

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Pre-U Certificate

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2014 series

9782 PRINCIPAL COURSE RUSSIAN

9782/04

Paper 4 (Topics and Texts), maximum raw mark 60

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2014 series for most IGCSE, Pre-U, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level components and some Ordinary Level components.

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Part I: Topics

Candidates are to attempt one question from Part I: Topics and will write their answers in the Target Language as these texts/films are to be studied primarily in cultural context (be it historical, political, social) as well as a literary/cinematic one.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 20 for Content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 10 marks]
- 10 for Language [AO3]

This paper is intended to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of a topic and their ability to use this knowledge to answer questions in a clear and focused manner. A sophisticated literary approach is not expected (although at the highest levels it is sometimes seen), but great value is placed on evidence of a first-hand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have studied. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotations: quotation for its own sake is not useful, though it will not be undervalued if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. This applies to films as well as literary texts. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh up all these at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and especially any signs of understanding and careful organisation. In the marking of these questions, specific guidelines will be given for each question, agreed by the examination team.

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Part I: Topics – Content		
18–20	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive knowledge of both texts/films. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show good understanding of underlying themes.
15–17	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Thorough knowledge of both texts/films. Detailed understanding and illustration of thematic and comparative issues.
12–14	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Equally sound knowledge of both texts/films. Good understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues.
9–11	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge of texts/films. Some understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues AND/OR good understanding of texts/films, but lacking detail. Stronger on one text/film than the other.
5–8	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
1–4	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Poor knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Insubstantial with very little relevance.
0		No rewardable content.

Part I: Topics – Language		
10	<i>Excellent</i>	Almost flawless. Excellent range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Good sense of idiom.
8–9	<i>Very good</i>	Highly accurate. Wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Some sense of idiom.
6–7	<i>Good</i>	Generally accurate. Good range of vocabulary and some complex sentence patterns.
4–5	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Predominantly simple patterns correctly used and/or some complex language attempted, but with variable success. Adequate range of vocabulary, but some repetition.
2–3	<i>Weak</i>	Persistent errors. Simple and repetitive sentence patterns. Limited vocabulary.
1	<i>Poor</i>	Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Very limited vocabulary.
0		No rewardable language.

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Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

1 ДЕТСТВО

- (a) **Опишите жизнь детей в выбранных вами произведениях. По-вашему, создатели этих произведений сочувствуют больше детям или взрослым?**

Candidates should describe the lives of the children in their chosen works before providing an opinion as to whether or to what extent the author or filmmakers show greater sympathy for the child or the adult characters in them. In *Детство* we are given a semi-autobiographical account of the childhood of a member of the landed gentry in the late 1830s. Events are narrated from the point of view of the ten year old Nikolay filtered through the perspective of an older and wiser first-person narrator who, from the perspective of a mature adult, analyses the feelings and reactions of the child to a series of exciting and traumatic events. These cause the child to experience a range of strong emotions: intense sadness at possible and actual partings from beloved servants, relatives and animals, fear and grief due to the illness and death of his mother, joy and sorrow caused by the first stirrings and experiences of love and learning how to behave as an adult in various situations – when hunting, meeting new people in Moscow society, attending a ball. By allowing the adult first-person narrator to endorse his emotional response as a child, Tolstoy clearly shows his sympathy with the young Nikolay whose strong feelings and world-view form the focus of interest for the reader. Though adults feature in this world and sometimes also experience sad events and are therefore presented sympathetically, their reactions are described from outside rather than from within and therefore seem less intense than those of the narrator. For example, when Nikolay's father, Petr Aleksandrych returns with his sons to his dying wife, a loving woman who has for long suffered from depression, perhaps brought on by her husband's gambling and philandering, the narrator reports that he displays genuine grief, but we cannot experience his feelings in the same close manner as we can the first-person narrator's.

In *Бор* we are shown the story of six year old Sanya, whose father had died in WW2, six months before his birth. His mother takes up with a handsome, strong soldier with whom she has a sexual encounter on a train. Tolyan, Katya and Sanya pass themselves off as a family, conning their way into communal accommodation and into the trust of their fellow residents. Katya soon learns that her lover is a selfish, violent brute, a calculating thief who feels no guilt in stealing from those who have accepted him into their communities. Sanya, who longs for a father figure and admires Tolyan's muscles and tattoos, is treated roughly by Tolyan, especially when the little boy gets in the way of sex with Katya. Like his mother, however, Sanya remains in awe of his surrogate parent as he is able to deal with any situation either by charm or violence. Tolyan attempts to teach Sanya how to stand up for himself against bullies, how to wash in a banya, and shows him how to bluff one's way out of many a difficult situation, but at the same time uses him shamelessly as a prop in his subterfuge and as a reluctant aid to break into buildings. Eventually, Tolyan's luck runs out when he and Sanya are heard stealing from a flat. Police are called, and the whole "family" has to flee. Tolyan is arrested as he and Katya prepare to go their separate ways by train. Despite Katya's heroic efforts to bribe officials to save her lover from punishment, Tolyan is sentenced to seven years in an inhospitable region. Sanya, encouraged by his mother, feels he has betrayed his "father" as his behaviour at the time of the arrest might have contributed to it. Katya contracts blood-poisoning from a botched abortion and dies. Her son is placed in an orphanage where he treasures his memories along with his mother's watch and Tolyan's gun. He dreams that Tolyan will one day be free and come for him. Years later, Sanya encounters Tolyan who has

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degenerated further as a drunk and womaniser. Tolyan initially fails to recognise Sanya and has difficulty even remembering who Katya was. He wants nothing to do with his former protégé. Sanya, feeling Tolyan has betrayed him and his mother, follows him as he is getting onto a train at night and shoots him dead, thus liberating himself from feelings of hero worship and a desire to emulate his surrogate parent. Chukhray shows his sympathy for Sanya by using close-up shots of his facial expressions and body language which reveal his fear and distress. Though his mother is presented sympathetically, she is not the main focus of the film, and the behaviour of Tolyan excludes the possibility of sympathy of producer and audience. References to the film's alternative ending where Sanya is shown as a serving officer will be credited, if appropriate.

Возвращение tells the story of two young teenage boys taken on a fishing trip by their father who has returned after a mysterious absence of twelve years. Set in the present over a short time space, the film provides limited insight into the lives of the two boys. We see them as part of a gang of friends who ostracise the younger boy, Vanya, when he fails to jump from a high tower into water. This causes him to experience a great deal of fear and misery. Apparently content living with their mother and grandmother, they know only what they have been told about their father. The trip proves to be a learning experience for them in many ways as their parent, brutalised by his own experience of life, controls their behaviour in a determined and sometimes violent manner, perhaps because for him the trip has another purpose behind it other than fishing. Despite this behaviour towards them which causes particularly the younger son to be terrified and traumatised, both boys are affected by the accidental death of their father as the result of a fall from a great height. Zvyagintsev's use of close-up shots and his focusing on the facial expressions and body language of the boys to show a range of emotions as well as the language and intonation patterns of their conversations indicate his sympathy for the children in their confrontation with a brutal parent. Some sympathy for this man is shown, however, by showing at the end of the film his cherished photographs of happier times.

- (b) **«Детство – это большое приключение. Каждый день ребёнок испытывает что-то новое, интересное, неожиданное». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, дети в этих произведениях с удовольствием ожидают нового в жизни?**

Candidates should discuss, by detailed reference to the events of the set works, whether childhood can be described as a big adventure. See above (Q1A) for detail of key events. While all will agree that the children who feature in all three works are continuously experiencing things which are new and unexpected, candidates will be divided as to whether some experiences are interesting. The question of whether the children look forward to experiencing new events will likewise vary depending on the ages, circumstances and experiences of the individual children in the works studied.

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2 РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ И ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ ВОЙНА

- (a) Что мы узнаём о жизни во время Революции и Гражданской войны в выбранных вами произведениях? По-вашему, кто из создателей этих произведений рисует более правдивую картину того времени?

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe with detailed reference to the studied works what the reader learns about life during the Revolution and Civil War. They should then go on to consider, using background knowledge, which of the authors and filmmaker provides the most truthful depiction of the age in which the works are set. Any one of the three will be acceptable provided candidates justify their choice. *Белая гвардия* follows the activities of the comfortably-off, intellectual Tsarist Turbin family caught up in the turbulent events which befell Kiev between May 1918 and February 1919. In particular, the novel focuses on two brothers (Aleksey, a doctor, and seventeen year old Nikolka) and their sister, Elena, abandoned by her Baltic German husband, Tal'berg who has to flee for having publically criticised Petlyura. Aleksey and his friend, Myshlaevsky, join Karas in his Mortar Regiment, while Nikolka serves as an Infantry Cadet. We are shown the men in a variety of difficult and dangerous situations as they try to defend their city from the encroaching forces of the Social-Democrat, Petlyura. Eventually, Aleksey is shot and wounded, but manages to return to his home, aided by the woman who had first tended to his wounds. Here his sister nurses him to a miraculous recovery from typhus. Though there is an unexpected happy ending for the main character, the text explicitly reveals the horrors of war and the mental and physical suffering of those participating in the confused struggles of the various competing military and political factions (monarchist, nationalist, Bolshevik, German allies etc.). Among those aspects of often gritty realism which could be mentioned are: frost-bite, lice and cold suffered by Myshlaevsky and others, lack of equipment and proper clothing, inadequate training (e.g. the Mortar Regiment), inept commanders who abandon their troops, blackmarketeers, food shortages, wild rumours concerning the fate of the Tsar and the identity of Petlyura, people changing sides, violent anti-Semitism, fear of spies and violence against them, disloyalty and betrayal (the withdrawal of the Germans, themselves horrified at the fate of their Kaiser), the cowardly flight of the Hetman and reactions to this, fear of foreign invasion, elation of victories and despair in defeat, violent death (e.g. the decapitation of Fel'dman, the army contractor), the gore of the mortuary (sight and smell) where the body of Nay-Turs has been kept, theft of property by errant soldiers (e.g. from Vasilisa) et al. Bulgakov gives us insight chiefly into the thought processes of the Turbins and their friends on the same side as they deal with the grim reality of the conflict. However, we are also made to realise that the enemy shares the same emotions and instincts as the Whites, as we are given limited insight into some enemy characters (e.g. Colonel Kozyr'-Leshko). Despite some theatrical moments (e.g. the ornate service in St Sophia's Cathedral), candidates will probably argue that the text is a good reflection of the reality of the time in terms of both historical events and conditions and human reaction to them.

Разгром is set in the summer and autumn of 1919. A detachment of Bolshevik partisans fighting in the Far East is forced to retreat in the face of superior forces. Though they are initially successful in extricating themselves from a virtually impassable swamp, they fall victim to a Cossack ambush as a result of which only nineteen of them survive. Living conditions for the partisans are primitive. These are not depicted through rose-tinted glasses, and the reality of death in wartime is never concealed. It is shown to affect many of the major and minor characters to whom the reader becomes sympathetic: Frolov is given a fatal dose of "bromide" because his condition is considered hopeless; Metelitsa is shot in captivity by his Cossack guard; Stashinsky, the doctor, is shot and dragged behind his horse; Morozka, trying to warn his comrades about the ambush, fires three warning shots when surprised by some Cossacks who promptly finish him off. If anything is idealised in the novel, it is the portrayal of characters according to Socialist Realist principles, although the term was not officially coined till 1932, some five years after the text was written. Fadeev presents to us a

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variety of types whose intrinsic nature, motivation and behaviour are meant to reflect the reality of Socialist society, predominantly in a positive manner. This does not mean that “negative” character traits are absent from minor characters, and they are even present in some of the major ones whom we are meant to consider positive. Hard drinking and womanising are pretty much omnipresent among the partisans. Varya, though married to Morozka, is generous with her sexual favours, and even Levinson, the model leader, is depicted around a campfire telling bawdy stories with his men. The faults of the proletarian heroes are excused, however, because of their overriding Socialist virtues – their willingness to risk their all for the good of society, their altruism and sense of duty and responsibility. Examples of this include: Morozka’s rescuing of Mechik under fire, his suicidal warning shots to his comrades in the end; Levinson’s apparently calm and considered leadership, even when he really has little idea what is best to do next, his determination to go on no matter what happens, even when he himself is ill and in pain, his need to go on living and do his duty; the troops fighting the enemy who, according to Levinson, are motivated not only by a desire for self-preservation, but by some higher instinct for which they would suffer anything, even death. Such superior proletarian attitudes are contrasted with those of Mechik, the petty bourgeois who feels out of place among his rough, uneducated comrades and quickly longs to return to his former comfortable life in the town. Never accepted because of his social origins and Maximalist connections, he acquires the reputation of an arrogant idler, failing to care for his horse and generally pull his weight. His desertion to save his own life at the end of the novel epitomises his selfishness and individualism. Candidates might conclude that though the conditions of conflict are accurately portrayed, the characters are not always wholly credible.

Адмираль deals with the rise and fall of Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak from 1916 until his execution in 1920. Made in 2008, its aim was not only to chronicle the period but to help to rehabilitate an anti-Bolshevik and present him as a true hero of Russia, regardless of his political beliefs. The film contains, for some, an excessively romantic portrayal of his adulterous affair with Anna Timireva, the wife of a fellow officer and friend as well as some historical inaccuracies (e.g. the Friedrich Carl was, in fact, sunk by mines in November 1914 rather than in November 1916, and most of the crew were rescued). Nevertheless, there are many scenes which accurately depict the violence, blood, guts, noise, confusion and general horror of war on land and sea. The naval battles in the Baltic in 1916 are particularly graphic as is the scene which shows the disarming and execution by rifle and bayonet of terrified officers at Kronstadt following the February Revolution in 1917. The non-violent disarming of Kolchak and his officers in Sevastopol due to the compliance of the respected now Vice-Admiral is shown in contrast. Kerensky summons Kolchak to Petrograd with the offer of being appointed Minister of Defence, but Kolchak criticises Kerensky for allowing indiscipline to flourish in the armed services. Angered by the Vice-Admiral’s desire to impose strict order once again, Kerensky exiles him to the USA, calling him a counter-revolutionary. After the October Revolution, Kolchak is seen to have returned. He is leading part of the White Army at Omsk. His former friend, Timirev, has changed sides and is now a Red Commissar on his way with his wife to the Far East. On hearing the news about the whereabouts of Kolchak, Anna leaves her husband to follow her lover. She arrives on the Eastern Front in November 1918 in time to see Kolchak sworn in as Supreme Ruler of Russia in a highly romanticised scene complete with triumphant music, religious trappings and many subordinates on their knees to show their loyalty. Anna becomes a nurse and works tirelessly to save lives amid the gore of the battles. With the arrival of General Janin, disagreements about the function and duties of various interventionist forces begin to emerge. Kolchak is depicted as a wise and beloved leader, though just as he is seen accepting presents for saving Omsk, news comes of Red victories. The city must be evacuated, and the capital moved to Irkutsk. As the trains are loaded, Kolchak and Anna are reunited. He will never leave her again. Kolchak tells Anna that he has asked his wife for a divorce. Though at first reluctant, Anna eventually consents to marriage. From this point, Kolchak appears more caught up in his personal happiness than in dealing with the reality of his army’s collapsing forces. General Kappel is

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simply ordered to Irkutsk to put down a rebellion as the Czechs begin to move out their equipment, having declared neutrality. Kappel's army is lacking in supplies and ammunition, and this results in the needless slaughter of its soldiers in a gruesome battle sequence. Janin agrees to hand over Kolchak to the Reds as this will secure the interventionists' safe passage out of the country. Kolchak still appears to be in a world of his own with Anna as they approach Irkutsk. Many of the White officers have already abandoned him before his arrest, trial and execution. In captivity, Kolchak is brave and stoical, sustained by his love for Anna who, we learn, subsequently spent thirty years in the Gulag. Candidates may well conclude that though the film depicts much of the physical and mental suffering of people in wartime and is broadly accurate in terms of the events shown, the documented cruelty and reactionary nature of Kolchak's regime has been omitted in the film, the personality of the hero is idealised and the importance of the love affair exaggerated.

