

# LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

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Paper 0427/01  
Poetry and Prose

## Key messages

- Responses must answer the specific question set and focus on this throughout.
- Effective and sustained analysis of language is essential, particularly in the passage-based questions.
- Detailed support from the text, either by short quotations or well-chosen references to words or phrases, is essential in all questions.
- Responses should show detailed knowledge of the text by ranging across the whole extract or poem in the passage-based questions and across as much of the novel or short story as is relevant in the essay questions.
- Candidates need to present a developed and well-structured response to the question.

## General comments

Many candidates showed an encouraging engagement with the poems or prose text studied. Many candidates do, however, continue to find it difficult to express complex ideas coherently and to frame a developed and analytical response; some show a tendency to drop too readily into description and narrative. There was frequently interesting and strong personal response, and this is to be encouraged, but quite often this was at the expense of a discussion of the details of language in the extract, which must always be the primary focus of any response and the key to higher marks.

Many candidates make a really promising beginning, with several relevant points, clearly explained and supported by the text, but then fail to take things further. Candidates should be helped to learn how to develop their points and consider the wide range of ideas available for analysis and discussion in each passage and essay.

Passage-based questions on all texts were far more popular than the essay questions. These questions require a response which analyses the writing and language while remaining focused on the particular question. Often a brief reference or introduction to the context of the passage is helpful or necessary, but this should not be a lengthy retelling of narrative which occurs before and after the passage; this inevitably loses focus on the question and on the language of the extract. However, a good response will place the passage within the novel; this will enable a consideration of how characters or situations change, for example, and enable judgments to be made about the significance of the passage and how it will affect what happens afterwards.

Focus on language remains the single most important discriminator between the mark bands and is still the area in which many candidates struggle. For credit to be given for language points, candidates need to look at specific words or phrases, selecting pertinent words or short quotations. This is covered in the mark scheme by 'the way the writer uses language' or 'the way the writer achieves...effects'. It is not sufficient just to identify figures of speech or important words without saying how and why these are appropriate and effective. Examples will be given in the comments on some of the individual questions to help demonstrate good practice. Knowing the terminology of literary criticism without being able to apply it sensibly and effectively will not help the candidates to present a successful response. In the same way, generalised comments such as 'he uses diction and imagery to put his point across' without identifying the words and figures of speech or sometimes even the point, do not in themselves demonstrate any understanding, so cannot gain any credit for the candidate.

Quite often responses are trying to consider language used by the writer but instead fall into the 'supporting reference to the text' category of the mark scheme. This often shows knowledge and understanding of the text, and is sometimes an appropriate choice, but tends to be a much longer quotation covering several lines of poetry or a longer sentence. These can have their place in an answer (though the rule is invariably 'the

shorter the better'), but candidates who only select these lengthier references without also considering specific word choice and effects can only achieve marks in the lower bands. In the same way, large sections of narrative or description, also common, very often do show some knowledge, but will not be given very many marks on their own. It is worth emphasising that consideration of the language used by the writer and its effects is just as applicable to the essay question. If there is only 'reference to the text', which is all that narrative can be, the higher bands cannot be achieved. Some short pertinent quotations which have been learnt by heart will generally be useful and there is no substitute for this.

A few candidates tried to answer the essay question by using the extract or by conflating both questions as if they were one. The essay questions always stand alone and should be considered as a completely separate question to the extract. It would be helpful for candidates to be made familiar with the layout of the exam paper and the choices offered before encountering the real thing in order to avoid this kind of error.

There were, regrettably, some responses which suggested that candidates were unfamiliar with the poem or passage on the exam paper and were seeing it for the first time. This particularly applied to the poetry section where there were several examples of misunderstanding or questionable interpretation. The fact that the poem is there in front of the candidate, and therefore does not have to be 'learnt', should not lead to complacency or a belief that it does not need to be studied and discussed beforehand. Those candidates who had had the opportunity to spend time with others discussing possible interpretations and use of language were clearly distinguishable and, inevitably, gained much higher marks.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A: POETRY**

Candidates have taken on board the need to discuss language in the poems and some made a creditable attempt at improving their responses by trying to show the meaning behind the poets' choice of imagery. Many, however, still feel that it is sufficient to 'spot' similes, metaphors, alliteration etc. without saying how these are effective and add to our understanding of the poem. Examples given below show the difference between simple or straightforward comments and those which are more indicative of higher band responses.

