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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/11
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts tailored to the specific demands of the question
- use relevant textual references to support their arguments
- engage with the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- include extraneous biographical material
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely label and list writers' techniques
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

General comments

There was some evidence of outstanding work this session, which offered engaging personal and evaluative engagement with the texts that candidates had studied. There were very few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper.

Textual knowledge

The strongest answers showed an impressively detailed knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully integrating both concise quotation and indirect textual references to support their ideas. In answers to extract questions, these candidates used the detail of the extract to support their ideas and to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects. The strongest responses to general essays also showed an extensive knowledge and included much direct quotation. Less successful responses were often characterised by an uncertain grasp of relevant supporting reference.

Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question. Less successful answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the text but without tailoring their material to the specific demands of the question. Detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward. Some candidates embarked on a description or sketch of characters or an explanation of themes regardless of what the question asked for. Poetry responses often worked their way, sometimes exhaustively, through the poem without selecting relevant material with which to answer the actual question.

Writers' effects

The most convincing responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by writers' use of form, structure and language. Those who had a detailed knowledge of their texts were unsurprisingly better able to explore closely the effects of the writing, and for this reason tended to produce more successful general prose essays. The strongest responses were able to link their comments on writers' effects to the ideas and impressions conveyed by the writer. Less successful responses often commented discretely on effects without relating them to the content and meaning, sometimes simply logging features such as alliteration, anaphora and hyperbole in poetry essays. This simple kind of labelling was often evident in general comments about ABAB rhyme schemes.

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Personal response

There was in the strongest answers much evidence of informed and sensitive personal responses to texts which focused directly on the key words of questions, exploring with perception a wide range of detail from the texts, and showing insight and individuality. These responses addressed directly those words in IGCSE Literature questions which are designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'powerful', 'vivid', 'striking', 'memorable' and 'moving'. Less successful responses made either cursory reference to these words or no reference at all.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

In what ways does Morris powerfully capture the feelings of the boy and his father in this poem?

Most candidates were able to understand the child's feelings but were not always clear that these thoughts were the imagined thoughts of the father. There was general recognition of the references to children's books. Many candidates missed the unhappiness of the father and envisaged he regretted his actions and was set to play with his son again. Few were able to unpick the significance of particular words such as 'scald' and 'mask'.

Question 2

How does Millay's writing make Sonnet 29 such a moving poem?

The overall mood of the poem and the distinction between heart and mind were successfully conveyed. Most noted the use and significance of the sonnet form. Candidates often did not explore the list of things not to be pitied for.

Question 3

Explore the ways in which Jennings uses words and images to powerful effect in this poem.

In general candidates were able to recognise the uniqueness of creation through the repetition of, 'one' and the specific times for mating with the increase in noise and the comparison with the final quietness. Some were successfully able to explore more fully the idea of creation and the role of Man within the natural world.

Question 4

How does Constantine convey a memorable experience in, 'Watching for Dolphins'?

This was a popular question and very pleasingly almost all candidates were clear that the dolphins did not appear and almost all addressed the significance of the final stanza. They were able to comment on how the language of constraint contrasted with the lively images of the anticipated dolphins and the language used to describe the hope and expectations of the passengers. Candidates understood the possibility that this quest to see the dolphins represented a wider aspect of human behaviour.

Questions 5 and 6

There were so few attempts at these questions that it is not possible to make general comments.

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Section B

Question 7

How does Bronte make you feel sorry for Jane at this moment in the novel?

Candidates responded well to this question. They were able to contextualise the situation and this helped them begin to convey their feelings of sorrow towards Jane following her unfair punishment. Most addressed the imagery of ghosts and the physical description of her distress. The strongest answers developed the significance of this incident to the whole novel with its implications for Jane.

Question 8

There were so few attempts at this question that it is not possible to make general comments.

Questions 9 and 10

There were so few attempts at these questions that it is not possible to make general comments.

Questions 11 and 12

There were so few attempts at these questions that it is not possible to make general comments.

Questions 13 and 14

There were no responses to these questions at all.

Question 15

How does Knowles make this conversation between Leper and Gene so disturbing?

Answers here tended to be largely descriptive and narrative. Leper's rambling was often contrasted with Gene's terse and brief responses, but this was not developed into commenting on the boys' relationship and the impact of war upon them.

Question 16

There were so few attempts at this question that it is not possible to make general comments.

Question 17

How does Orwell create striking impressions of Julia and O'Brien at this moment in the novel?

Most candidates were able to describe both characters and understood the irony of Winston's initial feelings towards them. Stronger candidates were able to develop responses to the language of the passage and how the thematic concerns of the novel are revealed.

Question 18

In what ways does Orwell make Mr Charrington and his shop such a memorable part of the novel?

Answers showed good knowledge of the text and were able to identify that both the diary and the paperweight were bought in the shop. The significance of the room was understood as being the only place where Winston and Julia believed that they could be free from the surveillance of The Party. The artefacts, the room, the seeming benevolence of Mr Charrington all provided Winston with hope and candidates were able to relate to this and were then able to illustrate how deceived Winston was.

Questions 19 and 20

There were so few attempts at these questions that it is not possible to make general comments.

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Question 21

What does MacLaverty's writing make you feel as you read the ending to the story?

There were many strong responses here, feeling keenly the unhappiness of the situation and the long-term impact on the boy. Most answers provided a sense of balance recognising that although the aunt's response was possibly extreme, the boy was actually in the wrong. The violence of the aunt's language was noted and the sad estrangement of the boy from his, 'teller of tales'.

Question 22

There were so few attempts at this question that it is not possible to make general comments.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/12
Poetry and Prose

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- use relevant textual references to support their arguments
- engage with the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

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- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- include extraneous biographical material
- make assertions which are not substantiated
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- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses to the question.

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Focus on the question

The most successful answers sustained a clear focus on the key words of the question. Less successful answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the text but without tailoring their material to the specific demands of the question. Detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward. Some candidates embarked on a description or sketch of characters or an explanation of themes regardless of what the question asked for. Poetry responses often worked their way, sometimes exhaustively, through the poem without selecting relevant material with which to answer the actual question.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most responses addressed the question with enthusiasm and focused from the outset on the contrasting features of the two birds. Successful candidates explored the effects of phrases such as 'dips his wing / in the orange sun's rays' and 'can seldom see through his bars of rage.' They were also able to develop their responses through a series of contrasting ideas, such as ease of mind versus anxiety and free movement versus physical restriction. Less successful responses offered overly assertive readings of the poem which strayed from the detail of the actual poem, with the result that opportunities to engage with images and aural effects of the poem were lost.

Question 2

Most candidates recognised the father's love for his family and how he expressed this through actions rather than words. They were also able to write sensitively about the difficult conditions he faced, both at work and home, during the week and also on Sundays, and to make a tentative link between this and the 'chronic angers' mentioned in the second stanza. Phrases such as 'blueblack cold' and 'the cold splintering, breaking' were explored with imagination and empathy. Candidates also recognised the retrospective perspective which comes to the fore in the final stanza. Some parts of the poem presented difficulties. Few candidates noted the plural and ambiguous quality of 'chronic angers', asserting that this plainly referred to the father alone. The last line, referring to 'love's austere and lonely offices', also posed a problem: many candidates ignored it altogether, and some interpreted it literally, writing that the father was lonely in his office at work. More successful responses were able to relate this phrase to the father's character and sense of responsibility; some candidates wrote movingly about the loneliness of the father as he went about his early morning duties, unobserved and unappreciated.

Question 3

Most responses were able to comment on the depth at which the Kraken sleeps, the murky light and the creatures surrounding him. More successful responses used the details of the poem to illustrate the idea that the Kraken has been there for an enormous length of time and the apocalyptic vision of the Kraken's waking and demise. The strongest responses explored Tennyson's use of language, structure and form. Less effective responses described the rhyme scheme and made general comments about the poem being almost a sonnet, though without developing these points and linking them to the question. Less successful responses lacked a clear understanding of the words 'sponges', 'polypi' and 'winnow' as used in the poem, and this led to some misreading. Other responses described the content of the poem without explicitly addressing the focus of the question. Some candidates wrote that global warming had killed the Kraken.

Question 4

Most candidates showed an understanding of the poem and its implications. In many cases, this was evident in a working through the passage in order, explaining and occasionally exploring the poem's detail. Comments were made about the location of the encounter, the speaker's surprise at the bird's song and appearance, and the time of year. Only the most successful responses selected relevant details from the poem that addressed the key words of the question: how Pitter 'uses words and images to communicate her feelings about the bird'. Less effective responses explored some of the description of the bird without linking it directly to Pitter's feelings about the bird. Stronger responses explored Pitter's feelings of amazement, awe and excitement with suitable references to the bird's singing and appearance. Some considered how the bird touched something deeper inside this solitary person and made the encounter a religious experience for her.

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Question 5

The more successful answers clearly focused on 'moving' and on 'how' Duffy achieves her effects, commenting on the sense of separation between mother and child, the purity of the child and her lack of 'history', and the almost religious feeling of the mother's worship of the child. In these stronger responses, candidates explored the presentation of the maternal voice and the effects of the natural imagery and the mood of quietness and reflection. Less effective responses revealed a basic understanding of the parent watching over her sleeping child and what she imagines the child is dreaming about, though these responses needed more detailed exploration of Duffy's language and effects.

Question 6

Most responses were able to appreciate the magic of Mrs Tilscher's teaching and classroom where 'you could travel up the Blue Nile'. Many recognised the pupils' pleasure and enchantment at the magical place names and the joy at receiving gold stars for good work. In most answers, there was at least to some extent an attempt to comment on what the first two stanzas reveal about the experience of early school days. More successful responses selected carefully details that would address the question and explored with some success the deeper implications found in the third and fourth stanzas. Only the more confident responses drew the contrast between the innocent, safe world of Mrs Tilscher and the facts of life as a child learnt 'how you were born'. These more successful responses explored the change to a darker language as the poem progresses, the impact of the final line and the significance of 'the sky split open into a thunderstorm'.

Section B

Question 7

In the few responses seen, there was an awareness of Mrs Reed's desperate need to get rid of Jane whom she considers an unwanted burden. There was an understanding of Mrs Reed's shock and quiet anger at Jane's outburst and a recognition that Mrs Reed clearly does not know how to handle Jane. The most successful responses explored Bronte's use of language in 'memorably' conveying the conflict between the two characters, commenting on the vocabulary associated with ice that describes Mrs Reed, and the unctuousness of her attempts to calm Jane.

Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

In the relatively few responses seen to this question, candidates tended to work their way through the extract, commenting on Deven's memories and assessment of Nur and the realisation that he was custodian of Nur's poetry. Stronger responses explored the ways in which Desai conveys Deven's thoughts and the significance of the imagery of the night-time path and the water in the canal. There was generally a less clear focus on the extract's effectiveness of the extract as 'a satisfying ending to the novel'.

Question 10

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 11

Many candidates found this question difficult: they were aware of the humour, but they struggled to explain how it is created. For example, many were able to pick out the key opposing terms 'Bank Fairy 'and 'Bank Dragon', but only the more confident responses took the opportunity to explore these sharply contrasting and humorous images in the context of the extract and the wider novel. One candidate sensitively picked out all the words used to describe Mrs Sparsit – 'lady paramount', 'guardian' and so on – and explored these in succession, showing how the 'portrait' was drawn by adding detail upon detail throughout the extract. The most successful answers were based on a secure knowledge of Mrs Sparsit's role and character in the novel. They also identified features such as her piecing together torn-up pieces of paper in an attempt to find damaging information about those whom she disliked; her ignorance of the nature of the bank's 'treasures'; and her inflated sense of superiority and feminine grace.

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Question 12

Most responses showed a secure knowledge of Mr Bounderby's character and role in the novel. They were also able to recall key textual references (such as 'the bully of humility' and 'That object is, to be fed on turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon'), which offered valuable opportunities to explore Dickens' language and effects. Generally, candidates agreed that Bounderby got what he deserved, although one or two expressed sympathy for him because he married a woman who did not love him. Almost all appreciated the irony of his lecturing Stephen on the impossibility of divorce, when the same fate was to befall him; or dying in a ditch, after lying that he was born in one. One danger of the general essay question is that responses can become overly assertive where there is little reference to the author's methods and language. Better responses were able to support their arguments by pinpointing particular events and pertinent textual reference, which allowed candidates to explore Bounderby's language and Dickens' descriptions of him.

Question 13

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 14

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

Question 15

Most responses focused with some success on Gene's first reaction on seeing Finny, Gene's general apprehension and his fear of Finny's possible suspicions. Stronger responses explored the detail of Knowles's portrayal of Gene's fear and guilt, contrasting this with Finny's general good humour. The most successful responses were able to pinpoint with accuracy the extract's position within the wider novel and to explore the underlying tensions in the boys' relationship, linking their points to the ways in which Knowles makes this such a memorable moment in the novel. The most perceptive responses demonstrated a clear and critical appreciation of the narrative viewpoint.

Question 16

Few candidates chose this question. Those who did were generally able to comment on the boys in the final year waiting to enlist and the war preparations in evidence in and around the school. There was reference to Leper's enlisting and his later dishonourable discharge, together with the impact of this on his mental wellbeing. More successful responses used pertinent detail from the text to explore more closely 'the ways in which Knowles conveys different attitudes to war', focusing on the debates between Finny and others about the war not existing and the presentation of the impact of the war (mainly on Leper).

Question 17

Most responses grasped the general dinginess of the setting, the impact of the old man's conversation with the barman, the barman's ignorance of the past, and the unease caused by Winston's arrival. Less effective responses worked through the extract, describing and explaining content rather than exploring the ways in which Orwell achieves his effects. More successful answers considered the significance of revealing textual detail (for example, the 'tired looking vegetables') and explored Orwell's use of description of the setting, the representation of the old man's speech and the potential for trouble of the dispute between the old man and the barman. The most successful responses explored the contrast between the sentiment that hope lies in the proles with Orwell's presentation of the proles.

Question 18

This was a less popular choice than the extract-based question and, overall, less well done. A few candidates were able to present convincing arguments which went beyond a character sketch. These stronger answers were characterised by their use of supporting textual reference. A more detailed knowledge of the text usually led to a more convincing and well-substantiated argument. Most candidates acknowledged Winston's role as the central character, his role in the Outer Party and his desire to rebel. More successful responses made reference to accounts of his behaviour as a child, the presentation of his betrayal of Julia, his desire to trust O'Brien and his awareness that he is 'the dead'. The strongest responses explored Orwell's use of narrative voice in providing insight into Winston's thoughts.

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Question 19

Candidates were generally able to contextualise the passage: the father reading his son's manuscript after the funeral and the pain and grief he feels. There was interesting comment on the relationship between James and Arthur and the impact the son's words would have on the father in future parts of the novel. Less successful responses tended to paraphrase (or simply ignore) the content of the manuscript whereas more confident answers explored in detail what makes it such a powerful contribution to the extract and wider novel. Only the most successful responses explored effects closely, for example, the contrast between the simple language of the narrative and the more academic language of the manuscript.

Question 20

There were only a few responses seen to this question. The focus was generally on Absalom rather than his companions. These answers needed a more thorough grasp of relevant textual detail and support, together with a closer exploration of the ways in which Paton achieves his effects.

Question 21

Most answers were able to make reference to what might be 'sad' in the extract, for example, the old man's obvious suffering, his thoughts about death and being cremated rather than buried. More successful answers were able to account for what makes the extract a 'sad ending' to the story by referring to what happens earlier in the story: the old man's trip to the city to plead with the authorities and his failure to persuade the planners who have designated land for re-development without regard to Maori traditions. Stronger responses were able to use these details to account for the man's very great disappointment and his attempt to put on a brave face ('right as rain'). Only the most confident responses commented on the style of the extract, its presentation of dialogue, use of colloquial language in conveying the old man's stream of consciousness; these responses were, as a result, better equipped to explore '*how*' Grace makes this 'such a sad ending to the story'.

Question 22

There were far fewer responses seen to this general essay question on *The Open Boat* than to the extract-based question on *Journey*. Answers revealed a rudimentary knowledge of the plot and a grasp in general terms of what makes the Captain an admirable character. Most candidates made basic points: he is injured, he mourns the loss of his ship and reassures the crew they will get ashore. More successful responses attempted to comment on his conversations with the men and his calm and pragmatic tone. In general, however, a more thorough grasp of the detail of the story was needed to address the specific thrust of the question. It is worth reminding candidates that they need to know the anthology stories in detail so that they have sufficient textual reference when answering questions.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

NORMAN NICHOLSON: *Rising Five*

Question 1

Most candidates were able to access the literal meaning of this poem – we wish our lives away and we should appreciate every moment. They considered the question and commented on the idea of passing time. Stronger answers showed their understanding by exploring the growth and cycles in nature, the inevitability of ageing and the reflections in the final stanza. Better answers provided a clear and detailed evaluation of how writing effects were achieved, for example they explored the imagery used to describe the child' s appearance or probed some of the language used to describe nature. Less successful candidates often identified language features but did not draw out their significance.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: *Sonnet 43*

Question 2

This question was a popular choice. Most candidates understood the central idea of the poem and were able to identify some of the ways Browning expressed her feelings of love. Stronger responses evaluated the intensity and force of these feelings and supported their points very well with apt quotation. These better answers examined the religious and abstract elements and provided some analysis of writing effects such as the listing, structure, the use of the sonnet form or the rhyme. Some candidates had been well drilled to provide a short introduction which placed the poem in context, three developed points and a conclusion. This disciplined structure provided a useful framework for some. Weaker responses concentrated on providing explanation for individual words or wrote generally, suggesting they had not fully appreciated the poem's intensity. Some used biographical detail excessively and some speculatively, for example Browning was planning suicide or had been treated badly by her husband, without contributing to the focus of the question. Other weaker scripts concentrated on drawing morals from the poem instead of literary analysis.

Teachers might like to consider that biography is very helpful here for giving context and general interest, but it should not be too detailed, lengthy or lead to speculation.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS: *The Caged Skylark*

Question 3

This was another very popular choice and most candidates were able to make some response to the ideas about freedom in the poem. Stronger answers showed an understanding of the similarities between the free and caged birds, the link to man's spirit, man's body as a prison and the significance of the last three lines. They showed an appreciation of Hopkins' verbal skills and were able to evaluate writing effects such as the extended comparison, the vivid imagery, the use of unusual words and the religious references.