- (b) «В трудные и опасные времена одни люди становятся сильными и идеалистичными, а другие становятся слабыми и эгоистичными». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, до какой степени создатели этих произведений понимают человеческую натуру?

In the first part of the question, candidates should discuss, with detailed reference to the studied works, whether or to what extent in difficult and dangerous times some individuals become strong and idealistic while others become weak and selfish. They should then go on to provide an opinion as to what extent the creators of the chosen works appear to understand human nature. See Q2A for detail of plots. Answers should refer to at least one strong and one weak character from each work discussed. When writing about *Белая гвардия*, candidates might compare the heroic actions of Aleksey or Nay-Turs with the cowardly, selfish behaviour of Tal'berg or the Hetman who appear only to be concerned with their own survival. In *Разгром*, Morozka and Levinson can be contrasted with Mechik, while in *Адмиралъ*, Kolchak's stoical bravery and idealism or that of General Kappel can be compared to the treachery and capitulation of Janin.

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3 СОВЕТСКИЕ ГРАЖДАНЕ В ВОЕННОЕ И МИРНОЕ ВРЕМЯ

- (a) Объясните, как война влияет или повлияла на характер и поведение мужчин в выбранных вами произведениях. По-вашему, являются ли мужчины в этих произведениях хорошим примером другим советским мужчинам?

In the first part of the question, candidates should explain how war influences / has influenced the character and behaviour of the male characters in the studied works. They should then provide an opinion as to whether or to what extent the men in question set a good example to other Soviet men. When writing about *Река Потудань*, candidates will discuss the effects of war on Nikita Firsov who is returning home after serving for 3 – 4 years as a Red Army private in the Civil War. He, like his comrades, has grown wiser, and learned to endure as a result of his experiences, yet Nikita's reaction to civilian life indicates that he has been seriously emotionally and psychologically damaged. On the way home to his father, he lies down to rest, nods off and dreams a terrible dream in which he is stifled to death by the warm fur of a small, plump animal. Having registered for the reserve at the Military Commissariat, Nikita walks around the town and notices how dilapidated everything now is and how the town appears to have shrunk – the result of seeing different and bigger places elsewhere. By chance he is greeted by Lyuba, a girl he used to know in happier times when she had lived comfortably with her mother, a teacher, and younger brother. Now she, a medical student, lives alone. He walks her home and finds that she has lost most of her old luxuries and that her room is no longer mysterious to him. Because Lyuba is hungry, she sleeps for a few hours. Nikita stays till she wakes, then returns home. He will not forget her as he has no one else to remember. After 2 days' rest, Nikita starts work as a joiner. He had not lost his good work habit from the army where the soldiers had mended houses, dug wells and the like for society in general. A week later he visits Lyuba with food. He watches her read, keeping the fire alight, then returns home. After this, he visits almost every day, but does not tell his father where he is going. When Lyuba's friend dies, Nikita makes a coffin for her. The couple continue to live apart as Lyuba feels she needs no distractions from her studies until they are over in the spring. Nikita accepts this, but has doubts as to whether he is good enough for her. He decides to stay away for a few days. Coincidentally, he falls ill, becoming delirious. He thinks flies are chasing round his brain. He thinks the pillow retains the scent of his mother's breath, indicating a longing for happier past times. A few days later, Lyuba finds where he lives and takes him to her house to look after him. Three weeks later, when recovered, Nikita returns to his father and work, visiting her in the evenings. Even now, their love is shown by no more than an occasional caress or kiss, strange behaviour for a couple in their 20s. When Lyuba tells him her exams are imminent, Nikita considerably leaves town to mend children's furniture in village schools so as to give her uninterrupted study time. When they finally marry, Nikita is frightened to embrace her, hides his body from her and, though sleeping next to her, avoids sex. In the morning he does the household chores like a wife. Ashamed, he stays away from his work while she goes to the hospital. He wonders how long before the ice will break and he can drown himself in the river. That evening Lyuba suggests they might have children and should plan. Nikita promises to work overtime and to make children's furniture. That night he cries in his sleep. For a while, life progresses with Lyuba working in the hospital and Nikita repairing and painting the house and other buildings. He decides not to kill himself while his wife will put up with him. He tries to keep out of her way. No work helps to dull his sorrow and, as in his childhood, he fears nights. He is clearly depressed. The children's furniture is made and painted. One morning Nikita gets up and follows a beggar to Kantemirovka where he goes to the market and simply stops thinking of Lyuba, life's problems and himself. He appears to lose the power of speech. Having been employed by the market manager to do menial work in return for food, he gradually begins to think and remember again. His feelings of loss and sorrow slowly pass. Work distracts him from memories and the desire to see his father. In summer he is sent to prison, accused of theft, but quickly found not guilty because, dumb and emaciated, he is too indifferent to the charge – he has no lust for life and no pleasure-seeking disposition. One

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day soon after, he is found by his father from whom he learns that Lyuba has attempted to drown herself. With his heart full of sorrow, Nikita runs home to his sick wife in bed. When she grabs his hands and draws him towards her, he acquires a new strength and succeeds in consummating his marriage, though he feels no great joy in it. To her question whether he will not mind living with her, he replies he is happy with her already. His breakdown appears to be over. Candidates are likely to conclude that Nikita has conquered his fears, dealt with his sexual inadequacy and, apart from running away, has behaved throughout in a kind, considerate and gentle manner to his wife.

When writing about *Летят журавли*, candidates will contrast the morally correct character and behaviour of 25 year old Boris Borozdin with that of his often morally reprehensible cousin, Mark. When war is declared, Boris and his friend, Stepan, volunteer for the army, though Boris is very obviously in love with Veronika and could well have been given an exemption from call-up. Before leaving, Boris leaves with his grandmother a toy squirrel for his girlfriend. In it is concealed a loving note of farewell which is not found till much later. Before going off to enlist, without having said goodbye in person to Veronika, Boris tells Mark to stay with the family. When Veronika finally arrives, it is too late. Her boyfriend has gone, but she has been spared the trauma of parting. Mark tells her where Boris has gone to enlist, and Veronika goes off to look for him. Amid crowds of people saying farewells, Boris appears to be looking for Veronika to come to him, but he cannot hear her calls above the noise of the crowd. Boris does not write to her from the front. One day, Veronika's parents are killed in an air raid after which Boris's father invites her to move in with them. He tells Mark to look after her to stop her brooding, and Mark promises his uncle to do what he can. Mark, a concert pianist, is seen playing the piano and complaining that were it not for the war, he would be playing in the Tchaikovsky Hall. An air raid siren is heard. Veronika refuses to go, saying she is not afraid. Mark frantically plays the piano to drown out the sound of the siren. When a bomb falls, he holds her, then kisses her. (Before her boyfriend left for the front, Mark had already made a play for her.) Veronika, moves away from him, shouting "No!" and smacking him, but he chases after her and declares his love for her. She appears to freeze. Then Mark picks her up, carries her away and rapes her. The scene cuts to Boris and Stepan whose unit has been surrounded. Boris is told he has a reconnaissance mission to find the best place to break through. He must hand in his documents. He passes his photo of Veronika to Stepan for safe-keeping. Returning to the Borozdins, a short scene shows a miserable Veronika telling her family that she and Mark are to get married. The family is shocked and disgusted. Shortly afterwards, Boris and another soldier are shown on their mission through mud and barbed wire. When Boris's partner is wounded, Boris bravely carries him along through water, but then himself gets shot. As the life ebbs away from Boris, we are shown his happy vision of his wedding to Veronika. Mark and Veronika are evacuated to Siberia where Boris's father is Chief of the Army Hospital. One day, Mark asks her to be nice to his boss, Chernov, when he comes round, though neither likes him. There is a tense atmosphere, as always. Mark asks her why she is always criticising and how he can make her happy. He appears to be making an effort. When Chernov appears, Veronika immediately leaves for work in the hospital. Mark is asked to procure some drugs from his uncle at the hospital. Later we see Mark getting ready to go out to a party. He insensitively takes Veronika's squirrel as a present "for a little boy". When Veronika comes home, she cannot find her squirrel which she wants for a little boy she has saved from an accident and has brought home. Some of her fellow flat-dwellers tell her why Mark took it. One says he is probably at Antonina's party. He occasionally visits her. Veronika runs off to find her husband. She finds him playing and singing a love song at the party. Boris's note is discovered with the squirrel, and Antonina, realising its origins, is obviously put out. Veronika arrives and reads the note, then hits Mark and leaves. At the hospital, Chernov is asking Mark's uncle for the use of transport (for Antonina's use). He suggests Mark's call-up exemption will not be renewed if he fails to cooperate. It appears Mark has offered Chernov money in the doctor's name for his exemption. When the doctor calls on Mark and Veronika, Mark is complaining that his wife has made a scene. The doctor upbraids him for thinking that others should lose life and limb for his sake.

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and asks him to explain how he has continued to be exempt from call-up. As a shocked Veronika starts to pack, saying she is renting a room, the doctor suggests that Mark should go instead. Mark is last shown in the film saying he has wanted to for ages. Though a soldier comes with news of Boris's death, Veronika does not give up hope until at a victory parade in Moscow she finally sees Stepan who hands her the photo Boris gave him to look after. One of the film's main messages is that it is Boris who has done his duty in a selfless and courageous manner, whereas Mark has behaved disgracefully in several ways. Thus the audience is provided with a positive and a negative role model.

Баллада о солдате centres around 19 year old signalman Alesha Skvortsov whom we first see on the battlefield as he disables two tanks to his obvious surprise. Alesha is modest and honest and admits to being scared when his general, calling him a hero, asks for details of what has happened. When the general tells Alesha he is putting him up for an award, the young soldier asks to be allowed to go home instead as he did not have time to say a proper goodbye to his mother and could also fix the roof at the same time. Alesha is delighted when he is given six days leave, but a combination of circumstances and his good nature conspire to limit his visit home to a matter of minutes. As he leaves the war zone, a soldier asks him to take a present of soap and a message to his wife in a town he will have to pass through. At one station, Alesha helps a one-legged man with his luggage. The disabled soldier goes to send a telegram to his wife, and because Alesha has to go looking for him when their train comes in, they both miss it. Once aboard another train, Alesha is surrounded by the crude banter of other soldiers, but this is alien to his character and he does not join in. Later, at the disabled soldier's stop, Alesha keeps the man company until his wife, whom he fears will reject him, turns up to collect him. The signalman now has to bribe a guard to hitch a ride on a military goods train full of hay. Having fallen asleep, he wakes to the sight of a girl who has just got on. When she notices him, she is frightened he will rape her and tries to jump off, but Alesha restrains her, saving her from hurting herself. Gradually during the journey, Shura comes to trust him. When the guard opens the door to look for something, the two cuddle in the hay to keep out of sight, but after all is clear, she pushes him away. Alesha does not force himself on her, however. When Shura tells him she is thirsty, Alesha leaves the train at a station to find water. He returns to find the guard trying to get Shura, a civilian, to leave the train. Alesha objects, and there is a brief fight, though he resolves the matter by offering the guard more tins of meat. When, however, the lieutenant arrives and spots the tins, the guard is punished with 5 days detention, and the two are allowed to continue their journey during which there is a discussion about platonic friendship between men and women. Alesha states that he has had such a relationship and that it is wholly different from love. When Alesha again leaves the train for water, on this occasion he does not return in time and has to hitch a lift. On the way he has to push the truck out of water-logged pot-holes. Reunited with Shura, the two go to deliver the soap, but find the building a smoking ruin. They are then directed to where the soldier's wife is now living, apparently with another man. Disgusted, Alesha does not linger. Having left, he returns to retrieve the soap which he then takes to the soldier's father. This takes up yet more time. The two resume their journey. At the next stop, Shura has reached her destination. Both appear sad at being separated as Alesha continues on his journey to Sosnovka. This train is hit by shells, and Alesha helps to rescue passengers from the burning vehicle. As he is not eligible for the next train, he takes a raft to reach a road where he eventually hitches a lift to his village. His reunion is further delayed as his mother is far off in the fields and takes a while to get home. Their brief meeting and embrace are very poignant. Close-up shots, pained expressions and tears from the mother, together with a silent backing track, reinforce the emotional atmosphere. Candidates are likely to agree with the narrator that Alesha, because of his character and actions, might well have become a wonderful citizen, for he is indeed a model example of a Russian soldier.

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- (b) «И в военное, и в мирное время любовь поддерживает людей больше всего». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, является ли изображение любви в этих произведениях реалистичным?

Candidates should first consider whether or to what extent they agree that in the works studied it is love which sustains people above all else in times of war and peace. They should then go on to offer an opinion as to whether the depiction of love is a realistic one. When writing about *Река Потудань*, candidates may disagree as to whether love between Nikita and Lyuba is a force for good or a destructive force with nearly fatal consequences. Nikita's sexual inadequacy at first has a certain childish charm for Lyuba, but her initial acceptance of the absence of physical love when set against Nikita's considerate behaviour soon turns into a deep sorrow when she expresses her desire to have children, thus initiating Nikita's breakdown and his sudden flight from home. Her attempt at drowning herself further illustrates the deep distress that love causes her. Though Nikita finally consummates the marriage on his return to his wife from Kantemirovka, his lack of pleasure in sex does not augur well for enduring happiness. Answers might suggest that for both Nikita and Lyuba, it is work which provides both escape and fulfilment, thus providing them with a purpose in life. Mention might be made of the love of Nikita's father for his son which provides him with a reason for living. There is likely to be a range of opinion as to whether the young couple's relationship is realistic or not. When writing about *Летят журавли*, candidates are likely to suggest that it is Boris's love for Veronika which supports him through the trials of battle as much as the belief in the cause he has volunteered to fight for. The gift of the squirrel, the contents of his note, the keeping of Veronika's photograph, his thought of his wedding and future happiness as he dies all illustrate this. For Veronika, it is the prospect of his safe return and of a letter from him, which sustain her through the death of her parents, her rape by Mark and subsequent unhappy marriage to him, her evacuation to Siberia and her tireless work in the hospital with the wounded. Her hope for Boris's safe return continues even when she is told that he has been killed, and it is only when she receives confirmation from Stepan that she can accept the harsh reality of his passing and begin to move on. For Mark, it is his music, his self-interest and determination to avoid danger which appear to sustain him as much as his lust and professed love for Veronika. Candidates are likely to suggest that the depiction of love between Boris and Veronika is credible given the many close-ups of loving expressions, gestures and appropriate body-language in addition to the depiction of their behaviour after their separation. A variety of views might be expressed about whether Veronika's marriage to Mark is a realistic consequence of the rape and whether his sudden exit from their marriage is also credible, given his attempts to make a go of the relationship. In discussing *Баллада о солдате*, candidates might consider the love between a mother and her son, clearly expressed in word and action, as a means for the former to bear Alesha's absence and the latter to deal with the trials of battle. Mention will be made of Pavlov's being sustained by the love for his wife to whom he sends a valuable present, care of Alesha. The importance of love as a means of getting through danger and difficulty is emphasised when Pavlov's father tells Alesha to say to his son that all is well and that his wife is waiting for him. His grandchild's wincing look at this lie – Elizaveta has taken up with another man – and Alesha's agreement to do this, reinforces this message. Candidates are likely to agree that the facial expressions and body language of Alesha and Shura as they travel realistically indicate mutual attraction and growing love. This can be described in detail along with an account of the things he does to help her. Some may question the realism of the apparent innocence of the 19 year old soldier and his belief in the existence of platonic friendships between young people.