#### **ROBERT FROST: *The Robert Frost Collection***

##### **Question 1: *Storm Fear***

All responses were relevant to the question, though very few considered 'vividly' or that the 'experience of living through the storm' was nuanced in this short poem. Most candidates were able to take the prompt from the title and identify that the family were afraid of the storm but often only suggested one or two quotations to support this, the most popular being the personification of the storm as '*The beast*'. Some said that Frost understands what the family are experiencing but then did not spell out explicitly the range of emotions which he describes, such as their vulnerability in the face of Nature. Many candidates seemed content to take the easy option, that 'fear' explains everything, and ignored the subtleties which Frost explores in the poem.

Examples of this include the feeling that the storm is an enemy which '*works against us*' and tries to lure them to their death outside with terrifying whispers of '*Come out!*', which is repeated for vivid effect. Surprisingly few commented on the contrast highlighted by '*count our strength*' being immediately followed by '*Two and a child*', to (vividly) show how pitiful their resources felt against the monstrous force of the storm.

The fire dying and the cold creeping were frequently used examples of how their position is worsening but few took this further by considering the end of the poem, to comment on how his '*heart owns a doubt*' about their survival unless someone comes to help them, which takes his fear to a different level, as he panics that he is perhaps too weak to protect his family.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- Frost describes the storm as '*the beast*' which says it's like a horrible animal. (straightforward comment).
- Comparing the storm to a '*beast*' tells us that they feel something alive is attacking them which wishes them harm and even wants to kill them. The words '*The beast*' are on their own on one line which emphasises the power of the storm and how these are the vivid thoughts of the narrator. (developed comment which focuses on all aspects of the question).

## Question 2: *Mending Wall*

This long poem offered a lot of scope for choosing some of the narrator's thoughts and feelings – an exhaustive list or line-by-line explanation was not needed. However, it was important to identify the contrast between the viewpoints of the narrator and his neighbour; the best candidates were able to articulate how the repeated saying in the last line '*Good fences make good neighbours*' was at the crux of whether each of them deemed it wise or necessary to mend the wall each year and at the heart of understanding the poem.

Others commented on how the narrator ponders on how some gaps seem to appear without much reason but others are annoyingly and thoughtlessly made by careless hunters. Very few commented on the tricky business of reinstating stones shaped like balls and the corresponding thoughts of why it is necessary to do such a difficult task anyway, when there are no longer any cows. It would have been good to see some appreciation of the humour of his statement that the apple trees will never go and eat the pine cones. It was, however, good to see an understanding that '*He is all pine and I am apple orchard*' referred to more than just the literal meaning of having different types of tree, and that the neighbour's determination to stick to his father's ways demonstrates an attitude of mind towards other people. Stronger candidates identified the important lines '*And set the wall between us once again. / We keep the wall between us as we go.*' as crucial to showing the narrator's frustration at how the barrier between them, both physical and emotional, is strengthened once again.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- '*He is all pine and I am apple orchard*' tells us that they have different trees but also different ideas about whether the wall should be mended (a relevant comment with a little development).
- The poet uses the fact that '*He is all pine and I am apple orchard*' to suggest that the narrator thinks that the difference in their choice of trees shows that they have different characters as well. He is a softer shape with blossom and fruit, but his neighbour is more rigid and does not want to change his ideas. This is the same as their attitudes towards being friendly with their neighbours. The narrator knows that he will never '*give offence*' but the neighbour sees it almost like a battle and he's a '*savage armed*', which is so unnecessary. (well-developed and perceptive personal response to how the poet achieves effects).

## *Songs of Ourselves*

### Question 3: *Father Returning Home*

This was a very popular choice but few candidates explored more than the superficial and more obvious elements of the poem, which was disappointing. All responses said that it was 'sad' that the father had such a depressing life, identifying hard work, a long journey home, poor clothes and food, uncaring children and a boring routine at home as reasons for pitying him. As such, this answered the question with some understanding of meaning and usually a little supporting reference. However, far fewer considered the language of the poem or the subtleties and implications of Chitre's description.

