

BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1995 HSC

EXAMINATION REPORT

ENGLISH
2 Unit General
2/3 Unit (Common)

Includes:

- Marking criteria
- Sample responses
- Examiners' comments

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1995 EXAMINATION REPORT

ENGLISH – 2 UNIT GENERAL AND 2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

Candidature 1995

The 2 Unit General candidature was approximately 30,000, the largest number of candidates of the 2 Unit English courses and as such encompasses a diverse range of abilities. The 2/3 Unit candidature was approximately 9000, 2000 of which were 3 Unit candidates. This group tends to be a very able group of students.

HSC Marking Procedures

All scripts in the 2 Unit English courses are marked by at least two independent markers from different groups at different stages of the marking operation.

First marking of scripts begins after a pilot marking phase during which markers are briefed on the standards established by senior markers after an initial reading of a wide sample of scripts. Second marking of scripts usually begins about one week later. Once marking is underway, a sample script considered typical of a particular range is sent around at regular intervals to check that all markers are adhering to the centre standards.

Markers are given the advice below to assist them in the marking process:

- 1) This is a ranking procedure. Use the entire range of marks.
- 2) Forget school and personal standards. Forget your memories of past papers and questions. Adhere to the centre standards.
- 3) The Reading Task contains a number of questions or parts. Within each answer there will be a range of responses.
- 4) Mark positively – reward what is there rather than penalise what is missing.
- 5) Aim for accuracy, not speed.
- 6) Don't 'agonise' over a script. Talk to other members of your group or to your Senior Marker.
- 7) In general, candidate responses are those of a seventeen year old completing an answer under exam conditions in forty minutes.

Clerical procedures in the Marking Operations

1. All scripts from an examination centre are divided into bundles of approximately twenty. Bundles from the one exam centre are distributed to many different markers. Schools are identified by an examination centre number only.
2. Each bundle has an accompanying mark sheet. Marks are recorded on these and no annotation is made on the scripts whatsoever. There is a second mark sheet for the recording of marks during the second marking. Both the first and second markings are completed independently.
3. Procedures are in place to ensure that markers do not mark scripts from their own schools or the school of their Senior Marker. In addition, markers do not mark scripts belonging to close relatives sitting for the HSC.
4. The confidential nature of the marking operation is stressed at all times and markers do not have access to marks awarded by other markers.

The Marker Reliability Operation

The Marker Reliability Operation has two important roles.

It assists Supervisors of Marking and Senior Markers in establishing an appropriate marking scheme for each question during the Pilot Marking Operation.

Once the marking scheme is finalised and the actual marking operation begins the statistical reports enable the SOM and SMs to check that the distribution of marks established during the Pilot Marking operation is being maintained. To ensure that the marking scale for each question is being applied consistently, feedback is provided to SOMs and SMs on the marking patterns of each marker.

How it Works

1. When a marker allocates a mark to a script, they put a tally mark on the tally card along-side that mark.
2. The tally cards are processed and reports are generated. The reports will typically contain information such as the overall distribution of marks, the mean (average) mark and the standard deviation (spread of marks) for each question.
3. Copies of the various reports are given to the Supervisor of Marking and are used to monitor trends in marking.

Resolving Discrepancies in Marking

A pair of marks is considered discrepant if the mark awarded during the first marking differs by a set amount determined by the Board. Three or more marks is considered discrepant if the scripts are marked out of ten, for example. The discrepancy is resolved by a third marker, usually a Senior Marker, who provides a third mark without knowing the marks awarded previously. If the third marking does not resolve the discrepancy, the script is passed on to a fourth marker and so on until the discrepancy is resolved. A relatively small number of scripts is discrepant, and very few scripts require reading by a fourth marker.

2 Unit General Paper 1

Part A – Reading Task

Nature of Each Question

The Reading Task tests candidates' ability to communicate effectively about the way language is used. Candidates are asked to read a variety of texts and to analyse how the meaning of each is created.

Format

The paper provided a good variety of stimulus material readily accessible to the candidature and reflective of Australia's multicultural society today.

Question 1 — refer to the examination paper for the stimulus material

(a) Both the photograph and the piece of writing below are a record of a family celebration.

In what ways does the passage 'Bloodlines' support the happy image in the photograph, and in what ways does it suggest something different? 4 marks

This was a very challenging first question. Candidates wrote very lengthy responses in an attempt to ‘hit on’ the answer, as the question seemed to force them to a point of view which was not totally valid.

(b) In the following poem, ‘In Black and White’, how is the passage of time suggested?

This was an excellent question requiring analysis of language and was a good discriminator as candidates had to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the use of language to convey the passage of time. However, there were very few marks allocated considering the complexity of the task.

(c) In the passage ‘Chinese New Year, 1995’ on page 5, both the photograph and the piece of writing are a record of a family celebration of Chinese New Year, 1955.

(i) What does the photograph tell you about this family celebration? 2 marks

Candidates were required to analyse visual text and to be able to support their ideas with close reference to the text provided (photograph).

(ii) Show how the writing conveys the sense of movement that is missing from the photograph. 4 marks

This was a good question expecting candidates to discuss a variety of language techniques.

(iii) ‘You can imagine this kind of afternoon’.
How does the writer help us imagine this family celebration? 6 marks

Good question testing understanding of writer’s technique.

Marking Guidelines

Question 1 (a)

Both the photograph and the piece of writing below are a record of a family celebration.

In what ways does the passage ‘Bloodlines’ support the happy image in the photograph, and in what ways does it suggest something different? 4 marks

Students may mention the following features:

Support idea of happy image	Suggest something different
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everybody • birthday celebration • caring older boys holding babies • family identity of dimple • cohesion: sitting and smiling together • family has flourished (now 40) • war and effect of conscription on family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical identifier not emotional • distance: ‘distant specks’ • detached, unemotional, distant writer seen in word choice like ‘siblings’. • irony of ‘aren’t we good children’ • Granny’s pessimism about future • structure of last paragraph reinforces separation • infrequency of family gatherings
‘remained childless.....never married’	

Students must explain features ie., tell how they support the idea of ‘a happy image’ or the idea of ‘something different’. Support is the discriminator.

- 4 marks The student provides 2 or more examples of something ‘happy’ and ‘something different’.
- The examples are well supported and show the ambiguity of the passage and that the photograph belies what is in the passage.
- 3 marks 1 example from ‘happy’, 1 example from ‘different’, 1 example from either ‘happy’ or ‘different’.
- Again the examples are well supported but may be weaker in one area. They may not spell out the ambiguity but can identify the differences.
- 2 marks The examples are poorly supported and may be weak in one area.
- These students have ignored or not been able to address the word ‘ways’ repeated in the question.
- They are able to identify and support (although poorly) examples of ‘happy’ and examples of ‘difference’.
- 1 mark These students may write about 1 or 2 ways that show ‘happy’ only OR 1 or 2 ways that show ‘different’ only, and this evidence lacks support. Limited to 1 mark because of lack of support.
- 0 marks Irrelevant answer.

(b) In the following poem, ‘Black and White’, how is the passage of time suggested? 4 marks
--

Students may discuss the following techniques:

- Structure: use of dash (lines 6, 12 & 25) and parentheses
 - Imagery: orange trees; 3 generations; hands
 - Tone: reminiscent/reflective
 - Language: eg., tense
 - Word choice: eg., repetition of ‘now’
 - Recollection: eg., mother’s prediction
 - Contrast: eg., ‘chubby’ to ‘slender’
 - Parallels: eg., natural world and child’s growth
- 4 marks Student’s discussion demonstrates a sophisticated appreciation of the way the poet has constructed the complete poem to show the passage of time.
- 3 marks Student demonstrates an understanding of the poem which shows a partial rather than holistic appreciation of the passage of time or student gives examples and some discussion of effect in terms of language or features and how it deals with the passage of time.

To gain more than two marks the student must do more than simply retell the poem.

- 2 marks
- couple of examples and implied effect
 - discussion of imagery without necessarily naming it and with good examples
 - images chosen from poem and explained but not really linked to the poem and the idea of the passage of time
 - tells the story and provides a few relevant examples
- 1 mark Student identifies some relevant words, phrases or examples from the poem but does not explain their connection to the passage of time.
- 0 marks A total misreading of the poem or creative response.

(c) In the passage 'Chinese New Year, 1955' on page 5, both the photograph and the piece of writing are a record of a family celebration of Chinese New Year, 1955.
(i) What does the photograph tell you about the family celebration? 2 marks

Students may mention the following features:

- 3 generations: family gathering
- wearing of best clothes
- formal pose
- Asian family in Western environment
- Alienation/displacement/sense of being uncomfortable
- in front of house
- serious: hesitant/half smiles

Students must set their answer in the context of celebration (either stated or implied) i.e., they must give evidence from the photo to support answer, refer to the 'celebration' and not simply describe the family.