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4 СОВЕТСКИЙ БЫТ ПРИ ХРУЩЁВЕ И БРЕЖНЕВЕ

- (a) Объясните, как один главный персонаж из каждого из выбранных вами произведений справляется с тяжёлой проблемой, неприятным событием или кризисом в жизни. Учитывая исторический контекст, вы думаете, что эти персонажи хорошо справляются со своими трудностями?

Candidates should explain how one main character from each of the selected works deals with a serious problem, unpleasant event or crisis in their lives. In the second part of the question, they should express an opinion as to whether or to what extent the chosen characters cope with their problems, taking into account the historical context in which the works are set. Candidates should be able to provide background information about the social, attitudinal, administrative or political problems featured in the works in order to assess the reactions of their chosen characters to the situations in which they find themselves. If writing about *Неделя как неделя*, candidates are likely to focus on society's expectations of Soviet women and the problems experienced by Ol'ga as a working woman with two small children. If writing about *Обмен*, candidates will likely concentrate on Soviet housing conditions, the complicated bureaucratic system for exchanging flats and the administrative and personal problems experienced by Dmitriev in organising the three-way exchange involving his mother. If writing about the film, candidates will probably focus on the treatment of women by Soviet men and the role of women in Soviet society in the context of Katya's date-rape, her being subsequently abandoned by Rudol'f, the success she makes of her life, though she is a single mother, and her assenting to the role of subservient female in order to attain domestic happiness with Gosha. See Q4B for detail.

- (b) «В СССР человечество шло вперёд!» Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, создатели этих произведений довольны обществом, которое они изображают?

Candidates should first describe the society depicted in the studied works before expressing an opinion as to whether or to what extent humanity appears to be moving forward in the USSR. The best answers will cover society in terms of material conditions and human behaviour. Candidates should then offer an opinion as to whether or to what extent the authors and director are content with the society being depicted. The narrator of *Неделя как неделя* is 26 year old Ol'ga Voronkova, a junior research scientist in 1960s Moscow. Married to the loving, but slightly lazy Dima, the young woman struggles with the double burden of doing an intellectually demanding job and performing the role of housewife and mother to two very young children. Over the typical week described in her diary, Ol'ga is frequently exhausted, occasionally tearful and often hassled by menial domestic concerns, her children's tantrums and apparently meaningless political duties which have no direct bearing on her work in a laboratory with inadequate facilities and looming deadlines. However, when contrasted with the lives of her female colleagues, Ol'ga's life is good. Her husband is faithful, loving, and supportive, they inhabit a comfortable modern flat in a new district, and for all its ups and downs, the family unit functions well. Candidates are likely to conclude that although Dima has an obvious lazy streak or a greater acceptance of child-instigated household disorder, he is as near to a model Soviet husband as one could imagine. Though the lion's share of domestic tasks falls on Baranskaya's heroine, Dima is prepared to help with some of the childcare and minor domestic tasks and is always ready to step in when it is clear that his wife cannot cope. Candidates should point out that it was the general expectation of Soviet society that women worked both inside and outside the home, whereas men were not really expected to do very much to help after a day's work. Dima further grows in stature when compared with the partners of Ol'ga's colleagues, for he is sober, never violent and, though there are sometimes quarrels, these are never really damaging to the couple's relationship or happiness. Dima is at first in favour of his wife having an abortion when the couple, with one child already, find themselves struggling to make ends meet, but

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once Ol'ga has decided she wants to have the baby, he quickly accepts her point of view and assumes his responsibilities in a positive manner. On the other hand, Shura's husband drinks, Lyusya Markoyan's husband has been nagging her for five years to stop work to care for her child and have yet another and the partner of Blonde Lyusya had returned to his original family on hearing his girlfriend was pregnant. Baranskaya would appear to be saying that Soviet marriage can be a positive experience for both men and women, though for many it contains much that is unfair to women. Likewise, Ol'ga's gentle questioning of the failures and weaknesses of the system indicate the author's opinion that though there is much to praise in Soviet society, there is still considerable room for improvement. When writing about *Обмен*, candidates will probably mainly focus on the relationship between Dmitriev and Lena, showing how this extremely strong woman comes to dominate her husband, gradually pushing out of him the values of the intellectual, Socialist, idealist Dmitrievs and replacing them with those of the materialistic, insensitive and philistine Lukyanovs. Though Lena is an intelligent woman, a translator of English with a prestigious job, she has demonstrated during her 14 years of marriage to Dmitriev that she lacks all scruples. She is a natural survivor with the necessary determination to succeed in a fundamentally corrupt society where the ability to use contacts to obtain goods, services and favours is vital. Described as a bulldog gripping her wishes firmly between her teeth until they have become a reality, Lena uses her skills to obtain a good job in an institute near the best shops, get a place for her daughter in a prestigious specialist language school, make her husband appropriate his friend's job and use her terminally-ill mother-in-law, whom she dislikes, as a tool to acquire a much-needed larger flat. By legally moving the old lady in, the young couple will inherit her living space on her death. Always ready to monopolise and manipulate weaker, more sensitive and morally upright individuals, Lena is depicted as a corrupting influence on her husband whom she pushes to the point of moral bankruptcy. Sexually enslaved by Lena, he is gradually infected by her materialism, insensitivity and determination to feather her own nest at the expense of others. Candidates will probably conclude that the author is highly critical of Lena's values as these are constantly being contrasted with those of past and present members of the Dmitriev family. Yet, however desirable traditional Socialist values may be, they appear to be no longer adequate for sustaining a good life in Brezhnev's Russia. Men'shov's film shows the differing fortunes of Tonya, Lyuda and Katya, three provincial girls living together in a women's residence in Moscow. Katya takes the opportunity to house-sit for a relative, a professor with a sumptuous flat where she and Lyuda, posing as the professor's daughters, entertain a range of intellectual men. Lyuda is attracted to Gurin, a famous ice-hockey player while Katya falls for Rudol'f, a cameraman who believes that TV will become the most important art form and change the world. After meeting Rudol'f's pretentious mother and being filmed on TV, Katya reluctantly has sex, as a result of which she becomes pregnant, a fact revealed at the wedding of Tonya to the solid Kolya. When Rudol'f discovers Katya is a mere factory worker, he abandons her, blaming her for her pregnancy and saying she had deceived him. His mother offers Katya money to keep away, but this she firmly refuses: she can earn her own living. Twenty years later, Katya is shown waking up in a nice flat where her daughter, Aleksandra, lives with her. She is now the director of a large factory where she is shown firmly in charge of a range of male subordinates. Lyuda, lonely and searching for a partner, has been divorced from Gurin for seven years. He has become an alcoholic and still bothers her for money to feed his habit. Tonya is still happily married to Kolya with whom she has several children. Katya is having an affair with Volodya, a married man, but is really still searching for the right man to come along. One day, as she is returning from Tonya's dacha, she meets a man whose dirty shoes lead to a conversation and a new relationship. Katya is impressed by the tributes made to him by his friends at a picnic, his willingness to cook and his general demeanour, though she ignores his traditional views: men should always earn more than women and a marriage cannot work if the woman is in a position of superiority. When Rudol'f turns up to film an interview with Katya at the factory, neither at first recognises the other. When they do become aware of their identities, both remain cool during the filming. Later Rudol'f pesters Katya into meeting her. He is twice divorced, has no children and wants to see his daughter. Katya tells him it is too late for him to help bring up their child. His

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leaving had made her stronger. He should not contact her again. Meanwhile, Gosha helps Aleksandra's boyfriend to chase off a group of young men led by her jealous ex. Later at dinner, Katya thanks Gosha, but says he should not have done it: words are better than fists. In future he should respect her wishes when it comes to her daughter. Gosha informs her that if ever she uses that tone of voice to him again, he will never again set foot in the house. From now on *he* will make the decisions, for he is the man. As Katya apologises, the bell rings. It is Rudol'f, come to see his daughter. He praises Katya's interview and tells her that they want to make a documentary about her rise from worker to director. Gosha is shocked and decides to leave. Katya is distraught, but now tells Aleksandra who Rudol'f really is. A week later, Kolya tracks down Gosha in a communal flat. He is drinking. After a drunken discussion, Kolya brings Gosha back to a dejected and submissive Katya. Candidates can comment on the apparent anti-feminist message that though women may well get on in their careers, traditional roles must be assumed in the home. Men and women must know their place, and happiness can only be achieved with the man in charge. Women can be single, strong and successful, but this state is no match for the stable nuclear family, led by a father figure. As well as discussing the specific behaviour of various characters, candidates may allude to the generally improving living conditions in town and country, the influence of technology in people's lives, social problems (alcoholism, domestic violence, loneliness, the demographic crisis) attitudes to sex, marriage, abortion, divorce, bribery and corruption, the housing crisis etc.

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5 ПОСЛЕВОЕННАЯ ЖЕНСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА 20-го ВЕКА

- (a) Какую картину домашней жизни рисуют создатели выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, эта картина идеализирована?

Candidates should describe and analyse the image of family life presented in the texts, assessing whether or to what extent it is idealised. It is likely that candidates will agree that the images of family life in *Свой круг* and *Вдовий пароход* are far from idealised, though they may be divided about the credibility of the ménage à trois in *Сонечка*. In *Свой круг* we are presented with a depiction of family life that is chaotic, unstable and in many ways destructive. The story is an account of an unnamed first-person female narrator suffering from a terminal kidney disease and starting to go blind. The narrator, the mother of little Alesha, recalls the personalities and antics of those in her crowd, the friends who have been meeting up on Fridays over many years to relieve the stresses and strains of professional and everyday late-Soviet life through alcohol, sex and intellectual conversation. We are presented with a description of a range of male and female characters with positive and negative characteristics. Alcohol often sexually disinhibits the men (e.g. Zhora who is easily aroused and acts on it). The women often bitch at one another as they make advances at each other's husbands or partners (e.g. when Lenka sits on Kolya's lap, the narrator remarks that Marisha is jealous on account of her [the narrator's] husband). We are provided with information about what has happened to various people over time (e.g. the once debauched Zhora has become a senior researcher with a brilliant career ahead of him and now has three children, but still is in love with Marisha). At the time of the main action, the narrator's husband Kolya has just married Serzh's wife Marisha. The narrator's parents have both died in a single winter and she herself is contemplating her own mortality. She invites her crowd to her and her ex-husband's place for an Easter celebration. In the past her parents would have taken Alesha to the dacha. Now they are dead, she tells the "grown-up" seven year old he will have to go and spend the night there himself. His father appears to dislike him, rarely visiting, and when doing so, criticising the boy and shouting at him for messy eating and smacking him for wetting the bed. Because of her illness, the narrator seems indifferent to the rough treatment her son is suffering from his father. The guests arrive, and all drink large amounts. The narrator makes a number of tactless and pointed remarks to some of the guests, including Marisha, even suggesting she move into her flat while she and Alesha can live where Marisha tells them to. She shows the guests forms of application to have Alesha put in an orphanage. Kolya reads them, then tears them up. The narrator claims not to know where the boy is, though it is after midnight. As some of the drunken guests take their leave, Alesha is found sitting asleep outside on the stairs. The narrator shouts at him, smacking him and giving him a bleeding nose. Reproaching the boy for being there, she continues to hit him blindly so that the others grab and restrain her. Kolya takes his son away with him. We learn that the narrator had calculated perfectly: though the guests could do terrible things to each other, none of them could stand seeing child-abuse as children were sacred to them. She tells the reader that the whole crowd will now look after Alesha and love him, showering him with treats and ensuring his successful path through life. Kolya and Marisha will be ideal parents and that Alesha will even live in his old flat since she will soon be dead. Thus the narrator is seen to have tricked her "friends" into looking after her son and providing him with a far better life in a surrogate family after her death. *Вдовий пароход* provides us with an account of the lives of five women, sharing a communal flat in Moscow from the time of World War 2 into the Brezhnev era. The story is mainly told from the points of view of Anfisa and Ol'ga, yet we learn also of the lives of Kapa, Pan'ka and Ada. Candidates may mention the poor, cramped living conditions and the inevitable squabbles resulting from living in these, but should concentrate on the women's general suffering because of their husbands and lovers who die, abandon them, beat them up, mistreat them when drunk and generally expect to be placed on a pedestal. Anfisa's illegitimate son, Vadim, inflicts considerable worry and unhappiness on his mother and other members of the household through his selfish and ungrateful behaviour to those who dote on him. Grekova's female characters,

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despite being generally mentally and spiritually robust, often appear to expect and condone selfish and antisocial behaviour. When Anfisa's husband drinks too much, the narrator remarks that there is nothing to forgive. He is only a man, after all. Anfisa's real love for Vadim's father is not reciprocated. He simply uses her for casual sex in the same way as Vadim uses his classmate and the nurse in the Virgin Lands. Domestic violence is considered normal. Kapa thinks Anfisa's husband will beat her when he learns about her baby. Vadim hits Svetka, claiming he loves her. Men are even excused a sloppy appearance. When talking to Vadim about her first husband, Ada says that being stout does not harm a man, whereas a woman has to watch her figure. Later, Ada weeps, remembering her past which contained no love, only men and abortions. However, though the male characters in *Вдовий пароход* commit many terrible acts, few are essentially complete monsters. Fedor not only accepts Vadim as his son, but even forms a strong emotional bond with him and forgives his wife for her transgressions. He beats Anfisa only once when he wants money from her for more drink, an action she regards as better than she deserves. Vadim, the epitome of the selfish, ungrateful spoiled child, atones to a large extent for his monstrous behaviour by caring for his mother during her last illness and seeing to her every need. In *Сонечка* we are presented with the life-story of the eponymous heroine from childhood until old age. Sonya, a bookish librarian, is proposed to by a disgraced artist, some twenty years her senior, two days after encountering him in her place of work. Sonya is content to follow Robert Viktorovich, a fellow Jew, to his place of exile, a primitive village in Bashkiria, where the couple live out World War 2 in wedded bliss, despite the privations of his assigned environment. In the late 1940s and 1950s they move around with their daughter, Tanya, gradually getting closer to Moscow and a civilised way of life. Their spacious Moscow house is near an artists' colony, and Robert quickly establishes himself as a central figure. Family life for the couple is stable, happy and wholesome. However, Tanya, now a melancholic teenager, develops an excessive interest in boys. Her school work suffers, and her father transfers her to night school. Here she makes friends with Yasya, an abused Polish orphan who since the age of twelve had made her way in life by giving men sex. Invited to a New Year party at Tanya's, Yasya spends the night and in the morning offers herself to her host. Thus begins a passionate affair. Eventually Sonya realises what is going on, yet does not break from her husband who continues to do up the new flat they are forced by the local Housing Department to move into. Though initially devastated, Sonya comes to accept the situation, admiring Yasya's beauty and glad that this young woman has revived Robert's interest in painting. After Robert's sudden death, the two women are united in grief. Both Tanya and Yasya end up living comfortable and interesting lives abroad, but Sonya remains in Russia to tend her husband's grave. With Robert's apparently sudden transformation from loving supportive spouse to sinful adulterer, family life changes suddenly and for ever. For some, Sonya's acceptance of the ménage à trois and her continued loyalty to Robert after his death may seem idealised or just puzzling. Yet others may find this normal within the Soviet, Russian or wider context.

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- (b) «Этим детям повезло с матерями». Прочитав выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, женщины в этих текстах хорошо или плохо влияют на будущее своих детей?