Only one response commented on the fact that the narrator of the poem, his son, is one of the '*sullen children*' he describes and the significance of this. Few attempted comment on the final three lines and his dreams of his '*ancestors and grandchildren*', though some brought this back to the question, identifying the love the man clearly has for his family and the contrasting emptiness in his current life.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- '*Like a word dropped from a sentence*' gives us more description about his journey home on his own. (A straightforward comment with a few signs of understanding).
- '*Like a word dropped from a sentence*' is a simile which shows him getting off the train full of people every day. (a basic understanding of surface meaning and language).
- The father is '*like a word dropped from a sentence*', as if he is unnoticed by anyone around him on the train; he is separate from them and unimportant. (a developed response to language).
- The father is now like '*a word*', which has become useless on its own. Without being part of '*a sentence*' it has lost meaning and no-one has even noticed when it '*dropped*' out. Chitre is saying that the father has no meaning in his life and no-one even sees him anymore. (sensitive and detailed response to the writer's effects/language).

#### Question 4: *Sons, Departing*

Far fewer candidates attempted this question and responses varied considerably. A few of the weaker responses did not fully grasp that the sons were leaving home as part of a natural progression into adulthood, and there were some speculative and unsupported assertions about arguments or dislike between father and sons. These responses suggested that the poem had not been studied and discussed by the candidates, and it can only be emphasised again how familiarity with the texts is vital to a successful answer.

However, most understood that the poem depicts a father coming to terms with the reality of his children's adulthood, their new-found freedom and their vision of a different life. The strongest responses were able to identify the viewpoints of both the father and his sons as they *'walked away'* and *'did not look back'*. Some commented that the *'tall hedges'* represented the safety of childhood and home, contrasted to the sea and sky which represented freedom as adults.

Fewer paid attention to the 'uses words and images to striking effect' aspect of the question, preferring to 'tell the story' of the poem, though these responses often also considered the language, answering the question implicitly rather than explicitly. Those who did respond to the task more successfully often identified *'torn clouds'* and *'irregular runs'* as showing how uncertain the life of the sons away from home is likely to be, despite *'the steadiness of their retreating footfalls'*, suggesting their confidence. The strongest candidates also considered the use of *'final'* as, indeed, the final word of the poem, to show how the father has come to terms with the reality of his sons' departure and how the vision of them as *'sunlit points'* suggests that for him they will always be bright lights in what is sometimes a dark world.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- *'their line was straight as the clipped privets'* shows that they were walking in a straight line away from home. (straightforward comment with a little supporting reference).
- Cassidy describes how they walked *'straight as the clipped privets'* to show they were sure of what they were doing. He describes the hedges again as symbolising their childhood at home which they have now outgrown. The privet hedge is *'clipped'* like their freedom at home, which they are now ready to leave and do what they choose. (well-developed, perceptive response to language and effects).

#### Section B: PROSE

##### MAYA ANGELOU: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

#### Question 5

The relatively small number of candidates who responded to this question mainly commented on Maya's thoughts about her mother and father, but these remained at a fairly basic level. Some identified Mother's *'glorious'* appearance or how Daddy Bailey was like *'a Sun God'* while not really making any impact on their lives. Few addressed how impressed she became at Momma's *'remarkable adjustment'* to city life, nor considered the contrasts drawn between Momma and Mother, which would have shown understanding of deeper implications and taken responses into the high bands.

Surprisingly, there were no comments on Maya's fear of having to talk about Mr Freeman and her *'old guilt'*, which she was clearly still carrying so needlessly. A response to Maya's use of *'trance'*, *'enchanted'*, *'miraculously transformed'* etc. to convey the sense of her amazement at the huge change in her life would have taken responses into 'a developed response to the way the writer achieves her effects'.

#### Question 6

Very few responses seen, so no meaningful comment can be made. Those who did attempt the question conflated it with the extract question and made one or two straightforward general comments about Daddy Bailey.

### **JENNIFER DONNELLY: *A Northern Light***

#### **Question 7**

Too few responses to comment, only attempted when more than one question was answered. Responses suggested that candidates were reading the extract for the first time and had not studied the text.

#### **Question 8**

No responses seen.

### **BARBARA KINGSOLVER: *The Bean Trees***

#### **Question 9**

Few responses were seen. Most understood the drama and emotion of this moment for Taylor, Estevan and Esperanza, particularly the heart-breaking link between giving up Turtle and losing their own child. Other responses commented on the treatment of immigrants and the officials who could not tell a Cherokee from a Guatemalan. Stronger responses commented on Taylor's realisation that '*This was no act*' and the ambiguity of who is '*mother*'.