- 2 marks 2 supported points or a well sustained analysis of one point
- 1 mark 1 supported point (must be drawn from the reading of the text of the photo)
- 0 marks unsupported comment or a misreading or a comment about the family rather than the celebration.

(c) (ii) Show how the writing conveys the sense of movement that is missing from the photograph 4 marks

Students may comment on the following language features:

- verbs (in present continuous tense)
- sensory images (taste, touch, smell, see, hear)
- accumulation of action
- use of italics to show direct speech
- short sentences
- word choice eg., 'scurry'
- structure: preparation to celebration.

- 2/3/4 marks Depending on the quality of the response, students are able to identify and support a discussion of language features. Sophisticated discussion of movement which may integrate comparison with photo.
- 2/3 marks Attempt to discuss description of movement supported by examples depending on quality of response.
- 1 mark Listing examples/techniques or paraphrase of movement regardless of number of examples or length of response.
- 0 marks Irrelevant answer.

(c) (iii)	'You can imagine this kind of afternoon'. How does the writer help us to imagine this family celebration?	6 marks
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Students may comment on the following techniques used by the writer:

- five senses
- use of definite article
- imagery: aural and visual
- onomatopoeia
- contrast (of what went on in Australian celebration and China)
- use of voice
- child's perspective
- use of second person narration
- block paragraph
- accumulation of images
- wealth of adjectives
- precise detail
- dialogue remembered
- Chinese phrase gives Chinese flavour
- familiarity with scene.

- 6 marks A literate answer which embraces one or more techniques in a clear fashion.
The answer is sustained with relevant, well explained examples and remains focused on the celebration.
It is an holistic assessment of the passage.
- 5 marks More rounded answer which attempts to integrate its response by displaying an holistic understanding of the way the passage functions to describe the family celebration
Some good ideas may be under-developed.
- 4 marks Identifies a number of techniques and attempts to explain this in a limited way.
Lacks appropriate examples to support its argument.
May be piecemeal in its approach.
- 3 marks Able to identify some techniques and provide some examples. Tries to extrapolate from passage to provide a personal response.
May slip into some description.
May be imprecise in some details/analysis.
- 2 marks Grasps at one or two implied and suggested techniques but experiences difficulties in being able to explain or sustain any argument.
- 1 mark May list some examples from the passage which suggest celebration but with no attempt to do any more.
- 0 marks Imagines what the celebration will be like rather than discussing technique.
Irrelevant.
Repeats content without addressing technique.

Strengths and Weaknesses Noted in Performance of Candidates

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the way language works. Responses were generally well written, fluent and focussed on the question.

Some candidates who appear intelligent and articulate are failing to gain high marks because of their lack of knowledge of the techniques which explain how language works eg., they can quote examples of onomatopoeia which convey movement c (ii) but do not use the appropriate term.

Candidates who are obviously literate seem to miscue on some of the questions that ask 'HOW'. They need to be better informed on how to answer these questions: taught the uses and resources of English specifically as a component of the course. The classic example is the candidate who fails to describe the techniques showing movement in c (ii) and yet quite competently provides the material in answer to c (iii).

Many students were not able to pace themselves. Too often they failed to complete question (c) because they spent an inordinate amount of time on question (a) writing up to two pages. OR they were unable to understand the subtleties of (a) thus writing copiously in the hope of finding understanding and meaning. The candidates who could write a sophisticated answer left themselves insufficient time for the rest of the paper.

Students need to be prepared to competently handle this section of the examination.

They need to be shown how to explain language technique and its effects. They need to be taught how to interpret visual text.

Note on Visual Text

Candidates are required to analyse visual text and to be able to support their ideas with close reference to the sources provided eg., photographs, cartoons, paintings, posters.

The 1995 question asks the candidates to examine the photograph for evidence about the family celebration.

Some typically good responses follow:

The photograph shows that this family celebration is an important and well respected event as the family are all well dressed and neat (1). They are also in a formal arrangement in the photograph, with the parents seated surrounded by their children (2). It is not a candid photograph and their facial expressions are quite serious, this reflects the importance of the family celebration (3). The day is a holiday, it is celebrated in the daytime, as none of the family members are working.

Excellent answer. Thorough reading of visual text. (1) (2) (3) – three points well supported.

The photograph of 'Chinese New Year, 1955' tells us that this is a wholly family celebration, it marks a significant time in the families life as the moment has been considered important enough to capture on film (1). The dress of the family also portrays the importance of the occasion as they are dressed in their 'Sunday bests' and not casual attire (2). The photograph though does not go to the extent of showing us the celebrations had by the family.

(1) and (2) – two points were supported from reading of visual text.

The photograph tells me that this family celebration is a time of gathering which tends to be a serious, important and yet happy moment. Serious shown by the expressions on their faces, important revealed by the formal clothes worn and happy due to the gathering of these people and the smiling expression on some of their faces.

A sound understanding of visual text. 3 points well explained.

The photo suggests that the family celebration is a special time when people dress up in their good clothes and that it is special enough to have a family photo to remember it by. The positioning of the people suggests a solemn dignified event (2) but the smiles on the two boys on the left suggest some fun is to be had.

Very good understanding of visual text expressed in a succinct style.

2 Unit General Paper 1

Part B – Writing Task

Question 2.

(a) ‘You can imagine this kind of afternoon.’

Write about your ideal afternoon. You may write in any form you choose.

OR

(b) Write in diary form about a memorable family event.

OR

(c) Write a letter to a friend describing a family occasion you have experienced.

Write about 300-500 words.

The question in 1995 was immediately accessible to candidates. The family-oriented nature of the choices in (b) and (c) enabled all students to write reasonably competent, literate pieces. The choice of questions also allowed candidates to write imaginative or personal reflections.

From the markers’ perspective the questions allowed for a reasonable degree of discrimination, and were relevant to the 2 Unit General course in its context of everyday, personal issues and events.

Marking Guidelines

'A' RANGE (A 10)

- High level of literacy
 - Often displays flair in vocabulary and expression but is not necessarily perfect.
 - Sustained register
 - A well-sustained, coherent piece of writing
 - May exhibit a different approach or angle to the question
-

'B' RANGE (B+ 9, B 8)

- Competent use of language
 - A coherent piece of writing
 - Often has flashes of originality, something different (thoughts, ideas, vocabulary, phrasing)
 - Fluent and literate, not necessarily scintillating
-

'C' RANGE (C+ 7, C 6, C- 5)

- Some attempt to shape material
 - Reasonably literate
 - May lack sophistication of ideas
 - Wide variety of responses
-

'D' RANGE (D+ 4, D 3)

- Lack of literacy may impinge on comprehension
 - Lack conscious shaping; unstructured
 - Lacks development of ideas
 - Little sense of audience
 - Lacks control of chosen register
 - Length may be an indication of lack of quality but is not a definitive criterion
 - May fulfil all the requirements of the question but suffer from poor use of language
-

'E' RANGE (E+ 2, E 1, E- 0)

- Very poor control of language
 - Trouble forming a coherent and sustained piece of writing
 - May fail to satisfy the requirements of the question
 - A totally irrelevant response is worth 0
-

N/A

- Nothing at all on the paper ('not attempted' or 'qu 1' is still n/a)
- Crossed out writing should be marked if no other writing appears on the page.

Strengths and Weaknesses Noted in Performance of Candidates

Most students were able to use the Reading Task as stimulus material for their writing. Most scripts were competent, literate and relevant to the question. The subject matter was varied and on the whole interesting, although there was a preponderance of recounts of family barbeques, birthdays and weddings in response to (b) and (c) which made it difficult for the candidates to get out of the 'C' range.

'A' and 'B' range scripts were often imaginative and original, displaying a sound command of the craft of writing. They were notable for their awareness of audience, and their ability to bring a story or a description to life on the page. Many such scripts were humorous, moving or evocative. The writer's voice was distinctive and the choice of language exhibited flair, sensitivity and control.

With the growth in recent years of the 2 Unit Contemporary candidature, there has been a distinct improvement in the standard of literacy in 2 Unit General writing. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are generally handled competently, and the majority of students employ a reasonable range of vocabulary.

It would appear, however, that writing is not taught explicitly in many classrooms, as markers noted that many candidates wrote mundane and predictable pieces which exhibited little awareness of such features of good writing as imagery and structure. Many candidates wanted to turn on the tap of the mind and let it all flow out, demonstrating very limited ability to shape a response. Awareness of audience was limited in the middle ranges, as was an ability to sustain an appropriate register. Narratives that failed to introduce a complication were also common. Depictions of characters and events were often flat and lifeless. In short, while most candidates were literate, they lacked the skills to propel their writing into the higher ranges. The majority were clearly not accustomed to experimenting with language, or manipulating language to achieve particular effects.