Candidates should analyse the characters of the mothers in the studied texts, discussing the nature of their relationships with their children during the course of their lives and assessing whether or to what extent the children are lucky to have them or not. They should then provide an opinion as to whether or to what extent the mothers or mother figures through their actions or example influence their children's futures well or badly. Though minor characters who are mothers may be mentioned, candidates are likely to concentrate on main characters. *Свой круг* is an account of an unnamed first-person female narrator suffering from a terminal kidney disease and starting to go blind. The narrator, a mother, lives with her young son Alesha. At the time of the main action, the narrator's husband Kolya has just married Serzh's wife Marisha. The narrator's parents have both died in a single winter and she herself is contemplating her own mortality. She invites her crowd of friends to her and her ex-husband's place for an Easter celebration. In the past, her parents would have taken Alesha to the dacha. Now they are dead, she tells the "grown-up" seven year old he will have to go and spend the night there himself. His father appears to dislike him, rarely visiting, and when doing so, criticising the boy and shouting at him for messy eating and smacking him for wetting the bed. Because of her illness, the narrator seems indifferent to the rough treatment her son is suffering from his father. The guests arrive, and all drink large amounts. The narrator makes a number of tactless and pointed remarks to some of the guests, including Marisha, even suggesting she move into her flat while she and Alesha can live where Marisha tells them to. She shows the guests forms of application to have Alesha put in an orphanage. Kolya reads them, then tears them up. The narrator claims not to know where the boy is, though it is after midnight. As some of the drunken guests take their leave, Alesha is found sitting asleep outside on the stairs. The narrator shouts at him, smacking him and giving him a bleeding nose. Reproaching the boy for being there, she continues to hit him blindly so that the others grab and restrain her. Kolya takes his son away with him. We learn that the narrator had calculated perfectly: though the guests could do terrible things to each other, none of them could stand seeing child-abuse as children were sacred to them. She tells the reader that the whole crowd will now look after Alesha and love him, showering him with treats and ensuring his successful path through life. Kolya and Marisha will be ideal parents and Alesha will even live in his old flat since she will soon be dead. Thus the narrator is seen to have tricked her "friends" into looking after her son and providing him with a far better life than he would otherwise have had after her death. Her apparent cruelty has, in fact, been a great kindness. She has tarnished her own reputation in order to provide the best for her child's future. Most will conclude that this is a selfless and praiseworthy act, given the attitude of her former husband. *Вдовий пароход* provides us with an account of the lives of five women, sharing a communal flat in Moscow from the time of World War 2 into the Brezhnev era. The story is mainly told from the points of view of Anfisa and Ol'ga, yet we learn also of the lives of Kapa, Pan'ka and Ada. We are shown the stoicism, heroism and devotion to duty of the characters in the many difficult routine situations and dangerous predicaments which Soviet women of that time had to endure. While serving as a nurse at the front, Anfisa becomes pregnant, giving birth to an illegitimate son, Vadim. Abandoned by her lover and having endured a difficult delivery, Anfisa at once becomes devoted to him. He has mastered her like no other. Once returned to civilian life, Anfisa continues to spoil her son as do the other women living in the flat. This turns out to be a mistake as Vadim grows into a haughty, insolent, arrogant and badly behaved boy, inflicting worry and unhappiness on his mother and other members of the household through his selfish and ungrateful behaviour to those who dote on him. The boy does not do his best at school, can be cruel to animals, is prone to tantrums and does not allow his mother a life of her own, showing great jealousy when an old flame shows interest in her. As a young man, Vadim grows to be a stranger to his mother and generally shows contempt for women. During a casual affair with Svetka on a sovkhoz, he hits the girl when she tells him she finds another boy more

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interesting, though later when he has to obtain money from Ada for an abortion for Svetka, he is appalled at the mess he has got into. With mediocre school grades, Vadim only enters higher education after his mother pleads his case with the dean of an institute. A reluctant student, Vadim is soon out of his depth, hates his studies, lives a wild student life, comes bottom of the class and leaves. This causes his mother deep distress, sending her into decline. Vadim spends two years away in the Virgin Lands. There he meets a nurse whom he uses for casual sex, though at this time he also starts to feel the beginnings of a spiritual awakening, thinking more of his mother. When Anfisa has a stroke, Vadim returns and substantially atones for his previous behaviour by caring for her during her last illness, seeing to her every need. Candidates might well take the view that had Anfisa brought up Vadim differently, the two might well have had a better relationship and that Vadim would have been a better person and a more diligent student with the prospect of greater success in life. In *Сонечка* we are presented with the life-story of the eponymous heroine from childhood until old age. Sonya, a bookish librarian, is proposed to by a disgraced artist, some twenty years her senior, two days after encountering him in her place of work. Sonya is content to follow Robert Viktorovich, a fellow Jew, to his place of exile, a primitive village in Bashkiria, where the couple live out World War 2 in wedded bliss, despite the privations of his assigned environment. Shortly after their arrival in Bashkiria, Sonya gives birth to a much wanted little girl. In the late 1940s and 1950s they move around with their daughter, Tanya, gradually getting closer to Moscow and a civilised way of life. Their spacious Moscow house is near an artists' colony, and Robert quickly establishes himself as a central figure. Tanya, now a melancholic teenager, disinterested in the books her mother reads to her, develops an excessive interest in boys. Her school work suffers, and her father transfers her to night school. Here she makes friends with Yasya, an abused Polish orphan who since the age of twelve had made her way in life by giving men sex. Invited to a New Year party at Tanya's, Yasya spends the night and in the morning offers herself to her host. Not knowing what has just happened between her husband and Yasya, Sonya suggests to Robert that the girl should move in with them, for Sonya feels a need to have more children to be faithful to her Jewish heritage. After a hiatus of some weeks, a passionate affair begins between Robert and Yasya. Eventually, Sonya realises what is going on, yet does not break from her husband who continues to do up the new flat they are forced by the local Housing Department to move into. Though initially devastated, Sonya comes to accept the situation, admiring Yasya's beauty and glad that this young woman has revived Robert's interest in painting. Tanya, being self-absorbed, cares little for her mother's feelings and goes off to pursue her own life with Alesha in Leningrad. After Robert's sudden death, Sonya and Yasya are united in grief. Both Tanya and Yasya end up living comfortable and interesting lives abroad, but Sonya remains in Russia to tend her husband's grave, despite being invited continuously by her "daughter", Yasya, to live in Paris. Candidates can comment on Sonya's magnanimity in relation to Yasya, how she does nothing to spoil her future life and, how her relationship with her adopted daughter seems stronger than that with her biological one. For some, her example of forgiveness will be praiseworthy, while others will find her behaviour stupid and demeaning.

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Part II: Texts

Candidates are to attempt **one** question from Part II: Texts and will write their answers in English as these texts are to be studied primarily from a literary point of view.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 25 for content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 15 marks]
- 5 for structure [AO3]

Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to engage with literary texts and to produce answers which show knowledge, understanding and close analysis of the text. A more sophisticated literary approach is expected than for answers to Part I. Great value is placed on detailed knowledge and understanding of the text; on the construction of an argument which engages the terms of the question and on a close and sophisticated analysis of sections of the text pertinent to the terms of the question. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotation: quotation for its own sake is not useful, although it will gain credit if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered in the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and understanding and especially any signs of analysis and organisation.

In the marking of these questions specific guidelines will be given for each essay, agreed by the examination team.

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Part II: Texts – Content		
23–25	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
19–22	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points, well illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the text.
15–18	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
11–14	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes a fair number of relevant points not always linked and/or developed.
6–10	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
1–5	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the text. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated. OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the text.
0		No rewardable content.

Part II: Texts – Structure		
5	<i>Very Good</i>	A well structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
4	<i>Good</i>	A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
3	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
2	<i>Weak</i>	Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
1	<i>Poor</i>	No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
0		No rewardable structure

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Indicative Content Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

6 Н. Гоголь, *Шинель*

- (a) **Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

Context: From roughly a quarter through the text. Akaky Akakievich, a humble, middle-aged titular councillor on a low salary of 400 roubles a year, has come to visit Petrovich, the tailor, to ask him to mend his much patched overcoat which no longer keeps out the Petersburg frosts. Petrovich is sober, gruff and likely to charge a higher than usual price for his services. The clerk, realising this, thinks to make himself scarce, but it is too late: Petrovich has spotted him.

Content: The two men greet each other, and the clerk starts to babble his request. The *skaz* narrator comments on the clerk's inarticulate manner of speech. The one-eyed tailor, who shrewdly appears to be assessing how much money his customer has with him and what state the coat is in, asks his customer what he has brought, though the coat is, in fact, one of his own. The clerk points out the coat's remaining serviceable areas, suggesting a repair would only be a small job. Petrovich makes a show of thoroughly examining the garment while taking snuff. After a suitably effective pause, Petrovich declares he cannot mend the coat as it is beyond repair. This causes the clerk's heart to sink. Candidates can comment on the characters of Akaky Akakievich and Petrovich and the significance of the coat as the title of the story.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: Candidates should describe and analyse the presence of the self-conscious *skaz* narrator in the extract, showing how he becomes a character in his own right through his comment about the clerk's incoherent manner of speech (Нужно знать, что...), his condemnatory reference to the coat as a *капот* and lack of omniscience at the identity of the general on the snuff-box lid. The effects of the balance between narration and dialogue in the extract can be examined along with the effects of the narratorial digressions (comic, retarding the pace of the action, creating a sense of the grotesque). The use of standard Russian by the clerk and the tailor as well as the narrator might also be mentioned.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can describe what befalls Akaky Akakievich in the rest of the story (his pride in his new coat, his apparent emotional awakening because of it, the tragic consequences of the robbery and the failure of those in authority to come to the aid of "the little man"). Possible interpretations of the text can be discussed, in particular the one in which the clerk falls victim to the Devil (Petrovich) who leads him astray and into destruction through his creation (the overcoat), which becomes for Akaky Akakievich a love object.

- (b) **Assess the effectiveness of *Шинель* as an example of *skaz* narration.**

Candidates should describe what is meant by *skaz* narration, then discuss Gogol's innovative use of this technique in the story, showing how effective the device is at various points of the narration as a tool to convey or obscure meaning. Gogol's hallmark is the *skaz* narrator whose unreliability, naïvety, lack of omniscience, occasional apparent poor memory, shifting narratorial focus, generalisations, circumlocution, digressions and ambiguous comments serve to confuse and entertain the reader. The best answers will show how the

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narrator, who is really a character in his own right, is instrumental in the creation of multiple interpretations of specific events in the plot and meanings for the text overall as well as in the achievement of comic effects throughout. Specific narrative techniques, features of the narrative persona and literary devices permeating the narrator's discourse may be mentioned: the use of *даже* and negative comparison to create comic alogism, self-conscious references to the reader, the story and the writing process, the narrator's habit of focusing on the grotesque, his playing with rhetorical syntax and imagery as in the pathetic passage, the use of direct speech, the balance between this and third-person narration by the narrative voice, irony, symbolism etc.

(c) 'Through the character of Akaky Akakievich, Gogol effectively reveals the inadequacies of Russian society.' Do you agree?

Candidates should consider the character of Akaky Akakievich and the events which befall him, outlining the social approach to interpreting the text. They should quote examples of implied social commentary or criticism, assessing their effectiveness in criticising the inadequacies of Russian society of the period. They are then likely to discuss whether or to what extent the social interpretation of the text holds up, given other aspects of *Шинель* such as the idiosyncratic *skaz* narrator whose lack of omniscience, contradictions and illogical presentation renders much of the narrative meaningless to the careful reader. The socially gauche clerk lives in a lowly part of town in apparent poverty with few possessions, yet he has no dependants, lives frugally and avoids a social life. The titular councillor, a copy-clerk, is often bullied at work on account of his unprepossessing appearance, his elderly landlady who allegedly beats him, and his obsession with copying, yet, for many, the pathetic passage where another clerk hears the words "я брат твой" is no indictment of society, but rather a parodic exercise in style which mocks the reader. When robbed of his new coat, an object which appears to awaken sexual desire and an interest in life in its owner, the clerk turns to the authorities for help. They prove completely useless, however, and it appears that they are being strongly criticised. The policeman (*будочник*) who saw the theft claims he thought the robbers were the clerk's friends and immediately passes the buck, telling him to go to the *надзиратель* for help. The clerk's landlady advises him not to bother with the corrupt and useless *квартирный*, but to go straight to the *частный*, but Akaky Akakievich is only received on his fourth attempt after uncharacteristically standing up for himself and demanding to see him in person. Instead of sympathy, however, the clerk is treated to accusatory questions which imply that he is at fault. The next day, a colleague advises him not to bother with the police, but to go to a certain VIP (*значительное лицо*) who would contact the right people and get things moving faster. The VIP turns out to be a caricature of a self-important official, unable to cope in his role or deal with inferiors. To show a visiting old friend how he deals with those who seek his help, the VIP keeps Akaky waiting only to shout at him when he finally agrees to see him, calling him impudent and rebellious for ignoring the correct procedure. The clerk is scared, nearly faints and has to be carried out. The next day, he succumbs to a fever as the result of which he dies. A few days after Akaky fails to come into the office, a message is sent telling him to report for work immediately. On the day after the office learns of his death, a new clerk at once takes his place. Thus we appear to be shown just how much of an insignificant cog in a wheel Akaky Akakievich actually has been. The recognition of coat thieves as the ghost of Akaky Akakievich can be explained as individuals' bad conscience at their treatment of the clerk and, by extension, a criticism of society for creating his sad way of life and doing nothing to improve it. One of Akaky's bullying colleagues seems to recognise the deceased clerk as the robber. The police continue to be totally ineffective, letting the "ghost" escape and subsequently being too frightened to arrest anyone. The VIP, who had had twinges of regret at his behaviour towards Akaky and about his subsequent death, also recognises his attacker as the humble clerk. Yet, he has been drinking and is on his way to an amorous extramarital encounter about which he probably feels guilty. Being robbed of his coat by the "ghost of Akaky" who reproaches him for his conduct can be seen as a form of self-punishment for several sins

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which lie heavy on his conscience. As a result of the robbery, the VIP becomes less overbearing, self-important and listens more to what his subordinates have to say. Thus, some social progress as well as personal reformation of character appears to take place. However, while it is possible to make a case for a social interpretation of the text, this approach is now largely discredited. Candidates are likely to conclude that while our attention may be drawn at times to negative aspects of society which are worthy of reform, the lack of realistic characterisation, the resulting lack of empathy by the reader for Akaky Akakievich and the presence of the *skaz* narrator render any socially critical interpretation at best dubious and most likely invalid. The inadequacies of Russian society are merely one facet of a text which has an altogether idiosyncratic artistic purpose.

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7 М. Лермонтов, *Герой нашего времени*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: From near the end of Максим Максимыч, the second story of Part 1. The frame-narrator, a traveller, has arrived at Vladikavkaz where he has unexpectedly encountered Maksim Maksimych, the middle-aged officer who had previously told him the story of Bela. By coincidence, Pechorin has also arrived at the posting station, but though Maksim Maksimych has got word to him that he too is there, Pechorin has made no attempt to meet his old companion. The next day Maksim Maksimych, who is hurt by this, has to see the commandant and asks the narrator to send for him if Pechorin shows up. When the narrator notices Pechorin ready to depart, but lost in thought, he goes to remind him that if he waits, he will be able to meet an old friend.