Weaker answers often focussed on the first two lines then wrote in vague terms with little reference to the rest of the poem. They tended to repeat themselves and quote excessively without drawing out specific meaning. Some were oblivious to the poem being a sonnet, mistook "fowl" for foul or were unaware of Hopkins' verbal inventiveness (e.g. kennings). A few answers veered into unconvincing readings, for example, the poem was about animal rights. Very few were aware of the theme of resurrection.

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ROBERT BRIDGES: *London Snow*

Question 4

This question was generally very well answered and almost all candidates responded with engagement and enthusiasm – they seemed to enjoy the poem and found plenty to write about. Nearly all candidates understood the transforming power of the snowfall and its effect on the children and the working people of London. Many candidates noted the differing reactions between the two groups and the sense of wonder, hope and beauty the snow created. There were many high-achieving responses which provided very detailed evaluations of writing effects such as the personification of the snow, the imagery and the metaphysical qualities of the snow. Their skilled use of appropriate quotations was notable. There were a handful of candidates who found it difficult to interpret the ending of the poem but, on the whole, this question was answered very well.

CAROL ANN DUFFY: *Originally*

Question 5

Generally, candidates showed some understanding of the anxieties and difficulties of a move to a new country. A few stronger answers were aware of the extended metaphor of the poem – that all childhood is an emigration – and successfully explored the speaker's feelings about emigrating. However, most responses tended to be explanatory rather than evaluative. For example, many candidates noted the image comparing the parents' anxiety to a loose tooth but did not explain why this is such an effective image. Similarly, the title of the poem 'Originally' was not really explored as fully as it might have been. Some candidates did not understand that the 'red room' was a train. Overall, responses may be characterised as having a general understanding of the poem with relatively few providing detailed insight into the poet's specific language choices. There was a certain amount of 'projection', with candidates imagining how they would feel in the narrator's shoes without basis in the poem itself.

CAROL ANN DUFFY: *We Remember Your Childhood Well*

Question 6

Most candidates responded to the key word in the task and were able to identify at least some of the 'disturbing' elements in the poem. Only a few answers, however, achieved top bands and these offered a relevant evaluation of the credibility of the viewpoints. They provided some analysis of the writing features such as the tone, use of forceful words, and a sense of mystery in the poem – we don't know for sure what happened. Less successful answers generally commented on the child's memories and were aware that the child seemed to be denied the chance to talk. Some of the weaker responses did not fully understand that the poem is the monologue of a parent and this led to some confusion and misunderstanding. A few candidates used this as an opportunity to write at length about their personal response to child abuse or neglect. This resulted in answers that were vague, generalised and lacked textual support.

Section B

CHARLOTTE BRONTE: *Jane Eyre*

Question 7

This passage is one rich in language, and allowed candidates across the ability range to score well. Candidates seemed reasonably well prepared and had no problems placing it in context. They had a thorough knowledge of the text, making links forwards and backwards from the extract with ease. Nearly all were focused on the question and able to make some response to drama of the scene. Most candidates were able to comment on the Gothic and supernatural themes in the passage, for example the 'demoniac laugh'. They were also able to grasp the religious aspects of the 'tongues of flames', although not many were able to make the link as to why these might be surrounding Rochester in particular. Many used knowledge of the text to mention that this extract served as a sort of foreshadowing for later in the novel where Thornfield Hall burns down.Stronger answers analysed the drama and Gothic elements in detail, and explored auditory devices, the imagery of fire and baptism and Bronte's diction. Weaker answers tended to identify the Gothic elements but did not explain how they worked to achieve effect.

Teachers might congratulate pupils on knowing their novel intimately but encourage them to keep focus on the main thrust of the question, 'dramatic' in this situation.

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Question 8

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

ANITA DESAI: *In Custody*

Question 9

Successful responses focused explicitly on the ways in which Desai creates tension in the passage. These explored the behaviour and responses of Murad and Deven to the situation, their argument and subsequent thoughts and actions. Stronger answers made some evaluation of the language in the conversations and a very few commented on the significance of the last sentence. Less successful responses tended to work through the extract in an explanatory fashion, with no attempt to explain the tension and no comment on any of the writing features.

ANITA DESAI: *In Custody*

Question 10

There were very few answers to this question. Most candidates considered the question and selected a range of reasonable points from the text to support their argument. They offered points such as Deven's misplaced idealism, his compromising nature, his lack of direction, lack of confidence and unassertiveness. A number of candidates viewed Deven as a bit pathetic, with an air of defeat and most agreed with the statement that Deven is foolish. Weaker answers merely provided an overall character sketch of Deven, with little support or examples from the text. A few answers used the extract in **Question 9** from which to draw their points. A wider range of relevant textual detail would have helped many candidates to explore with greater sensitivity the ways in which Desai presents this character.

CHARLES DICKENS: *Hard Times*

Question 11

Not many candidates chose to answer this question and, of those who did, there were hardly any which achieved higher grades. Responses showed some awareness of the context and noted Tom's deviousness. Candidates generally struggled to draw out the significance of the passage, and most missed how this scene determines the course of the rest of the novel and ultimately leads to Stephen's death. Similarly, candidates missed the dramatic qualities of the moment and there was hardly any comment on writing features such as the mood and tone, dialect or imagery. Most answers resorted to narrative or a paraphrase of the passage.

CHARLES DICKENS: *Hard Times*

Question 12

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Question 13

There were no responses seen for this question.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Question 14

There were no responses seen for this question.

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JOHN KNOWLES: *A Separate Peace*

Question 15

This was a very accessible extract, offering much opportunity for all candidates to engage with the task and text. Even weaker answers were able to find something meaningful to say about the qualities of leadership demonstrated by Finny. Many answers were engaged, enthusiastic and displayed an admiration of Finny. Successful answers noted and evaluated Finny's charisma, skills and actions, and supported their points in great detail from the text. These commented on the techniques used by Knowles such as the imperative commands, the shouts and arguments and the descriptions of Finny's talent and excellence. A few of the more able candidates commented on the wider context of war and the escapism the game represents. Weaker answers tended to run through the passage, identifying key points but not drawing out their significance. A handful of responses strayed off the point and focussed on the war or Gene's insecurity and his response to Finny's leadership.

JOHN KNOWLES: *A Separate Peace*

Question 16

Very few candidates chose this question. Those who did were generally able to provide at least a few reasonable points to consider the question. Stronger answers provided relevant examples which were well supported from the text and evaluated to what extent Gene was 'a good guy'. These showed good knowledge of the text and character and were well prepared. Weaker responses tended to offer a character sketch without any evaluation of Gene's good and bad points. Some weaker answers were limited in the range of points they offered, or did not provide sufficient support for their point of view.

GEORGE ORWELL: *1984*

Question 17

This was another popular choice with plenty of material for candidates to comment on. The key word in the question was 'shocking' and most candidates were able to find some aspects of this in the passage. Most candidates were able to place the passage in context and showed good overall textual understanding. Nearly all candidates observed the physical reactions of Julia and Winston to being discovered and included apt quotations from the extract to support their points. Stronger answers were able to evaluate some of the techniques used by Orwell to create shock. The symbolism of the paperweight was a favourite, but the better answers appreciated the sinister atmosphere created by the use of repetition and the symbolism of the singing. Weaker answers were generally able to note some of the key points in the passage but needed to comment in more detail on how the 'shock' was created.

A few answers were distracted by the opportunity to discuss at length the characteristics of totalitarianism.

GEORGE ORWELL: *1984*

Question 18

This was a much less popular choice than the extract-based question and, overall, less well done. A very few candidates were able to present convincing arguments which went beyond a character sketch. Stronger answers were able to select relevant examples from the passage which described the Parsons family. Weaker answers usually showed some understanding of the family but either did not provide sufficient support or wrote in very general terms. Some candidates spent too much time writing about totalitarianism without providing solid points that were supported from the novel.

ALAN PATON: *Cry, the Beloved Country*

Question 19

This was a less popular choice of question and textual knowledge was varied. There were very few strong answers and these picked up on the correct context of the extract (just before the verdict) and why this made it particularly dramatic. Many candidates struggled to place the extract chronologically which affected their understanding to some degree. There wasn't always a great deal of focus on the 'dramatic' aspect of the extract – candidates on the whole found this difficult. Most candidates also found it difficult to respond to

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language and most treated the opening conversation perfunctorily. They concentrated on the episode of the newspaper, and gave details of why it was a threat to the trial, often ignoring the beginning and end of the extract. A few candidates ran through the passage and simply paraphrased the events and conversations.

ALAN PATON: *Cry, the Beloved Country*

Question 20

There were too few responses seen to make meaningful comment.

JANET FRAME: *The Bath*

Question 21

Whilst there were many reasonable responses, few achieved the higher band marks. In general, candidates struggled to link the descriptions of places and events to the question, which was about the 'moving ending'. Stronger responses showed their understanding of deeper meaning by looking beyond the individual circumstances of the old woman to consider some of uncomfortable truths about life as one goes into physical decline. These were also able to comment on the beauty and peace of the environment, and the comparison of the bath and the coffin. Many candidates referred to the opening of the story in which the main character struggles to get out of the bath but did not link this to the question – how does Frame make this such a moving ending? Weaker scripts showed excessive empathy or moralising at the expense of close reading of text and struggled to provide points that were relevant.

BERNARD MACLAVERTY: *Secrets*

Question 22

There were very few responses to this question. Those seen displayed knowledge of the story, engagement with the boy's and his aunt's feelings and some appreciation of Mac Laverty's style. Candidates were generally able to provide relevant points to explain why 'Secrets' is such a sad story. These included the boy's intrusion, his innocent curiosity and the guilt and regret he felt.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/21
Drama

Key messages

- Strong responses showed detailed knowledge of the text, could refer to specific incidents and used brief, well-chosen quotations.
- The most successful answers consisted of a brief introduction with a focus on the question and a statement of the approach to answering it. They avoided unloading lengthy factual details of the historical context of the play.
- Responses to passage-based questions which had internalised the context of the passage in the play as a whole were the most convincing.
- Successful answers used apt quotations from the passages and used a range of precise textual references in discursive answers.
- Candidates who were well versed in drama as a genre and in stylistic analysis, wrote the most successfully about authorial effects.

General comments

Candidates showed knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain.

In terms of making the most of their time in the examination, candidates would be advised to avoid introductions which include lengthy explanations of the historical or social context of the play and conclusions merely reiterating points already made. This is often at the expense of writing about the whole passage in the passage-based questions and limiting the range of reference in the discursive.

In answer to the passage-based questions, the main barrier to achievement was lack of clear knowledge of the context. On paper 31 where candidates have the set text, they would be advised to quickly check on the context. Not knowing it sometimes led to the candidate making erroneous statements or following a less productive line of argument. It is important that candidates use quotations to support the points they make. Paraphrasing what characters say, rather than quoting it, when the passage is printed on the paper, seems self-defeating.

There were some very strong responses with perceptive comments on characterisation, stagecraft, mood and tone. Many candidates explored the passages in depth and detail and wrote well-constructed discursive essays with a range of material drawn from across the text. Candidates understood the use of theme and symbolism and generally wrote effectively about irony, dramatic irony and the use of foreshadowing.

A number of answers were self-limiting since they were overly generalised and not informed by close textual reference, whether in the form of quotation or in specific references to events in the text. This was unfortunate as the ideas were often sound and would have been reasonably developed if the points had been supported. Learning a fair range of quotations would help to overcome this. Many answers contained two or three stock quotations which were then applied to any circumstance, whether strictly relevant or not.

There were sophisticated, engaged responses which showed a developed overview of the text and an engagement with its issues. Some responses were rather distracted by contextual issues such as racism and feminism at the expense of a focus on the question, though strong answers showed an implicit understanding of such elements which informed their answers effectively.

Rubric infringements were infrequent. There were few very brief or imbalanced scripts, though there were a number who ran out of time and did not finish. Fewer candidates this session referred to line numbers instead of quoting from the text.

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Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY*: A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) Strong responses to this question understood the context: Walter wants to use Mamma's insurance money to buy a liquor store. Mama disapproves on religious grounds. Ruth thinks that Walter's prospective partners are unreliable and that the money is not his to spend. The strongest answers showed the tension created by Walter asking Ruth to intercede with Mama and commented on his mimicking tone as disrespectful. A misconception amongst several candidates was that Ruth merely wants things to stay the same and has no ambition. Like Mama she sees buying a house as the best way out of their problems and feels that Walter's dreams are unrealistic. The strongest answers picked up her sarcasm in *'So- I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace',* and her irritation at Walter's moaning rather than acting. They also commented on how Walter's frustrations stem from his emasculation in a racist society and that he unfairly blames his wife and *'coloured women'* in general, instead of an unjust society. Strong answers traced the escalation in tension Hansberry creates via the stage action in terms of the characters' expressions, tone of voice and their actions, such as Ruth's ironing. They commented effectively on the impact of the *'eat your eggs'* refrain. Few mentioned the fact that, as we find out later, Ruth is pregnant and therefore more tired and anxious than usual.

(b) Most candidates commented that Mama was the matriarch in the Younger household. She makes the decisions and holds the purse strings. She aims to hold the family together. Many answers were limited to such narrative commentary, with some struggling to relate these points to moments in the play. More effective answers commented on her past experience, the symbolism of the plant, her slapping Beneatha when she transgresses against the religious principles of her upbringing and her treatment of Walter when he loses the insurance money. Surprisingly few referred to the bold move of buying a house in a white area, though the strongest answers commented perceptively on how she helps Walter into his 'manhood'. Detailed textual knowledge was a prerequisite of an effective response to this question.

ARTHUR MILLER: The Crucible

Question 2

(a) There were many very strong answers to this powerful passage from the play which had clearly made a considerable impact on the candidates. Successful answers maintained a sharp focus on what was revealed in the scene and how this was dramatically conveyed. Candidates showed understanding that Abigail admits the girls are not bewitched, whilst hiding the fact that she drank a potion to kill Proctor's wife. The skilful revelation of John and Abigail's past affair, her obsession, his rebuttal, her desire for revenge on Goody Proctor and the consequences of this were fully explored in the strongest answers. There were some detailed explorations of how much of this is revealed in the body language of the actors as well as in the powerful language of the dialogue. There was understanding that the revelation of John Proctor's guilt and desire to regain his integrity was of great significance to the play. Several candidates made engaged moral judgements as to Proctor's relationship with a young girl, though some candidates thought Abigail was thirteen rather than seventeen. Knowledge of the historical context was usefully applied with comment on the seriousness of adultery in the puritanical society and of how the affair enlightens Abigail as to its hypocrisy. Most answers could make sound comment on characterisation and understood the nature of this encounter. Less successful responses did not focus sufficiently on the revelation or the drama.

(b) This was a less popular question than **2a** though those who tackled it generally chose appropriately and commented effectively on the frightening aspects of the moments. Less successful answers found it difficult to pinpoint two different moments or wrote about several moments in a generalised way. The strongest answers could support their points with specific detail. For example, one candidate chose to write about Abigail threatening the other girls with a *'pointy reckoning'*, making a good case by looking in some detail at the violence in the language at that moment in the play.

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TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates wrote well about the dramatic tension in the scene and how it is created. They showed awareness of the context, commented on Grace trying to protect Ronnie and the impact of Arthur's silence. Ronnie's slow movements towards his father's room were explored for their dramatic effectiveness. Surprisingly less attention was paid to the significance of the scene. Arthur's method of finding out the truth, his relationship with Ronnie and his belief in him were given far less credit than they should have been. The dramatic cliff-hanger of the call to Osborne which kicks off the plot of the play as a whole could have been more fully explored.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) Effective answers showed good knowledge of the context and responded to the dramatic power of Macbeth ranting at a seemingly empty stool and the appearance and disappearance of the ghost. Lady Macbeth's withering scorn was assessed, although some answers spent too much time on reversed gender roles at the expense of a focus on the drama. Even the strongest candidates missed the dramatic irony of Macbeth toasting Banquo and saying: *'Would he were here!'* Similarly, there was some misinterpretation of the speech beginning: ' *Blood hath been shed...*' where Macbeth suggests that in the old days when you murdered someone they stayed dead. This was seen as a currently occurring event, the black humour therefore unappreciated. Most candidates understood that Macbeth was revealing secrets in front of his lords at a celebratory banquet and the gripping effect of not knowing what the consequences of this will be. Several candidates commented on the animal imagery in Macbeth's final speech and on Lady Macbeth's hapless attempts to smooth things over. Less effective answers mistook the context or did not focus sufficiently on the drama of the scene.

(b) There were many well-constructed, concise answers which considered Macbeth's innate ambition; his belief in the witches; the contrast with Banquo's response to them; his increasing bloodthirstiness; his latter feeling of invincibility and his murder of Macduff's family. Some strong responses concentrated purely on Macbeth, one effectively exploring his *'vaulting ambition'* speech and *'stars hide your fires*' to explore the ambition and dark desire in his psyche. Others balanced his responsibility with the temptation and persuasion of the witches and Lady Macbeth or blamed the inevitability of fate. Less successful answers tended to write an essay on guilt rather than responsibility or did not give specific evidence for the points raised. There were some sweeping comments on his 'paranoia', with few answers commenting on the dynastic reasons for Macbeth wanting to kill Banquo and Fleance. *'Blood will have blood'* was frequently misquoted.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context. Romeo and Juliet are married. No-one else on the stage knows this but the audience do. Tybalt assumes Romeo is mocking him when Romeo is deadly serious. Mercutio misinterprets Romeo's words as a *'vile submission'*. Less successful answers were not conversant with these facts and therefore did not fully appreciate the power of the drama. Most candidates commented on Mercutio's death, the fact that Romeo was partially to blame, and that Mercutio curses the two houses. There was a perception that Mercutio meant a plague to occur – hence Friar John not being able to deliver the letter which could potentially have averted the tragedy. This, whilst a legitimate observation, remains a rather literal interpretation. Whereas most candidates could comment on the tragedy of Romeo losing a friend and the consequences of his subsequent revenge, few explored the dramatic, black humoured quality of Mercutio's final speech, though the repetition was appreciated. There were several plot driven answers which did not give sufficient attention to the passage itself.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22
Drama

Key messages

- The most successful responses focused on the key words in the question, remained focused and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Useful opening paragraphs were brief, referenced the question and avoided lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writer's techniques to be addressed. Conclusions needed to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Responses to passage-based questions which briefly contextualised the passage in the play, explored the whole passage, including the ending, were the most successful.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
- Many responses would have been improved by avoiding a retelling of the whole plot before addressing the specific question or only attempting to link this information to the question in the conclusion.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage was a feature of the most successful answers.