Teachers should note that whilst the invitation to write in any form they wish in (a) is liberating for many candidates who would feel restricted by the diary or letter format, poetry is not an advisable choice. Given the nature of the form, it is very difficult for a student to get out of the 'C' range.

Each year, a small number of candidates have clearly 'learned' a prepared answer, which they attempt to adapt to the demands of the question with limited success.

The marks awarded the writing question in the examination are the same as those awarded to literature, reading and topic area questions. With the reduction of the number of texts to five from 1996, the writing component of the syllabus will hopefully receive more emphasis in the English classroom.

2 Unit General Paper 1

Part C – Topic Areas

Marking Guidelines

Topic Area questions require candidates to

- display an understanding of the Topic Area
- engage in a discussion which demonstrates an integrated response to the question
- use supplementary material appropriately in the context of the above.

At best, candidate responses are informed, integrated, personal, and address the question as set.

Discuss scripts which are unusual, contentious or alarming with your Senior Marker.

WELL ABOVE AVERAGE RESPONSES (A 10)

- sustained engagement with question demonstrating thorough knowledge of text and integrated use of supplementary material
- a very good integrated response using text and supplementary material to effectively demonstrate (select/justify/support) a response to all aspects of the quotation in the question
- may not be perfect but involves all aspects of the question
- has flair, is fluent and highly literate
- may be concise, succinct if it fulfils all other criteria
- needs to display quality of argument in the context of Topic Area/Question.

ABOVE AVERAGE RESPONSES (B+ 9)

- a good response to the question/quotation in the context of the Topic Area
- sustained focus on all aspects of the question with thorough use of text and supplementary material
- a very good, integrated response with slight weakness in engagement with question or Topic Area or text or supplementary material
- the degree of engagement and integration may distinguish B/8 from B+/9 responses.

(B 8)

- informed discussion of all aspects of the question with good use of text and supplementary material
 - a complete, thorough and well written response to the Topic Area
 - a good overall response which focuses on the Topic Area in terms of the question
 - degree of engagement with the question may well be main discriminating factor for a 'B' range response.
-

AVERAGE RESPONSES (C+ 7)

- a solid response to the question which has some weakness which precludes the candidate from gaining a B/8 eg., only framework of ideas
- discussion of Topic Area with less specific focus on the question but with reasonable text and supplementary material
- a competent, thorough response which lacks engagement with the question
- good knowledge of text and supplementary material
- 'pedestrian' response may get to this category
- exceptional response with unreferenced supplementary material.

(C 6)

- a satisfactory response to the Topic Area question
- demonstrates sound knowledge of Topic Area/text, may engage in story telling; has relevant supplementary material
- an otherwise well written response which may be weak in engagement with the question, or text, or supplementary material.

(C- 5)

- response to the question which has some weakness which precludes it from going to a C 6
 - retells the story of the text completely, but with little supplementary material
 - a superficial, simplistic response to the Topic Area question with some text, supplementary material
 - a well written response to the question which has no supplementary material.
-

BELOW AVERAGE RESPONSES (D+ 4)

- poor response to the question
- retells story with supplementary material
- response with significant weakness (literacy)
- superficial response to the Topic Area question with little text but some supplementary material
- personal response to the question with little text, supplementary material
- no text, maximum 4.

(D 3)

- a very generalised/superficial/brief response to the Topic Area question
 - response with serious literacy problems
 - retelling of story/text but with no supplementary material
 - supplementary material only
 - largely irrelevant response to Topic Area.
-

WELL BELOW AVERAGE RESPONSES (E+ 2)

- an extremely brief, limited response
- a very generalised discussion of Topic Area but no text, supplementary material

(E 1)

- an almost illiterate response
- minimal positive input from candidate
- extremely brief but beyond mere rewriting of the question
- may be anecdotal, largely unrelated to the Topic Area.

(E- 0)

- totally irrelevant eg., creative writing, personal confessional
 - totally irrelevant eg., wrong Topic Area/non-existent text
 - no positive input from candidate eg., writes only the question.
-

Nature of the Question

QUESTION 3. (20 Marks)

EITHER

(a) Aboriginal Experience

'I am hunting for lost pieces of myself but through my culture I have many answers.'

RAYMOND MEEKS

Dalkua Mnuuway the Rom, Aboriginal Artist

In what ways do the text and supplementary material you have studied demonstrate this to be true of Aboriginal experience?

In your answer refer to a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are:

Jack Davis, Stephen Muecke, Mudrooroo Narogin, Adam Shoemaker (eds),

'Paperbark: a collection of Black Australian writings'.

Ruby Langford, 'Don't Take Your Love to Town'.

Sally Morgan, 'My Place'.

Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson) 'Wild Cat Falling'.

OR

(b) Crossing Boundaries

'Crossing Boundaries involves responding to the challenges society sets and to the challenges you set yourself.'

In what ways do the text and supplementary material you have studied demonstrate this?

In your answer refer to a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are:

Nadine Gordimer, 'July's People'.

Melina Marchetta, 'Looking for Alibrandi'.

Beryl Markham, 'West with the Night'.

Willy Russell, 'Educating Rita'.

There was general agreement amongst markers that the questions were of a good quality in that they both required an ‘engagement’ with the question itself. Students could not simply write out a prepared answer. They were required to select from the knowledge they had gained and the information they had gathered.

Each question was balanced in that it required a response to the given quote. For Aboriginal Experience it required engagement with ‘lost pieces’ and the search for ‘answers’. In Crossing Boundaries the question required a response to ‘challenges set by society’ and ‘challenges you set yourself.’ Structurally, the questions were balanced and did not favour one Topic Area over another.

However, some markers commented that the instruction ‘to refer to a variety of supplementary material’ should have been placed in brackets. They felt that some students’ responses were too heavily focussed on supplementary material at the expense of textual analysis.

The questions proved to be good discriminators especially for the ‘A’ and ‘B’ range of scripts as students were directed to respond to the quotations by ‘demonstrating’ the relevance of text and supplementary materials to the given stimulus.

The changing nature of the Topic Area question places a greater responsibility on teachers to ensure that students demonstrate a broader and more balanced understanding of the Topic Area.

Strengths and Weaknesses Noted in Performance of Candidates

Generally the concept of Crossing Boundaries or Aboriginal Experience as a Topic Area was understood by candidates.

For example a typical response to the concept was:

Throughout the novel Looking for Alibrandi, written by Melina Marchetta, many boundaries are expressed by the narrator, Josephine Alibrandi. Many boundaries are crossed by many of the characters in the novel; boundaries of social values and morals (the boundaries that society sets), as well as boundaries of education and interpersonal relationships, just to name a few. Also, the novel expresses that crossing these boundaries results in personal growth.

Candidates were attempting to come to terms with the question. The well above average responses demonstrated sustained engagement with the question responding to all aspects of the quotation in the question. Average responses also demonstrated engagement though in a less focused manner, but at the least attempting to structure a response.

Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of texts and many made good use of texts for supporting quotes relevant to the Topic Area question.

For example:

Throughout the course of the play it becomes apparent that Rita is slowly breaking through the educational barriers which are holding her back and crossing the boundary from the uneducated side to the educated side. Rita is beginning to become more fulfilled as a person and is discovering who she is.

‘It’s not taking the place of life, but pounding me with life itself’.

Candidates were, in the main, able to give more than cursory details when focussing on events, characters, situations, or features of the text which they associated with the demands of the question. This detailed knowledge of text was manifested in the length of responses as students seemed to be writing more.

For example:

As a child Markham crossed boundaries instinctively, as her writing style reflects. She selects only the highlights, writing with little direction or chronological order ... 'aimless dreaming' says she. Indeed as a child we see Beryl play with the native males, they arguably had more fun than the girls, thus defying the cultural convention that separated the Nandi females from the boys.... 'I drove the blunt end of my spear into the ground and stood beside it' states Beryl, evoking a feeling of strength and determination, so typical of Markham's character. Thus we see Markham responded to the restrictions and limitations of the African culture, impulsively.

Supplementary material was reasonably varied and possibly of slightly better quality than previously. It was often well integrated with the discussion of the question and the text, rather than simply 'tacked on' at the end. The best candidates had obviously collected a great variety of supplementary material because they were able to choose that which best suited the question. There were almost no responses that had no supplementary material at all. The open nature of the two Topics seemed to be conducive to the gathering of many and varied pieces of supplementary material.

For example:

Through the interpretation of the dream, Duggan comes to accept his culture and heritage. He becomes more optimistic, even seeing humanity in the policeman's face 'I feel I want to live more than ever before'.

Duggans experience is paralleled in 'Lo-Anna' in the Women of the Sun film series.

Anne, an Aborigine, is raised as a white girl when she finds out her true heritage she must come to accept her Aboriginality and is re-united with her natural mother.

The music, characterisation and visual images created a powerful dramatic tool, portraying for the first time to a mass audience the importance of the recognition of Aboriginality.