Content: Maksim Maksimych runs up to embrace him, but the man he still regards as his friend treats him coldly by simply holding out his hand. The formality of Pechorin's behaviour progressively disconcerts the staff-captain during the course of the extract as his suggestion of staying on for a couple of hours to catch up over a dinner of pheasants and first-class wine is politely but firmly rebuffed: he must be going as he is in a hurry, he has nothing to tell, but thanks him for not forgetting him. The staff-captain is upset and annoyed that Pechorin shows no wish to tell him what he has been up to since they last met, but tries to conceal his feelings. Candidates can describe the characters of Maksim Maksimych and Pechorin (See Q7B) and briefly relate the story of Bela, Pechorin's captive Chechen concubine. When the staff-captain asks him if he remembers her, Pechorin displays an interesting reaction. At first he pales and turns away, indicating shock and guilt at her sad demise, though he quickly recovers to give an affected yawn as though her violent death meant nothing to him. Pechorin's state of being disconnected from society and lacking a purpose in life is indicated by his response to the questions about what he has been up to: he has simply been bored.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: The extract opens with a description by the frame-narrator of the staff-captain running up to Pechorin. The short phrases used reflect the breathlessness of the officer. The dialogue consists largely of short phrases and broken syntax, partly because of the officer's shortness of breath, partly because of Pechorin's cold, matter-of-fact replies. The officer's response to Pechorin's initial coldness and apparently unexpected use of the *вы* form is to move from *ты* to the formal *you*. While Pechorin's language is standard educated speech, the staff-officer uses some colloquialisms which help to define his character (*неужто, подельвали*). The narrator's perspective is reflected in his perception of Pechorin's yawn and the officer's facial expression at the end of the extract.

Relevance to Rest of Work: This is the only time when the frame-narrator himself sees Pechorin and can make an objective assessment of his character and strange behaviour. Prior to the extract, the narrator has noted his penetrating sombre glance and eyes that do not laugh, a sign of an evil nature or deep sorrow. Candidates might note how our impression of Pechorin is constructed through the perspectives of the different narrators, including Pechorin himself in his journal. Immediately after the extract, he tells Maksim Maksimych that he can hold on to the papers he had been keeping for him as he does not want them. The frame-narrator asks if he can have them as the staff-captain is only going to use them for cartridge wads. Maksim Maksimych tells him he can print them if he wishes. Thus Pechorin's papers come into the hands of the frame-narrator who later publishes part of them in *Герой нашего времени*.

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(b) Consider the view that Pechorin displays the essential hallmarks of a superfluous man.

Candidates should first define the term “superfluous man” before going on to show whether or to what extent the character and behaviour of Grigoriy Aleksandrovich Pechorin match those of this classic Russian literary character type. Though the superfluous men of Russian literature vary to some extent in nature, they share the characteristic of being in a state of disharmony with the world, either rejecting it or being rejected by it. Evidence of their alienation may come from the words, thoughts and actions of these characters and / or from the words, thoughts and reactions of those whom they encounter. Candidates will likely agree with the view expressed in the question, but are required to prove its accuracy through detailed evidence from the text. Answers should refer to Pechorin’s self-analytical statements made to characters or written in his diary about his nature and how others have treated him badly in the past as justification for his actions in the main timeframe of the text. The young officer’s character is also revealed through the eyes of third-person narrators who are themselves part of the action of the novel. A detailed multi-perspective psychological portrait of this superfluous man is thus created. Pechorin is confident, courageous, charming, physically attractive and can display good taste in manners and dress. He is highly intelligent, strong willed and individualistic, but, due to the nature of Russian society, doomed to inactivity and thwarted ambition. Deprived of a focus for using his undoubted talents, he becomes bored, bitter, aimless and thoroughly dissatisfied with life. Alienated and isolated from society, Pechorin ruthlessly pursues his own goals and pleasures, delighting in his skilful manipulation of those around him and ruthlessly pushing aside those who get in his way. In *Бэла* we see him manipulate Azamat into abducting his sister for Pechorin in exchange for the opportunity to steal a wonderful horse. Bela is a reluctant bride and must be craftily wooed over a period of time before she finally gives herself to him. Once the challenge is over, however, Pechorin grows cold to the girl, spending more and more time away hunting. After her terrible death, he reacts by laughing, though we are told he was unwell for a long time and lost weight. In *Максим Максимыч* we see another example of the young man’s cold and self-centred nature when he fails to acknowledge his friendship with his former fellow officer, politely refusing to stay for dinner to catch up and claiming to be in a hurry to get away. In *Тамань* we see Pechorin become sexually infatuated with a teenage beauty. He shows himself to be vulnerable and, by getting into a boat when he cannot swim, not always to be in control of himself. He also falls victim to robbery by a blind boy, thus appearing to be a fool. His lack of concern about what befalls the old woman and blind boy again illustrates his callousness. *Княжна Мери* especially illustrates Pechorin’s skill at manipulating people for his own pleasure regardless of their own distress. Through the use of cunning psychology, he successfully woos Mary away from the cadet, Grushnitsky, at the same time resuming his relationship with a former lover, Vera, who is now married. Eventually, Vera become jealous of the younger woman and later ruins her own life by admitting her love for Pechorin to her husband. Pechorin ends up killing his younger rival in a duel, though he offers Grushnitsky the opportunity to save his life by admitting he has acted wrongly. Some may argue that, though Pechorin clearly enjoys playing games with people and their emotions, he occasionally shows himself capable of feeling guilt (e.g. towards Meri at the ball on 4 June), pity (towards Vera on same occasion), depression at how he cannot help spoil things for others (5 June), scorn for himself (14 June), regret at killing Grushnitsky (16 June) and deep sorrow when he realises he has lost Vera for ever (16 June). Others may question the sincerity of his journals since in *Фаталист* we are shown contradictory attitudes to predestination from Pechorin which might cause the reader to doubt the veracity of what he says elsewhere. Candidates need not make more than a passing reference to other superfluous men in Russian literature.

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- (c) 'In addition to its interesting characters, *Герой нашего времени* presents us with a fascinating insight into Lermontov's Russia.' Do you agree?

Candidates are likely to agree with part or all of this statement. Answers should discuss a range of characters including the main ones, assessing whether or to what extent these may be described as interesting, before exploring other aspects of the text which reveal interesting information about the historical period in which it is set (1830s). Answers will feature a brief assessment of Pechorin (See Q7B), and should cover a selection of the others: Bela, Kazbich, Azamat (Бэла), Maksim Maksimych (Максим Максимыч), the unnamed girl and Yanko (Тамань), Meri, Vera and Grushnitsky (Княжна Мери), Vulich (Фаталист). The novel's characters encompass a range of social types, revealing a variety of behaviour and attitudes well beyond the confines of the polite society of European Russia to which Pechorin belongs, depicted at the fashionable spa in Княжна Мери. We learn about the Ukrainian underclass represented by "honest smugglers" on the Black Sea, army life in remote areas of the empire, the often tense relationships between Russians and non-Russians, especially tribesmen in the Caucasus whose attitudes to women and revenge stem from their Muslim heritage. We are offered descriptions of rites of passage (wedding, funerals), celebrations, balls, soldiers' drinking and gambling sessions, the rules of courtship, the gentleman's code of honour, duelling etc. There are attractive descriptions of varied geographical settings from the Georgian military highway to the Black Sea coast, local buildings and accommodation, food, clothing, weaponry and languages spoken (Tatar in Бэла, Caucasian vocabulary in Максим Максимыч, Ukrainian in Тамань and French in Княжна Мери), all of which add local colour and help to define social types. Mention might also be made of the genres of the different component parts of the novel which are variants of those popular at the time of writing: Бэла – a romantic love story, Максим Максимыч – a combination of travel notes and character study, Тамань – a combination of travel tale, military anecdote, romantic adventure and supernatural tale, Княжна Мери – a society tale in the form of a confessional diary, Фаталист – a philosophical tale with supernatural overtones. Numerous intertextual references, both explicit and implicit, permeate the work, indicating the canon of works known to the cultured reader of the time.

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8 И. Тургенев, *Первая любовь*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: From near the start of Chapter 17. It is the day after the young narrator, Vladimir Petrovich, has observed Zinaida on her way to a secret meeting in the garden with her lover whose identity is still unknown to him. Count Malevsky, one of Zinaida's retinue of young male admirers, has called round.

Content: Malevsky is clearly bent on making mischief. He has become a regular visitor to the house, appearing to befriend the narrator's mother, Mar'ya Nikolaevna. The narrator has become aware that his father, Petr Vasil'evich, dislikes him, though at this stage he does not yet know why. (Petr Vasil'evich is in fact having an affair with Zinaida, and Malevsky could well find out and inform his wife.) The count sarcastically addresses Vladimir as "Monsieur le page", a reference to the status Zinaida has recently conferred on him. The young princess has cooled towards the narrator, ceasing to flirt with him and now treating him as a young and emotionally distant acquaintance. This Vladimir Petrovich finds hard to cope with. Malevsky teases the young man by asking him what his queen (Zinaida) is doing. Malevsky thus reminds him of his earlier comment made after Zinaida had told a story about a queen, much admired by young men, as she goes off to meet her lover by a fountain in a garden. All recognised that Zinaida appeared to have cast herself in the role of queen, and thus when Malevsky said that Vladimir would have carried her train as she went into the garden to her lover, he had been grossly offended at the insinuation that he was still a child and not himself able to be a serious candidate for the role of Zinaida's suitor. The visitor now further irritates and insults by asking the young man if he is still annoyed, then reproaches him for neglecting his duties as a page: pages should never leave their mistresses day or night as at night, with no one around, anything might happen. Vladimir should keep watch in the garden near the fountain at night. The comment that Vladimir will thank him for the information is deeply ironic, given the identity of Zinaida's lover and the crushing effect the discovery will have on the young narrator. Equally ironic is the narrator's comment that Malevsky probably attached little importance to his words and that he only wanted to tease him slightly. The narrator's youth and naïvety are clearly shown in his reactions: the blood rushes to his head, he seems to realise the significance of the garden rendez-vous, cries out «Так не бывать же этому!» but is not quite sure what he is wishing to prevent.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: The extract, like the rest of the text apart from the introduction, is narrated in the first person from the point of view of the young Vladimir Petrovich. This allows us throughout the text to experience with him a range of emotions as he reacts to events around him. Here we are presented with a lively exchange of direct speech interspersed with the narrator's direct thought and commentary on his visitor and his words as he tries to make sense of them and assess their significance. Both characters use the standard Russian indicative of their social class and educational level. This is also shown by Malevsky's use of French.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can discuss the character of Malevsky, the nature of his relationship with Zinaida as one of her retinue and his role in informing the narrator's mother of her husband's relationship with the young princess. The character of Vladimir can be discussed in the context of his love for Zinaida and his reaction to the knowledge that his father has become her lover. Mention can be made of how the main characters deal with their emotions after the affair is admitted and what happens to each subsequently. Vladimir suffers, but does not break with his father who chooses to remain with his wife despite Zinaida's request that he leave her. Zinaida is abandoned, but eventually marries, only to die suddenly in child-birth. The intensity of Vladimir's love for Zinaida is shown by the fact that he

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attempts to see her some years after their encounter and through his apparent failure to fall in love with anyone else.

(b) Assess the effectiveness of *Первая любовь* as an example of poetic realism.

Candidates should first define poetic realism before showing how the term applies to the text. At the same time there should be an evaluation of Turgenev's skill in creating this example of the genre. In a text of this nature, the setting will be recognisably part of what the reader understands as the real world. The characters are credible human beings whose behaviour and actions are regarded as possible, even if they are at the margins of conventionality. The plot will likewise be realistic and credible, and though coincidence may feature, the supernatural will not. In *Первая любовь* Turgenev sets his story in and around Moscow, creating an aura of realism through the naming of specific geographical places (e.g. Kaluzhskaya zastava, Neskuchnyy sad). The names of characters, their manners of speech, clothes, houses, belongings, interests, routines and pastimes are all recognisably part of the world of 1833 when the main action is set. This is also true of the introduction which frames it. The plot centres around the young narrator's first love affair, a realistically described infatuation with a slightly older woman who, though unusual in terms of her beauty, character and behaviour, could well exist. The shocking twist in the plot – that Zinaida becomes the lover of the narrator's father – is equally within the bounds of possibility, however rare such a situation may be. Candidates will show how Turgenev poeticises reality in the telling of the tale, using nature to assist the reader in making sense of the characters and events of the story-world. Answers should refer to specific episodes within the text to illustrate how nature is used to poeticise the story of the narrator's unrequited love for Zinaida and her unsatisfactory relationship with his father. In the final chapter the narrator describes his first love as a brief storm that quickly passed in spring (May and June when nature is bursting forth with new life and the spring of a 16 year old's life). Much of the action is centred around the gardens of the neighbouring houses where the narrator and Zinaida are temporarily living. The flora and fauna are described not simply to add colour and realism to the setting, but often to either reflect the emotions and psychological state of the main characters or to contrast with these. Turgenev makes use of the pathetic fallacy at key points in the narrative (e.g. C7- to reflect the stirrings of love in the narrator after the game of forfeits - storm, thunder muttering angrily, restless wind, forks of silent lightning which seem to answer to mute and secret fires within him; C16- the setting for Zinaida's story which mirrors her own hopes and desire for the narrator's father. In the garden of a palace on a summer night beside a splashing fountain the man whose slave she is awaits her.) At other times the natural world is contrasted with the feelings of the characters and sets their tragedies in relief. It is portrayed as a constant phenomenon which highlights the ephemerality and accidental nature of human existence, hopes and feelings (e.g. C9- During 3 weeks of seeing Zinaida, the love-struck narrator takes to sitting on a wall at the end of the garden, staring at nothing for hours amid fluttering butterflies, chirping sparrows and cawing crows. He is aware of the gentle sun and wind and tranquil monastery bells, but cannot understand the feelings within him which are at odds with the tranquillity of his environment. Later in C9, the love-sick and miserable Zinaida is depicted in a setting which is bright and green, with murmuring leaves, cooing doves, buzzing bees and blue sky. The environment around her remains detached from her state of mind, ironically beautiful and impassive.) Candidates might also point out that the nature description adds much to the pleasure of the text as it is in itself beautiful and a noteworthy component of Turgenev's prose. Passages are composed of carefully selected details describing the sounds, sights and scents of the environment in a realistic manner, but this realism is selective in order to achieve the desired artistic effect. Unpleasant images are avoided in the same way that anything banal or sordid is glossed over in the actions of the narrative. Throughout the text Turgenev uses isolated symbols and images which link the natural world to the characters and events of the story. (When first introduced to Zinaida (C4), the narrator is as happy as a fish in water. In C7, when in love, he sees Zinaida as a swan rising from the grasses of the marsh and hovering over his soul. In

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C9 Zinaida's varied feelings succeed each other like shadows of clouds on a wintery summer day and later (C9) the narrator sticks to Zinaida's house like a beetle tied by the leg. In C19 the major row between the narrator's parents and what follows is described as a thunderbolt which blasts away his sweet longing.) There are some more overt symbols with erotic overtones which have links to the characters: In C13 Zinaida requests a strong horse because she wants to gallop. The narrator's father (C21) has a horse which no other can ride. In C4 Zinaida is brought a kitten by an admirer and draws attention to its little pink tongue as it laps up milk. In C17 when the narrator waits to catch Zinaida's lover, he is standing under a solitary pine. At its foot is a mysterious path which winds its way like a serpent up to and beyond the fence into Zinaida's garden. The reference to the serpent links the setting to the Garden of Eden and mankind's choices between good and evil. Answers are likely to suggest that Turgenev has created a very effective example of the poetic realist genre.

(c) 'Petr Vasil'evich is clearly the villain of the piece: his fate is well deserved.' Do you agree?