Most were able to describe Esperanza's genuine love for Turtle, and Taylor's realisation that she could not have taken Turtle off her, even after all that she had gone through for her.

#### **Question 10**

No responses seen.

### **JOHN STEINBECK: *The Wayward Bus***

#### **Questions 11 and 12**

No responses seen for these questions.

### **STORIES OF OURSELVES**

#### **Question 13**

This was overwhelmingly the most popular question of the examination and candidates seemed to enjoy getting to grips with the wealth of material which the extract offered in order to illustrate the many ways in which this is such a satisfying ending. Weaker candidates made the inevitable point that Poldero got what he deserved for cruelly mistreating the phoenix purely for financial gain, but then without doing much else other than describing some of the many abuses and saying how satisfying it was to read that he '*perished in the blaze*.' Better responses discussed how the abuse was all the more appalling because the phoenix was such a '*civil and amiable*' bird, stronger candidates going on to make the point that the ending was all the more satisfying because the phoenix itself was the one to cause the death of the awful Poldero and thus get revenge.

Stronger candidates looked for other, less obvious, ways in which the writing made the reader enjoy the ending. Some spent some time discussing how those in the audience were also to blame – for not appreciating the bird in its normal state and for agreeing to pay Poldero for the dreadful 'entertainment' of seeing a living creature burn to death. However, even the better responses often failed to look sufficiently at the language used, making relevant reference to examples of mistreatment, that Poldero '*stationed himself in front of the cage to jeer at the bird*' or '*its allowance of food was halved*', but not taking this further by referring 'in detail to the way the writer achieves her effects.' This could have been achieved by considering the use of the extensive listing of abuses, described in such a seemingly calm and offhand way, as if they were perfectly normal and acceptable acts, and that these in fact were mirroring Poldero's own thoughts. The irony of the hyperbolic commentary from the loudspeaker of the phoenix's extraordinary attributes contrasted to the appalling way this '*aristocrat*' has been treated would also have taken responses into the higher bands.

A few stronger responses looked at the structure of the story, making the point that the sudden and quick plot twist, in one short paragraph, created an element of surprise, and was also extremely satisfying for the reader, particularly after the much longer section of the abuse and seeming success of Poldero. The

dramatic but brief final sentence, with so many people *'burned to ashes'* should have been shocking, even horrifying, but instead the writer has managed to make the 'grand finale' incredibly satisfying, a good example of 'the way the writer achieves her effects' (Bands 7 and 8).

A number of candidates also successfully considered the 'deeper implications' (Band 5 upwards). They discussed the idea of 'karma', commenting that the whole story could be seen as a metaphor for human greed abusing nature, and the consequences of this, one quoting a wise saying that we should 'never expect to receive good from bad actions.' Others suggested that our current desire for entertainment, whatever the cost to others, was illustrated by the story and shown to be a thoroughly undesirable and 'bad thing'. Overall, it was clear that this was a story that candidates had really enjoyed and engaged with, resulting in some very competent responses which were a pleasure to read.

#### **Question 14**

No responses seen.



# LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

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Paper 0427/02  
Drama

## Key messages

Candidates need to select the question to answer carefully, then analyse the question so that they are clear what they need to address in their answer.

Good answers to discursive questions need to cover three or four relevant points supported with apt and brief quotation or detailed reference to the text.

When answering the passage-based question, candidates need to read the passage carefully and select the most appropriate material from the passage with which to answer the question.

Short quotation is the best way to refer to the text; the quoted text then needs analysis to make clear how it exemplifies the point being made, and how the point addresses the question.

Candidates need to show a clear understanding of the context of the passage and the characters in it.

The best answers respond to the text as drama by analysing the effects of such features as: dialogue, interaction between characters, movement on stage, stage directions and audience response.

## General comments

Candidates usually knew their set text well and often responded with empathy for characters in a strong personal response. Thus they sympathized with Hally and his difficult relationship with his parents in Fugard's *'Master Harold'...and the Boys*; and they also sympathized with both Margaret and Brick as they struggle with their marriage in Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the response was focused more on the humour of the passage, since Bottom does not demand much sympathy despite his ass's head, as he inspires the love of the bewitched Titania. Candidates needed to be able to analyse the text to explain how the author encouraged their personal response to the drama.