TV programs such as the ABC's Blackout seek to educate Australians about the place of the Aboriginal culture in modern society. By providing an outlet of expression for Aboriginal artists, dancers and musicians, it seeks to strengthen the Aboriginal culture in the only way possible: through awareness and education.

Weaknesses noted in the general performance of candidates fell into a number of areas. Obviously, there exists a strong relationship between these areas; they often overlap, or impact upon each other.

i) **Approach to the Topic Area Itself**

- lack of personal approach; ie., an approach which reflected the student's own explorations and understandings of the Topic Area, the text, and supplementary material. This weakness compounded itself when it came to, particularly, use of supplementary material and engagement with the question.
- whilst the Topic Area is text-based, it should be noted that students need a full view of the Topic Area. Use of supplementary material can, for example, be used to contrast as well as extend the aspects of the Topic Area encountered in the text. Many students limited themselves in this respect.

ii) **Approach to/Use of Text**

- Some candidates made poor use of text (despite their apparent knowledge of it). Responses should go beyond the mere 'plucking' out of a situation which can be attached to 'a boundary' or an 'aspect of Aboriginal Experience'.

iii) **Approach to the Question**

- Candidates must 'engage' with the question asked, this is vital to their success. Prepared answers often 'issue-based' or 'definition-based', tended to be stilted and limited.

For example:

The text that I studied, Educating Rita by Willy Russell, demonstrates this statement perfectly. Rita is trapped by many boundaries including Educational, Social Class Standard, Sexism and many more but those are the main ones.iv)

Supplementary Material

Whilst there appeared to be more supplementary material used this year than last, genuine variety and appropriateness remain a problem.

Some candidates demonstrate weakness in linkage of supplementary material and text. This is a very important aspect as students do need to develop detailed, explained links in order that the text and supplementary material support/demonstrate their viewpoint.

The lack of variety is self limiting; without it students cannot fully explore either the Topic Area or the question asked of them.

Students should accurately source their material.

2 Unit General Paper 2

Responses to Literature

Part A – Poetry

QUESTION 1

‘Ideas and the way those ideas are presented are what make a poet’s work distinctive.’

Choose TWO poems from ONE of the poets you have studied and describe how they show the distinctive characteristics of this poet’s work.

The poets set for study in 1995 are:

Judith Beveridge

Joanne Burns

Bruce Dawe

John Foulcher

Robert Gray

Kenneth Slessor.

This was an excellent question which allowed for clear discrimination across the whole range of responses. The element of choice allowed candidates to choose the poet and the poems which they knew best and which best suited the question. Candidates clearly showed their wealth of knowledge and understanding or lack of it. There was less paraphrasing of the poetry and a stronger personal response from candidates because the poems were not reproduced on the examination paper as in past years.

The question facilitated a wide range of responses and gave scope for a variety of approaches; some discussed the ideas, some discussed technique, some discussed both. The vast majority of responses were written as structured essays, with an integrated approach and a sustained argument rather than in two separate sections addressing each poem.

The quotation which introduced the question gave many candidates access and confidence while allowing others to ignore it and simply concentrate on the ‘instruction’ section.

Marking Guidelines for 2 Unit General Poetry

'A' RANGE (10) WELL ABOVE AVERAGE

May be characterised by some or all of these:

- Sustained discussion of the poems
- Detailed reference as to what makes the two poems distinctive – copes with idea of distinctive
- Argues a convincing case
- Generally a sophisticated style and structure
- Effective use of quotations
- Often displays flair and originality
- Fluent expression
- Deals effectively with two poems – one may be stronger than the other not necessarily perfect.
- Superior analysis of effects of language/imagery
- May be succinct
- Often an integrated approach – able to make coherent link between discussion of two poems to illustrate points made
- Interpretation of poetry displays insight

'B' RANGE (9, 8) ABOVE AVERAGE

May be characterised by some or all of these:

- Good expression
- Detailed understanding of the ideas in the poems
- Relevant discussion of aspects of the two poems – language, style, content, themes, purpose
- Appropriate quotation
- Logical structure
- Makes points clearly
- More sophisticated style than average range
- Sustained response
- Interpretation is supported by argument and judiciously selected evidence drawn from the poems
- May deal with ideas rather than technical analysis
- Relates material to argument
- Deals with more than simply content

'C' RANGE (7, 6, 5) AVERAGE

This is the largest range and therefore the majority of marks should fall in this range. May be characterised by some or all of the following:

- Reasonable understanding of the poems discussed and a reasonable attempt to answer the question
 - Attempts to identify characteristics of the poet
 - May deal with only one major aspect eg., imagery
 - Generally sound expression
 - At the top of the range the candidate should have an understanding of the poems and may have an appreciation of their qualities
 - May refer to poetic devices but with little understanding of their effect
 - Demonstrates an understanding of the thought line of the poem but may be superficial
 - Weaker 'C' may tend to story tell but shows knowledge of the poems
 - May be stronger on one poem than other
 - Accurate interpretation but pedestrian approach
 - May be long and repetitive and regurgitates poem with some comments
 - Persistent
 - Expression may be laboured, some language problems
-

'D' RANGE (4, 3) BELOW AVERAGE

May be characterised by some or all of these:

- Unsupported generalisations
 - Limited understanding
 - Over reliance on recounting content, story telling, paraphrasing
 - Simplistic ideas with little substantiation
 - Problems with expression
 - Ideas but poor expression
 - Doesn't cope with idea of distinctive characteristics
 - Repetitive
 - May be articulate but not enough content
 - Misinterpretation
 - May not be completed
-

'E' RANGE (2, 1) WELL BELOW AVERAGE

May be characterised by some or all of these:

- Serious misunderstanding of poems
 - Irrelevant discussion
 - No concept of poem as a whole
 - Distorted comments
 - Ideas are often simplistic
 - Problems with expression
 - May be short
 - Doesn't engage question
 - Lacks detail and content
 - Discussion not substantiated
 - Inadequate treatment of two poems
 - Minimal knowledge
-

'0' mark says nothing worthwhile pertaining to the question or provides an incomprehensible answer.

N.A. is awarded for a Non Attempt – a blank page or the words Not Attempted may appear on the script.

Note: The treatment of one poem by each of the two different poets can only receive a maximum of C- 5. One poem by one poet can only receive a maximum of C- 5.

General Comments

- Very few candidates confused the instructions – the vast majority of candidates wrote on two poems by one poet!
- Bruce Dawe, John Foulcher and Slessor were the most popular poets. Beveridge was well represented. Gray had only a small representation. Very few candidates wrote on Burns.
- Some candidates included poems that had not been set for study in their answers.

Examiners strongly suggest that teachers keep to poems set and if they teach additional poems ensure that candidates know not to use them substantially in their answers.

Above Average – ‘A’ and ‘B’ range

Above average responses were characterised by a sustained discussion of two poems with some detailed reference as to what made the poems distinctive. They were more sophisticated in style and structure, were fluent in expression and often offered an integrated essay which showed a superior analysis of the poems. For example:

Challenging tradition she voices her opinion freely through the eyes of the traveller and by using various techniques to exaggerate, perhaps make look superficial, our customs she encourages us to laugh at ourselves by presenting ridiculous images and dampening the reader’s complacency in interpretation.

The best responses made effective use of quotations with an excellent analysis of the effects of the language and imagery. Their interpretation was supported by argument and carefully selected evidence, such as:

One would expect the connotations associated with a library would be of peace and serenity therefore the reader is captured unexpectedly by the remainder of the clause ‘when you are protesting against state torture’. This use of contrast does not stop here

Average – ‘C’ Range

Candidates in this range displayed a reasonable understanding of the poems discussed and made a reasonable attempt to answer the question. They also generally attempted to identify the characteristics of the poet (in some cases dealing with only one major aspect like imagery) and usually had sound expression; eg. *he (Dawe) tries to give the reader a picture that is easily visualised, along with the truth. The realities he expresses such as keeping the ‘old crown jewels’ ‘safely tucked away’ put the reader in a position where they see themselves.*

At the top of the range the candidates showed an understanding of the poems and had an appreciation of their qualities and were able to refer to poetic devices with limited understanding of their effect. Weaker scripts in the average range tended to tell the story but showed knowledge of the poems and were often stronger on one poem rather than both. Some candidates in this range wrote long and repetitive essays and quoted well from the poem with some comments. Candidates also were able to demonstrate an understanding of the thought line of the poem though sometimes this was superficial eg. *The closing statement of the poem ‘They’re bringing them home too late, too early’ is used by Dawe to make the reader think.*

Below Average – ‘D’ Range

The typical D-range script was characterised by the use of unsupported generalisations such as *similes are commonly used in Gray’s work*. This type of response shows a limited understanding of the poems and talks about the ‘ideas’ without giving any detail, relying instead on recounting content, storytelling and paraphrasing such as *the giraffe is a prisoner trapped in a zoo and is unhappy*.