General comments

The strongest candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the questions. They deconstructed the question, focusing on the key terms, for example, 'memorably', 'vividly' or 'strikingly', to choose their material effectively. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. These often included an introductory paragraph to give an overview of the intended answer.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. These often relied on lengthy quotations or textual detail without demonstrating understanding of the text quoted. Often there was some reference to the text, but this was not analysed to show understanding of the author's methods and effects. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, resulted in much valuable examination time being wasted. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material drawing close links to the question throughout.

Formulaic approaches were common, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulting in unnecessary repetition and taking away valuable time in an examination context.

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

The most popular texts were *Macbeth, A Raisin in the Sun and Romeo and Juliet.* Fewer candidates answered on *The Winslow Boy.* There was one new text this series, *The Crucible* but this was studied by relatively few candidates. Candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text.

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There was an unusually high number of rubric infringements on 0475/22 where candidates answered two questions on the same text or answered two passage-based questions. There was some evidence that candidates did not have detailed knowledge of at least one of the set texts to answer the questions in enough depth. This was particularly obvious in the passage-based questions where some candidates did not know the context of the passage or were unable to recognise the events referred to in the passage, relying on writing all they could about the passage with scant understanding or reference to the actual question. This type of approach is unlikely to achieve high reward. In addition, there were some candidates who simply copied out the passages for two questions, with no personal comments or any attempt to address the question. Here there was nothing to reward.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as these responses were self-penalising.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) This was a popular choice of text and question. It was a rich passage with a lot to say about George and Beneatha separately and together. Most candidates who attempted this question focused on the 'striking impressions' created and understood that this passage revealed the incompatibility of Beneatha and George. They were able to identify the different ideologies of the two characters and the tension this causes between them. Some candidates over-stated the impression of George labelling him a 'misogynist' whilst others were more measured, considering him 'sexist', in attitude and behaviour. The most successful were able to identify that George was '*shallow'*, a stereotypical male of this period whilst Beneatha was not the stereotypical female and not in terms of the Black community. They were able to support these comments with some well-selected references to their behaviour and dialogue: George only interested in Beneatha for her looks and not her 'thoughts' and Beneatha wanting and enjoying more intellectual conversation. The best candidates managed to explore the stage directions and what they reveal of George and Beneatha at this moment. There was some effective analysis and general satisfaction conveyed at the writer's use of pauses, with emphasis on Beneatha's '*longer pause'* followed by her abrupt '*Good night, George'*. Many understood that this was a moment where Beneatha felt understood by her mother in the final exchange between them and identified this as 'striking', contrasting it to the previous scene when Mama had slapped her.

Less successful responses worked through the passage with little focus on the question and concentrated on George, or strayed from the passage completely, to talk about the couple in other parts of the play. There was some misinterpretation of the stage directions, especially of '*groping*', with some candidates accusing George of sexual assault: he was considered evil and a pathological liar as he tells Mama that he had had a nice time. There was also some misinterpretation of his reference to '*Garbo*' with candidates misunderstanding who she was, or the context, and saying that he was calling her '*garbage*.' Some responses demonstrated a surface understanding of the passage attempting a narrative overview with evidence that the text had not been fully studied or understood.

Very few candidates explored the staging with any awareness of the humour of George's persistence or the visual comedy of Beneatha's rejection of George.

(b) Fewer candidates answered this question, and many struggled with the idea of the apartment having any significance beyond showing the family's poverty. Often, responses focused on the biographical details of Lorraine Hansberry and the socio-historical context of the play with some candidates focusing entirely on the poverty and discrimination of the black community rather than focusing on the text and question. Few managed to get beyond the basic assertion that as the apartment was the only setting it was 'memorable' and then proceeded with describing, often in generalised terms, a few moments from the play. These did not move beyond the lack of rooms and space for a family of five people; the shared bathroom; only having one window and the lack of sunlight and the worn-out furniture. Most candidates were able to include one or two quotations mainly taken from the opening setting of Act One.

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More successful responses were able to discuss the significance of the single window and the symbolism of Mama's plant, showing an understanding of how the apartment reflected the characters' emotions, lives and dreams. Stronger candidates linked the poverty of the area, reflected in the apartment, to racism and the family's desire, especially Mama's dream of moving to a larger home and better neighbourhood. There was understanding of the 'centrality' of the apartment as a setting: all the action takes place here, so the audience is directly involved in the daily struggles of individual family members. There was some understanding of the '*care and love and even hope*' in Mama's original choice of the furnishings and the fact that it was now '*tired*', signifying the worn-out lives of mama and Big Walter. Better responses were able to link the drama of the characters' lives specifically to the apartment, for example, Ruth's willingness to resort to an abortion due to the lack of space, reflected in Beneatha's brutal comment about where 'it' was going to sleep, suggesting 'on the roof?' Others noted Travis being unable to prepare his bed on the sofa, or sleep, whilst Walter was on the telephone or Beneatha had visitors. The best responses picked up on Mr Lindner's visit to the apartment with the pertinent comment that for a white man to visit a Black family's home in those time was unusual, so clearly 'memorable', and obviously for a particularly important reason as the audience were to find out.

Some weaker responses compared the apartment with hypothetical living conditions in their 'new home' without considering that they had yet to move.

ARTHUR MILLER: The Crucible

Question 2

(a) Of the few candidates who answered on this text, this was the more popular question. This was a straightforward question focused on what was 'powerful and dramatic' and the passage provided a plethora of detail for candidates to explore. However, only a few stronger responses showed a secure understanding of the passage and its context within the play. There was some understanding of what was happening in the passage, the chaos and drama, and what it revealed about Abigail's manipulation. Most understood that Mary was turning the tables on Proctor and that this was a dramatic twist in expected events. They showed awareness of the text being performed on stage and commented on the language and stage directions, especially in relation to Mary, though few explored the actual sounds, the screams and movements of the girls.

Comments on John Proctor and Hale were less successful, with widespread misinterpretation of both Proctor's and Hale's words. Some candidates did not grasp Proctor's words, '*God is dead'*, and thought this was a '*confession*', that he had publicly acknowledged that he was in league with the devil and agreeing with Mary's accusations against him. They did not understand that Hale left the proceedings due to his horror at what was happening and argued he was leaving the proceedings because he was angry with Proctor and siding with Mary. There was little focus on the hysteria in court or commentary on Proctor's concluding words, *'You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore*!'. Danforth's role was only mentioned in a few of the strongest responses.

Less successful responses paraphrased the passage with little or no focus on the question, demonstrating little understanding of the situation. Some responses were very confused, asserting that Mary is John's wife, and that John is guilty of witchcraft.

(b) Very few candidates attempted this question. For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Rebecca Nurse, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, her 'dramatic impact' on the play. Better responses recognised her worth as a kind and good Christian woman, a pillar of the community, supporting this with her husband's comment, that she is the '*brick and mortar of the church'.* She was considered a wise woman and being the mother of seven children, an expert on children as she said that Betty would awake when she was ready. Some commented on her husband Francis, his arguments with Mr Putnam over land and Mrs Putnam's jealously of Rebecca's children whilst she had several children die in infancy when Rebecca acted as the midwife. Only the best responses linked the Putnam's jealousy to their unfounded accusation and saw the dramatic impact of her arrest and execution, and how petty jealousies could result in people being accused of witchcraft with no chance of defending themselves. The Proctor's shock at her arrest and her conversations with John Proctor, before their respective deaths, were rarely explored.

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Less successful responses narrated something of her role in the play, finding little to say about her, so these tended to be brief. These responses lacked precise textual reference to the text and there was some confusion between Rebecca Nurse and Mrs Putnam.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) This was a less popular choice of text. Responses to the passage needed to focus on Rattigan's methods to making the family's first meeting with Sir Robert memorable. Many candidates were confused about the timing of the meeting, stating that Arthur was late rather than Sir Robert being early. This impacted on some responses where they argued Catherine was embarrassed and attempting to keep Sir Robert engaged until her father arrived, supporting this further by Grace entering *'hastily'*. The best responses understood the context and Catherine's knowledge and support for Len Rogers. Her deliberate attempt to provoke a response from Sir Robert during this meeting was also explored as memorable. These candidates commented on her intended irony in reporting his handling of the case as a '*great forensic triumph'* and '*masterly'* before implying that Rogers' suicide is Sir Robert's fault. Her provocation in labelling Ronnie's case '*trivia*l' was understood. There was an awareness of audience response with exploration of the underlying tension, the language, the stilted dialogue and the pauses. The family's respect and awe of Sir Robert, his dining at '*Devonshire House'* and activities in the '*House of Commons'* were also highlighted as memorable as was his affected manner, described as '*carelessly*' and '*languidly*'. Some candidates were amused to see Arthur forced to be more polite, than his usual self, in trying to secure the examination of Ronnie and with it, the services of Sir Robert. The satisfactory ending to the meeting with the enjoyment of the phrase, '*Let Right be done'* was a memorable ending to the passage.

Less successful answers merely described what happened in the passage with some confusion over Sir Robert's behaviour. Some thought he was behaving so *'indifferently'* as he was attracted to Catherine and that he becomes more amiable when Desmond enters to belatedly impress Catherine, clearly not understanding the context or purpose of this meeting. These did not convey understanding of Catherine's cold response to Sir Robert or understand what her comments about the past case signified. The weakest responses relied on paraphrasing the passage with little understanding, or focus, on how the different members of the Winslow family interacted with Sir Robert during this, their first meeting.

(b) There were fewer responses to this question. They were relatively weak with candidates adopting a narrative approach or writing a character profile of Ronnie, occasionally adding that this made the reader/audience feel sympathy for Ronnie but without exploring how the writer makes the audience sympathise with Ronnie. Most candidates found it difficult to provide supporting evidence from the text, so responses were very general. There was little detailed discussion of Sir Robert's interrogation of Ronnie or the reactions of other characters to Ronnie.

More successful responses sympathised with how a young boy, unfairly expelled from school for allegedly stealing a postal order was sent home alone. His fear of facing his father, hiding in the garden in the rain and Sir Robert's interrogation of Ronnie were also reasons to sympathise. A few candidates balanced their responses feeling little sympathy due to his perceived indifference to his case, falling asleep rather than following the news and his absence at the crucial moment of the final verdict. Most responses would have been improved by a wide range of precise textual references.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) This was the most popular text and question, and most candidates were able to identify some aspects of the context. The most successful responses briefly contextualised the passage commenting on Macbeth having just murdered King Duncan and returned to Lady Macbeth with the guards' bloody daggers. There were many strong responses to this passage with candidates maintaining a sharp focus on the question with much perceptive analysis of the language and what it reveals of their different reactions. There was critical understanding of Macbeth's guilt, fears and regrets, with the stark contrast to Lady Macbeth's '*calm and collected*' approach. These were supported by well-selected references and close analysis of the language. Stronger responses

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drew salient links between their behaviour in the passage to both before the murder, and later in the play, when their reactions change completely with Lady Macbeth's words, '*a little water clears us of this deed*' and Macbeth's repetition of having '*murder'd sleep'* coming back to haunt her. The strongest candidates were able to do this, without losing focus on the question or passage itself. Candidates commented on Lady Macbeth's decisiveness, scorn and use of imperatives, contrasting this to Macbeth's fearful state and the visual horror at the sight of blood for the audience. Some candidates lost focus and drifted into commentary on gender role-reversal and concepts of masculinity and femininity, with both characters falling short of these perceived standards. Many candidates could talk of Lady Macbeth's emasculation of her husband but struggled with the imagery itself – the '*eye of childhood'/'heart so white'.* The latter was frequently seen as her thinking she was still pure.

Less successful responses were generalised, writing about their reactions collectively as in, '*they were afraid'*, which misses the point of the question and shows little understanding of their respective behaviour and dialogue at this moment. A few candidates thought they had both committed the murder. Some discussed his '*unbearable guilt which keeps him awake at night'* when, in fact, he has only just committed the murder. There were other mis-readings on his invocation of Neptune as a desire for 'God's' help and asking for his forgiveness. Others commented on the absurdity of mentioning 'oceans' and 'water' as there is no water on Neptune, forgetting that Shakespeare and the Elizabethans would have had no such knowledge of the planetary system. Only the best responses addressed and understood the knocking which heralds the arrival of the outside world with weaker responses interpreting this as *'within'* his mind like the '*voices*' at the start of the passage.

Weaker candidates resorted to paraphrasing the passage, after lengthy introductions about the plot. Where there was textual detail it was repetitive and did not help to develop the argument. For example: '*Macbeth is afraid, because he says, 'I am afraid"*, without further commentary. There were some sweeping generalisations on Macbeth's '*paranoia'* and descent into '*madness'* and Lady Macbeth's behaviour as evidence of her being the '*fourth witch',* without any textual support or development.

(b) This was a less popular question and difficult for many candidates as they had limited textual support and precise moments in the play to support Shakespeare's characterisation. The most successful responses were aware of the terms of the question, Banquo's 'dramatic impact' and understood that he was a foil to Macbeth. They were able to explore their responses to the witches' prophecies, loyalty to King Duncan and the dramatic murder of Banquo and appearance of his ghost. Only the strongest answers were supported by well-selected references to the text and relevant quotations, fully analysed. They explored his dramatic impact on Macbeth, the murder of his 'best friend' attempting to secure the crown and returning as a ghost to signify Macbeth's guilt and the suspicions Macbeth's babbling raises in the minds of the thanes regarding both the murder of King Duncan and Banquo himself. The brutality of his murder and telling Fleance to flee were frequently commented on.

Less successful answers wrote character sketches of Banquo and lost sight of the question, except to mention it at the end. When used, references to the text supported a narrative approach and lacked the detail concerning the effect and implications of Banquo's language quoted. The least successful responses retold the plot tracing Banquo's part in the play or contrasted him to Macbeth, often writing more on Macbeth than Banquo. It was clear that some candidates referred to film versions of the play particularly when referencing Banquo's murder and Fleance's escape.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) This passage-based question offered the opportunity for candidates to support comments with textual detail and for some analysis of the language. However, many candidates found it difficult to comment on how Shakespeare portrays their friendship and struggled to explore the language of the passage. Most saw how Mercutio and Benvolio were trying to cheer up a lovesick and depressed Romeo. Unable to explore the extract in any meaningful way, many responses provided a simple, repetitive overview of their friendship: '*They were good friends and trusted each other'.* Only the strongest candidates were able to contextualise the passage accurately knowing that Romeo had read the Capulet servant letter about the feast and that Benvolio's plan was for Romeo to see other '*admired beauties*. Most candidates saw it as a sudden idea to 'gate crash' the party.

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There was a lot of misreading of individual phrases within the passage with weaker candidates copying out lengthy quotations then trying to explain them but showing only a surface understanding of the text. Assertions were then made that this showed that they '*trusted'* or '*advised each other'*, showing they were good friends, but without any precise analysis of the language or the writer's methods to show this.

A few stronger responses showed understanding of their closeness and camaraderie; Mercutio's teasing and the banter, and how Shakespeare was laying the foundations of a solid friendship to prepare the audience for later events: the death of Mercutio and Romeo's act of revenge against Tybalt. One candidate argued that in persuading Romeo to attend this ball where he meets Juliet, ironically, they ultimately proved not to be good friends at all.

The weakest responses resorted to narrating the plot and what follows this scene, with scant focus on the question or the passage. There were reports of some candidates simply copying out the passage verbatim with no attempt to answer the question.

(b) Fewer candidates attempted this question. Effective responses focused on the Nurse's relationship with Juliet, addressed the 'How far' of the question, and presented a balanced argument. She was not to blame because everything she did was to make Juliet happy, but she was to blame as she encouraged the romance with Romeo, knowing the feuding families would never agree to their union. They traced her role as messenger, not telling the Capulets and giving bad advice. Many candidates argued that her most culpable contribution was her advice to marry Paris, perceived as the betrayal which resulted in Juliet's death as she is driven to desperate measures. Only the strongest responses were able to support ideas with close reference to the text and detail to the nurse's language. These responses referenced other factors contributing to Juliet's death before coming to a decision. The best answers explored the words of the Chorus at the start of the play, arguing that the death of the '*star-crossed lovers'* was destined so whatever the nurse did made no difference to the outcome.

Less successful responses became speculative, losing sight of the question and the Nurse's role, suggesting what she could have done differently, and ideas were not rooted in the text. They narrated the plot, working through who, or what, was to blame. The least successful responses were confused about the chronology of events and thought the Nurse was involved in the plan with Friar Lawrence. These were very general, narrative in approach and could only indicate others who were culpable.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/23
Drama

Key messages

Successful answers focused introductions which address the question briefly in three or four key points which are then developed in the course of the response.

All good answers use evidence from the text to support the key points, either through direct quotation or precise reference.

All questions require a response to the text as drama on stage.

In passage-based questions, successful answers briefly state the context of the passage in order to show a deeper understanding of its content.

When responding to a discursive question, candidates need to select the best supporting material from the whole text.

General comments

This session all texts and questions saw some highly successful answers, which showed candidates' detailed understanding and appreciation of their chosen text. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was new to the paper this session. Candidates who placed the passage from this text in its context showed a sound grasp of its disturbing central issue: how innocent villagers are accused of witchcraft on the flimsiest of evidence. Candidates were also disturbed by how Macbeth first considers the murder of King Duncan in the passage on *Macbeth*, with his speech showing this in its structure as it mirrors the rhyming of the witches. There were strong personal responses to all of the texts, and these were credited highly where they were well-supported with evidence from the text. Thus, sympathy was felt for how Walter's dream was lost in *A Raisin in the Sun*, for Catherine's limited life-choices at the end of *The Winslow Boy*, and for Juliet as she discovers her cousin has been killed by her husband in *Romeo and Juliet*. Much less sympathy was expressed for the dislikeable Reverend Parris in *The Crucible*, and for the wicked tyrant Macbeth. Every question expected candidates to consider the effects of staging the text. Answers gained credit where candidates showed understanding of how playwrights created dramatic effects from features such as: action on stage, dialogue between characters, or between a character and the audience, entrances and exits, and likely audience reaction.

To write a successful answer, candidates need to begin by thinking through the requirements of the question, and then they need to select the most important points to include, and then to decide on the most suitable material to use in support of these points. Thus, successful answers this session began by briefly giving three or four main points which are then developed in detail and supported from the text. Some responses began unhelpfully with general introductions which summarised the plot, listed irrelevant cultural or historical detail, or biographical detail of the writer. Other answers lost focus on the question or did not provide evidence from the text in support of the candidate's comments.