Candidates needed to know their set text well to recognise the context of the passage in the examination. Strong answers began by briefly placing the passage in its context and commenting on its significance within the play. Successful answers directly addressed the question, and used short quotations from the passage to support the points made in answer. They analysed quotations to show how they supported the points, and the best answers commented on the effects of dramatic features such as dialogue and action. Candidates ended good answers by linking back to the question, briefly restating the main points, and then showing an overview by commenting on the significance of the particular character or theme.

A number of candidates this session confused the two questions on their text on the examination paper, and tried to answer the second, discursive question with sole reference to the passage printed for use with the first question. This resulted in some very weak answers. For example, the discursive question on *'Master Harold'...and the Boys* asked candidates for their judgement on how well the author brings the play as a whole to a satisfying conclusion; but the passage for use with the previous question was taken from the middle of the play. It was difficult for answers on the ending of the play to be at all relevant when they were based on the middle of the text.

Candidates need to know the format of the examination. Candidates are required to answer one question on their set text. There are always two questions to choose from: the first is a passage-based question and the second is a discursive question which refers to the text as a whole. The first requires candidates to read a passage from the text, and the question based on the passage is asked at the end of the passage. Then there is the second question on the same text.

Strong responses to the second, discursive question constructed a clear argument consisting of three or four key points, which were well-developed and supported by apt and detailed reference to the text, usually in the form of memorized short quotations. Candidates needed to know the text well to select the most appropriate material from the whole play with which to support their response. Good answers addressed the question directly, and focused on its key words and phrases such as: 'to what extent', 'satisfying', 'enjoyment' or 'memorable'. Some candidates limited their answers by not supporting them from the text, or by selecting inappropriate material, such as from the passages printed for use with the previous question. Others needed to make clear how the reference to the text supported the point being made. The strongest answers ended by linking back to the question, briefly restating the main points, and then showing an overview by commenting on the significance of the character or theme.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **ATHOL FUGARD: *'Master Harold' ...and the Boys***

##### **Question 1**

Good answers to this question began by placing the passage briefly in its context; it occurs after Sam and Hally have been reminiscing about their life in the old Jubilee Boarding House, where the young Hally used to hide in Sam and Willie's room to escape from his alcoholic father. Sam made the kite for Hally and taught him how to fly it, because he wanted Hally to have some fun in his life. Successful answers made a direct response to the question and clearly said how Fugard made the moment so moving for the candidate; several identified the moving enjoyment of the shared experience between the two racially different people, Hally and Sam, and that it was also moving because it was so brief, while others focused more on the ending of the passage, when Hally says you can not fly kites on rainy days, because it suggested how much hardship Hally experiences in his life now. Strong responses also commented on Hally's worries over whether the home-made kite would actually fly, and his feelings of elation and joy when it did, along with his fear of it crashing. They analysed the kite-flying as a metaphor reflecting his anxious life with his parents. Several candidates mentioned the race issues raised – that Sam was not allowed to sit on the bench because of racial segregation laws, and he could not stay to play because he had to work. Some answers made a few straightforward comments on the narrative of flying a kite, without considering deeper implications; and there were a few candidates who showed their limited understanding of the text by referring to both Hally and Sam as young girls enjoying a day in the park.

##### **Question 2**

Strong answers explored how Hally insults Sam at the end of the play, spits in his face and demands to be called 'Master Harold' to try to enforce his perceived white superiority over Sam and Willie as black employees. They contrasted this to Sam, who reminds Hally of his closeness to Hally's family and the care and service he has given them over the years. The play closes with the men dancing; successful answers quoted Sam telling Hally that on the dance floor there are no unfortunate 'accidents' like there are in life; good answers related this to the question and candidates considered this ending to be satisfying because they felt that Hally realizes his behaviour is wrong, and that Sam is poised to help Hally change his learned behaviour, so that the ending feels full of hope for their future. There were a few candidates who tried to answer **Question 2** with sole reference to the passage for use with **Question 1**, but because the passage is not the ending of the play, such answers showed very limited understanding.