Another common characteristic of this range was that the candidate did not cope with the idea of distinctive characteristics. For example: *the poets work is distinctive because of the usage of similes, personification, figures of speech the tone of the poem, the way characters are presented and mood*. Listing and poor expression are also more readily seen in this range and often become repetitive, reiterating points using a variety of facts.

Many scripts may have been articulate and fluent but didn’t contain enough content to respond fully to the question. Misinterpretations or obvious statements such as ‘the giraffes are alive’ or ‘North Coast Town is about a North Coast Town’ were common. Finally some candidates in this range failed to complete the question.

Part B – Fiction

Question 2. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

The novel is called *Frankenstein* but the real interest lies in the relationship between the creator and his creation.

Do you agree?

This question was problematic. The ‘Do you agree’ instruction allowed candidates to dismiss the set question, and present their own seemingly prepared answer, usually on themes. This was unfortunate as the basic thrust of the question would have discriminated well. The problem lay in the instruction itself.

Question 3. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

In *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway says: ‘Gatsby turned out all right at the end’.

Does your final view of Jay Gatsby agree with Nick’s?

This was a popular text that tended to attract able candidates who generally grappled well with the question. The definition of what ‘all right’ meant in terms of the candidate’s essay was the major discriminator. For example, better candidates interpreted ‘all right’ as an understated assessment by Nick of Gatsby and viewed it as essentially complimentary, whereas poorer candidates defined ‘all right’ as a mediocre assessment of Gatsby. Some candidates trapped themselves in a literal interpretation, arguing that ‘no one can be alright if they die’. Better candidates also grappled with the complexity of Gatsby’s character.

Question 4. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

At the end of the novel, Obierika says of Okonkwo: ‘That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog ...’.

Who or what do you think drove Okonkwo to kill himself?

The text attracted a fairly wide candidature that basically coped well with the text and the question.

Both the nature of the text and the wording of the question allowed candidates to give a systematic summary of significant incidents, that led to Okonkwo's suicide. This question was essentially a rewording of popular questions on this particular text.

Question 5. Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*

Del's growing-up is influenced by the people with whom she interacts.

Show how TWO or THREE of these people are significant for Del.

This question discriminated well in all ranges. The question was appropriate to the text as there were a variety of characters that could have been selected to address the question well.

Candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of Del's 'growing up' and supported their ideas well with appropriate references to the text.

Question 6. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

The Color Purple reveals the inner strengths of its main character, Celie.

What are the main ways in which the novel does this?

Many candidates displayed a sensitive understanding of this text. They clearly enjoyed reading and writing about it. The majority of candidates dealt with the question in the light of their understanding of Celie's growing strengths as shown by her relationships with other characters.

The more capable candidates were able to deal with aspects of style and structure of the novel to address the 'main ways' in which these inner strengths were revealed.

Question 7. Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

Paul's growth to maturity is influenced by his relationships with many people.

Show how TWO or THREE of these relationships are significant in his development.

This overwhelmingly popular text attracted a wide range of candidates. The statement that Paul's growth to maturity was influenced by 'many' people was open to question with all candidates answering on Keller predominantly. Megan and Rosie were the next most popular choices. Many essays were not balanced, many candidates writing largely about Keller with limited reference to any other characters. The better candidates understood the concept of 'growth to maturity', ie., that maturity is not just achieved with age.

Question 8. Marele Day, *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*

In *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*, the corrupt city plays as important a role as any character.

Do you agree?

This proved to be a very challenging question for candidates who attempted this text. Most candidates showed a sound knowledge of genre and the text itself, but a significant number had difficulty addressing the question.

Many became focussed on proving that the city was corrupt, rather than discussing the role of the city in the novel. The 'Do you agree' part of the question was also a problem with candidates answering in the negative and then proceeding to write an essay on a variety of other aspects of the novel, ie., themes or 'women as detectives'.

Marking Guidelines

Guidelines are not to be used as a checklist. Rather they are to be used only as a help in choosing the appropriate mark category.

No allowance is made for 'Degree of Difficulty' of the text.

'A' RANGE (A 10) WELL ABOVE AVERAGE

- Question answered clearly (sometimes in an unusual way)
- Well developed essay structure. Sustains argument throughout essay with clear development of points. Discussion that reflects insight.
- Accurate knowledge of text. Able to select appropriate supporting evidence, including quotes that are usually nicely integrated.
- Perceptive, shows insight
- Literate, fluent, sophisticated use of language.

'B' RANGE (B 8, B+ 9) ABOVE AVERAGE

- As proficient as 'A' answers but not as refined.
- Developed essay structure that maintains the line of argument even though it may not be as controlled or as strongly argued as an A response
- As accurate as 'A' answers but not as perceptive; or alternately, as perceptive but not as accurate; sometimes with flashes of insight.
- Able to select appropriate supporting evidence, may use quotes.
- Literate but not as sophisticated as 'A' range answers.

'C' RANGE (C- 5, C 6, C+ 7) AVERAGE

- Must link to question even if only at beginning and end
- Makes good points even if not always fully developed
- Sometimes simplistic response to question, sometimes limited discussion and limited supporting evidence
- Knows text well (but some errors)
- Shows understanding of issues, themes, etc. (this may be fairly basic at times)
- May be very fluent but more often adequate
- Average control of mechanics. Often unrefined, often pedestrian in expression.

'D' RANGE (D 3, D+ 4) BELOW AVERAGE

- Fails to answer question clearly. Linking to the question may be haphazard
- Poor selection of supporting evidence, eg., often fragmented or inappropriate
- Little interpretation or real understanding of themes etc.
- Often has a good general and often accurate understanding of text but has difficulty in applying it to the question.
- May range from literate to quite fluent answers.
- There may be some errors of expression and limitations of vocabulary.

'E' RANGE (E- 0, E 1, E+ 2) WELL BELOW AVERAGE

- Little or no attempt to answer the question
 - Little real discussion and even that is not linked to question
 - Sometimes good knowledge of text
 - May range from brief to quite lengthy answers
 - May be fluent but more often below average expression
 - Errors of expression and limitations of vocabulary may be even more noticeable.
-

Candidate Responses

ABOVE AVERAGE RESPONSES

Gatsby had as Nick said 'A romantic readiness such as I have never seen in another person', and this was a quality that no other character possessed.

He had an ability to love so wholly that he devoted his whole life to it. His loyalty and unwavering devotion for Daisy was his most admirable quality that carried through to the end and made him, in a sense, 'turn out all right'.

This candidate goes on to explore Gatsby's character comparing her with others such as Daisy and Tom, and also exploring the corrupt side of his nature. This sophisticated discussion placed the candidate in the 'A' range.

The better candidates were able to distinguish between maturing and growing older.

Keller tries to teach Paul through his own mistakes, and tries to prevent him from making the same mistakes. With Keller's help Paul is able to look at life from a different perspective. He is able to see life from someone else's perspective and in doing so is able to grow and mature.

AVERAGE RESPONSES

There were many things that led to Okonkwo's Suicide. These were his ability to change, the coming of the white man and his own personality

This plan from the introduction was developed in a simple fashion in the main body of the essay, with at least a paragraph on each point. The candidate was placed in the average range.

BELOW AVERAGE RESPONSES

D range answers often incorporated storytelling with some links to the questions .

When Claudia was in the container terminal she was very frightened. It was dark and she was unarmed. She thought about her escape, it looked impossible. She was worried about Harry Lavender . This is another example of the corrupt city.

WELL BELOW AVERAGE

These responses made little or no attempt to answer the question.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker was part of the second wave of feminism spreading throughout the world. It is undeniably true that afro-American people were considered inferior by the caucasian inhabitants of America.

Celie is oppressed by those around her, she is raped by her father and is used by Mr __ who brings his mistress to live with him in the house.

The candidate includes irrelevant material and then lapses into story telling. There was little attempt to address the question in the essay that followed.

Part C – Drama

General Observations

Markers felt that the drama question showed that 2UG candidates need more indication of the direction the question expects them to take. Particularly in terms of the expectation of candidates discussing dramatic technique.

Candidates generally tried to demonstrate the extent to which the play was a realistic representation of the world. The second part of the quote was treated as a corollary to the first. Consequently serious consideration was not given to this aspect, although better candidates used it as a springboard for discussing the play as a social comment. Most candidates interpreted the ‘doesn’t try to change it’ part of the quote as meaning the playwright was not ‘distorting’ the world at the time, rather than seeing it as an attempt to engender social change. Such an interpretation made it especially difficult for candidates attempting to answer on Macbeth.

2UG candidates are often intimidated by a quote and do not feel confident enough to take an opposing point of view, even though some texts may lend themselves to this.