In preparation for a good response to a passage-based question, candidates needed to read the whole passage, consider the requirements of the question, and then select the best points from the whole passage with which to address the question. Some responses this session focused on the first few lines of the passage, and so missed significant material from later on. It was helpful when candidates briefly stated their main points in their introduction, then went on to develop each one, with reference to the ways in which the writers achieve their effects, with a focus on dramatic features such as action, dialogue, or significant exits or entrances. For example, in the passage question on *The Winslow Boy*, the exit of Arthur is significant because the tone of the passage changes as his wife, Grace, drops her pretence of light-heartedness in front of Arthur and then shows her deep concern for Arthur's health to their son. Some answers treated the

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passage in isolation and so they tended not to show understanding of any deeper implications. For example, some answers to the passage on *The Crucible* focused entirely on Proctor's shocking treatment of Mary Warren at the start of the passage, where he grabs her cloak and threatens to whip her. Some of these gained credit for exploring how Miller's stage directions suggest Proctor's physical strength. Many candidates pointed out that physical violence is disturbing, which showed a basic understanding. Stronger answers developed their points to consider Mary's lack of response, due to mental exhaustion because of her participation in the court's accusations of witchcraft. The key point of her part in condemning fellow villagers to death on little evidence is shown in the rest of the passage.

Candidates who made good answers to discursive questions knew the text well and were able to select the most relevant material from the whole text with which to support their answer. They began by giving three or four key points, then developed these, using apt supporting text. This session, some answers were limited because they drew on material solely from the beginning of the play. Thus, in making an argument to the question on whether Macbeth is completely wicked, some candidates drew material from the beginning up to the murder of Duncan. They often argued that Macbeth was a loyal warrior who was tricked by witches and manipulated by his wife into killing Duncan, so he was more misunderstood than wicked. Stronger responses were able to develop this partial judgement by including some of Macbeth's actions later in the play, such as the murder of Macduff's family, to arrive at a more considered answer. Similarly, some answers on how dislikeable Parris is in *The Crucible* limited their references to the first act, where their judgement rested purely on how fond Parris is of his reputation, whereas stronger answers reached later in the play to include Parris's more significant and vindictive role in condemning to death innocent parishioners for witchcraft, such as John Proctor.

The key to a good answer is a sound grasp of the play's events and an apt selection of supporting material. Some candidates did not know the play well enough to select salient supporting material, and some gave incorrect plot details, or mixed up characters. This was evident in weaker answers on all texts, but a lack of textual support was a recurring problem in answers to how good a friend Mercutio is to Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*. Some answers gave an account of Mercutio's actions, however without detailed textual support, it is difficult to achieve high credit. Some answers quoted from their text without explaining it, or paraphrased it without making clear how it supported the point being made or referred to the question.

This session there was a very small number of rubric infringements on component 23, in which candidates answered two passage-based or two discursive questions. In these cases, only the higher mark was credited.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in the context of Lindner's racism as he has just offered to buy back Mama's new house to prevent the Youngers moving into the area. These candidates were able to place Walter's hatred against this background and explore the stage directions to consider how Hansberry conveys his feelings. Candidates alert to staging effects commented on the dramatic moment of quiet as characters on stage say nothing while the audience and the Youngers process the insult. Stronger answers identified the sarcasm of Beneatha, Walter and Ruth evident in '*Welcoming Committee'*, and went on to consider how Hansberry uses humour to ridicule Lindner's prejudice in Beneatha's *'eat 'em'* and Ruth's '*marry 'em'*. Attentive candidates considered the dramatic contrast of their humour with Mama's worries, as she prays for strength against possible violence. Some candidates expressed their anger at such racism in a strong personal response and explored how Hansberry encourages this response with the Younger's mockery of Lindner.

Most candidates commented on Walter's anger, but some candidates needed to consider the reason for it, and some took the *'Welcoming Committee'* at face value and misunderstood Beneatha's sarcastic tone, and the mocking humour at the end of the passage. Some needed to consider effects of stagecraft, such as the dramatic silence, or the mockery of the handshake.

(b) Candidates needed to develop their own personal response to Hansberry's writing and to what they found memorable about Walter's dream of a better life. Some candidates usefully focused on how Walter's dream provides a contrast with his current life, others on Walter's development as a

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character faced with the unreality of his dream, and others still on how Walter's dreams conflict with those of other family members. Some stronger answers took a wider view of Walter as a symbol of every black person whose dreams have been thwarted by an unjust society. Whatever their approach, the best answers responded well to 'memorable' and selected detailed material from the text to support their answer.

Some candidates needed to move beyond a narration of the sorry tale of Walter's liquor store, or an explanation of the dream of each Younger member in turn. They also needed to use detailed references to the text to support their comments.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in its context within the play, pointing out that Mary Warren has just returned from court where she has been made an official. She has contributed to the disturbing increase in the number of people accused of witchcraft. Given this context, candidates were able to consider how Mary's stress at seeing accused people sentenced to death has led to her feelings of sickness, exhaustion and an unexpected lack of response to Proctor's threats of violence. Strong answers explored the disturbingly weak evidence for accusations of witchcraft; that Sarah Good *'mumbled'* once and that she tried to kill Mary in court, when Mary experienced hysteria so smothering that she had difficulty breathing. Sarah's false confession of making a compact with the Devil was considered understandable in the context of avoiding being hanged. Stronger candidates explored the deeper implications of Mary's gift of the poppet and her pious homily to Elizabeth, and often showed how Miller was using Elizabeth and Proctor's dialogue to bring a sense of reason in the face of Mary's absurd revelations.

Some candidates limited their response by not considering context; thus they often selected disturbing elements such as Proctor's violent grabbing of Mary's cloak, or Mary's dramatic sobbing, without understanding their significance. The weakest answers related Mary's treatment to modern-day concerns with domestic abuse, sometimes calling Mary a 'slave', or accepted Mary's claims that Sarah Good was a proven witch. A few seemed to be answering a question on tension in the passage, rather than the question asked.

(b) Most candidates had a good understanding of the dislikeable central character, Parris. They explored his greed, hypocrisy and cowardice and were able to cite detailed textual support, such as the gold candlesticks, his hellfire preaching, and his fear of rioting at the end. Stronger responses developed their answers to consider how Parris's keen desire to preserve his reputation revealed him as an ungodly person, too ready to protect himself at all costs. They often explored Parris's role in the accusations of witchcraft and the sentencing of those found guilty to death, and how he abuses his respected social position to destroy those who have criticised him, such as John Proctor. Parris's cowardice was seen at the end, when he tries to halt the executions after his personal safety is threatened by a knife stuck in his own front door, which makes him fearful of civil unrest.

The most successful answers knew the text well and selected apt material from the whole play to support their answer. A strong personal response was often made to the unfairness of Parris abusing his position. Some answers made assertions about Parris's dislikeable character, without supporting their comments with evidence from the text. Others focused mainly on Parris's actions at the start with his daughter, Betty, lying in bed; although they considered his concern for his reputation, little of his more consequential traits shown later in the play was considered.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in its context in the closing stages of the trial, with Grace feeling the pressure of dealing with the press as she attends court every afternoon, and then coping with Arthur at home, bad-tempered as he is due to stress from the trial and his ill-health. Stronger answers commented on Grace's determined light-heartedness in the first part of the passage, in front of Arthur, as she pretends to be concerned only with more trivial things (such as her clothes or lunch), and pointed out that this is her way of coping with the stress of the trial and of not worrying Arthur too much. She encourages him to criticise her trivial comments, rather

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than have him focus on the more serious aspects of the trial, finance and his illness. Some candidates commented on the exchange about sacking the maid, Violet, which serves to emphasise the impact on Grace of the cost of the trial as she faces losing her help. Stronger answers identified Arthur's exit as the point where the tone of the passage changes. Grace then reveals her worries to Dickie; she is concerned about Arthur's health, which is ruined by the stress of the trial. Dickie appreciates the full impact of the trial on Grace as he sympathises with her. Strong answers commented on the resignation shown by Grace at the end, as she says her wish to drop the trial was ignored, and she can only try to *'pick up the pieces'*.

Some answers thought Grace was only concerned with her looks or clothes, not understanding the deeper implications. Violet's character as the maid was not always recognised. Other answers needed to acknowledge Grace's love and concern for Arthur, which is shown in her exchange with Dickie, and her stoicism at the end of the passage.

(b) There were some superb answers to this question on Catherine's sacrifices. These started by considering how she sacrifices her marriage to John and the financial security it would provide to her, as a woman of thirty. They then considered how Catherine has to recant on her firmly-held views about Sir Robert Morton, and explored how she suffers the indignity of having to consider marriage to an older man she does not love in order to secure a place in the world. There was a sensitive understanding of how Catherine finds this particularly hard to accept as a modern-thinking and independent young woman. Some good answers responded to 'strikingly' by considering the drama of the broken engagement on stage (following Catherine's heartfelt declaration of the strength of her love for John to her mother) and the later drama of Desmond's doomed proposal. Strong answers supported their views throughout with detailed textual support.

Some answers focused entirely on Catherine's broken engagement to John Watherstone, and so lacked breadth. Others showed a general understanding of what happens to Catherine, but they needed more detailed textual support. Some good answers needed to make a stronger response to 'strikingly' to gain more credit still.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) There were some excellent responses to this passage, which began by briefly placing the passage in its context; previously, the witches have made their first three prophecies, and Duncan has praised Macbeth's loyalty and heroic fighting. Many good answers focused firmly on the key term 'disturbing' and explored how Macbeth takes the news that he is to be the new Thane of Cawdor as proof that he will also be king, awakening his ambition. Many considered that the execution of the previous Thane of Cawdor for treachery ironically foreshadows Macbeth's future treachery as Thane of Cawdor. Strong answers explored how Macbeth first entertains the idea of murder, but wavers between the idea of doing good or evil, while, in contrast, Banquo explicitly warns against the witches' tricks. Some answers developed their comments on Banquo to consider how Macbeth sounds out Banquo on his sons, suggesting they '*speak their free hearts each to other'*. This was interpreted either as Macbeth looking to involve Banquo as an ally against Duncan, or as Macbeth already plotting against Banquo after the witches' prophecy.

Strong answers made a detailed analysis of the writing, selecting features such as Macbeth's use of asides to convey his wavering directly to the audience, increasing the drama of which he will choose, and explored some of the imagery in detail, such as that of his '*seated heart'* knocking at his ribs at the horror of killing Duncan, which is what he will probably have to do if he is to ascend to the throne; but this idea is yet '*fantastical*'. Fewer considered how Macbeth almost rejects this idea as he thinks that if it is prophesied then he may become king *'Without…stir'*. Some related the striking paradoxes in Macbeth's speech, such as '*nothing is but what is not',* to the riddles of the witches in '*Fair is foul'*, and some considered that Macbeth's use of rhymes showed him falling, *'rapt'*, under the witches' spell. The image of '*borrowed robes'* was often thoroughly explored.

While no answer is expected to be exhaustive, strong answers selected several salient disturbing features from throughout the passage, while other responses tended to focus on just one aspect, such as the Thane of Cawdor, often giving lengthy and irrelevant narrative information. Some lost the focus of the question and passage in irrelevant comments on general themes such as 'appearance versus reality', or gave an account of the social and historical context of how witches

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might be viewed by a Jacobean audience. Some spent too long recounting all of the witches' prophecies, or the whole plot.

(b) All candidates found something to say about Macbeth's wickedness. Stronger answers created their own argument and selected apposite material from throughout the play to support their reasoning. A common approach was to show how Macbeth was at first a noble and valiant warrior, who was tempted by witches making predictions and unwillingly manipulated by his wife into murdering the king. Some candidates limited their response to this early section of the play, and so they tended to consider that Duncan's killing was not Macbeth's fault and that he is not very wicked at all. Given the murders Macbeth went on to commit, this is perhaps a limited view. Strong responses explored the text in detail to argue how far Macbeth's wickedness is revealed at different points, as well as apportioning reasoned degrees of blame to the contributions of the witches and his wife. Some sophisticated answers used Macduff's description of Scotland under Macbeth's rule to illustrate his tyranny and wickedness.

Some less well-reasoned answers absolved Macbeth of any wickedness because he expresses regret after killing Duncan, or because the battle between warriors at his death shows courage which redeems him. Some answers with a strong personal response to Macbeth's wickedness limited their answer because they did not use detailed textual support. The least successful answers confused the narrative; but most candidates were able to give an opinion on Macbeth's wickedness in murdering King Duncan, at least.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Good answers placed the passage in its context, that Romeo has just slain Tybalt in revenge for Mercutio's death, and as a result the Prince has banished Romeo from Verona. Most candidates understood that Juliet's distress arises from her confused emotions of divided loyalties between her cousin and her husband. Stronger answers explored the use of language to consider in detail how Juliet's distress is conveyed. They commented on her repeated questioning of the Nurse at the start and how it shows that she finds it hard to accept that her husband has killed her cousin. Shakespeare's vivid and extensive use of oxymorons in Juliet's speech here was often identified, and some candidates thought they exemplified the cause of her distress. Some stronger answers analysed their effects in detail. For example, the juxtaposition of the two contradictory words in *'Beautiful tyrant'* exemplifies her dilemma, in that she wonders how someone as beautiful as her husband could act in such a tyrannical manner as to kill her cousin. Strong answers continued their analysis to say that the addition of *'fiend angelical'* reversed the pattern of the previous two words, and compounded the confusion in her emotions – as indeed the continuation of this section of the text does, with its repeated use of oxymorons, each one vivid in its extremes. Less assured answers identified the excessive use of question marks and exclamation marks in Juliet's speech here, with claims that they heightened the drama; but such assertions are difficult to credit without any exploration of the content they are used to mark. Other answers quoted sections of the text and explained them without comment, which also did not gain much credit. Juliet's speech at the end of the passage proved fairly demanding for some candidates, who showed limited understanding of her changing reactions to her tears, and also of Juliet's distress at recollecting Romeo's banishment.

Some stronger answers sensitively analysed the contributions of the Nurse. They saw how her confused announcement of Tybalt's death contributes to Juliet's confusion; how her dramatic lamentations add to the intensity of the drama; and how her condemnation of Romeo provokes Juliet into defending Romeo and reaffirming her love for her husband.

(b) Most candidates considered Mercutio to be a good friend to Romeo because he tries to cheer him up when he is pining for Rosaline and takes him to the Capulet ball to take his mind off her. Stronger answers were able to support their argument with detailed reference to the text, by quoting some of Mercutio's many jokes. Some explored the difference between their attitudes to love, with Mercutio all for being proactive in dealing with love as seen in *'If love be rough with you, be rough with love'*, while Romeo takes on the idealised role of thwarted romantic when he laments that love *'pricks like thorn'*. Candidates often saw Mercutio as being rather disgusted by Romeo's love-sickness, and that his harsh teasing and his rude jokes were his way of trying to jolt Romeo out of his melancholy, which was what they thought a good friend does. Some also quoted from Mercutio's Queen Mab speech to illustrate his fun-loving character. Candidates often suggested

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that Mercutio shows a good friend's loyalty by fighting with Tybalt in defence of Romeo's honour, because Romeo refuses to fight since Tybalt is now a relation of his, due to his secret marriage to Juliet. In dying, Mercutio makes the ultimate sacrifice for his loyalty, thus demonstrating what a good friend he is.

Some discerning candidates challenged the idea of what a 'good' friend to Romeo would really do. They considered that a better friend might first try to discover why Romeo is so reluctant to fight Tybalt now, or he might try to stop Tybalt and bring peace to Verona, rather than charging in with drawn sword at the first opportunity. Some made the case for Mercutio as a bad influence on Romeo by encouraging him to attend an enemy's ball, to pick up any attractive girl and disregard his feelings of love; and then encouraging him to disobey the Prince to fight Tybalt. Whatever approach they took, strong answers supported their views with detailed references to the text. Less confident responses tended to be undeveloped and needed to support their comments with textual reference.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/31
Drama

Key messages

- Strong responses showed detailed knowledge of the text, could refer to specific incidents and used brief, well-chosen quotations.
- The most successful answers consisted of a brief introduction with a focus on the question and a statement of the approach to answering it. They avoided unloading lengthy factual details of the historical context of the play.
- Responses to passage-based questions which had internalised the context of the passage in the play as a whole were the most convincing.
- Successful answers used apt quotations from the passages and used a range of precise textual references in discursive answers.
- Candidates who were well versed in drama as a genre and in stylistic analysis, wrote the most successfully about authorial effects.

General comments

Candidates showed knowledge and enjoyment of their set texts and an engagement with the characters, ideas and themes they contain.

In terms of making the most of their time in the examination, candidates would be advised to avoid introductions which include lengthy explanations of the historical or social context of the play and conclusions merely reiterating points already made. This is often at the expense of writing about the whole passage in the passage-based questions and limiting the range of reference in the discursive.

In answer to the passage-based questions, the main barrier to achievement was lack of clear knowledge of the context. On paper 31 where candidates have the set text, they would be advised to quickly check on the context. Not knowing it sometimes led to the candidate making erroneous statements or following a less productive line of argument. It is important that candidates use quotations to support the points they make. Paraphrasing what characters say, rather than quoting it, when the passage is printed on the paper, seems self-defeating.

There were some very strong responses with perceptive comments on characterisation, stagecraft, mood and tone. Many candidates explored the passages in depth and detail and wrote well-constructed discursive essays with a range of material drawn from across the text. Candidates understood the use of theme and symbolism and generally wrote effectively about irony, dramatic irony and the use of foreshadowing.

A significant number of candidates underperformed because they wrote answers which were too generalised and not informed by close textual reference, whether in the form of quotation or in specific references to events in the text. This was frustrating as the ideas were often sound and would have been reasonably developed if the points had been supported. Learning a fair range of quotations is the only way to overcome this. Many answers contained two or three stock quotations which were then applied to any circumstance, whether strictly relevant or not.

There were sophisticated, engaged responses this year which showed a developed overview of the text and an engagement with its issues. Some responses were rather distracted by contextual issues such as racism and feminism at the expense of a focus on the question, though strong answers showed an implicit understanding of such elements which informed their answers effectively.

Rubric infringements were infrequent. There were few very brief or imbalanced scripts, though there were a number who ran out of time and did not finish. Fewer candidates this session referred to line numbers instead of quoting from the text.