#### **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

##### **Question 3**

Most candidates gave a strong personal response to this question as they showed their clear enjoyment of the scene on stage. Some candidates placed the passage in its context of Oberon telling Puck to make sure Titania wakes when something vile is near so that she falls in love with it. Puck's joke is that Bottom is monstrous with an ass's head, causing his colleagues Quince and Snout to run away from him in fear, and making Titania's attraction to Bottom even more incongruous. Strong answers successfully analysed staging in the passage, such as the confusion created by the quick entrances and exits at the start, as Puck causes chaos in which to perform his magic. They analysed the effects of some of the language, such as Snout's 'chang'd' and Quince's 'translated' as they try to tell Bottom of his new appearance; and of Shakespeare's puns with the word 'ass', as Bottom blames his friends for making an 'ass' (or idiot) of him, without realizing he looks like an ass too. Candidates found the humour entertaining, of Titania calling the monster Bottom an



'angel', and of the way she continues to praise his singing and his beauty so fully that even Bottom has to disagree with her. The dual meaning of her comment 'Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful' – with Bottom not beautiful at all – was fully enjoyed. The strongest answers also explored Titania's last speech, in which she promises to lavish Bottom with jewels as tokens of her love, and have her fairies 'attend' to him. Some other answers still made good responses to 'entertaining' by focusing on the humorous effects of Bottom and his ass's head.

#### Question 4

Answers to this question often narrated the backstory of Theseus and Hippolyta's relationship. Good answers considered Theseus's role of benevolent ruler, as he tempers Egeus's harshness towards Hermia in Act 1, and is also tolerant of the mechanicals in Act 5, although he does go on to mock Bottom's performance. Hippolyta is quieter, with few lines; she is gentle towards the mechanicals' attempts at performance at the end. Strong answers addressed the question directly, often making a case for their enjoyment being enhanced by the way Theseus and Hippolyta's marriage forms the frame for the drama, within which the four young lovers' relationships are played out, as well as providing the setting for the competition to provide the nuptial entertainment; they contribute to the portrayal of love and relationships. Stronger answers used detailed textual support and analysed the structure of the play; other answers remained rather general, with suggested and asserted points.

#### TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

#### Question 5

Good answers began by placing the passage in its context; Maggie has just confessed to having a relationship with Skipper; she says they were both in love with Brick; but Skipper is now dead and her repeated 'I'm alive' is a celebration of her vibrancy. Candidates identified the power of the passage arising from the conflict between the two; Brick's response is to try 'to kill' Maggie by hurling his crutch at her; he hates Maggie, continues drinking to get drunk, and actually tells her he 'can't stand' her. Strong answers explored Maggie's actions in the passage; her elation at being alive at the start is quashed by Dixie literally shooting it down and by the taunts of her childlessness. Having Brick's child is important to Maggie; stronger answers linked this to her love for Brick, but also to her desire to ensure their financial security in Big Daddy's will. Miller ensures this polar conflict is clearly introduced by Brick as the powerful ending to Act 1: the rest of the play is occupied in resolving the problem raised here. Strong responses analysed some of the effects of the writing and staging to support their answers. Thus, Maggie's desire to be a mother is mocked by her cruelty to Dixie, who in turn is brutal in shooting at Maggie and accusing her of jealousy because she 'can't have babies!' Brick's lack of interest in Maggie is emphasized by his 'faraway' look and by her having to repeat 'Are you LISTENING TO ME!' The action of the rest of the play is powerfully heralded by Maggie at the end: 'Here they come!' Some responses needed to answer the question more directly to show a clear understanding of what is powerful in this ending to Act 1. A few responses analysed stage directions in great detail, showing some understanding of how Miller creates tension in the scene; but their comments needed to be related to the context of the passage to show understanding of the text and of deeper implications.