Candidates should first describe the character of Petr Vasil'evich, the father of the young narrator, before going on to assess whether or to what extent he can be described as the villain and cause of unhappiness for the other major characters and whether or to what extent his fate is deserved. Petr Vasil'evich is about 41, some ten years younger than his wife, Mar'ya Nikolaevna. Handsome, well dressed and with an elegant figure, he is always calm, self-assured and imperious. He had not married for love, and his wife is jealous of him. It is implied that that he no longer finds her attractive or sexually accommodating. Vladimir Petrovich describes his relationship with his father as strange. He regards him as the ideal man, loving him and admiring him despite the emotional distance his father places between them. Tenderness is only ever rarely shown. Petr Vasil'evich respects his son's feelings and freedom, playing the role of an indulgent mentor and letting go to pursue his own interests when he has had enough of the boy's company. Above all, he has a desire to live, believing that one's own will and the power this gives one makes a person free. When his wife discovers from an anonymous letter that her husband is having an affair, she makes him choose between his family and his lover. This is Zinaida, a young princess with whom the young narrator is infatuated. Petr Vasil'evich opts to stay with his wife. When Vladimir discovers that it is his father who is the real object of Zinaida's affections, he is shattered. Jealousy turns to misery, though bitterness does not result and the father-son relationship survives. Later the boy observes his father hit Zinaida with a riding-crop when she appears to ask him to leave his wife whom she describes in insulting terms. Petr Vasil'evich had claimed to be a champion of free will, yet in reality this turns out to be no more than an illusion. In pursuing his affair with the young princess, Petr Vasil'evich causes unhappiness to his long-suffering wife, his son about whose first love he is clearly aware, as well as to Zinaida, the object of both their affections. The effect of his actions on the narrator is clearly profound and long-lasting, for Vladimir Petrovich never goes on to marry. Some may condemn Petr Vasil'evich for his apparently immoral behaviour, while others may consider he redeems himself by deciding in the end to do the "morally correct thing" and remain with his wife with whom he is not in love. Others will decide that he displays weakness for not following his heart and creating a new life for himself with someone who adores him. Though capable of infidelity and cruelty to his wife, son and lover, he seems to have a sense of moral duty to his family, a genuine respect for his wife in particular as well as a lasting love for Zinaida and concern for her well-being. It appears to be her fate which causes him emotional and physical distress and leads finally to his death from a stroke at the young age of 42. The stroke is brought on by a letter from Zinaida which uncharacteristically upsets him. Eight months after his last encounter with the girl, Petr begs a favour from his wife, breaking down in tears as he does so. In his final letter to his son, Petr urges him to beware the love of women. Following his death, his widow sends Zinaida a considerable sum of money, presumably the favour her husband was asking for. Candidates will be divided as to whether

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he deserves his fate. Some might also cast Zinaida as villain since she is clearly aware that her lover is married and that his son is infatuated with her. It is also possible to argue that love is a complicated emotion over which one has little control and that in matters of the heart there are no villains, only consequences with which one must live and make the best of.

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9 Л. Толстой, *Смерть Ивана Ильича*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: From near the middle of the first chapter. Following the announcement of Ivan Il'ich's death, some of his former colleagues from the Law Courts have gone round to his house to pay their respects to his widow, Praskov'ya Fedorovna and their family, though they consider the visit a tiresome demand of propriety. Petr Ivanovich had studied law with the deceased. Viewing the body, he has felt a sense of discomfort at the reminder of his own mortality and wishes to join his friends that evening for a game of cards to re-establish a sense of normality. Shortly before the service is to begin, Praskov'ya Fedorovna asks to speak privately to Petr Ivanovich in the drawing-room decorated to the taste of Ivan Il'ich and crammed with items chosen by him. The solemnity of the feelings displayed is interrupted by a farcical moment as Petr sits down on a low pouffe with springs which behave erratically. The lace of the widow's shawl catches on the carved edge of the table. Petr Ivanovich twice gets up to help her detach the shawl and sits down on the pouffe which makes noises and pushes him around in an inappropriately undignified fashion.

Content: Petr Ivanovich is disconcerted as a result of the incident with the shawl and the pouffe as his display of appropriately despondent feeling has been spoiled. The widow's tears cease when the butler brings the news that her husband's proposed plot will cost 200 roubles. This suggests that she is much more in control of her emotions than she wishes people to believe. Assuming the air of a victim, and trying to gain the sympathy of her guest, she states that it is all very hard for her. She is nevertheless able to discuss with the butler the prices of various plots in a detailed manner. Clearly, what grief she has for her husband's passing has not impaired her ability to deal with financial and practical matters in a prudent manner. This impression is strengthened by her noticing that her guest's cigarette ash is about to fall on the table and immediately passing him an ashtray. Praskov'ya Fedorovna goes on to say to her guest that attending to practical affairs relating to her late husband, if not a consolation, is certainly a distraction. However, appearing to be not quite up to sustaining her composure, in order to win sympathy, she takes out her handkerchief, as though about to cry, but manages to say in a calm voice that there is a matter she wishes to discuss with him. This later turns out to be a request for information as to how to maximise the amount of money she can obtain from the government as a result of her husband's death. Once she learns that there is no way to increase the amount she knows about already, she just wants her guest to take his leave. The quivering of the springs under Petr Ivanovich reintroduces humour to the scene, breaking the display of false feeling and reducing our sympathy for the widow. This is compounded after her description of her husband's screams and suffering during the last 3 days of his life when she selfishly says that she cannot understand how she bore it, as if her emotional suffering could be anything compared with the physical suffering of Ivan Il'ich.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: The extract consists of omniscient third-person narration interrupted by the direct speech of the two characters who use a register appropriate to their social station – standard educated Russian. The narrative voice appears to be objective and matter-of-fact, but closer inspection shows there to be a critical tone which interprets the characters' actions, body language, tone of voice and facial expressions negatively, (e.g. Petr is described as sitting *насупившись* while Praskov'ya looks *с видом жертвы*).

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can briefly outline the plot leading up to the death of Ivan Il'ich at the very end of the text with some reference to the eponymous hero's spiritual transformation. The character of Praskov'ya Fedorovna can be described and the nature of

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her troubled relationship with her husband over the course of their life together might be analysed. The themes of the displaying of false feeling, the difference between the sentiments of words expressed and words actually spoken and the reluctance of people to express themselves honestly for the sake of social convention and propriety even among close relatives, can be discussed. The character of Petr Ivanovich can be touched upon, especially in respect of the self-interest displayed by him on learning of the death of Ivan Il'ich, for the new vacancy results in a shuffling of posts, and Petr Ivanovich can now apply for his brother-in-law's transfer from Kaluga.

(b) Describe the character of Gerasim. Analyse the function of this character in *Смерть Ивана Ильича*.

Candidates should first describe the character of Gerasim, outlining his role in the plot. They should then discuss the significance of the character in symbolic terms in relation to the other characters, illustrating how this aids our understanding of the text's meaning. Gerasim is a young peasant employed by the Golovin family to wait at table and perform menial tasks for his master, the dying Ivan Il'ich. Described as a: "чистый, свежий, раздобревший на городских харчах молодой мужик", he is "всегда весёлый, ясный". He is portrayed as the embodiment of Russian peasant virtues and values, and as such is lauded by the narrator through his selfless behaviour and reactions to Ivan Il'ich's illness and death. For Gerasim, death is simply "Божья воля. Все там же будем". Always simply yet smartly dressed, Gerasim is consistently polite and helpful, obeying his master's every whim, never complaining at the unpleasant task of helping Ivan use the commode or the tedium of letting him rest his legs on his shoulders to relieve his discomfort. The health of Gerasim's strong, youthful muscular body soothes Ivan, while the observation of health in the other characters offends him. Because of the peasant's straightforward attitude to life and death, he proves an immense comfort to the dying man due to his acceptance of death as a natural part of life, about which one should have no complaint. It is only Gerasim who does not lie about Ivan's condition and prospects of recovery. It is really only Gerasim who appears to understand his situation and to feel for him. It is therefore natural that Ivan prefers to have his servant sitting with him when close to death rather than his wife. In looking after his master so kindly, Gerasim is hoping that one day, when it is his turn to die, someone will do the same for him. Though the character of the peasant is only a minor one in terms of the plot, its function is highly significant in terms of its symbolic value, pointing the reader's way to what is, for Tolstoy, the correct attitude to death. Answers should show how the major and other minor characters, with perhaps the exception of Ivan's schoolboy son, are all portrayed as conventional members of society enslaved by conformity and respectability and governed by hypocrisy and self-interest. They are neither able to accept the reality of death nor display genuine pity for Ivan who is clearly approaching a terrible end. For example, Petr Ivanovich (C1) thinks the warning on the face of the dead Ivan Il'ich does not apply to him while Praskov'ya Fedorovna and her family, when going off to the theatre, by falling silent and then breaking it, betray their guilt at leaving Ivan behind and their failure to face the reality of death with him, instead indulging in superficial conversation (C8).

(c) 'In terms of our understanding of Tolstoy's message, the narrative structure of *Смерть Ивана Ильича* is particularly effective.' Do you agree?

Candidates should first describe the narrative structure of the text before going on to discuss whether or to what extent they consider it effective. The povest' consists of 12 chapters: the first describes certain events after Ivan Il'ich has died on 4 February 1882, the second consists of a summary of his life, including 17 years of marriage, while the rest deal with his life from 1880, including his accident in the late summer of that year, and his final illness. The time structure with the announcement of his death at the start of the text removes from the reader any uncertainty about the outcome of his illness, thus allowing us to take a more detached analytical stance towards characters, events and the text's main themes (the falsity

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of much that is expressed as true feelings by people, the futility of a materialist outlook and how one should react to the reality of death). It is no surprise that Ivan suffers a steady decline, and thus we can concentrate on his changing psychological perspectives on life, material things, those around him and death itself. The opening chapter shows us a range of self-interested and conformist reactions to Ivan's death as his former colleagues and wife reveal a range of hypocritical behaviour and false feeling. The second chapter, summarising most of Ivan's life, reads mainly like an account of promotions and moves with apparently important personal events mentioned only in passing. The death of children is glossed over while social advancement is described in relative detail, thus illustrating the shallow priorities of the conformist couple. This chapter consists of almost entirely third-person omniscient narration and reads like a chronicle as does chapter 3 whose paragraphs are sometimes introduced with phrases appropriate for an historical account (e.g. Так они жили; И всё шло так etc.). From the fourth chapter onwards, the story is told using a mixture of third-person omniscient narration, direct speech and the direct thought of Ivan himself. This enables the reader to have access to a range of narrative voices and their differing perspectives on characters and events. The text now follows a continuously advancing time pattern with only occasional reference to past events. The pace of narration appears to become progressively faster as it leads up to its dramatic conclusion – the death of the central character in the last two words of the narrative. The ending forces us to focus on Ivan and his spiritual enlightenment experienced shortly before death. Instead of being preoccupied with money, the trappings of worldly success and status, Ivan Il'ich comes to a realisation that the life he has lived has been false, for what he once valued is actually worthless. What is of paramount importance is to love others, for love casts out the fear of death. Thus, spiritually transformed and with his negative feelings towards his family replaced with positive emotions, Ivan is finally able to pass away as his pain and fear have left him. While candidates will probably agree that the narrative structure is logical and effective, some may feel that the reader is being forced into a narrow point of view and that this in fact spoils the text as a work of art.

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10 А. Чехов, *Дядя Ваня*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: From near the beginning of Act 4. At the end of Act 3, Voynitsky (Uncle Vanya) has attempted twice to shoot Professor Serebryakov who has suggested the estate be sold, though it rightfully belongs to Sonya. The professor's suggestion has proved the catalyst for the release of all Voynitsky's frustrations about his wasted life on the estate as he has been struggling to clear its debts and finance the professor's life in the town. It is now the evening of the day of the shooting. Marina, an old nurse, and Telegin have been discussing the decision of Serebryakov and Elena to leave at once for Kharkov. Marina and Telegin are looking forward to the restoration of their daily routines as they were prior to the arrival of the professor and his wife. Sonya and Astrov are looking for Voynitsky, afraid he might harm himself. Telegin has hidden the pistol in the cellar.

Content: Voynitsky enters, protesting at being watched. Telegin and Marina exit, but Astrov insists he will not go until Voynitsky returns what he has stolen from him (morphine). There is a fear that Voynitsky will use it to kill himself. Voynitsky continues to deny the theft and Astrov appears to threaten him with force. Voynitsky feels he has made a fool of himself in missing his target twice and cannot forgive himself for that. Astrov suggests he would have been better shooting himself, though he clearly does not mean this, as indicated by his insistence that Voynitsky return the morphine. Voynitsky then analyses his situation: though he has attempted murder, no one has sent for the police as he is considered mad. He marvels that others might consider him mad, though other people are apparently not – those who masquerade under the guise of being academics though they are heartless and stupid (Serebryakov), women who marry older men, then deceive them (Elena). Voynitsky shouts at his rival, telling him he has seen him and Elena kiss (half way through Act 3). Astrov, who has also been rejected, childishly enjoys making the point that he has been slightly more successful with Elena than his rival, thus provoking him into suggesting Astrov deserves to be dead. Astrov says Voynitsky is now being stupid, to which Voynitsky declares that his madness allows him to say silly things. The doctor once again tells him he is not mad, but simply a crank, something he regards as the normal condition of mankind. Voynitsky is therefore quite normal. Candidates can discuss the characters featured and the dramatic tension of the extract.

Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques: The main characters all express themselves in a register appropriate to their social station (standard educated Russian). The passage is extremely poignant and dramatic. Astrov and particularly Voynitsky display a range of quickly changing emotions and attitudes. The entrance of Voynitsky immediately brings with it the depiction of raw emotion, indicated by the exclamation marks. The tension created by Voynitsky's entrance is prolonged while Telegin exits on tip-toe and Marina gathers her wool, imitating the noise of a gander which can be both mocking and provoking. We do not know how Voynitsky will react. The audience is made to share the fear caused by Voynitsky's earlier violent behaviour, but at the same time is made to sympathise with his frustrations and inner turmoil as he explains his feelings and behaviour during the course of the extract. The frank interaction between the two rivals indicates their previous closeness. Astrov's apparent childishness gives way to control as he gradually manages to calm Voynitsky down. Candidates should explain how the length of the pause, the possibility of varying the pace and volume of delivery, the body language of the two men, and Voynitsky's laugh all play their part in creating the intensity of the atmosphere at this point in the play.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can point out how Astrov's interaction is successful as Voynitsky's emotions turn next to shame at his behaviour and the expression of a desire

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to begin life anew. Answers might describe the reasons behind Voynitsky's behaviour (his realisation that he has wasted his life and opportunities for 25 years while supporting Serebryakov who has achieved nothing of significance as an academic, and his unrequited love for Elena, Serebryakov's wife). The rivalry between Voynitsky and Astrov for Elena's love, her struggle and decision to remain faithful to her much older husband may be mentioned along with the final outcome of the drama (the resumption of a life of hard work and self-sacrifice by Voynitsky and Sonya).

(b) What do you consider to be the main theme of *Дядя Ваня*?