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Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY*: A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) Strong responses to this question understood the context: Walter wants to use Mamma's insurance money to buy a liquor store. Mama disapproves on religious grounds, Ruth thinks that Walter's prospective partners are unreliable and that the money is not his to spend. The strongest answers showed the tension created by Walter asking Ruth to intercede with Mama and commented on his mimicking tone as disrespectful. A misconception amongst several candidates was that Ruth merely wants things to stay the same and has no ambition. Like Mama she sees buying a house as the best way out of their problems and feels that Walter's dreams are unrealistic. The strongest answers picked up her sarcasm in *'So- I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace',* and her irritation at Walter's moaning rather than acting. They also commented on how Walter's frustrations stem from his emasculation in a racist society and that he unfairly blames his wife and *'coloured women'* in general, instead of an unjust society. Strong answers traced the escalation in tension Hansberry creates via the stage action in terms of the characters' expressions, tone of voice and their actions, such as Ruth's ironing. They commented effectively on the impact of the *'eat your eggs'* refrain. Few mentioned the fact that, as we find out later, Ruth is pregnant and therefore more tired and anxious than usual.

(b) Most candidates commented that Mama was the matriarch in the Younger household. She makes the decisions and holds the purse strings. She aims to hold the family together. In many answers stating these ideas was as far as it went. Candidates struggled to relate these points to moments in the play. More effective answers commented on her past experience, the symbolism of the plant, her slapping Beneatha when she transgresses against the religious principles of her upbringing and her treatment of Walter when he loses the insurance money. Surprisingly few referred to the bold move of buying a house in a white area, though the strongest answers commented perceptively on how she helps Walter into his 'manhood'. Detailed textual knowledge was a prerequisite of an effective response to this question.

ARTHUR MILLER: The Crucible

Question 2

(a) There were many very strong answers to this powerful passage from the play which had clearly made a considerable impact on the candidates. Successful answers maintained a sharp focus on what was revealed in the scene and how this was dramatically conveyed. Candidates showed understanding that Abigail admits the girls are not bewitched whilst hiding the fact that she drank a potion to kill Proctor's wife. The skilful revelation of John and Abigail's past affair, her obsession, his rebuttal, her desire for revenge on Goody Proctor and the consequences of this were fully explored in the strongest answers. Even more gratifyingly there were some detailed explorations of how much of this is revealed in the body language of the actors as well as in the powerful language of the dialogue. There was understanding that the revelation of John Proctor's guilt and desire to regain his integrity was of great significance to the play. Several candidates made engaged moral judgements as to Proctor's relationship with a young girl, though some candidates thought Abigail was thirteen rather than seventeen. Knowledge of the historical context was usefully applied with comment on the seriousness of adultery in the puritanical society and of how the affair enlightens Abigail as to its hypocrisy. Most answers could make sound comment on characterisation and understood the nature of this encounter. Less successful responses did not focus sufficiently on the revelation or the drama.

(b) This was a less popular question than **2a** though those who tackled it generally chose appropriately and commented effectively on the frightening aspects of the moments. Less successful answers found it difficult to pinpoint two different moments or wrote about several moments in a generalised way. The strongest answers could support their points with specific detail. For example, one candidate chose to write about Abigail threatening the other girls with a *'pointy reckoning'*, making a good case by looking in some detail at the violence in the language at that moment in the play.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

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Question 3

(a) Most candidates wrote well about the dramatic tension in the scene and how it is created. They showed awareness of the context, commented on Grace trying to protect Ronnie and the impact of Arthur's silence. Ronnie's slow movements towards his father's room were explored for their dramatic effectiveness. Surprisingly less attention was paid to the significance of the scene. Arthur's method of finding out the truth, his relationship with Ronnie and his belief in him were given far less credit than they should. The dramatic cliff-hanger of the call to Osborne which kicks off the plot of the play as a whole could have been more fully explored.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) Effective answers showed good knowledge of the context and responded to the dramatic power of Macbeth ranting at a seemingly empty stool and the appearance and disappearance of the ghost. Lady Macbeth's withering scorn was assessed, although some answers spent too much time on reversed gender roles at the expense of a focus on the drama. Even the strongest candidates missed the dramatic irony of Macbeth toasting Banquo and saying *'Would he were here!'* Similarly there was some misinterpretation of the speech beginning: '*Blood hath been shed...*' where Macbeth suggests that in the old days when you murdered someone they stayed dead. This was seen as a currently occurring event. The black humour therefore unappreciated. Most candidates understood that Macbeth was revealing secrets in front of his lords at a celebratory banquet and the gripping effect of not knowing what the consequences of this will be. Several candidates commented on the animal imagery in Macbeth's final speech and on Lady Macbeth's hapless attempts to smooth things over. Less effective answers mistook the context or did not focus sufficiently on the drama of the scene.

(b) There were many well-constructed, concise answers which considered Macbeth's innate ambition; his belief in the witches; the contrast with Banquo's response to them; his increasing bloodthirstiness; his latter feeling of invincibility and his murder of Macduff's family. Some strong responses concentrated purely on Macbeth, one effectively exploring his *'vaulting ambition'* speech and *'stars hide your fires'* to explore the ambition and dark desire in his psyche. Others balanced his responsibility with the temptation and persuasion of the witches and Lady Macbeth or blamed the inevitability of fate. Less successful answers tended to write an essay on guilt rather than responsibility, or did not give specific evidence for the points raised. There were some sweeping comments on his 'paranoia', with few answers commenting on the dynastic reasons for Macbeth wanting to kill Banquo and Fleance. *'Blood will have blood'* was frequently misquoted.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Responses to this pivotal scene in the play varied considerably. Successful answers were aware of the exact context. Romeo and Juliet are married. No-one else on the stage knows this but the audience do. Tybalt assumes Romeo is mocking him when Romeo is deadly serious. Mercutio misinterprets Romeo's words as a *'vile submission'*. Less successful answers simply did not know these basic facts and therefore could not really grasp the power of the drama. Most candidates commented on Mercutio's death, the fact that Romeo was partially to blame and that Mercutio curses the two houses. There was a perception that Mercutio meant a plague to occur – hence Friar John not being able to deliver the letter which could potentially have averted the tragedy. This is an appealing idea but a rather literal interpretation. Whereas most candidates could comment on the tragedy of Romeo losing a friend and the consequences of his subsequent revenge, few explored the dramatic, black humoured quality of Mercutio's final speech, though the repetition was appreciated. There were several plot driven answers which did not give sufficient attention to the passage itself.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22
Drama

Key messages

- The most successful responses focused on the key words in the question, remained focused and supported ideas with concise quotations which were analysed fully.
- Useful opening paragraphs were brief, referenced the question and avoided lengthy socio-historical detail and lists of the writer's techniques to be addressed. Conclusions needed to be more than a reiteration of points.
- Responses to passage-based questions which briefly contextualised the passage in the play, explored the whole passage, including the ending, were the most successful.
- Successful answers to discursive questions maintained a tight focus on the question and gave a precise, wide range of reference.
- Many responses would have been improved by avoiding a retelling of the whole plot before addressing the specific question or only attempting to link this information to the question in the conclusion.
- An awareness of the text as drama and an appreciation of the play on stage was a feature of the most successful answers.

General comments

The strongest candidates knew their set texts well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge whilst focusing closely on the terms of the questions. They deconstructed the question, focusing on the key terms, for example, 'memorably', 'vividly' or 'strikingly', to choose their material effectively. They demonstrated their ability to quote from texts to support their comments and developed the argument effectively. These often included an introductory paragraph to give an overview of the intended answer.

A less successful approach was where candidates wrote all they knew about a text, or character, without linking it to the specific question. These often relied on lengthy quotations or textual detail without demonstrating understanding of the text quoted. Often there was some reference to the text, but this was not analysed to show understanding of the author's methods and effects. The tendency to retell the plot up to the start of a specific passage, before attempting to focus on the question, resulted in much valuable examination time being wasted. The best responses were able to write a sentence or two to contextualise a passage before analysing well-selected material drawing close links to the question throughout.

Formulaic approaches were common, where the same point introduced and ended a paragraph, resulting in unnecessary repetition and taking away valuable time in an examination context.

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

The most popular texts were *Macbeth, A Raisin in the Sun and Romeo and Juliet.* Fewer candidates answered on *The Winslow Boy.* There was one new text this series, *The Crucible* but this was studied by relatively few candidates. Candidates should be made aware that it is not a productive use of examination time to preface responses to this text with lengthy introductions about the religious, social, and historical background of Salem, or the political context of McCarthyism in the United States in the 1950's, in response to questions on this text.

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There was an unusually high number of rubric infringements on 0475/22 where candidates answered two questions on the same text or answered two passage-based questions. There was some evidence that candidates did not have detailed knowledge of at least one of the set texts to answer the questions in enough depth. This was particularly obvious in the passage-based questions where some candidates did not know the context of the passage or were unable to recognise the events referred to in the passage, relying on writing all they could about the passage with scant understanding or reference to the actual question. This type of approach is unlikely to achieve high reward. In addition, there were some candidates who simply copied out the passages for two questions, with no personal comments or any attempt to address the question. Here there was nothing to reward.

Candidates endeavoured in all but a few instances to number their questions correctly. However, there are still a few candidates answering the discursive question on the passage which resulted in some low marks as these responses were self-penalising.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) This was a popular choice of text and question. It was a rich passage with a lot to say about George and Beneatha separately and together. Most candidates who attempted this question focused on the 'striking impressions' created and understood that this passage revealed the incompatibility of Beneatha and George. They were able to identify the different ideologies of the two characters and the tension this causes between them. Some candidates over-stated the impression of George labelling him a 'misogynist' whilst others were more measured, considering him 'sexist', in attitude and behaviour. The most successful were able to identify that George was '*shallow'*, a stereotypical male of this period whilst Beneatha was not the stereotypical female and not in terms of the Black community. They were able to support these comments with some well-selected references to their behaviour and dialogue: George only interested in Beneatha for her looks and not her 'thoughts' and Beneatha wanting and enjoying more intellectual conversation. The best candidates managed to explore the stage directions and what they reveal of George and Beneatha at this moment. There was some effective analysis and general satisfaction conveyed at the writer's use of pauses, with emphasis on Beneatha's '*longer pause'* followed by her abrupt '*Good night, George'*. Many understood that this was a moment where Beneatha felt understood by her mother in the final exchange between them and identified this as 'striking', contrasting it to the previous scene when Mama had slapped her.

Less successful responses worked through the passage with little focus on the question and concentrated on George, or strayed from the passage completely, to talk about the couple in other parts of the play. There was some misinterpretation of the stage directions, especially of '*groping*', with some candidates accusing George of sexual assault: he was considered evil and a pathological liar as he tells Mama that he had had a nice time. There was also some misinterpretation of his reference to '*Garbo*' with candidates failing to understand who she was, or the context, and saying that he was calling her '*garbage*.' Some responses demonstrated a surface understanding of the passage attempting a narrative overview with evidence that the text had not been studied or understood.

Very few candidates explored the staging with any awareness of the humour of George's persistence or the visual comedy of Beneatha's rejection of George.

(b) Fewer candidates answered this question, and many struggled with the idea of the apartment having any significance beyond showing the family's poverty. Too often responses focused on the biographical details of Lorraine Hansberry and the socio-historical context of the play with some candidates focusing entirely on the poverty and discrimination of the black community rather than focusing on the text and question. Few managed to get beyond the basic assertion that as the apartment was the only setting it was 'memorable' and then proceeded with describing, often in generalised terms, a few moments from the play. These did not move beyond the lack of rooms and space for a family of five people; the shared bathroom; only having one window and the lack of sunlight and the worn-out furniture. Most candidates were able to include one or two quotations mainly taken from the opening setting of Act One.

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Better responses were able to discuss the significance of the single window and the symbolism of Mama's plant, showing an understanding of how the apartment reflected the characters' emotions, lives and dreams. Stronger candidates linked the poverty of the area, reflected in the apartment, to racism and the family's desire, especially Mama's dream of moving to a larger home and better neighbourhood. There was understanding of the 'centrality' of the apartment as a setting: all the action takes place here, so the audience is directly involved in the daily struggles of individual family members. There was some understanding of the '*care and love and even hope*' in Mama's original choice of the furnishings and the fact that it was now '*tired*', signifying the worn-out lives of mama and Big Walter. Better responses were able to link the drama of the characters' lives specifically to the apartment, for example, Ruth's willingness to resort to an abortion due to the lack of space, reflected in Beneatha's brutal comment about where 'it' was going to sleep, suggesting 'on the roof?' Others noted Travis being unable to prepare his bed on the sofa, or sleep, whilst Walter was on the telephone or Beneatha had visitors. The best responses picked up on Mr Lindner's visit to the apartment with the pertinent comment that for a white man to visit a Black family's home in those time was unusual, so clearly 'memorable', and obviously for a particularly important reason as the audience were to find out.

Some weaker responses compared the apartment with hypothetical living conditions in their 'new home' without considering that they had yet to move.

ARTHUR MILLER: The Crucible

Question 2

(a) Of the few candidates who answered on this text, this was the more popular question. This was a straightforward question focused on what was 'powerful and dramatic' and the passage provided a plethora of detail for candidates to explore. However, only a few stronger responses showed a secure understanding of the passage and its context within the play. There was some understanding of what was happening in the passage, the chaos and drama, and what it revealed about Abigail's manipulation. Most understood that Mary was turning the tables on Proctor and that this was a dramatic twist in expected events. They showed awareness of the text being performed on stage and commented on the language and stage directions, especially in relation to Mary, though few explored the actual sounds, the screams and movements of the girls.

Comments on John Proctor and Hale were less successful, with widespread misinterpretation of both Proctor's and Hale's words. Some candidates did not grasp Proctor's words, '*God is dead'*, and thought this was a '*confession*', that he had publicly acknowledged that he was in league with the devil and agreeing with Mary's accusations against him. They did not understand that Hale left the proceedings due to his horror at what was happening and argued he was leaving the proceedings because he was angry with Proctor and siding with Mary. There was little focus on the hysteria in court or commentary on Proctor's concluding words, *'You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore*!'. Danforth's role was only mentioned in a few of the strongest responses.

Less successful responses paraphrased the passage with little or no focus on the question, demonstrating little understanding of the situation. Some responses were very confused thinking that Mary is John's wife, and that John is guilty of witchcraft.

(b) Very few candidates attempted this question. For this to be more than a straightforward character profile of Rebecca Nurse, it was essential to focus on the terms of the question, her 'dramatic impact' on the play. Better responses recognised her worth as a kind and good Christian woman, a pillar of the community, supporting this with her husband's comment, that she is the '*brick and mortar of the church'.* She was considered a wise woman and being the mother of seven children, an expert on children as she said that Betty would awake when she was ready. Some commented on her husband Francis, his arguments with Mr Putnam over land and Mrs Putnam's jealously of Rebecca's children whilst she had several children die in infancy when Rebecca acted as the midwife. Only the best responses linked the Putnam's jealousy to their unfounded accusation and saw the dramatic impact of her arrest and execution, and how petty jealousies could result in people being accused of witchcraft with no chance of defending themselves. The Proctor's shock at her arrest and her conversations with John Proctor, before their respective deaths, were rarely explored.

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Less successful responses narrated a little of her role in the play finding little to say about her, so these tended to be brief. These responses lacked precise textual reference to the text and there was some confusion between Rebecca Nurse and Mrs Putnam.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) This was a less popular choice of text. Responses to the passage needed to focus on Rattigan's methods to making the family's first meeting with Sir Robert memorable. Many candidates were confused about the timing of the meeting, stating that Arthur was late rather than Sir Robert being early. This impacted on some responses where they argued Catherine was embarrassed and attempting to keep Sir Robert engaged until her father arrived, supporting this further by Grace entering *'hastily'*. The best responses understood the context and Catherine's knowledge and support for Len Rogers. Her deliberate attempt to provoke a response from Sir Robert during this meeting was also explored as memorable. These candidates commented on her intended irony in reporting his handling of the case as a '*great forensic triumph'* and '*masterly'* before implying that Rogers' suicide is Sir Robert's fault. Her provocation in labelling Ronnie's case '*trivia*l' was understood. There was an awareness of audience response with exploration of the underlying tension, the language, the stilted dialogue and the pauses. The family's respect and awe of Sir Robert, his dining at '*Devonshire House'* and activities in the '*House of Commons'* were also highlighted as memorable as was his affected manner, described as '*carelessly*' and '*languidly*'. Some candidates were amused to see Arthur forced to be more polite, than his usual self, in trying to secure the examination of Ronnie and with it, the services of Sir Robert. The satisfactory ending to the meeting with the enjoyment of the phrase, '*Let Right be done'* was a memorable ending to the passage.

Less successful answers just described what happened in the passage with some confusion over Sir Robert's behaviour. Some thought he was behaving so *'indifferently'* as he was attracted to Catherine and that he becomes more amiable when Desmond enters to belatedly impress Catherine, clearly not understanding the context or purpose of this meeting. These did not convey understanding of Catherine's cold response to Sir Robert or understand what her comments about the past case signified. The weakest responses relied on paraphrasing the passage with little understanding, or focus, on how the different members of the Winslow family interacted with Sir Robert during this, their first meeting.

(b) There were fewer responses to this question. They were relatively weak with candidates adopting a narrative approach or writing a character profile of Ronnie, occasionally adding that this made the reader/audience feel sympathy for Ronnie but without exploring how the writer makes the audience sympathise with Ronnie. Most candidates found it difficult to provide supporting evidence from the text, so responses were very general. There was little detailed discussion of Sir Robert's interrogation of Ronnie or the reactions of other characters to Ronnie.

More successful responses sympathised with how a young boy, unfairly expelled from school for allegedly stealing a postal order was sent home alone. His fear of facing his father, hiding in the garden in the rain and Sir Robert's interrogation of Ronnie were also reasons to sympathise. A few candidates balanced their responses feeling little sympathy due to his perceived indifference to his case, falling asleep rather than following the news and his absence at the crucial moment of the final verdict. Most responses would have been improved by a wide range of precise textual references.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) This was the most popular text and question, and most candidates were able to identify some aspects of the context. The most successful responses briefly contextualised the passage commenting on Macbeth having just murdered King Duncan and returned to Lady Macbeth with the guards' bloody daggers. There were many strong responses to this passage with candidates maintaining a sharp focus on the question with much perceptive analysis of the language and what it reveals of their different reactions. There was critical understanding of Macbeth's guilt, fears and regrets, with the stark contrast to Lady Macbeth's '*calm and collected*' approach. These were supported by well-selected references and close analysis of the language. Stronger responses

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drew salient links between their behaviour in the passage to both before the murder, and later in the play, when their reactions change completely with Lady Macbeth's words, '*a little water clears us of this deed*' and Macbeth's repetition of having '*murder'd sleep'* coming back to haunt her. The strongest candidates were able to do this, without losing focus on the question or passage itself. Candidates commented on Lady Macbeth's decisiveness, scorn and use of imperatives, contrasting this to Macbeth's fearful state and the visual horror at the sight of blood for the audience. Some candidates lost focus and drifted into commentary on gender role-reversal and concepts of masculinity and femininity, with both characters falling short of these perceived standards. Many candidates could talk of Lady Macbeth's emasculation of her husband but struggled with the imagery itself – the eye of childhood/heart so white. The latter was frequently seen as her thinking she was still pure.