#### Question 6

Candidates needed to know the play well to select apt material from the whole play with which to support their answer on Gooper and his family. Candidates thought Gooper is memorable for his contrast to Brick; he is rather a straightlaced, anxious lawyer, whereas Brick is the easy-going, popular sportsman. Gooper's slyness is memorable, and his underhandedness; he is jealous of Brick's place as Big Daddy's favourite; he and Mae present themselves with their five children as the solid future for Big Daddy's estate, and they do everything possible to disparage Brick and Maggie. Candidates were horrified by Gooper's heartlessness in having already had legal papers drawn up for his accession to the estate, which he tries to get his father and then his mother to sign; but he misreads his mother's emotions on learning of Big Daddy's terminal illness; she too prefers Brick to Gooper, which candidates could easily understand; Brick is the more attractive son. Mae disapproves of both Maggie and Brick, and makes many unkind, snide comments about them. Stronger answers used detailed textual support for their comments on Gooper and his family, while others tended to refer to the play in general and assert points without support.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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**Paper 0427/03**  
**Coursework**

## **Key messages**

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- select relevant material to meet the requirements of the text
- substantiate their arguments with relevant, concise references to the text
- analyse in detail and sensitively the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- write exhaustively and lose focus on the task
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- list writers' techniques without close analysis
- offer pre-learned 'themes' rather than personal responses.

## **General comments**

There was much evidence of coursework of a high standard this session, where candidates showed both sensitive engagement with, and enjoyment of, the texts they had studied; this was a testament to the hard work of both candidates and teachers in this most challenging of academic years. There were a few instances of syllabus infringements, for example where candidates entered assignments dealing with only one poem or short story or with only a discrete extract from a prose or drama text. These deficiencies were mentioned in the individual reports to centres.

The most successful assignments sustained a clear focus on a carefully worded task designed to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the highest levels in the mark scheme. In these assignments, candidates selected relevant material from the text to address the task that had been set. Some less successful responses showed a detailed knowledge of the text, sometimes at exhaustive length, but did not tailor their material to the specific demands of the task. This was an unproductive approach taken in many poetry assignments where candidates worked through the poem offering a line-by-line commentary, in so doing, losing the sight of the task. Candidates should be taught the skill of selecting material judiciously in a way that directly addresses the task set – this is true for examination questions as well as coursework assignments.

The most convincing essays sustained a critical engagement with the ways in which writers achieve their effects (Assessment Objective 3), relating their points to the task. Less successful assignments often commented discretely on connotations of specific words without relating them to their use in the text and sometimes simply logged features such as alliteration, anaphora and enjambment in poetry essays, without regard to the thrust of the question.

Several centres submitted empathic responses, with most providing the necessary information: the name of the character and the precise moment in the text that the interior monologue takes place. The most successful responses captured a convincingly authentic voice for the chosen character and moment. It should be remembered that significant characters from novels and plays (not short stories) lend themselves best to empathic tasks.

## Guidance for teachers

Guidance on task-setting can be found in the Coursework Handbook, which stresses the importance of (a) wording tasks that direct candidates explicitly to explore the ways in which writers achieve their effects and (b) avoiding insufficiently challenging command words such as 'Describe' and 'Explain'. Teachers within the centre should together discuss the appropriateness of proposed tasks before they are given to candidates. This means that any problems can be nipped in the bud.

There follows a reminder of what constitutes both good practice in the presentation of coursework folders:

- Start each assignment with the full wording of the task. In the case of empathic responses, the chosen character and moment should be clearly stated. This is important since it allows the moderator to determine how successfully the candidate has captured an authentic voice for the character at the specified moment.
- Use focused ticking in the body of the text to indicate valid and thoughtful points, together with concise marginal and summative comments which relate to the wording of the levels descriptors.
- Provide a brief explanation on the assignment or cover sheet in cases where marks are changed during internal moderation. Such purposeful annotation aids transparency and contributes to the robustness of the assessment as it enables a centre to justify its award of particular marks. It is, therefore, not appropriate to send clean (i.e. unannotated) copies of assignments.

The following examples of unhelpful annotation should be avoided: excessive ticking (e.g. of every paragraph or every line); hyperbolic praise of work of indifferent quality; labelling by assessment objective. Simply putting the supposed relevant AOs in the margin is of very little benefit to the moderator, as it does not reveal the *extent* to which a particular assessment objective has been addressed; instead, more specific reference should be made to the relevant levels descriptors.

Most centres carried out administration efficiently. Cover sheets (individual record cards) were secured by treasury tag or staple which allowed easy access to candidate work. In these centres care had been taken to:

- include all candidates' details on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form
- transcribe totals accurately across the various documents.

All centres are advised to include a clerical checking stage in their moderation procedures before submitting their paperwork to Cambridge [International](#). This check should be carried out by a different person from the one who completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets originally.