Many candidates resorted to general comments about the world today, current affairs or contemporary issues and their relationships to incidents in the play. This tended to distract them from relevant discussion of the text.

The lack of focus in the question appeared to result in frustration on the part of many able candidates who proceeded to list as much as they could about the themes and characters of the play without being sure how to link this to the question. This resulted in a wider variety of approaches within each range. For example, a better response might thoroughly discuss the issues in the play and link this less substantially to the question than another good candidate’s response which may focus discussion upon the social change, or dramatic technique aspects of the drama, but with much less discussion of text issues and content.

Uncertainty about ‘Drama tries to show the world as it is...’ meant that relatively few candidates discussed dramatic techniques, preferring to see the play as a literary text, rather than a performance.

‘C’ Range candidates often just listed issues which they perceived as realistic and indicators of realism. Many of these were literate and knowledgeable but too general in nature, failing to demonstrate an understanding of the text and the question.

‘General Studies’ type responses were prevalent in Maydina and were frequently linked to Topic Area type references to the Aboriginal Experience, without much textual support. These types of responses were often discrepant with markers struggling to identify the amount of contact with the text.

Similar difficulties were encountered with Macbeth:

Macbeth’s audience were no doubt satisfied with the play as it tried to appeal to every different class in the theatre house. The use of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre was a means in which Shakespeare could house everyone in the society that attended his plays.

Ultimately, discrimination for the majority of responses seemed to come from knowledge of the play, rather than how students dealt with the question.

Examples of particularly insightful approaches were:

The Statement that 'Drama tries to show the world as it is, it doesn't...' applies to Shaw's play Pygmalion only partially. It displays the true nature of early 19th Century society to the extent that there's emphasis on the importance of society's class and status and having your independence. What it distorts, to enhance the theatrical production, is the over characterisation of each character.'

David Williamson in his play 'The Removalists' attempts to expose the violent society which we live in and does not try to hide or change his beliefs.

In this drama Arthur Miller portrays the society in which we live. The characters can easily be identifiable as people we know...

Better Responses

These candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues in the play and were able to link this to the question. They understood that the play was more than a realistic picture of the world and that the playwright was attempting to elicit a response from the reader.

Average Responses

These candidates demonstrated a knowledge of the play and attempted to link this to the question in a simplistic manner. They were generally able to identify significant issues in the play without fully comprehending their significance to the question. They demonstrated varying levels of substantiation and development.

Below Average Responses

These candidates generally struggled to understand the question fully and were only able to demonstrate limited knowledge of the play.

2 Unit General Drama Marking Guidelines

These guidelines are not intended to be used as a checklist.

Their purpose is to guide markers in the selection of appropriate categories in which to place candidates' responses.

General Observations

There is a wide range of interpretations for 'show the world as it is'. Markers' judgements will be based upon the extent to which the student is able to link the key issues in the play with the world being portrayed.

Students may also vary in their interpretation of the drama's attempt to 'change' the world. A major discriminator is an understanding of how the play presents the world and the ways in which the issues raised impact on the audience.

Students will only be awarded marks when they come into contact with the play and the question.

The question does not require students to explain how these issues are presented dramatically although better students may discuss this.

WELL ABOVE AVERAGE (A 10)

Demonstrates a clear insight into the play

Well structured and sustained argument which thoroughly addresses the question

Demonstrates effective control of language

Argument well supported with examples from text.

ABOVE AVERAGE RESPONSES (B 8, 9)

Demonstrates a clear understanding of the play

Presents a clearer line of argument that addresses the question fully.

Answers in the range may attempt to explain how the play engages the audience by presenting a particular view of the world.

Supports answer with well chosen examples from the play.

Need not be a sophisticated response, may be more mechanical than 'A' scripts.

AVERAGE RESPONSES (C 5, 6, 7)

Demonstrates a reasonable knowledge of the play

Identifies issues in the play with some elaboration linked to the question.

Basically may list issues without presenting an overall view of the play and/or the question.

Answers question but may be simplistic and/or pedestrian.

Uses quotes or appropriate incidents as opposed to irrelevant storytelling.

NB: There will be a wide range of responses within the 'C' range.

BELOW AVERAGE RESPONSES (D 3, 4)

Demonstrates some limited knowledge of the play.

May simply be random lists of aspects of the play without clearly focusing on the question.

Must come into contact with the question.

Could contain story telling but has on one or two aspects relevant to the question.

Literate.

WELL BELOW AVERAGE (E 0, 1, 2)

Demonstrates little knowledge of the play or understanding of the issues but may show some background knowledge.

Irrelevant material to the play/question.

May be quite literate but fails to address the question.

2/3 Unit (Common) Paper 1 – Resources and Uses of English and Shakespeare (*King Lear*)

Part A – Resources and Uses of English

General Comments

Question 1. Reading Task

The format of the Reading Task in 1995 was different from previous papers, with three separate questions in the reading section rather than the single question in use previously.

Candidates often penalised themselves by writing overly long responses to parts (a) and (b), sections worth only four marks each. Then, perhaps through lack of time, they wrote what were generally briefer answers to part (c), a section worth seven marks.

Most candidates had little trouble with question (a), where the majority saw the incongruities between the happy atmosphere of the photograph, which recorded an instant in time, and the realities of most other times with the distance both in age and priorities of the eldest and youngest, which was reflected in the separation at different ends of the table. The unrealistic instant of the photo... 'imagine trying to do this now'..., the reality of the Vietnam war, and grandma's wry comment about 'God's way of preparing for a war in twenty years time' are in stark contrast. The ambiguous nature of the last sentence – in parenthesis (does it relate to the picture or to the 'two (who) remained childless; one has never married'?) was further evidence of the 'something different' suggested by the passage. Relatively few students associated the title 'Bloodlines' with this contrast.

[Note: an answer as brief as the above paragraph would have been more than sufficient to gain full marks for this section].

Question 1(b) specifically asked candidates to show how the passage of time was suggested. The best answers considered the language, the reality of the description and the imagery. The language was specific 'ten years ago', and things have changed 'as you predicted'.

The passage of time is shown by the trees, 'mere saplings – they shade the entire garden now' ... and by the 'one year old daughter... grown lovely (now)... her legs are long and slender' ... The reference to the three generations – 'she takes after you and after your mother' ... is a further real situation showing the passage of time.

The third aspect was the imagery. The black and white photograph as opposed to the more usual colour one of the present, the old fashioned 'dress buttons down the front' and the webbed veins 'as mine are now' clearly show the passage of time. The strongest image of all is the bathroom mirror, the youngest generation applying make up – impatient to become an adult. This image is contrasted in a very clear way with 'mine' – the writer's, the middle generation.

Question 1(c). This question did not require any reference to the photograph. The best answers were able to discuss the writer's tone and technique and relate these to the sense of celebration. The apparent random sentence structure – some sentences as short as two words, others quite lengthy, the kaleidoscope of images of holiday food, colour and firecracker smoke; the contrast between the swift running, sticky mouthed children and the guests in front room sipping tea are all worthy of note. The onomatopoeia of the cooking noises, the use of dialogue clearly distinguished by the use of italics, and the choice of active verbs such as 'scurry, leaks, sneaked' and 'intercepted' help to maintain this sense of excitement of a family celebration.

Teachers need to treat the analysis of language in a manner which considers the subject, purpose and audience and its relationship to the language rather than concentrating on lists of language aspects. Technical language in itself is of no value – students who can show the effect of language fare much better.

2/3 Unit (Common) Resources and Uses of English

Reading Task Marking Guidelines

Question 1. (a) Both the photograph and the piece of writing below are a record of a family celebration.

In what ways does the passage 'Bloodlines' support the happy image in the photograph, and in what ways does it suggest something different? (4 marks)

Two approaches can be taken to the marking of this question.

One is the traditional awarding of a maximum of 2 marks for a discussion supporting a happy image and a maximum of 2 marks for a discussion in support of something different.

Alternatively there may be good answers which challenge the assumptions in the question without necessarily raising '4 points'.

These responses may present a perceptive, well developed and substantiated point of view. They may even go so far as to recognise ambiguity in the passage.

Poorer responses may partially paraphrase or copy from the passage.

Are unlikely to provide sufficient development or support for their response.

There may also be misreadings of the passage.

Question 1. (b) In the following poem, 'In Black and White', how is the passage of time suggested? (4 marks)

4 marks – Scripts at this level will include some of these features:

- A well developed or substantiated view point.
- Identifies and discusses the 'How' rather than simply offering evidence which indicates that time has passed.
- Makes connections or sees the links between contrasting or reoccurring images.
- Offers a perceptive interpretation: (Can draw appropriate conclusions from the information that is presented. Demonstrates understanding rather than observation.)

3 marks

- Has a degree of interpretation and sees some of the connections.
- Moves beyond a superficial listing of points.
- Offers an elaboration on these points

2 marks

- A tendency to list obvious and minor points.
- May develop lengthy explanations of these minor points.
- Points undeveloped, poorly developed, and/or poorly linked to the question.