Less successful responses were generalised, writing about their reactions collectively as in, '*they were afraid'*, which misses the point of the question and shows little understanding of their respective behaviour and dialogue at this moment. A few candidates thought they had both committed the murder. Some discussed his '*unbearable guilt which keeps him awake at night'* when, in fact, he has only just committed the murder. There were other mis-readings on his invocation of Neptune as a desire for 'God's' help and asking for his forgiveness. Others commented on the absurdity of mentioning 'oceans' and 'water' as there is no water on Neptune, forgetting that Shakespeare and the Elizabethans would have had no such knowledge of the planetary system. Only the best responses addressed and understood the knocking which heralds the arrival of the outside world with weaker responses interpreting this as *'within'* his mind like the '*voices*' at the start of the passage.

Weaker candidates resorted to paraphrasing the passage, after lengthy introductions about the plot. Where there was textual detail it was repetitive and did not help to develop the argument. For example: '*Macbeth is afraid, because he says, 'I am afraid"*, without further commentary. There were some sweeping generalisations on Macbeth's '*paranoia'* and descent into '*madness'* and Lady Macbeth's behaviour as evidence of her being the '*fourth witch',* without any textual support or development.

(b) This was a less popular question and difficult for many candidates as they had limited textual support and precise moments in the play to support Shakespeare's characterisation. The most successful responses were aware of the terms of the question, Banquo's 'dramatic impact' and understood that he was a foil to Macbeth. They were able to explore their responses to the witches' prophecies, loyalty to King Duncan and the dramatic murder of Banquo and appearance of his ghost. Only the strongest answers were supported by well-selected references to the text and relevant quotations, fully analysed. They explored his dramatic impact on Macbeth, the murder of his 'best friend' attempting to secure the crown and returning as a ghost to signify Macbeth's guilt and the suspicions Macbeth's babbling raises in the minds of the thanes regarding both the murder of King Duncan and Banquo himself. The brutality of his murder and telling Fleance to flee were frequently commented on.

Less successful answers wrote character sketches of Banquo and lost sight of the question, except to mention it at the end. When used, references to the text supported a narrative approach and lacked the detail concerning the effect and implications of Banquo's language quoted. The weakest responses retold the plot tracing Banquo's part in the play or contrasted him to Macbeth, often writing more on Macbeth than Banquo. It was clear that some candidates referred to film versions of the play particularly when referencing Banquo's murder and Fleance's escape.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) This was a more popular question than 5**(b)**, perhaps because a passage offers the opportunity to support comments with textual detail and for some analysis of the language. However, many candidates found it difficult to comment on how Shakespeare portrays their friendship and struggled to explore the language of the passage. Most saw how Mercutio and Benvolio were trying to cheer up a lovesick and depressed Romeo. Unable to explore the extract in any meaningful way, many responses provided a simple, repetitive overview of their friendship: '*They were good friends and trusted each other'.* Only the strongest candidates were able to contextualise the passage accurately knowing that Romeo had read the Capulet servant letter about the feast and that Benvolio's plan was for Romeo to see other '*admired beauties*. Most candidates saw it as a sudden

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idea to 'gate crash' the party. There was a lot of misreading of individual phrases within the passage with weaker candidates copying out lengthy quotations then trying to explain them but showing only a surface understanding of the text. Assertions were then made that this showed that they '*trusted'* or '*advised each other'*, showing they were good friends, but without any precise analysis of the language or the writer's methods to show this.

A few stronger responses showed understanding of their closeness and camaraderie; Mercutio's teasing and the banter, and how Shakespeare was laying the foundations of a solid friendship to prepare the audience for later events: the death of Mercutio and Romeo's act of revenge against Tybalt. One candidate argued that in persuading Romeo to attend this ball where he meets Juliet, ironically, they ultimately proved not to be good friends at all.

The weakest responses resorted to narrating the plot and what follows this scene, with scant focus on the question or the passage. There were reports of some candidates simply copying out the passage verbatim with no attempt to answer the question.

(b) Fewer candidates attempted this question. Effective responses focused on the Nurse's relationship with Juliet, addressed the 'How far' of the question, and presented a balanced argument. She was not to blame because everything she did was to make Juliet happy, but she was to blame as she encouraged the romance with Romeo, knowing the feuding families would never agree to their union. They traced her role as messenger, not telling the Capulets and giving bad advice. Many candidates argued that her most culpable contribution was her advice to marry Paris, perceived as the betrayal which resulted in Juliet's death as she is driven to desperate measures. Only the strongest responses were able to support ideas with close reference to the text and detail to the nurse's language. These responses referenced other factors contributing to Juliet's death before coming to a decision. The best answers explored the words of the Chorus at the start of the play, arguing that the death of the '*star-crossed lovers'* was destined so whatever the nurse did made no difference to the outcome.

Less successful responses became speculative, losing sight of the question and the Nurse's role, suggesting what she could have done differently, and ideas were not rooted in the text. They narrated the plot, working through who, or what, was to blame. The weakest responses were confused about the chronology of events and thought the Nurse was involved in the plan with Friar Lawrence. These were very general, narrative in approach and could only indicate others who were culpable.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/33
Drama

Key messages

Successful answers have focused introductions which address the question briefly in three or four key points which are then developed in the course of the response.

All good answers use evidence from the text to support the key points, either direct quotation or precise reference.

All questions require a response to the text as drama on stage.

In passage-based questions, successful answers briefly state the context of the passage in order to show a deeper understanding of its content.

When responding to a discursive question, candidates need to select the best supporting material from the whole text.

General comments

This session all texts and questions saw some highly successful answers, which showed candidates' detailed understanding and appreciation of their chosen text. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was new to the paper this session. Candidates who placed the passage from this text in its context showed a sound grasp of its disturbing central issue: how innocent villagers are accused of witchcraft on the flimsiest of evidence. Candidates were also disturbed by how Macbeth first considers the murder of King Duncan in the passage on *Macbeth*, with his speech showing this in its structure as it mirrors the rhyming of the witches. There were strong personal responses to all of the texts, and these were credited highly where they were well-supported with evidence from the text. Thus, sympathy was felt for how Walter's dream was lost in *A Raisin in the Sun*, for Catherine's limited life-choices at the end of *The Winslow Boy*, and for Juliet as she discovers her cousin has been killed by her husband in *Romeo and Juliet*. Much less sympathy was expressed for the dislikeable Reverend Parris in *The Crucible*, and for the wicked tyrant Macbeth. Every question expected candidates to consider the effects of staging the text. Answers gained credit where candidates showed understanding of how playwrights created dramatic effects from features such as: action on stage, dialogue between characters, or between a character and the audience, entrances and exits, and likely audience reaction.

To write a successful answer, candidates need to begin by thinking through the requirements of the question, and then they need to select the most important points to include, and then to decide on the most suitable material to use in support of these points. Thus successful answers this session began by briefly giving three or four main points which are then developed in detail and supported from the text. Some responses began unhelpfully with general introductions which summarised the plot, listed irrelevant cultural or historical detail, or biographical detail of the writer. Other answers lost focus on the question or did not provide evidence from the text in support of the candidate's comments.

In preparation for a good response to a passage-based question, candidates needed to read the whole passage, consider the requirements of the question, and then select the best points from the whole passage with which to address the question. Some responses this session focused on the first few lines of the passage, and so missed significant material from later on. It was helpful when candidates briefly stated their main points in their introduction, then went on to develop each one, with reference to the ways in which the writers achieve their effects, with a focus on dramatic features such as action, dialogue, or significant exits or entrances. For example, in the passage question on *The Winslow Boy*, the exit of Arthur is significant because the tone of the passage changes as his wife, Grace, drops her pretence of light-heartedness in front of Arthur and then shows her deep concern for Arthur's health to their son. Some answers treated the

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passage in isolation and so they tended not to show understanding of any deeper implications. For example, some answers to the passage on *The Crucible* focused entirely on Proctor's shocking treatment of Mary Warren at the start of the passage, where he grabs her cloak and threatens to whip her. Some of these gained credit for exploring how Miller's stage directions suggest Proctor's physical strength. Many candidates pointed out that physical violence is disturbing, which showed a basic understanding. Stronger answers developed their points to consider Mary's lack of response, due to mental exhaustion because of her participation in the court's accusations of witchcraft. The key point of her part in condemning fellow villagers to death on little evidence is shown in the rest of the passage.

Candidates who made good answers to discursive questions knew the text well and were able to select the most relevant material from the whole text with which to support their answer. They began by giving three or four key points, then developed these, using apt supporting text. This session, some answers were limited because they drew on material solely from the beginning of the play. Thus, in making an argument to the question on whether Macbeth is completely wicked, some candidates drew material from the beginning up to the murder of Duncan. They often argued that Macbeth was a loyal warrior who was tricked by witches and manipulated by his wife into killing Duncan, so he was more misunderstood than wicked. Stronger responses were able to develop this partial judgement by including some of Macbeth's actions later in the play, such as the murder of Macduff's family, to arrive at a more considered answer. Similarly, some answers on how dislikeable Parris is in *The Crucible* limited their references to the first act, where their judgement rested purely on how fond Parris is of his reputation, whereas stronger answers reached later in the play to include Parris's more significant and vindictive role in condemning to death innocent parishioners for witchcraft, such as John Proctor.

The key to a good answer is a sound grasp of the play's events and an apt selection of supporting material. Some candidates did not know the play well enough to select salient supporting material, and some gave incorrect plot details, or mixed up characters. This was evident in weaker answers on all texts, but a lack of textual support was a recurring problem in answers to how good a friend Mercutio is to Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*. Some answers gave an account of Mercutio's actions, but without detailed textual support, it is difficult to achieve high credit. Some answers quoted from their text, but explained it or paraphrased it without making clear how it supported the point being made or referred to the question.

This session there was a very small number of rubric infringements on component 23, in which candidates answered two passage-based or two discursive questions. In these cases, only the higher mark was credited.

Comments on specific questions

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Question 1

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in the context of Lindner's racism as he has just offered to buy back Mama's new house to prevent the Youngers moving into the area. These candidates were able to place Walter's hatred against this background, and explore the stage directions to consider how Hansberry conveys his feelings. Candidates alert to staging effects commented on the dramatic moment of quiet as characters on stage say nothing while the audience and the Youngers process the insult. Stronger answers identified the sarcasm of Beneatha, Walter and Ruth evident in 'Welcoming Committee', and went on to consider how Hansberry uses humour to ridicule Lindner's prejudice in Beneatha's 'eat 'em' and Ruth's 'marry 'em'. Attentive candidates considered the dramatic contrast of their humour with Mama's worries, as she prays for strength against possible violence. Some candidates expressed their anger at such racism in a strong personal response, and explored how Hansberry encourages this response with the Younger's mockery of Lindner.

Most candidates commented on Walter's anger, but some candidates needed to consider the reason for it, and some took the 'Welcoming Committee' at face value and misunderstood Beneatha's sarcastic tone, and the mocking humour at the end of the passage. Some needed to consider effects of stagecraft, such as the dramatic silence, or the mockery of the handshake.

(b) Candidates needed to develop their own personal response to Hansberry's writing and to what they found memorable about Walter's dream of a better life. Some candidates usefully focused on how Walter's dream provides a contrast with his current life, others on Walter's development as a

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character faced with the unreality of his dream, and others still on how Walter's dreams conflict with those of other family members. Some stronger answers took a wider view of Walter as a symbol of every black person whose dreams have been thwarted by an unjust society. Whatever their approach, the best answers responded well to 'memorable' and selected detailed material from the text to support their answer.

Some candidates needed to move beyond a narration of the sorry tale of Walter's liquor store, or an explanation of the dream of each Younger member in turn. They also needed to use detailed references to the text to support their comments.

ARTHUR MILLER: *The Crucible*

Question 2

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in its context within the play, and pointed out that Mary Warren has just returned from court where she has been made an official. She has contributed to the disturbing increase in the number of people accused of witchcraft. Given this context, candidates were able to consider how Mary's stress at seeing accused people sentenced to death has led to her feelings of sickness, exhaustion and an unexpected lack of response to Proctor's threats of violence. Strong answers explored the disturbingly weak evidence for accusations of witchcraft; that Sarah Good 'mumbled' once and that she tried to kill Mary in court, when Mary experienced hysteria so smothering that she had difficulty breathing. Sarah's false confession of making a compact with the Devil was considered understandable in the context of avoiding being hanged. Stronger candidates explored the deeper implications of Mary's gift of the poppet and her pious homily to Elizabeth, and often showed how Miller was using Elizabeth and Proctor's dialogue to bring a sense of reason in the face of Mary's absurd revelations.

Some candidates limited their response by not considering context; thus they often selected disturbing elements such as Proctor's violent grabbing of Mary's cloak, or Mary's dramatic sobbing, but they did not understand their significance. The weakest answers related Mary's treatment to modern-day concerns with domestic abuse, sometimes calling Mary a 'slave', or accepted Mary's claims that Sarah Good was a proven witch. A few seemed to be answering a question on tension in the passage, rather than the question asked.

(b) Most candidates had a good understanding of the dislikeable central character, Parris. They explored his greed, hypocrisy and cowardice and were able to cite detailed textual support, such as the gold candlesticks, his hellfire preaching, and his fear of rioting at the end. Stronger responses developed their answers to consider how Parris's keen desire to preserve his reputation revealed him as an ungodly person, too ready to protect himself at all costs. They often explored Parris's role in the accusations of witchcraft and the sentencing of those found guilty to death, and how he abuses his respected social position to destroy those who have criticised him, such as John Proctor. Parris's cowardice was seen at the end, when he tries to halt the executions after his personal safety is threatened by a knife stuck in his own front door, which makes him fearful of civil unrest.

The best answers knew the text well and selected apt material from the whole play to support their answer. A strong personal response was often made to the unfairness of Parris abusing his position. Some answers made assertions about Parris's dislikeable character, but needed to support their comments with evidence from the text. Others focused mainly on Parris's actions at the start with his daughter, Betty, lying in bed; they considered his concern for his reputation, but little of his more consequential traits shown later in the play.

TERENCE RATTIGAN: *The Winslow Boy*

Question 3

(a) Good answers started by briefly placing the passage in its context in the closing stages of the trial, with Grace feeling the pressure of dealing with the press as she attends court every afternoon, and then coping with Arthur at home, bad-tempered as he is due to stress from the trial and his ill-health. Stronger answers commented on Grace's determined light-heartedness in the first part of the passage, in front of Arthur, as she pretends to be concerned only with more trivial things, such as her clothes or lunch, and pointed out that this is her way of coping with the stress of the trial and of not worrying Arthur too much. She encourages him to criticise her trivial comments, rather than

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have him focus on the more serious aspects of the trial, finance and his illness. Some candidates commented on the exchange about sacking the maid, Violet, which serves to emphasise the impact on Grace of the cost of the trial as she faces losing her help. Stronger answers identified Arthur's exit as the point where the tone of the passage changes. Grace then reveals her worries to Dickie; she is concerned about Arthur's health, which is ruined by the stress of the trial. Dickie appreciates the full impact of the trial on Grace as he sympathises with her. Strong answers commented on the resignation shown by Grace at the end, as she says her wish to drop the trial was ignored, and she can only try to 'pick up the pieces'.

Some answers thought Grace was only concerned with her looks or clothes, not understanding the deeper implications. Violet's character as the maid was not always recognised. Other answers needed to acknowledge Grace's love and concern for Arthur, which is shown in her exchange with Dickie, and her stoicism at the end of the passage.

(b) There were some superb answers to this question on Catherine's sacrifices. These started by considering how she sacrifices her marriage to John and the financial security it would provide to her, as a woman of thirty. They then considered how Catherine has to recant on her firmly-held views about Sir Robert Morton, and explored how she suffers the indignity of having to consider marriage to an older man she does not love in order to secure a place in the world. There was a sensitive understanding of how Catherine finds this particularly hard to accept as a modern, thinking and independent young woman. Some good answers responded to 'strikingly' by considering the drama of the broken engagement on stage, following Catherine's heartfelt declaration of the strength of her love for John to her mother; and the later drama of Desmond's doomed proposal. Strong answers supported their views throughout with detailed textual support.

Some answers focused entirely on Catherine's broken engagement to John Watherstone, and so lacked breadth. Others showed a general understanding of what happens to Catherine, but they needed more detailed textual support. Some good answers needed to make a stronger response to 'strikingly' to gain more credit still.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*

Question 4

(a) There were some excellent responses to this passage, which began by briefly placing the passage in its context; previously, the witches have made their first three prophecies, and Duncan has praised Macbeth's loyalty and heroic fighting. Many good answers focused firmly on the key term 'disturbing', and explored how Macbeth takes the news that he is to be the new Thane of Cawdor as proof that he will also be king, awakening his ambition. Many considered that the execution of the previous Thane of Cawdor for treachery ironically foreshadows Macbeth's future treachery as Thane of Cawdor. Strong answers explored how Macbeth first entertains the idea of murder, but wavers between the idea of doing good or evil, while, in contrast, Banquo explicitly warns against the witches' tricks. Some answers developed their comments on Banquo to consider how Macbeth sounds out Banquo on his sons, suggesting they 'speak their free hearts each to other'. This was interpreted either as Macbeth looking to involve Banquo as an ally against Duncan, or as Macbeth already plotting against Banquo after the witches' prophecy.

Better answers made a detailed analysis of the writing, selecting features such as Macbeth's use of asides to convey his wavering directly to the audience, increasing the drama of which he will choose, and they explored some of the imagery in detail, such as that of his 'seated heart' knocking at his ribs at the horror of killing Duncan, which is what he will probably have to do if he is to ascend to the throne; but this idea is yet 'fantastical'. Fewer considered how Macbeth almost rejects this idea as he thinks that if it is prophesied then he may become king 'Without…stir'. Some related the striking paradoxes in Macbeth's speech, such as 'nothing is but what is not', to the riddles of the witches in 'Fair is foul', and some considered that Macbeth's use of rhymes showed him falling, 'rapt', under the witches' spell. The image of 'borrowed robes' was often thoroughly explored.

While no answer is expected to be exhaustive, strong answers selected several salient disturbing features from throughout the passage, while other responses tended to focus on just one aspect, such as the Thane of Cawdor, often giving lengthy and irrelevant narrative information. Some lost the focus of the question and passage in irrelevant comments on general themes such as 'appearance versus reality', or gave an account of the social and historical context of how witches

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might be viewed by a Jacobean audience. Some spent too long recounting all of the witches' prophecies, or the whole plot.