Candidates may either offer a detailed discussion of one theme, arguing its dominance as a leitmotiv within the context of the plot or they should discuss all the play's themes, putting them into some sort of hierarchy before coming to a conclusion that one is more significant than the others. It is also possible to conclude that as the themes are cleverly interwoven and often interdependent, it is impossible to single one out as being more important than the others. Answers are likely to contain a short description of the plot in order to exemplify and justify the points made. See Q10C for detail. Most characters, but especially Voynitsky and Astrov, are effectively used to depict the dull banality of country life for the gentry and intelligentsia in the provinces in the 1880s. The differences between town and country are thrown into relief by the invasion of Serebryakov and Elena, with their alien ways which disrupt the routine and calm of the house and estate. The words and deeds of both Voynitsky and Sonya demonstrate how the sacrifice of personal desires and ambitions and working for the good of others will benefit future generations, though, equally, these characters embody a tragic waste of human resources and potential. Astrov voices remarkably modern ideas about the importance of conserving the environment, while through Voynitsky, Astrov and Sonya we are made to think about the theme of disillusionment and shattered ideals. Aspects of love feature strongly. Through two prospective couples (Voynitsky and Elena, Astrov and Sonya) we experience the pain of unrequited love, while Elena and Astrov reveal the frustrations of unfulfilled desire. The tense relationship between Serebryakov and his much younger second wife highlight the problems of unsatisfactory marriages. The best candidates will draw attention to the fact that the director of a specific production can place greater emphasis on particular themes through casting, the direction of actors, especially in respect of gesture, body language and pace of delivery, and the use of lighting effects and music to determine mood.

(c) 'Though Voynitsky is clearly the main character, the real heroine of the play is Sonya.' Do you agree?

Candidates may approach this question from a number of angles. Answers might discuss how in the Chekhovian drama there is no hero or heroine in the true dramatic sense. The main characters are broadly equal in importance because of the interweaving plots centred around groups of characters. Thus in this play the relationships between Voynitsky and Elena, Astrov and Elena and Astrov and Sonya are as significant as the conflict between Voynitsky and Serebryakov. By describing and analysing these relationships, candidates might show that no individual stands out as the main character and no character consistently displays the characteristics of a traditional hero or heroine as all have flaws. That the play is entitled *Дядя Ваня*, however, suggests that the main focus for the audience should be Voynitsky, and answers might well trace events surrounding this character through the course of the play before embarking on a discussion as to whether or to what extent Sonya fulfils the qualities of a literary heroine. Voynitsky, now 47, has been selflessly managing the estate for a mere 500 roubles per annum in order to finance the lifestyle and academic work of his brother-in-law, Professor Serebryakov, in the town. Due to Voynitsky's hard work and judicious management, the estate is free of debt and in excellent condition. Though it technically belongs to Sonya, her father wants to sell it, ostensibly because they could all live better by investing the proceeds from the sale, but really because of the professor's intense

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dislike of country life. Voynitsky finds his brother-in-law insensitive and ungrateful, for he has never thanked him for his efforts. He has also come to realise that all he has done has been in vain since Serebryakov appears to have written nothing of value during his time in academic life. He feels that life has passed him by and that he has forsaken his personal happiness for a man he no longer admires. Voynitsky is in love with Serebryakov's wife, Elena, whom he knew 10 years previously, though at that time there was no romantic interest between them. Voynitsky's frustration and anger boil over when Serebryakov makes his announcement about selling the estate. Embittered, Voynitsky attempts twice to shoot his brother-in-law, then steals some morphine from Astrov in order that he might kill himself. However, he is dissuaded from this course of action, and with Serebryakov and Elena gone, we see him at the end of the play once again at peace and dedicated to work and self-sacrifice for the good of others. Sonya is Serebryakov's daughter by his marriage to Voynitsky's late sister. She is spiritually closer to her uncle than to her father, sharing Voynitsky's altruism and attitude to work. Her character grows over the course of the play until in the final scene it is she who dominates the stage as she voices her belief in hard work for the benefit of those to come and her faith that one will be rewarded for the trials of life after one's death. It is therefore the message contained in Sonya's ideas which the audience takes away at the end of the play, raising her claim to be considered the heroine on account of her praiseworthy idealism. In addition to this, Sonya's role is often that of a practical problem-solver, a character able to encourage, rebuke and persuade people to behave properly for the sake of others and themselves. In Act 1 she shows kindness to the insecure Telegin and attempts to stop the squabbling between Voynitsky and his mother. In Act 2, having cared for her father all night, she scolds him for refusing to see Astrov, his doctor, and for being generally irascible. She gently rebukes her uncle for drinking and neglecting their work. She alone, it would appear, is taking responsibility for the running of the estate. She is ready to make excuses for her father's difficult behaviour and tries to stop Astrov from drinking as she feels he is destroying himself and becoming like ordinary men. Though unable to persuade her step-mother to help with the estate, teach or care for the sick, she later on plays the role of ultimate conciliator. Despite the dual blow of learning that Astrov does not love her and that her father wishes to sell the estate, thereby not only rendering her homeless but depriving her of her life's purpose, she is able to rally. At the end of Act 3 she urges her father to be merciful to her uncle, pointing out how she and Voynitsky have both worked hard for him for so long. In Act 4 she successfully persuades her uncle to return the stolen morphine to Astrov, saying she will not give in to despair and encouraging him to resume their previous duties. She then makes him become reconciled with the man he has twice tried to kill. Thus, as a moral force for good, Sonya may be considered the real heroine of the play.

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11 E. Замятин, *Мы*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: From the beginning of Entry No.6 in the diary of D-503, builder of the Integral and one of the mathematicians of the One State. The diary, which is meant to be an account of life in the mathematically perfect One State, will be placed aboard the space-ship in an attempt to convert other worlds by peaceful persuasion to the philosophy of this society. Previous entries mainly describe the system and conditions under which the population lives, but some information about D-503's personal circumstances and attitudes has emerged. The diarist is officially registered as the sexual partner of O-90 who is in love with him and wants his baby. He is one of only a few to have been moved by Scriabin played on a piano by I-330 at a lecture at which inferior old music is compared to the mathematically perfect variety of the One State.

Content: D-503 indicates his willingness to provide an honest account in his diary and reports that society has not quite yet attained perfection: the ideal is that in society nothing should happen i.e. nothing needs to change because everything is already perfect. This is the ideal of communism in the Soviet period which is therefore being held up for criticism. D-503 mentions an announcement in the Государственная газета (State Newspaper) about a Festival of Justice. This means that a member of society (number) is going to be punished for disrupting the progress of the Great Machine of State. D-503 goes on to describe a phone call from I-330 in which she invites him to fly over to the Ancient House. D-503 reports that he is irritated, repelled and frightened by her, but accepts. Her earlier piano-playing has clearly made an impression on him. During the flight he is irritated by the appearance of a ridiculous white cloud which he finds disturbing. The cloud, it seems, spoils the rationality of the otherwise clear blue sky. It symbolises the irrational / natural world beyond the Green Wall. With the windscreen down, the wind makes their lips dry. D-503's licking of his lips to keep them moist appears to take on a sexual significance. The vehicle lands close to the Ancient House protected by its glass shell.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: The extract is given the appearance of spontaneous writing by the use of broken syntax and interjections (e.g. а у нас...Вот.), the use of *И* to begin the second paragraph, the slightly random mixture of first-person narration, recalled marked direct speech by I-330 and the writer and his own recalled unmarked direct thought. The writer uses standard Russian forms which are appropriate to his level of education. The vocabulary relating to aspects of the One State (номер, Личный час etc.) creates a powerful sense of atmosphere and firmly fixes the novel's setting in the mind of the reader. See Q11C for the use of colour adjectives.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can describe the nature of the society of the One State, referring particularly to numbers, Personal Hours, Festivals of Justice (the torture of I-330 at such an event in the final entry of the diary), the Green Wall which is there to protect the One State from the savages living beyond it, the Ancient House whose function is a reminder of how things used to be / model for how things might be again. D-503 finds himself drawn to life as it was lived there as he moves around in it, a place where he will go on to experience illicit pleasures and revolutionary thoughts. Answers might include a brief account of the novel's plot in relation to the main character, D-503, and his journey from pillar of the establishment of the One State to rebel as a result of his spiritual awakening caused by his relationships with O-90 and I-330. Mention should be made of the fact that I-330 uses and manipulates him from the start for her own revolutionary ends. As a result of the rebellion's failure, D-503 is forcibly remade into a loyal citizen through having the Great Operation.

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- (b) What do you consider to be Zamyatin's artistic purpose in writing *Мы* and to what extent do you think he has succeeded?**

Candidates should discuss the nature of Zamyatin's artistic purpose, and by illustrating how he goes about conveying his message, provide an evaluation of his success in delivering it. Zamyatin's dystopian novel describes a nightmare state where everything is organised according to mathematical principles. Almost all the thoughts and actions of its citizens are controlled. Happiness is perceived as the absence of desire, envy and feeling. Love is reduced to a regulated sexual act and death is meaningless. The citizens of the One State live in a sterile, climatically controlled zone, protected from the savages outside by the Green Wall. Every action apart from sex can be observed by everyone else, including the guardians, the upholders of the principles of the State and the rule of the Benefactor who is elected annually, but without any permitted opposition. The loss of liberty is justified by the absence of crime. Most candidates will agree that the society depicted in Zamyatin's text and the fates of many of the characters serve as a sharp warning to the dangers of any (not just Bolshevik) totalitarian state in which personal choice is virtually eliminated and dissent is socially unacceptable and practically impossible. Despite the severe warning about the dangers of creating such a society, there is in the novel's conclusion a secondary message which offers a grain of hope as to the ability of the individual to assert himself in the face of massive odds. Though the One State seeks total control over its population, it has not quite managed it, and over the course of the novel an opposition movement gains in strength. Candidates can examine the nature of the One State and describe the events of the plot and the fate of the main characters who have not totally abandoned their essential humanity. Instead, they have banded together to escape the man-made rational paradise and its restrictions, seeking to regain a more natural human state in the irrational world beyond the Green Wall. Though the One State finally eliminates I-330 and brings D-503 back under its control and into line by giving him the Great Operation, *Мы* ends with a small degree of optimism, for the Green Wall has been blown up, and many have gone over to the other side.

- (c) 'The reader's ability to comprehend the message of *Мы* is impaired by an excessively complex web of literary devices.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first outline the novel's message (See Q11B) before discussing whether or to what extent this is impaired by the complexity of the literary devices used by Zamyatin. In the first entry, Zamyatin's fictional narrator, a mathematician of the One State, refers to his work as a поэма. Though he claims that his pen does not have the strength to create the music of assonances and rhymes, this is clearly false modesty as the diary is filled with complex poetic devices. Answers should describe and analyse these, assessing their effects. Though the diary is written in prose and therefore, as D-503 rightly points out, does not contain the music of assonances and rhymes, it is heavily permeated with complex and original imagery and symbolism more typical of poetry than of prose. Colour symbolism centres upon red, yellow and blue. Yellow is associated with sunshine and life, but also death and decay. Red is associated with energy, fire, passion and blood, while light blue is linked with entropy and cold rationalism. Dark blue is linked to strong emotion while in the final scene the almost total lack of colour reflects the sterility of D-503's cleansed mind. Green, the middle colour of the spectrum, is the colour of the wall dividing civilization from the savage world beyond, while black is most associated with I-330 (black dress and black piano at the concert, black hat and stockings at the Ancient House). The metal gold, traditionally associated with eternal values and excellence, is the material of the gold badge worn on the citizens' uniforms. The badge is a metaphor for the rational self, removed only for sex during the unstructured personal hours. Cast iron is linked with the crushing inevitability of events and the voice and gestures of the Benefactor. Sunlight is associated with life beyond the wall, while water is linked to sex and the Integral. Images to do with eruption – cosmic, geographical, social, political, sexual – abound. Shape images feature: The description of O-

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90's body suggests roundness (eyes, mouth, pregnant abdomen), while the sinuous shape of S suggests a satanically evil serpent. Human beings are often reduced to inanimate pieces of machinery or vice versa. The idea that the fictional narrator is a mathematician is constantly reinforced by the use of mathematical references and imagery. Many candidates will vigorously disagree with the proposition of the question, arguing that the literary devices actually strengthen the effect of the message, though some will conclude that the inconsistency of the use of colours can be confusing, while the mathematical imagery is only comprehensible to other mathematicians, thus rendering a full understanding of the text's meaning impossible for the average reader.

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12 В. Некрасов, *Кира Георгиевна*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: The extract comes from near the start of Chapter 15, towards the end of the story. Kira has unexpectedly arrived in Kiev from Yares'ki. After phoning round a few hotels, she has found the one where Vadim, his wife and son are staying. Vadim has briefly left Kira at his mother's to meet his wife in Kiev in order to arrange practical matters relating to their impending separation, especially with regard to their son. His return to Yares'ki has been delayed. Meanwhile, Varya, who disapproves of Kira and her relationship with her younger brother, has suggested she leave Yares'ki altogether. Kira has decided to go back to Moscow and to inform her lover of her decision.

Content: Kira dials the room occupied by Vadim and his family. The phone is answered by his wife, Mariya, whom she has never met. Mariya gets Vadim to come to the phone, and he invites her to come up, though being nervous about meeting his family for the first time, she would rather have met him downstairs. Vadim meets her on the floor of his room. He at first thinks she has come because something has happened to his mother, but is reassured. Vadim leads Kira to his room where he introduces her to Mariya whose intrinsic goodness is recognised by Kira in her thought about her having a good face. Vovka rushes in from the bathroom. The little boy, whom his mother later calls shy and afraid of strangers, refuses to shake hands with the auntie and rushes off to seek the comfort of his toys. This action, though plausible for a young child, is greatly symbolic as the child instinctively perceives Kira as a threat to the integrity of his family unit. Candidates can describe Kira, Vadim, Mariya and her son and the complexities of their relationships. They can contrast Kira's superficial and selfish nature with that of Mariya, a doctor who had looked after Vadim in the camp hospital during their imprisonment.

Use of Language and Narrative Techniques: The extract consists almost entirely of direct speech. The dialogue is made up of very short utterances which reflect the agitation of Kira and the general tension of all concerned as the two women in Vadim's life unexpectedly confront each other. Vadim's concern for his mother is also conveyed in this way. The pace of the dialogue creates a sense of excitement, dramatic tension and immediacy for the reader. The characters use the standard educated Russian of the professional classes to which they belong. The presence of the third-person omniscient narrator is barely detectable here. As is characteristic of the text as a whole, it nevertheless merges with the perspective of Kira, giving us insight into her impressions and thought processes. The женский голос of the женщина who answers the phone reflects the perspective of someone who has not yet been introduced to that character. The narrator tells us that Kira wanted Vadim to come downstairs, that the corridor was endless (both Kira's perspective, though the latter might be objective). The objective description by the narrator of the brief look the two women give each other on first meeting is followed by the marked direct thought of Kira as she evaluates the face and thereby the character of the mother of Vadim's son.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can go into more detail about the course of the relationship between Kira and Vadim, giving reasons for its ultimate failure: Kira chooses to be loyal to her seriously ill husband after his brush with death, of which she will hear shortly in the last paragraph of the chapter from which the extract is taken, while Vadim chooses to stay with his son and his mother and does not reply to Kira's letter telling him of her decision to stay with Nikolay Ivanovich and that it would be better if they did not meet.

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(b) Consider the view that the real hero of *Кира Георгиевна* is Vadim.