1 mark

- Offers a paraphrasing or partial paraphrasing.
- Indicates a very limited understanding.
- Is likely to be repetitious.

Less than one

- A complete misreading of the poem or question.

Question 1. (c) In the following passage, 'Chinese New Year, 1955', how does the writer use language to express a sense of family celebration? (7 marks)

7 marks

- A thorough response with a strong focus on the 'HOW'.
- Understands the implications of how language is used and its effect.
- Able to present an integrated discussion or one which is highly competent, yet mechanical.
- Will see the links between various parts of the passage.
- Able to group ideas together.
- Will draw appropriate conclusions about the use of language.

6 marks

- A well sustained response.
- A focused discussion of the 'HOW'.
- May offer a competent yet 'mechanical' discussion of language.

5 marks

- A response which is above average.
- Makes some comments on how language is used to establish a sense of family celebration.
- Will develop connections in more detail than a 4 mark response.

4 marks

- An average response.
- Makes connections between language and celebratory atmosphere.
- May present a partial analysis of the use of language and its effect.

3 marks

- A general discussion of the language without realising its effect.
- The focus is directed towards the content.
- Offers a discussion of what is celebrated.
- Inclined, at times, to labour minor/obvious events and features.

2 marks

- Presents a list as evidence of celebration.
- Links to the question are rather tenuous.
- Responds only to the content.
- May lapse into paraphrasing.

1 mark

- Presents a list as evidence of celebration.
- May offer a poor summary or paraphrasing of the passage.

Question 2. Writing Task.

‘I should take a photo, while I’ve got you all together.’

Write about 300—500 words, using this sentence somewhere in your answer.

You may write in any form you choose.

Question 2. Writing Task

Generally, the standard of writing in this section was very good. The responses from some centres showed clearly that teachers have worked on writing skills as students gave evidence of originality and understanding of the craft of writing. The best responses avoided clichéd stories about school formals and graduations and about horror stories and accidents. Instead they showed a clear focus and a control of language that was appropriate for the subject. They often told a story from a different or unusual point of view and sustained the appropriate voice throughout. At the lower end of the range there were many fantasy pieces of writing that became silly rather than convincing. In this section in particular, student’s handwriting is important. Scripts that are very difficult to read cause the markers to lose the continuity of the story, and this may be reflected in marks.

2/3 Unit (Common) Uses and Resources of English—Writing Task Criteria

Overall Comments

These notes are intended to provide only the broadest description of the scripts likely to be found in each range. They are not intended as a checklist of any kind nor should they be considered absolute.

‘A’ RANGE (14–15) WELL ABOVE AVERAGE

15 An articulate response with quality expression. An ability to successfully manipulate language. (language reflects purpose).

Shows originality/flair/imagination/insight. A successful demonstration of form, style, or tone.

‘B’ RANGE (11–13) ABOVE AVERAGE

13 Unified and sustained response which engages the reader.

12 Sophisticated or effective use of language.

11 May experiment, with some success, in style, ideas or humour.

‘C’ RANGE (7–10) AVERAGE

10 Understands the need for the writing to have a purpose. Competent in use of language.

8–9 Attempts a sustained point of view. A straight forward narrative.

7 A tendency to rely on cliché, in ideas and language. (Predictable)

Likely to be bland and unimaginative; laboured.

‘D’ RANGE (4–6) BELOW AVERAGE

6 Demonstrates limited narrative skill.

5 Uses expression which is uneven, patchy, fragmented or inappropriate.

4 Uses of language with little purpose or effect.

‘E’ RANGE (1–3) WELL BELOW AVERAGE

3 Lacks clarity of expression.

2 Is very confused in focus or structure.

1

NB: Non attempt.

Part B – Shakespeare

Question 3. King Lear.

Allow about 50 minutes for this question.

'*King Lear* distresses us by its display of the emptiness and disorder of human life.

Yet we are moved by the persistent attempts to reclaim order from disorder.'

Discuss the complex nature and effect of tragedy as it unfolds in *King Lear*.

The strongest candidates were able to produce an integrated and sometimes creative response to the question. Some good candidates however became confused when attempting to deal with the multi-faceted nature and style of the question.

These candidates knew the play well but many had trouble producing a clear argument. Some candidates took a simple line of interpretation dealing with only one aspect of the question such as 'order and disorder' and were able to produce a coherent argument.

Some of the key words acted as 'handles' for the weaker candidates.

'Unfolds' led some to tell the story, 'complex' led others into a discussion of the double plot in *King Lear*, 'tragedy' led some candidates to discuss the nature of Shakespearean tragedy – a concept with which some struggled.

2/3 Unit (Common) Shakespeare Marking Guidelines

Overall Comments

Due to the diverse elements of the question students are adopting a variety of legitimate approaches. They may have chosen to tackle the elements of the quotation or the statement, or composite of these, eg., order and disorder or the effect on the audience or the nature of tragedy.

'A' RANGE (10) WELL ABOVE AVERAGE

'A' range have superior knowledge of the text incorporated into unified, clear and often original argument. Many offer a wide ranging and sophisticated discussion. Have flair, fluency and control over language.

'B' RANGE (9, 8) ABOVE AVERAGE

'B' scripts have a good knowledge of the text. Have an argument and make the examples from the text fit it (rather than the reverse). Have a more formed argument from the start of the essay. Loss of the struggle that marks the 'C' range. Have conceptual ideas about the terms of the question.

Essays have a sense of unity. They have flair and fluency of expression. Are more discriminating in their selection of examples/quotes.

'C' RANGE (7, 6, 5) AVERAGE

'C' scripts have knowledge of the play. They attempt an argument but the argument tends to come from a sequential account of the narrative. Tend to be struggling with the argument – may stumble on it but not maintain it or may arrive at the argument at the end. Often select similar scenes. Often apply the words of the question as 'labels' rather than concepts, eg., this is tragic.

Some take parts of question and do a little bit of each. Better 'C' scripts maintain line of argument, select more relevant material from the play to support these. Poorer 'C' scripts sometimes rework another topic, eg., self awareness. Poorer scripts do not integrate quotes well.

'D' RANGE (4, 3) BELOW AVERAGE

Show knowledge of text but tend to stumble on a line of argument; may not be selective about the examples they use; argument may be simplistic. May tend to be linear, and more tangential connections to key words from question.

May use inaccurate language. May lack control of language. Lack flair in express. May be repetitious and make generalisations. May simply agree with the question rather than discuss.

Poorer 'D' responses may be brief or miss the point of the question.

'E' RANGE (2, 1, 0) WELL BELOW AVERAGE

Show some knowledge of the story but it may be confused or simplistic. May make unsubstantiated statements. Tend to be very brief or unfinished.

2/3 Unit (Common) Paper 2 – Poetry/Fiction/Drama

Part A – Poetry

General Comments on the Poetry Section

The examiners felt that the questions were more even this year and were pleased with the equality in the number of poems that had to be treated as well as the absence of giving some poems for some poets only which had been a feature of past papers.

The Larkin question posed problems for candidates because of the use of the word 'celebrate'. The Cataldi question caused problems because of the complicated nature of the wording of the question. The Chaucer question was very well-received because of its straightforward nature.

Poetry Marking Guidelines

The different ranges may be characterised by the following:

'A' RANGE (10) – WELL ABOVE AVERAGE

- Well above average but not necessarily perfect
 - Sustained discussion of the poems in answer to the question
 - Often superior discussion of the effects of language
 - Strongly focussed on the question
 - Often sophisticated style and structure
 - Effective use of quoting
 - May display real flair and originality
 - Not necessarily inspirational, but comprehensive
 - Deals effectively with two poems, but one may be stronger than the other.
-

'B' RANGE (8, 9) – ABOVE AVERAGE

- Good expression in a more structured response
 - Responses may be more perceptive and/or more detailed than the top of the 'C' range
 - Demonstrates how the language and/or style contribute to the impact of the poem
 - Appropriate choice and constructive use of quotation
 - Sustained response
 - Interpretation supported by argument and evidence drawn from the poems.
-

'C' RANGE (5, 6, 7,) – AVERAGE

- Reasonable attempt to answer the question
 - Reasonable understanding of the poems
 - May communicate ideas clearly, but have flawed expression
 - At the top of the 'C' range, students will have a deeper understanding of how the impact is conveyed
 - Candidates who discuss one poem only cannot get out of the 'C' range
 - An average response from an average student.
-

'D' RANGE (3, 4) – BELOW AVERAGE

- Limited understanding with an over reliance on recounting content/paraphrasing/quotation
 - Discernible padding
 - The attempt to answer the question is limited
 - Simplistic comments
 - May be characterised by poor expression.
-

'E' RANGE (1, 2) – WELL BELOW AVERAGE

- Does not understand the poems
 - Irrelevant discussion
 - Does not address the question
 - No concept of the poem as a whole providing distorted and simplistic comments
 - Often poorly expressed but not necessarily so
 - May be brief
 - Unsupported generalisations.
-

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- Worst of the scripts you will see
 - Vary in length
 - May be well expressed but fail to address the question
 - May reveal crucial misunderstandings of the poems.
-

Strengths of Candidates

The better candidates showed the following qualities in their responses:

- they had internalised the poetry and empathised with the poet and understood the poet's vision. This produced genuinely personal responses.
- they had a good knowledge of the poetry and were able to use evidence in an integrated and appropriate manner.
- they clearly addressed all aspects of the question.
- they had a balanced approach to the treatment of two poems.
- they presented cohesively argued essays.
- they could identify the intricacies of the questions, relating the poems appropriately.
- they showed superior discussion of techniques and an ability to integrate this discussion into the overall argument.
- they were usually concise and fluent responses.
- they showed that care had been taken in analysing the wording of the questions.