(b) All candidates found something to say about Macbeth's wickedness. Stronger answers created their own argument and selected apposite material from throughout the play to support their reasoning. A common approach was to show how Macbeth was at first a noble and valiant warrior, who was tempted by witches making predictions and unwillingly manipulated by his wife into murdering the king. Some candidates limited their response to this early section of the play, and so they tended to consider that Duncan's killing was not Macbeth's fault and that he is not very wicked at all. Given the murders Macbeth went on to commit, this is perhaps a limited view. Strong responses explored the text in detail to argue how far Macbeth's wickedness is revealed at different points, as well as apportioning reasoned degrees of blame to the contributions of the witches and his wife. Some sophisticated answers used Macduff's description of Scotland under Macbeth's rule to illustrate his tyranny and wickedness.

Some less well-reasoned answers absolved Macbeth of any wickedness because he expresses regret after killing Duncan, or because the battle between warriors at his death shows courage which redeems him. Some answers with a strong personal response to Macbeth's wickedness limited their answer because they did not use detailed textual support. The least successful answers confused the narrative; but most candidates were able to give an opinion on Macbeth's wickedness in murdering King Duncan, at least.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*

Question 5

(a) Good answers placed the passage in its context, that Romeo has just slain Tybalt in revenge for Mercutio's death, and as a result the Prince has banished Romeo from Verona. Most candidates understood that Juliet's distress arises from her confused emotions of divided loyalties between her cousin and her husband. Stronger answers explored the use of language to consider in detail how Juliet's distress is conveyed. They commented on her repeated questioning of the Nurse at the start and how it shows that she finds it hard to accept that her husband has killed her cousin. Shakespeare's vivid and extensive use of oxymorons in Juliet's speech here was often identified, and some candidates thought they exemplified the cause of her distress. Some stronger answers analysed their effects in detail. For example, the juxtaposition of the two contradictory words in 'Beautiful tyrant' exemplifies her dilemma, in that she wonders how someone as beautiful as her husband could act in such a tyrannical manner as to kill her cousin. Strong answers continued their analysis to say that the addition of 'fiend angelical' reversed the pattern of the previous two words, and compounded the confusion in her emotions – as indeed the continuation of this section of the text does, with its repeated use of oxymorons, each one vivid in its extremes. Less assured answers identified the excessive use of question marks and exclamation marks in Juliet's speech here, with claims that they heightened the drama; but such assertions are difficult to credit without any exploration of the content they are used to mark. Other answers quoted sections of the text and explained them without comment, which also did not gain much credit. Juliet's speech at the end of the passage proved fairly demanding for some candidates, who showed limited understanding of her changing reactions to her tears, and also of Juliet's distress at recollecting Romeo's banishment.

Some stronger answers sensitively analysed the contributions of the Nurse. They saw how her confused announcement of Tybalt's death contributes to Juliet's confusion; how her dramatic lamentations add to the intensity of the drama; and how her condemnation of Romeo provokes Juliet into defending Romeo and reaffirming her love for her husband.

(b) Most candidates considered Mercutio to be a good friend to Romeo because he tries to cheer him up when he is pining for Rosaline, and takes him to the Capulet ball to take his mind off her. Stronger answers were able to support their argument with detailed reference to the text, by quoting some of Mercutio's many jokes. Some explored the difference between their attitudes to love, with Mercutio all for being proactive in dealing with love as seen in 'If love be rough with you, be rough with love', while Romeo takes on the idealised role of thwarted romantic when he laments that love 'pricks like thorn'. Candidates often saw Mercutio as being rather disgusted by Romeo's love-sickness, and that his harsh teasing and his rude jokes were his way of trying to jolt Romeo out of his melancholy, which was what they thought a good friend does. Some also quoted from Mercutio's Queen Mab speech to illustrate his fun-loving character. Candidates often suggested

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that Mercutio shows a good friend's loyalty by fighting with Tybalt in defence of Romeo's honour, because Romeo refuses to fight since Tybalt is now a relation of his, due to his secret marriage to Juliet. In dying, Mercutio makes the ultimate sacrifice for his loyalty, thus demonstrating what a good friend he is.

Some discerning candidates challenged the idea of what a 'good' friend to Romeo would really do. They considered that a better friend might first try to discover why Romeo is so reluctant to fight Tybalt now, or he might try to stop Tybalt and bring peace to Verona, rather than charging in with drawn sword at the first opportunity. Some made the case for Mercutio as a bad influence on Romeo by encouraging him to attend an enemy's ball, to pick up any attractive girl and disregard his feelings of love; and then encouraging him to disobey the Prince to fight Tybalt. Whatever approach they took, strong answers supported their views with detailed references to the text. Less confident responses tended to be undeveloped and needed to support their comments with textual reference.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/41
Unseen

Key messages

- This skills-based paper examines all the Assessment Objectives for Literature and is a valuable test of how securely a wide range of candidates have mastered critical analysis.
- Good responses had a strong structural understanding of the texts and explored language and imagery in detail.
- More candidates are choosing to write about prose passages and need a toolkit for unseen prose analysis.
- Good responses contain strong arguments and conclude with an evaluation of the impact of the text on the reader.

General comments

This was an unusual assessment series at the end of a year which has caused difficulties and disruption for teachers and learners. In some regions, the entry was unavoidably lower than usual, and whilst there was some weaker work, there were many strong answers too. This paper is designed to test all the skills of literary criticism: knowledge and understanding supported by apt textual reference, analysis of literary features and their effect, and personal response requiring interpretation and evaluation of the whole text. However, as it does not rely on preparation of specific set texts, it is a very good teaching tool as well as assessment option in times when consistency of learning may be problematic. Candidates have to apply their learning to the imagery, language and viewpoint presented to them in the unseen texts and need the confidence to venture their own opinions about content, techniques and meaning. Unseen analysis is therefore an excellent test of how far literary skills have been embedded. Strong responses showed quick identification of authorial techniques and extended commentary on their effect, with overall comment on the writer's purpose and methods.

Stronger responses were often notable for the effectiveness of their opening paragraph. While the bullet points provided can be used to help candidates structure their responses, many answers simply repeated or rephrased the stem question and bullet points. Understanding of the stem question often led to a strong response and the intensifying adverb ('powerfully') pointed the candidate to an emotive response to the feelings and mood of the writing, and the methods used by the writer to create tone and atmosphere. A good answer therefore looked at the 'bigger picture' and had an overall understanding of the emotions the writer wished to convey. This is more effective than launching straight into the detail of words, images or narrative before achieving an overview. Stronger responses therefore were planned, with well-structured and supported arguments to illustrate how the text works.

More candidates chose to write about the prose passage in preference to the poem. Candidates should be encouraged to make choices, but they need to be as well equipped with analytical terms and language for exploring prose as they are for poetry. There was a tendency to misuse poetic terms such as *caesura* in the analysis of prose. Candidates could also consider narrative viewpoint and voice, and focalisation, in order to interpret how prose writers present emotions through characterisation. Good answers on prose passages also appreciated the rhythm and development of the passage, often looking at syntactical variations or stylistic changes, with a view to where the writing is intended to take the reader by the end of the passage.

Most candidates used the bullet points skilfully to demonstrate understanding, and these bullet points are designed to help them to appreciate the development of the texts, and to address the Assessment Objectives. Almost all candidates appreciated the style of response required and made good use of supporting quotation, although weaker candidates tended to paraphrase instead of analysing the language within those quotations. There were very few rubric errors, and that suggests that candidates are well-prepared for the demands of the paper. The third bullet discriminated between stronger and weaker

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candidates, as it asked for a degree of evaluation, and understanding of the deeper implications of the way the poem or passage ends. Sometimes candidates simply ran out of time because they had worked so exhaustively on earlier parts of the text, but the final section of a poem or prose passage tends to be a key indicator of its overall mood and effect.

Candidates could usefully practise writing stronger conclusions as well as stronger introductions. While the introduction has an overview of the text, the conclusion needs to evaluate its final impact on the reader. Good answers present strong and convincing arguments, with appreciation of why the writer wrote the text, how it achieves its effects and how the reader feels at the end. If candidates can learn to begin their writing with a clear end in view, they will improve the effectiveness of their response to whatever unseen text they have been set.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Some candidates who chose to answer **Question 1**, based on Edwin Muir's poem, *On Seeing Two Lovers in the Street* wrote impressively, but there were also many brief, under-developed responses. Rather than engaging with the poet's methods in presenting *his* feelings about love, some candidates chose to offer up personal interpretations of 'love' as they had observed it or experienced it. Occasionally, these observations were tangentially linked to specific moments in the poem, but quite often the substance of the poem was virtually ignored as candidates shared their own philosophies about love and loss.

Some candidates insisted on focusing on the 'narrative' of the poem, as they perceived it, and they wrote at too great a distance both from the poem and from the bullet point 'prompts' in the question, which were intended to guide their approach to the subject matter. Comments about Muir's use of language tended to be at surface level, or dependent on device-spotting, instead of analysis of how the writer achieved his effects. Anaphora and enjambement were most frequently 'spotted'. The occasional rhyme and the metaphor of the *'dazzling soul'* were only commented on in a few, stronger responses.

The stronger responses were from candidates who did not start writing before first attempting to unravel the poet's treatment of time through the lovers' history, their *'dazzling'* present and their potentially divergent futures. Some insightful candidates also commented on the simplicity of the language used to achieve this complex fusion of tenses and how this illustrated shifting *'altered'* states of mind, induced by love. These candidates frequently drew attention to the poet's almost exclusive use of monosyllabic words, short lines and enjambement and how these features were used to capture the poet's fleeting and shifting thoughts as he encounters the pair.

Less successful responses appeared not to understand the distant relationship of the poet to the *'Two Lovers'*, and some did not appear to understand that an encounter with *'two lovers'* inspired his musings. Some candidates successfully explored the poet's use of the numbers '*one*' and *'two'* and his consideration of the ways in which individual identities are lost, merged and potentially regained in the course of the growth and decline of a love affair. Several wrote about the mind-numbing effects of love, its drug-like qualities being both addictive and stupor-inducing, and they cited lines such as '*You are not here', 'There they are lost', 'Nothing can find them'* to support their ideas.

A small number of candidates explored the implications of the use of the poet's direct address, first to the lovers and then to the reader whom he invites to share his own views on the lovers' apparently somnambulant existence. A handful of answers considered the poem's rhythm and rhyme scheme. Many candidates struggled with the poem's double perspective, and with challenging concepts presented in the poem such as *'their tracks are covered'* and the final phrase *'New selves to bind them'*. Often candidates simply chose not to address these challenges and they omitted them from their answers. However, the poet's complex images and ideas gave the strongest candidates plenty to engage with, profitably and in individual ways.

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Question 2

The overwhelming majority of this small cohort of candidates selected the prose passage, based on *'So Many Chances' from The Shell Collector by* Anthony Doerr,

finding it both engaging and accessible. Many candidates who chose this passage wrote full answers and revealed varying degrees of sensitivity to the writing. Most clearly enjoyed the passage and were drawn to the plight of Dorotea and to her dreams of self-transformation.

There were many lively responses in which candidates revealed secure understanding of Dorotea's initial situation, picking up on the repetition of *'nobody'* at the end of the first paragraph, with more assured responses also noting that the word first appeared as Dorotea's appraisal of herself, but then switched to being the opinion of another. Most candidates grasped the somewhat enigmatic character of the father, out of touch with both his daughter and his wife, but keen to take a *'chance'*. Some considered him to be selfish in risking the family's future on an opportunity that appeared to offer uncertain rewards in an industry that the father knew nothing of. Others applauded him for his adventurous spirit, and the best investigated Dorotea's reactions to his news and to his suggestion that he is making the move for 'us'.

Some excellent responses showed candidates exploring the narrative perspective and shifts within it between third person narrator, reported speech and the internal voice of Dorotea, which comes through from time to time in the passage. Almost universally, candidates felt empathy for Dorotea's vision of a new version of herself: *'Maine Dorotea, barefoot with a coconut necklace'*.

The second half of the passage was more challenging for some of the candidates who were uncertain about the father's feelings as he drove '*empty-eyed, knuckles white'*; some interpreted this as symptomatic of a keen desire to reach the destination, others read into this his fear of failure; either was acceptable, provided the text was used to support the interpretation. Most candidates were able to understand how the writer presented the mother's complete lack of enthusiasm for the move and better responses pointed out that much of the language relating to the mother was associated with pain. The more assured candidates always had something purposeful to say about the imagery associated with the mother's face: *'lips curled above her chin like two rain-drowned earthworms'*. Many also understood the reference to the mother's past, having *'hid under onions for four days'* while others interpreted this as a kind of mental deficiency rather than a desperate bid to enter the US.

Many candidates wrote enthusiastically about Dorotea's excitement as she glimpses the ocean for the first time, and they noted the writer's use of figurative language associated with light and the effect of the sun on the water. Although not all candidates reached the concluding paragraph, those who did often wrote perceptively of the way in which her mother's lack of response to the vista before her had a dampening effect on Dorotea's joyful experience of the *'shimmering expanse of sea'.*

This passage proved engaging and discriminating, allowing the skills of a wide range of candidates and their ability to interpret unseen literature to be assessed.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/42
Unseen

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates tended to respond to the language of school reports in U. A. Fanthorpe's poem *'Reports'* from the perspective of a candidate rather than a teacher. More careful reading of the introductory rubric would have helped them with the dramatic voice which the poet assumes here and might have assisted in recognition of the poet's ironies. Candidates clearly had strong views of their own about the clichés and shorthand used in school reports and sometimes their personal responses got in the way of clear and deep understanding of the poem. This was especially true of candidates who did not read for meaning over the end of the short individual verse lines, and therefore misread the syntax of its phrases and sentences. Candidates wrote more effectively when they realised that the poet, in the role of an experienced and somewhat cynical teacher, is addressing another teacher. The cynicism and world-weariness, alongside some mordant humour, tended either to elude the weaker candidates or make them frustrated. They found the world view communicated a little alien, although the poem is not more than fifty years old. Many felt the teacher's attitude was quite shocking: 'so different from what we might expect of a teacher'. They wanted to find more idealism and wanted to read the first four stanzas as guidance to a candidate about how to improve, rather than admonitions to a fellow teacher about how to couch terminal judgements cautiously.

The convention of representing another voice in poetry through *italics* is often misunderstood, and worth teaching. It indicates the degree of distance and irony in the poet's repetition of clichés such as '*has made a sound beginning*' and '*finds the subject difficult'*. A structural appreciation of how the poem is constructed out of a commentary on each of those stock phrases and then an extension of these phrases as a metaphor for attitude to life was evident only in the strongest answers, although many other responses had good incidental observations. One candidate wrote that the 'scattered' approach to where reporting comments were placed in the poem 'allude to the teacher's brain when writing reports'. Most appreciated that the poem comments on the repeated use of '*multi-purpose'* terms to the point where they become meaningless. This often led to personal comments on how reports might be more motivational than a mere '*satisfactory*' to satisfy the good. Some thought *'encouraging but dull'* a comment on the learners rather than the teacher's comment, but most appreciated the caution *of 'do not give them anything/To take hold of'* especially when coupled with the invocation of the *'unholy trinity'* of parent, child and head later in the poem.

Those who could understand the teacher's viewpoint felt that teachers had to 'bite their tongue' and 'sugar coat' their reports, and there was general understanding of the fear of giving offence. Some candidates gave the notion that even *'Pronouns are dangerous'* a contemporary twist with reference to modern debates about gender identity. Some referred to a 'copy and paste' attitude among teachers, with different degrees of sympathy for the difficulties of those on the other side of the teacher-candidate divide. There was some effective commentary on language and techniques, such as the pun on 'sound' in *'strikes the right note*', or the military imagery of *'feel free to deploy them'* and '*be on your guard'*, depicting the classroom as the frontline in a battle. There was a feeling that parents must not be given any ammunition or allowed to hold the teacher hostage.

The fourth stanza did cause quite a few confusions, not least because modern teachers would not even think of writing *'unmanageable oaf'* in a report! The idea that using a neutral cliché here defuses confrontation and allows the teacher to be *'master'* was only grasped by the stronger candidates. Most enjoyed the religious allusions to an *unholy trinity* reading *'your scripture backwards'*. However, only a few had a full understanding of how the last two stanzas show the poet applying the stock phrases of school to life, seeing school as a metaphor for a disappointing journey through life *('school is the world'*). Many candidates thought these stanzas described the life of a disappointed candidate or teacher and was a warning of the potentially fatal consequences of a misplaced word or grammar in a school report.

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However, the idea that language could easily be misinterpreted was well understood by most candidates, and they provided exploration of appropriate examples. Some made interesting comments about the 'duplicitous' nature of words, or the choice of the bland over more direct or purposeful language. There was pointed understanding of the use of euphemism, and the irony that, while the language of reports was clear and straightforward, it was also vague and meaningless.

The wider application of this to judgements on life itself was only really tackled by the strongest candidates. One such wrote that the poem shows how 'school is intrinsically linked to life and regret'. That certainly demonstrates appreciation of the poem's tone and mood, as well as content. The ironic tone of the text caused some problems, and candidates at this level do need to read examples of poems in an ironic voice, such as Hardy's or Larkin's, which do not necessarily mean what they appear to say. However, there were a lot of interesting personal responses to the idea that death is the '*final instructor'*, such as the candidate who wrote 'without progress and criticism, one dies a death without meaning ... if one continues to be inexpressive and politically correct, these restrictions will follow us to the grave.' The strongest answers demonstrated not only incisive analysis, but individual evaluation of what the text meant to the candidate, with a sensitive response to verbal detail and tone.

Question 2

The extract from Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* proved more accessible to contemporary candidates, although only the strongest got to grips with its challenging narrative perspective and style. Despite the hints in the introductory rubric, only a small number appreciated that the passage describes George's memory of a moment in her recent past, even though the writer uses the present tense throughout, and therefore everything is filtered through George's perspective. However, many found the writer's imitation of the voice and viewpoint of an adolescent girl engaging and convincing. Most intuitively grasped that George is presenting her impressions of her mother's enthusiastic response to the city and explored the difference between her articulacy and the relative silence of George and Henry. Indeed, some were rather worried that the latter has so little to say, although a few picked up an older sibling's disregard for the younger.