Candidates should describe and analyse the character of Vadim Petrovich Kudryavtsev, Kira's first husband, a tall, blue-eyed well built, 20 year old, Bohemian poet whom she married at the age of 18 after a brief affair. Vadim also worked as an assistant producer in their native Kiev, enabling Kira to become acquainted with the exciting world of cinema. In 1937, after a year together, their happiness came to an abrupt end when Vadim was arrested, declared an enemy of the people and imprisoned. Though she never forgot him, Kira's loyalty cooled and, lured by position, money and connections, in 1947 she married a grey, bald, elderly widower, a professor at an Art Institute and successful painter over 20 years her senior. One day, two decades after their last meeting, Vadim, now released from Stalin's camps, unexpectedly calls at the sculptress's Moscow studio while sorting out matters to do with his rehabilitation, and though he himself is married with a young son, their passion for each other is quickly rekindled. The couple decide to recreate their past relationship, first in Kiev, then at Vadim's mother's. Though initially happy, Kira and Vadim come to realise that the passing of time has altered their way of thinking in different directions and that they are no longer spiritually compatible. Vadim realises he cannot give up his son, and Kira feels a moral duty to return to her ailing, elderly husband. Though the story's title suggests Kira is the heroine, she is largely disqualified from this status on account of her lifelong, superficial, pragmatic and dishonest behaviour which she has always managed to justify to herself. This includes a casual affair with Yurochka, the young model for the sculpture she is working on when Vadim returns to her life, an affair she conceals from both Nikolay Ivanovich, her then husband, and Vadim. The apparent changes in her character on learning of Nikolay Ivanovich's illness, though significant, mark only the beginning of a spiritual reform rather than a complete transformation, and the story ends with the onset of a sense of shame coupled with a realisation that it would be a long time before she could be happy and cheerful again. By contrast, Vadim displays a number of heroic qualities in his behaviour in the main timeframe of the story and by means of flashback account. Knowing his position to be hopeless in the political climate of the period, he writes to Kira from his camp, telling her he is alive and giving her her freedom. Years later, he demonstrates moral responsibility, unlike Kira, by acknowledging the importance of proper arrangements being made for his wife and child if he and Kira are to resume their lives together. Though he has suffered great privations in the camps, he appears not to be bitter, yet refuses to forget the tragedy of the people which he shared. He is rebuked by Kira for constantly telling stories about his exile, for Kira shares the official ideological point-of-view that the past should be forgotten and one should fix one's eyes on the future. Vadim, by contrast, is the standard-bearer of honesty, an advocate of true reality rather than reality as the Party would like it to be. In terms of Socialist Realism, he is no positive hero proclaiming a belief in a happy future, yet it is his positive influence on Kira which brings about the changes in her approach to both art (See Q12C below) and life, by showing her that in respect of both these things, her attitudes have been false. In the train to Kiev, Vadim recalls talking to Yurochka and acknowledging that his youth had been empty and frivolous, but in the camps he had thought a lot, learned much and got to know many different people, by some of whom he was needed. Having returned from exile, he puts into practice a praiseworthy, altruistic and, in Soviet terms, non-conformist ideology, which makes him the only candidate to be considered the story's hero.

(c) '*Кира Георгиевна* is fundamentally about aesthetics and the relationship between the artist and society.' Do you agree?

Candidates may agree or disagree with this statement. While some may consider that the text is fundamentally a human drama exploring the thoughts and emotions of its eponymous heroine and the three men in her life as she moves from one to another to satisfy her various needs (See Q12B for detail), others may regard Nekrasov's ideological message about aesthetics and the role of the artist in society as more significant in the historical context of

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the Thaw when the principles of Socialist Realism could be at least questioned, if not challenged. Throughout the story, there are numerous references to art and the principles behind its creation. These are scattered throughout the text, and the reader can only evaluate what they all add up to at the end. Arguing with a group of friends (C1), Kira states that what makes a work of art is the ability of the artist to seize on the most striking, individual and distinctive features and from these to create a generalised image. Her artistic purpose is to reflect the optimistic view of communism, and this is embodied in her sculpture of the young, muscular Yurochka, looking skyward, clad in workers' trousers, his torso bare. Nevertheless, her work is praised by her friends for having something of its own and being convincing (C5). Both Vadim and Kira express a dislike for the new Gogol statue. The old one by Andreev was disliked by Stalin for its gloomy look and was replaced by a more upbeat one by Tomsy. In her comment Kira might well be showing a subconscious dislike of Socialist Realist values. Vadim's story of the fox cub which had strayed into his camp, a politically inappropriate setting, is rejected by the Kiev newspaper office (C12), and he in turn rejects the offer to write about one of the better collective farms. The film script on the life of fishermen, which he does accept, does not go well, presumably because he is incapable of infusing his creativity with the necessary Socialist Realist ideals. In the gallery in Kiev (C12), Vadim questions the eternally optimistic celebratory themes of the paintings: *И почему всё праздник да праздник?* Vadim recognises that the pictures of work make it look effortless, that fighting is depicted as being without hardship and funerals are portrayed as glorified spectacles. Socialist Realist art is openly being criticised for being fundamentally not true to life. In his thoughts on the train to Kiev, Vadim muses over how Kira cannot understand him for she, like all others who belong to the world of art, have only to see what is clear, bright and joyous. He goes on to recall, when with Yurochka, thinking about whether she might in her art be substituting all that is alive and complicated for a convention and fabrication. Through her renewed contact with Vadim, Kira comes to understand that her art is contrived and lifeless. This is made explicit when, after her husband's serious illness and after she has chosen to break with Vadim, she finally revisits her studio to meet once again with Yurochka (C19). As she waits in vain for him to arrive, she looks at her versions of traditional Socialist Realist sculptures and finds them all bad, old and done by someone else. A feeling that Vadim's reappearance had destroyed the elevated state of mind necessary for her creativity gives way to a deep sense of shame and a realisation that she has also been living her life in a wholly wrong way. For the Soviet reader of the early 1960s, this would have been a shocking conclusion for the main character to come to. Nekrasov's ideological message concerning art is that the Socialist Realist version is wrong and that artists should be true to themselves rather than to phoney principles. It is, of course, possible to argue that both the human story and the aesthetic debate are of equal importance.

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13 Т. Толстая, *Милая Шура, Петерс, Река Оккервиль*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

Context: The conclusion of *Река Оккервиль*. The balding, elderly translator, Simeonov, who had been obsessed with a once-famous singer, Vera Vasil'evna, has returned home after finally plucking up the courage to seek out the woman of his dreams whose continued existence and address he had only recently discovered. The encounter has shattered his illusions, for instead of waiting alone for her sad, balding prince, the lady was happily entertaining numerous guests at her birthday party. Vera is now a plump, elderly lady, white and rouged with thick, black eyebrows. Simeonov feels betrayed. One of the guests, Potseluev, arranges with Simeonov for Vera to visit him to use his bath.

Content: Simeonov has returned home to find Tamara hanging around his door. She carries in the metaphorically crushed Simeonov, undresses and washes him, then gives him a hot meal. He tries to replace Vera with Tamara, promising to marry her, but the vision of a young Vera in heels he had invented returns in his dream to call him names and spit at him. Potseluev comes in the morning to check out the bathroom and in the evening brings the singer with him. Over sandwiches and cigarettes, the visitor extols Vera's power over men. Against his will, Simeonov listens to the grotesque sound of the plump, elderly lady in the bath. The grotesque image is reinforced as we learn how Potseluev cleans away the grey pellets of her skin and scoops her white hairs from the drain. Vera's lasting power and influence is made clear, however, when Potseluev winds up the gramophone and her divine voice rises above all present and even the elements, including the powerful Petersburg rivers flooding the city. Candidates should comment on the characters of Simeonov, Vera and Tamara as well as their relationships along with the open ending of the story which allows for a potential happy conclusion for Simeonov in the mind of the reader.

Use of Language and Narrative techniques: The extract contains a mixture of narrative perspectives. It is primarily third-person omniscient narration with the voices of Simeonov, Potseluev and Vera interrupting the narrative at key places. The unmarked exclamation by Simeonov (родная!) shows a merging of his point of view with the narrator's. This is appropriate, for the narrator is closer to the main character than to the two others whose discourse is marked by speech marks. The contrasting images of the singer are extremely powerful: Simeonov's sexually charged vision of Vera swaying on her black heels appears to be confirmed by Potseluev's words indicating her past as a femme fatale. This gives way to the grotesque sounds of the plump singer taking a bath which her admirer listens to against his will, the unattractive image of Vera (красная, распаренная) followed again by the grotesque серые окатыши and седые волосы which are washed away by Potseluev. The final image of Vera is triumphant, however, as her divine (дивный) voice soars above mere mortals and the elements. Among other stylistic features which candidates may mention: the powerful effects of the sentences of varying length with their complex interweaving narrative perspectives, the sense of action created by the proximity of verbs in the opening sentence, the chronicle-like force of the sentences beginning with И and А, the frequent use of assonance and alliteration (e.g. the use of repeated gutturals to evoke the sounds of Vera's body colliding with the bath, sibilants to evoke the sounds of water, and later, in present participles to evoke sensuality in the description of her voice), the repetition of над with participles to reinforce the effect of the voice rising ever upwards.

Relevance to Rest of Work: Candidates can describe the earlier content of the story, showing how the plot has reached this conclusion. The typicality of the use of language and narrative techniques contained in the extract can be confirmed by quoting other examples from the rest of the text.

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(b) Describe and analyse Tolstaya's treatment of the themes of loss and yearning for the unattainable in these three stories.

In describing and analysing the treatment of loss and yearning for the unattainable in the three stories, candidates are likely to show that these themes are common and, indeed, central to them all. The stories are centred around eccentric, quirky and idiosyncratic characters: the effete, socially gauche, pot-bellied and flat-footed librarian, the eponymous hero of *Петерс* who fails in all his relationships with women; the nonagenarian and much married Shura who relives the highs and lows of her life with her various lovers for the narrator of *Милая Шура* in her shabby, Moscow communal flat; Simeonov, the elderly Leningrad translator, still infatuated with Vera Vasil'evna, a once famous singer, now long forgotten by her public (*Река Оккервиль*). All three are shown as loners struggling to reconcile dream with reality in the pursuit of happiness either through the restoration of previously more fortuitous circumstances or through the creation of new, ideal ones. The central characters all share a desire for the ideal soulmate, a longing for domestic bliss, a desire to return to the past or a longing to escape from it. Despite the strict and suffocating control of his grandmother, Peters (*Петерс*) enjoyed a close and loving relationship with her. Though her death liberates him, it also necessitates a quest for a replacement soulmate. Due to his unfortunate appearance, the librarian's attempts to court attractive women repeatedly fail. In an attempt to add to the knowledge of German superficially imparted by his grandmother, Peters seeks out a tutor, for he believes this will render him more attractive to those women he seeks to form relationships with. On the way to Elizaveta Frantsevna's, Peters is robbed by a girl in a bar. Humiliated and affected by alcohol, he experiences an urge to kill his tutor whom he regards as a symbol of all those women who had let him down or abandoned him, in so doing, putting an end to his dreams. In time Peters becomes the husband of a cold, hard woman who controls him as his grandmother had done. Though a sought-after pattern has now been placed on his life, Peters does not appear to be happy. Ironically, it is only when he is abandoned by his wife that he appears to be reconciled with the hand that life has dealt him. Observed at the end of her life, Shura (*Милая Шура*) appears to be a sad and lonely old lady, yet closer analysis reveals she has made much of her opportunities, though the highpoints of her life are now lost to her. Her first two husbands had brought her wealth and friends, though her third marriage had been a less pleasant experience. Her chief regret seems to be her failure as a young woman to follow her heart and sacrifice her comfortable life for the impecunious Ivan Nikolaevich. Her frequent reminiscences of Ivan and the circumstances of her aborted elopement show her to have become obsessed with a sense of loss for what might have been, even though there is really nothing to suggest that life with her lover would indeed have turned out better for her in the end. In the character of Shura, Tolstaya appears to be showing us how a sense of loss can dominate a person's existence, but also how yearning, memory and imagination can equally bring comfort when a person turns out to be essentially alone. The ending of *Река Оккервиль* suggests yet another possible outcome for a person suffering from a sense of loss and yearning. Simeonov has for years been obsessed with the singer, having imaginary conversations with her as he listens to her old recordings. Despite real encounters with women, including Tamara, a regular partner as well as domestic help, the translator is always disappointed. One day, when acquiring a new record, Simeonov learns that the singer is still alive, and after listening to the arguing voices of two demons debating whether he should go after her or leave things alone, the translator finally decides to pursue his quest. When he finally encounters Vera Vasil'evna, however, his illusion is broken and his vision lost, for the elderly and impoverished singer is happily entertaining friends and is in no need of a balding prince. He feels that Vera has died long ago, killed by the old woman before him. However, one of her friends persuades Simeonov to let the singer use his bath. Though at first Simeonov takes comfort in Tamara, neither her body nor her cooking satisfy him, and his vision of the singer returns so that when the singer actually comes round to take a bath, Simeonov's aspirations for a relationship with Vera appear to have the potential to be rekindled.

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- (c) 'Despite their rather weak plots, Tolstaya's stories are thoroughly engaging.' Do you agree?

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement, though the reasons they provide for the engaging nature of the stories may vary. Answers should first outline the episodic plots of the three stories in order to confirm the first half of the quotation. In *Пeters* we first observe the eponymous hero during his happy yet suffocating childhood. Brought up by his overprotective grandmother, the boy fails to learn to interact with his peers. As an adult, Peters proves unable to form a relationship with a woman, despite several attempts (Faina and Valentina), due to his unprepossessing appearance. No one ever wants to play with him. Thinking a command of German would assist his chances in love, Peters arranges a lesson on the way to which he is robbed by a girl in a bar. When he arrives at his tutor's flat, Peters has an urge to kill her, as a symbol of all the women who had promised, tricked, seduced and abandoned him on behalf of all fat and awkward men not invited to the party, but the urge passes. After some time, Peters marries a hard woman who controls and bullies him. Some years later, she abandons him. After initial regret, Peters becomes reconciled to his solitary life. In *Милая Шура*, a female narrator describes her visit to the elderly Shura, a thrice married nonagenarian who relives the highs and lows of her life with her various lovers and, in particular, describes her affair with her true love, Ivan Nikolaevich. We learn of the events and thinking around her final decision not to leave her husband and join her lover in the Crimea many years ago. When the narrator calls again, she is shocked to find that the old lady has died and her once treasured belongings have been put out with the rubbish. The narrator has a vision of the deceased old lady floating off to join her beloved in the south. In *Река Оккервиль*, we read of the obsession of Simeonov, an elderly Leningrad translator. He is infatuated with Vera Vasil'evna, a once famous singer, now long forgotten by her public. Simeonov collects the singer's old records and has imaginary conversations with her, while in the real world he is tended to by Tamara who sees to his every need. Learning that the singer is still alive, Peters finally persuades himself to visit her only to be disappointed that instead of waiting for her prince, she is happily entertaining others at her birthday party. Simeonov feels betrayed. He is asked by one of her friends if she can come round to use his bath, and Simeonov agrees to this. He returns to Tamara, but is still haunted by the singer who is brought the next evening to bathe. The ending is left open. Clearly, none of the plots is complicated, yet the stories may be considered engaging on account of the idiosyncratic main characters, their quirky imaginings and behaviour. For some, it is the diversity of themes which makes the stories memorable (love, unrequited love, loyalty, longing for domestic bliss, the disparity between the world of the imagination and reality, the effects of childhood on early life, life and death, the effects of time on individuals, spiritual imprisonment, a desire to return to the past by individuals or a longing to escape from it, the plight of the eccentric or unfortunate personality in society). For others, it will be Tolstaya's unique and effective style which chiefly engages them. Candidates might show how the author uses the style and language of her various narrators to seduce the reader into believing in the rather thin plots and caricature-like characters through the wide use of literary devices and poetic effects. Mention can be made of any of the following (preferably with appropriate quotation): esoteric vocabulary, variable sentence length, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, onomatopoeia, complex narrative and rhythmic structures, polyphony, the range of narratorial voices, use of free indirect speech, intertextual references, use of imagery (especially relating to water, wind, colours, smells, animals and entrapment), use of punctuation, spatial hyperbole et al.