotation of candidate work is an important part of the moderation process, enabling Moderators to see how a Centre's marks have been arrived at.

All relevant paperwork and oral assessments should be checked for accuracy and completeness before submission.

General comments

There was only a small entry on this component this series, and Centres receive individual reports on performance. This general review draws together and reiterates some key points of recent guidance to Centres.

Detailed summative comments on candidate record forms – or, in the case of written work, at the end of assignments – are an essential part of the process. Where comments draw on the wording of the relevant assessment criteria, it is possible for a Centre to justify its award of a particular mark. Written assignments should not be submitted as fair copies; there should be evidence of focused ticking of valid points together with concise marginal annotation pointing out strengths and weaknesses of a candidate's performance. Teacher annotation helps to secure more accurate marking and to make the process of moderation more accountable and transparent. The topics of Marking and Annotation are covered in *Sections 5.5. and 5.6* in the Coursework Training Handbook. This is essential reading for teachers new to the syllabus and to those uncertain of the syllabus requirements.

Critical Essay

The strongest critical essays sustained a perceptive appreciation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to convey their meanings and achieve their effects. The descriptors in the top bands make it clear that there should be a detailed appreciation of aspects of the writing for high reward. The importance of wording tasks carefully is key here, and examples of good (and bad) tasks can be found in the Coursework Training Handbook. Tasks that do not invite an exploration of the writing can limit candidate performance. The key words 'How?', 'vividly' and 'present' together require candidates to demonstrate higher order skills of analysis and move them away from mere description. Titles of assignments that are simply the titles of poems do not provide adequate direction to candidates (or Moderators).

Candidates should write down the task in full at the top of the assignment – not an abbreviation or approximation of it – so that other readers can see how successfully it has been addressed as they read the work.

Empathic Response

Empathic tasks enable candidates to engage creatively with key aspects such as theme, characterisation and use of language – all channelled through the key moment selected. A key requirement of this task is that candidates select a key moment for their chosen character to 'write their thoughts'. Examples of empathic tasks can be found in the Coursework Training Handbook.

For these tasks, candidates must include details of both their chosen character and moment at the top of the response so that other readers can gauge how effective the response is to both character and moment.

Recorded Conversation

In the strongest conversations there was an impressive command of the relevant detail, especially given that this is a 'closed book' assessment. At the top end of the range candidates were able to deploy and integrate much well-selected reference in support of perceptive responses to characters or themes. Many candidates were able to sustain the conversation engagingly for the permitted maximum of seven minutes. There were, however, instances of candidates who found it difficult to sustain their conversation beyond five minutes without the discussion becoming increasingly fragmented. Centres are reminded that the upper time limit is not obligatory.

Teachers are reminded that oral assessments should be submitted along with the written coursework folders, and clear reference to the assessment criteria should be made on the individual candidate record forms.

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Paper 0408/02
Paper 2: Unseen

Key Messages

- Candidates need to remember that the bullet points are prompts, which are there to help them structure an answer. They are not discrete questions and the focus should always be on the main question.
- Before answering candidates should plan and select material carefully. The endings of poems or passages are often very important and an over-detailed and conscientious answer sometimes does not reach a crucial section of the text.
- Candidates should avoid introductions which merely reiterate the question and bullet points, or do little more than list technical features of the poem or prose out of any meaningful context.
- Candidates should consider literal as well as symbolic or metaphorical interpretations of texts.

General Comments

There was a small entry for the paper this series. The prose task (**Question 2**) on the passage from Per Petterson's novel *Out Stealing Horses* proved more popular than the poetry task (**Question 1**) on the poem by Cesar Pavese.

Those who attempted the poem showed evidence of engagement with the question and the poet's techniques, while their answers concentrated on the more obvious points. Reference to the text tended to be descriptive. There was some understanding of mood. There was a focus on the first bullet point, with some picking out important words such as 'unguarded' and 'drunk' but with little analysis to secure marks in higher bands.

On the prose, most answers showed some reasonable understanding of the ways in which the narrative developed the portrayal of the boys' characters and relationship. They addressed the first two bullet points, and made some comment about narrator's feelings. There was evidence of response to the writing, but most answers used paraphrase rather than explicit analysis.

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Paper 0408/03
Paper 3: Set Text

Key Messages

The following are important features of good answers on this component:

Relevance to the question. An essay showing a detailed understanding of the text cannot score highly unless it answers directly the question.

Exploring the extract in detail. In extract questions, candidates are expected to explore the printed extract in detail as part of their response to the question. Glancing references to a few details in the extract will not lead to high reward.

Sustaining a critical analysis. The strongest responses show a detailed critical engagement with the writer's technique. This is true of both the extract questions and the general questions. Careful and sensitive evaluation of the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to achieve particular effects is required to gain reward in the top two bands.

General Comments

There was a small entry for the November 2013 series. There was clear evidence that candidates had enjoyed the text they studied. They knew the text in at least some detail.

The best essays were those which engaged with the key words of the question from the start and kept them in focus throughout. These essays supported points made by judicious use of quotation from the text. By contrast, the least successful essays made unsupported assertions without achieving a clear focus on the question. It is likely that candidates will under-perform when their writing shows knowledge of the text but does not directly address the question.

In extract questions, it is essential for candidates to explore in detail the writing within the context of the actual question. Simply working through the extract mechanically without regard to the question cannot lead to high reward. Similarly, answers making generalisations about the content of the extract without probing the effects of the language cannot score highly.

Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on each of the two questions in this 90-minute paper, rather than spending too much time on one answer at the expense of the other.

Comments on specific questions

There were no responses to **Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12.**

Question 4

Most candidates were able to comment on this crucial moment in the play: Dr Stockmann's denunciation as the 'Enemy of the People'. In some responses there was an awareness of the drama of the moment with its confusion of voices, applause and jeering in a generally noisy and potentially violent scene. Better responses explored the impact of the dialogue and also the actions identified in the stage directions. In extract questions, success depends on probing the detail of the printed extract.

Question 10

Stronger answers contrasted Petra's idealism and general virtue with the rank hypocrisy of others elsewhere in the play. They pointed out the qualities she shares with her father: a sense of vision, idealism and stubbornness. The best answers used textual reference to support their view that Petra was indeed an admirable character. The less successful answers merely asserted that she was admirable, opting for brief character sketches rather than a clearly developed line of argument.