The bullet points were successfully used by candidates to structure and guide their responses. Stronger candidates commented on the implicit dynamic between George and her mother and ways in which the mother might be disguising her true feelings for fear of triggering teenage *ennui*. Many picked up that George does not really think the city is *'no big deal'* – after all, she remembers the pictures she saw in the palace when commenting on the leggings worn by the young people in the historical pageant that evening. Those who were able to range more widely through the passage and did not simply treat it paragraph by paragraph could see the extent of the mother's enthusiasm for the city and its history, and that some of it is remembered in garbled form by George (such as the reference to *'Giorgio someone...a novelist who lived here in the past'*). Some candidates were amused by the way George captures her mother's way of buttonholing the children and contrasted her talk with the moment she stops speaking 'to let the wonder of the city speak for itself'.

George's descriptive observations fall into two clear sections, which most candidates followed: the city by day and the ceremonies by night. Most commented on the simile which compares all three of them to *'the reprobate kids at school'*, some thinking they were scruffy, or outsiders, and some describing them as 'out of it' with wonder and amazement. There was little comment on the writer's use of the present tense or deliberate eccentricities of punctuation and syntax to mirror the flow of George's thoughts, but most did comment on the immediacy of George's sense impressions, and adjectives such as '*miraculous'* and '*effortless'.* A number already felt there was a kind of magic about the city, in its easy elegance, lack of effort and mutual respect, and contrasted this with our usual associations with a *'modern'* city. Some, lacking a clear historical perspective, struggled with how a city could be both historic and '*the first modern city'* in Europe (the early modern period starts in the fourteenth century in Europe), but most appreciated the way pedestrians and cyclists, or young and old, are described as co-existing in harmony, so that the everyday business of life was made up of '*completely different acts here'*. The implications about a culture of mutual respect were picked up by most candidates, indicated by the choice of verbs such as *'mingle'* and '*weave'.* Many commented on the pattern of sentences beginning '*Nobody...*' and many understood that George is shaping a contrast with her own hometown.

Stronger answers picked up the implications of this Mediterranean harmony and correspondence of feelings as the link between the *dolce fa niente* of the evening walks and the rambunctious ceremonies right up to midnight. In between, there is a moment when George blushes at the freedom of the insouciant lovers, and her mother's cheeky response to them, which captures the awkwardness of adolescence. Many noticed that while the dominant sense in the earlier scene is one of sight, in the night scene sound dominates, with many

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references to the *'noise'*. The *'marching dances or dancing marches'* are later contrasted with the ambling dog, who seems to have heard it all before, and the *'enchanted'* behaviour of the teams after the midnight bells have struck, with their gentle and tuneful humming. Stronger answers did not forget to illustrate commentary with frequent brief quotation but also pertinent comment on the effects of language choices.

Those able to see the structure and movement of the whole passage wrote most effectively about these paragraphs, but many also noticed the details of how the young people, close in age to George, were dressed, the flags '*bigger than bedspreads'* and '*like outsize butterfly wings'*. Many noticed how the unfurling flags conveyed a magical atmosphere, and a few noticed how George's perceptions are also opening out in response. The passage ends with another comment by her mother, but this time she and George seem in complete harmony too, and both overawed by the enchantment of the moment, and the charms of the city and its people. A strong response might also have considered the contrasting syntax of the last two sentences.

Candidates seemed to share George's charm, although one or two tried to maintain that she remained resolutely unimpressed throughout. Some candidates did comment on the particular enjoyment of reading about this kind of experience of a foreign city at this time of pandemic and social restrictions. One reader felt they had 'time travelled', and another described the harmonious city as 'idyllic...a utopia'. One striking response marvelled at the writer's portrayal of our sense of wonder when visiting a new place: 'a refreshing break from the dark confines of the Covid restrictions, offering hope for new days and experience to come'. This kind of personal response and engagement with the mood and implications of a text reinforces the importance of continuing to read imaginative literature in times of confinement.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/43
Unseen

Key messages

- This skills-based paper examines all the Assessment Objectives for Literature and is a valuable test of how securely a wide range of candidates have mastered critical analysis.
- Good responses had a strong structural understanding of the texts and explored language and imagery in detail.
- More candidates are choosing to write about prose passages and need a toolkit for unseen prose analysis.
- Good responses contain strong arguments and conclude with an evaluation of the impact of the text on the reader.

General comments

This was an unusual assessment series at the end of a year which has caused difficulties and disruption for teachers and learners. In some regions, the entry was unavoidably lower than usual, and whilst there was some weaker work, there were many strong answers too. This paper is designed to test all the skills of literary criticism: knowledge and understanding supported by apt textual reference, analysis of literary features and their effect, and personal response requiring interpretation and evaluation of the whole text. However, as it does not rely on preparation of specific set texts, it is a very good teaching tool as well as assessment option in times when consistency of learning may be problematic. Candidates have to apply their learning to the imagery, language and viewpoint presented to them in the unseen texts and need the confidence to venture their own opinions about content, techniques and meaning. Unseen analysis is therefore an excellent test of how far literary skills have been embedded. Strong responses showed quick identification of authorial techniques and extended commentary on their effect, with overall comment on the writer's purpose and methods.

Stronger responses were often notable for the effectiveness of their opening paragraph. While the bullet points provided can be used to help candidates structure their responses, many answers simply repeated or rephrased the stem question and bullet points. Understanding of the stem question often led to a strong response and the intensifying adverb ('vividly') pointed the candidate to an emotive response to the feelings and mood of the writing, and the methods used by the writer to create tone and atmosphere. A good answer therefore looked at the 'bigger picture' and had an overall understanding of the emotions the writer wished to convey. This is more effective than launching straight into the detail of words, images or narrative before achieving an overview. Stronger responses therefore were planned, with well-structured and supported arguments to illustrate how the text works.

More candidates chose to write about the prose passage in preference to the poem. Candidates should be encouraged to make choices, but they need to be as well equipped with analytical terms and language for exploring prose as they are for poetry. There was a tendency to misuse poetic terms such as *caesura* in the analysis of prose. Candidates could also consider narrative viewpoint and voice, and focalisation, in order to interpret how prose writers present emotions through characterisation. Good answers on prose passages also appreciated the rhythm and development of the passage, often looking at syntactical variations or stylistic changes, with a view to where the writing is intended to take the reader by the end of the passage.

Most candidates used the bullet points skilfully to demonstrate understanding, and these bullet points are designed to help them to appreciate the development of the texts, and to address the Assessment Objectives. Almost all candidates appreciated the style of response required and made good use of supporting quotation, although weaker candidates tended to paraphrase instead of analysing the language within those quotations. There were very few rubric errors, and that suggests that candidates are well-prepared for the demands of the paper. The third bullet discriminated between stronger and weaker

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candidates, as it asked for a degree of evaluation, and understanding of the deeper implications of the way the poem or passage ends. Sometimes candidates simply ran out of time because they had worked so exhaustively on earlier parts of the text, but the final section of a poem or prose passage tends to be a key indicator of its overall mood and effect.

Candidates could usefully practise writing stronger conclusions as well as stronger introductions. While the introduction has an overview of the text, the conclusion needs to evaluate its final impact on the reader. Good answers present strong and convincing arguments, with appreciation of why the writer wrote the text, how it achieves its effects and how the reader feels at the end. If candidates can learn to begin their writing with a clear end in view, they will improve the effectiveness of their response to whatever unseen text they have been set.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In this variant paper, over two-thirds of candidates chose to write about the poem by Ravi Shankar, *'Double Rainbow'*. The poem proved to be the perfect length and level of difficulty to prompt highly analytical and thoughtful answers, although there were some who found so much to say that they omitted to comment on the crucial final line. Certainly, the quality of comment in response to the final bullet point and the last two stanzas tended to mark out the strongest answers as they were able to engage with deeper implications and possible symbolic interpretations of the *'Double Rainbow'*, moving well beyond the purely descriptive. However, the descriptive passages themselves are so full of figurative language that candidates had little difficulty in engaging with implicit emotions and therefore gaining access to the higher mark bands. Candidates paid more attention to form and structure than is often the case when responding to poetry. Paradoxically, they were helped by the poem's absence of rhyme scheme, and syntax, which forced readers to move beyond the line endings to make sense of the lines. The poet makes much creative use of caesura and enjambment, and those who realised that the first sentence continues until the last line of the second stanza and explored the significance of enjambment between stanzas as well as between lines, with only 4 of the 12 lines end-stopped, showed a high level of analysis and critical understanding of the writer's purpose and implicit feelings. Enjambment can perform different functions even in the same poem, and good answers noticed this, pointing out that the rhythms convey the speed of the car in the first two stanzas, but then the moment of awe, standing still to view a *'bridge between worlds'*. Good answers showed awareness that the poet's mood changed dramatically, and that this is signified by the caesura in line 6, as well as the imagery. Sensitive responses also noted the contrast of '*They do not last'* in the final line: the only short, monosyllabic line in the poem, and were alert to the idea that, while this might undercut the moment of revelation at the heart of the text, it may not wholly undermine it.

Moving through the poem, almost all candidates were alert to the poet's use of pathetic fallacy in the first stanza – '*the skies above mirror my mood'* – and many picked up on the danger of '*speeding, without destination'*. Some commented on the absurdity of being in a hurry, yet with nowhere to go, and a number of candidates felt this was indicative of a depressed or even suicidal state of mind. The strong focus on the speaker's feelings meant that some missed the implicit narrative *behind 'dark torrents... poured and been returned/at home...'*. The storm here is metaphorical, and came from both directions, so clearly there has been an argument at home. Those who noticed this were then more likely to see the significance of the reference to *'reconciliation and pardon'* in the final line and notice the similarly of phrasing and punctuation. The poem makes more sense if the poet has something he needs to forgive in others as well as himself, but this interpretation needs an overview of the whole text before focusing on detail.

Most candidates felt that the overwhelming emotion portrayed in the first half of the poem is anger and were able to make a very effective contrast between the darkness of these stanzas and the *'full spectrum'* of colour in the rainbow. Some commenting pertinently that the rainbow would not have been possible without the storm first, and there were thoughtful interpretations of the necessity for paradox and light and shade in both the natural and human world. Quite a few took up broader philosophical or theological reflections prompted by the imagery of the final stanza.

Many wanted to write about the implicit violence of imagery, emotions and actions in the text: '*windscreen wipers knifing*', '*a shard'*, '*cutting*', and '*unstitch'* all received detailed analysis, some seeing images of aggression or self-harm. Most felt it was the poem who was *'fuming'* rather than the seat or the car and some, probably rightly, thought this detail was deliberately ambiguous. Some commented on how the poet seemed to find it hard to detach himself from the machine into which he had bound himself (for safety?

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security? high jinks?) and *'greet'* the natural world outside. Several pointed out the danger, for a speeding car, of streets '*slick with pooling'*. However, the '*cutting*' of the ignition is only superficially an aggressive act; some candidates noticed that this is also the moment when he cuts the fire of anger and allows himself to step outside.

Most candidates wrote particularly well about how the poet describes himself moving *'to greet'* the rainbow, seeing this verb as indicative of a respectful attitude, as if to a welcome friend or guest. Some noticed that the verb *'arcing'* describes not only the archway shape of the rainbow, but also the way the meaning carries across the end of the line into the next stanza, unifying the two rainbows. Most saw the rainbow as a link between heaven and earth, and there was much learned exploration of imagery drawing on classical, oriental and even Norse mythology about rainbow bridges and the *'sun god'*. More straightforwardly, other candidates noticed the shape of the bow, or the hem of a coat. For many candidates, this was a bridge between heaven and earth, or between nature and man, bringing the possibility of forgiveness in its train.

The ending of the poem is neatly poised, and it was important to reach this moment in order to sum up the mood of the text as a whole. Does the lyrical moment turn into something more elegiac, about the fleetingness of moments that do not last? Is the poet reverting to anger and cynicism, or is he deciding to make the most of a brief glimpse of eternity? The text elicited a variety of personal responses, which were supported by close analysis of the language, imagery and movement of the text. What was essential for interpretation of this text was a strong grasp of its overarching direction, structure and development.

Question 2

The extract from Roald Dahl's '*My Uncle Oswald'* proved to be popular with about a third of candidates, some of whom showed that word choice, structure and imagery in prose can merit attention just as closely as any poem. This passage offered rich moments of description, sustained and developing tension, the excitement of a successful hunt and the curiosity of a rather odd narrative voice. Most candidates responded to the first of these, a few never quite traced the hunt to its climactic conclusion, and only the strongest picked up on the inconsistencies and peculiarities of the narrator's actions and attitudes, some finding him a little sinister.

Some pointed out the oddity of the narrator's purchases: whilst oranges and a watermelon might be useful in a desert, why chocolate? Most noticed the meticulousness of his preparations, and how the writing shows his calmness, in order to create tension and suspense. The details and precision of his references to the geography of Suez, as he makes his way into the desert, convey his confidence and knowledge to the reader: he has a clear sense of purpose. Many commented on the use of similes *'like a black ribbon'* and *'like the breath of an oven'* to convey an isolated, stifling and possibly dangerous environment which the narrator and his '*Lagonda*' are determined to master. Candidates were assiduous in continuing to reference the question, and the ways in which '*anticipation'* is created in both narrator and reader: these details portray an isolated place, where he must carry out a dangerous mission in an environment hostile to man but *'some of the finest scorpion country in the world'*. Several pointed out that if the scorpion were to sting the man, there would be no '*living creature'* to rescue him.

Many candidates revelled in the description of *'authentic'* desert with many references to the brilliance of the sunshine*, 'throwing'* heat in a hostile manner towards the man. Despite this threat, he abandons the *'comfortable hermit-crab shell'* of his car, this metaphor revealing both his proud isolation and his vulnerability without protection, while beginning to make him seem slightly inhuman. This is developed by reference to the *'queer, godlike feeling'* he analyses within himself in the midst of a '*hot, inhuman'* landscape; here the anticipation provoked in the reader was felt by some candidates to include some apprehension about the megalomania or obsessiveness of the narrator, although others offset this with his appreciation of the colours of the natural world and respect for an environment few humans have witnessed. The colours of the desert landscape received close attention, while many candidates pointed out its eerie other-worldliness, with repeated references to soundlessness and the feeling that this was like another planet or '*some place more distant and desolate still'*. The extreme heat, and hyperbole of language and emotions make the reader anticipate something extraordinary.

After the poetic description of the desert, the following paragraphs are much more prosaic, but they sustain tension and the reader's anticipation in slightly different ways. The precision of the narrator's preparations and the determination of his pursuit – '*not looking for scorpions but the lairs of scorpions'* – were often illustrated by candidate's analysis of the effect of his use of technical terms to convey his expertise and self-assurance. Short sentences – *'I searched only for burrows'* – sustain tension. Good responses were alert to the ways in which tension is sustained through the anti-climactic return to the car after *'ten or fifteen minutes'* because heat has got the better of him, followed by the accidental sight of the burrow, just as he was about

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to step onto the road. Some candidates wished to moralise about persistence rewarded, but others were disturbed by the narrator's reference to his '*killing box'* and were not necessarily on his side. Others wondered if the last lines of the extract are really a moment of triumph, or whether there will be a sting in the tail.

Good responses paid careful attention to pacing, syntax and punctuation in the final paragraphs, as they are the ways in which the writer controls and maintains the reader's anticipation. Metaphors referring to the hunt for the scorpion as an *'operation'* or a *'treasure hunt'* keep scientific precision and childish excitement in careful balance. The narrator's references to *'danger'* which is enough to '*stir the blood'* and to his '*heart beating away'* certainly suggest a more visceral excitement than the purely scientific interest which the narrator evinced earlier, and the physical tension of this moment brings anticipation to a climax. Even this is delayed by the repetition of probing '*deeper and deeper into the sand'* before the ellipsis in the final, single-sentence paragraph holds our interest until the final, triumphant exclamation mark!

Candidates relished the passage's opportunities for very close analysis and sometimes this left them with little time to step back and evaluate the passage's overall tone and effect on the reader. Those who did rightly noticed a sense of mystery and 'other-worldliness', which is not dispelled by the discovery of the scorpions' lair at the end. The passage leaves the reader with unanswered questions, as is characteristic of short stories. Very good responses needed an overarching sense of the direction and tone of the whole passage to supplement close reading of descriptive details, so that the purpose of the writer emerges clearly. There is more to the impression made by good prose writing than the narrative alone, and stronger responses indicated that this had been understood.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/05
Coursework

Key messages

The ability to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects is a requirement for the higher levels in critical essay responses. Tasks should be framed in such a way as to elicit critical analysis.

Assignments which give character sketches or explanations of themes neglect to consider the ways in which writers use language, structure and form.

Coursework allows candidates a degree of freedom in their choice of task and can lead to engaged and developed personal responses.

General comments

Moderators saw a range of texts and tasks as well as a wide range of performance. There was much evidence of candidates' enjoyment of the texts they had studied, usually plays by Shakespeare, poems from *Songs of Ourselves* and stories from *Stories of Ourselves*.

The most successful critical essays demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the texts and sustained a personal and evaluative response to the task that had been set. Level 6 and above require a developed analysis of the ways in which writers achieve their effects. Effective task-setting is, therefore, important in giving a clear direction to candidates to explore writers' effects.

Some assignments were over long; candidates would have been better advised to take the opportunities offered by coursework to select, edit and proofread their material effectively. In the most successful answers, it was clear that candidates had spent time and effort tailoring their material precisely to the demands of the question, instead of solely displaying knowledge of characters and themes at the expense of addressing the task. There were examples in poetry assignments of candidates working through the detail of a poem in an exhaustive way, which often led to fragmented essays. Careful selection of pertinent detail, together with close analysis, tended to offer a more successful approach. Occasionally, poetry essays were characterised by the simple listing of literary devices, followed by a brief explanation of meanings.

The majority of essays on drama and prose fiction texts showed a detailed knowledge of the plot, characters and key themes. For high reward, there needed also to be a consideration of the ways in which the writer contrives the plot and presents characters and themes. In many essays, for example, there was an understanding of character that fell short of an appreciation of ways in which the writer portrayed characters.

Some centres had given their candidates a degree of choice in their tasks on the text studied; this approach encouraged candidates to offer engaged, and even sensitive, personal responses to their chosen topic.

There was much evidence of careful administration on the part of the majority of centres. In these centres, there was evidence of careful task-setting, helpful annotation of assignments and accurate completion of forms. Most teachers recognised the importance of selecting relevant wording from the levels descriptors in justifying the award of a particular mark. Any teacher that is teaching the syllabus for the first time should be clear about the requirements set out in the Syllabus document and the guidance set out in the *Coursework Training Handbook*.

This general report should be read alongside the individual feedback contained in reports to centres.

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