Weaknesses of Candidates

The weaker candidates displayed some of these characteristics in their responses:

- they did not address the question asked
- they had a lack of evidence
- they used unsupported generalisations and often made ridiculous or meaningless statements
- there was a strong reliance on storytelling and/or extraneous biographical or philosophical material
- there was often an inability to construct an argument
- they displayed listing of techniques which showed little or no understanding of how they related to the overall meaning or effect of the poems
- quotations were often used in an irrelevant manner or without any attempt to integrate them into the response
- there was a reliance on paraphrasing
- candidates were unable to balance their argument around two poems

- there was literal interpretation of the poems which showed a lack of understanding of the various levels within the poetry
- responses were often verbose, using terms and vocabulary that were not understood by the candidate
- some over-reliance on notes which candidates clearly did not understand.

Question 1. Geoffrey Chaucer

‘The Miller’s Tale suggests that there is very little that is dignified or noble in human life.’

Does your reading of The Miller’s Tale support this view or not? Discuss with detailed reference to the poem.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Candidates in this range acknowledged all aspects of the question and were able to sustain an argument either supporting or refuting the quotation. In doing so they revealed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Tale and of Chaucer's purpose and his use of poetic techniques including character portrayals, parody and irony. Candidates were able to quote accurately and appropriately from the text or by relevant paraphrase were able to demonstrate close reference to the text.

AVERAGE

Candidates in this range understood the terms of the question and made a reasonable attempt to answer it. Most did not understand how Chaucer dealt with the concepts of 'dignity' and 'nobility' in general but limited discussion to individual characters instead. Evidence tended to be descriptive rather than analytical.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates in this range lacked consistent argument, did not understand the terms of the question and had no idea of the broader concepts. They were unable to focus on either the 'dignified' or 'noble' and concentrated on character descriptions and the bawdy aspects of the Tale.

Example of a weaker response where the candidate has a naive understanding of Chaucer’s use of language:

The language in the poem also suggests vulgarity, especially in the words. For example 'pisse' is made to rhyme with 'kisse' while the word 'quentye' appears many times, an euphemism for a part of the female anatomy. The Miller's Tale is not a dignified and noble tale.

Question 2. Andrew Marvell

In Marvell’s poems, we find humour of different kinds. Examine the use and effect of humour in TWO of the poems set for study.

ABOVE AVERAGE

The better candidates addressed all aspects of the question – ‘humour’ ‘different kinds’, ‘uses’ and ‘effect’ – producing an integrated and sustained response. They gave detailed analysis of two poems and demonstrated a sound understanding of Marvell’s humour and its significance within the context of the poems.

AVERAGE

Attempted to address the terms of the question but some stressed one aspect (eg., the use of humour rather than also addressing the effect of the humour). Attempted to sustain an argument but often with unsupported or general statements. Candidates had some knowledge of poetic devices and made an attempt to integrate techniques with concerns.

BELOW AVERAGE

Attempted to address the question but in a very limited way. Often general comments on humour without reference to different kinds or the effect. Showed only a superficial understanding of the poems and often misquoted or had no evidence for support. Some were too brief to present a reasonable argument.

Examples of weaker candidates – use of extraneous material and naive understanding:

- i. *Much of Marvell's poetry is not humorous. It tends to portray the turbulent times that were avid in the seventeenth century. Marvell concentrates more on ideas of love and loss, masculinity versus femininity or contemplation against action. Humour may eventuate from the comparison of two opposite forces such as war and peace.*
- ii. *In the conceit where Marvell describes his love in the language of geometry he says that his mistress and he are like parallel lines that never meet but their love goes on forever. He sees this as being superior to love that is on lines that meet at every corner...This love is not pure and everlasting. Marvell also talks of astronomy and the ‘conjunction of the stars’ which is likened to love in this conceit.*

Question 3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge

What do Coleridge’s poems show about the importance of the powers of the imagination?

Discuss with reference to Two of the poems set for study.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Candidates chose appropriate poems and could demonstrate through close analysis of the text the importance of the imagination. They integrated accurate and appropriate quotation into the body of the essay. Candidates related the question to the use of the Romantic poets’ belief in the power of the imagination.

AVERAGE

Candidates gave accurate and detailed analysis of two poems but did not look at the importance of imagination. They attempted to give a balanced treatment of two poems. They often quoted accurately but sometimes inappropriately.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates wrote superficially about the two poems often showing little knowledge of the text. Some treated only one poem. Candidates may have only mentioned the word 'imagination'. There was often a narrative approach ie. telling the story of the poem.

Example of a weaker, naive response:

Without the imaginatory power, Coleridge's poems wouldn't flow from the page like they do.

Example of a better response where the candidate has a good understanding of the philosophy and use of Romantic imagination:

Through the use of imagination he has transcended his physical limitations and integrates nature and god, endorsing a pantheistic philosophy. He is now delighted to find that his bower which he had previously described as a 'prison' is in fact a microcosm, encapsulating all aspects of nature.

The spiritual journey uses nature as a vehicle to express the persona's state of mind. He begins contemplating 'the roaring dell: o'erwooded, narrow deep'. This mirrors his meditative state. 'The many steepled tract magnificent', 'under the wide heavens' reflects his spiritual exhilaration. Poetic devices are also used to exacerbate the persona's spiritual progression. Use of alliteration 'as I stood silently with swimming sense' reflects the poet's intoxication with nature. The magnificence and glory of nature is also escalated by use of assonance 'mighty orbs dilated glory'.

Example of a better candidate who also uses an overview of the importance of imagination to establish a sound argument:

Coleridge stresses the importance of the powers of the imagination as a means of overcoming obstacles in the physical world. As Charles has used his imagination to him 'no sound is dissonant which tells of life' and this is bound with the basic message of Coleridge in 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison'; he who can use his imagination to seek joy in any part of nature will find eternal pleasure. He will be enlightened and will find comfort through spiritual means.

Example of better candidate's uses of detailed analysis:

Furthermore, his imagination allows him to lift his spirits. The dell is physical representation of his journey in his mind. He describes the 'roaring dell' as 'o'erwooded, narrow, deep' and only speckled by the 'midday sun'. The darkness is further emphasised by the description 'unsunn'd and damp' 'few poor yellow leaves'. The darkness suggests his low spirits, but as his imagination flows, his 'friends emerge/Beneath the wide wide Heaven'. With this physical movement upwards, his spirits rise. By the end of the poem Coleridge himself realises: 'Tis well to be bereft of promised good/That we may lift the soul!' – evidence that the imagination has the ability to lift the soul and spirits.

Question 4. Emily Dickinson

'I am alive – I guess.'

EMILY DICKINSON, from a poem not set for study.

Choose TWO of the set poems by Dickinson. Show how she fashions meaningful poetry from doubts and uncertainties.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Candidates addressed all aspects of the question. Better candidates demonstrated an understanding of the process Dickinson used in moving from personal to universal concerns or, conversely, interpreted Dickinson's concerns as purely personal and sustained a relevant argument.

AVERAGE

Candidates attempted to address the question but ignored one aspect – usually the idea of 'meaningful poetry'. They addressed most aspects of the question but gave no detail or depth of discussion. Often an imbalance in the treatment of two poems. Often a good analysis of techniques or meanings but no integration of these.

BELOW AVERAGE

Some attempt to address some aspect of the question but very poorly done. Naive statements demonstrating little, if any, understanding of the poems. Often irrelevant biographical detail.

Question 5. Alfred, Lord Tennyson

A famous twentieth-century poet objected that 'all Tennyson knew about was melancholy'.

Is that fair? What qualities do you find in Tennyson's poetry? Discuss with reference to TWO of the poems set for study.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Candidates in this range addressed all aspects of the question which involved a response to both the quotation and a close examination of the 'qualities' of Tennyson's poetry. These two aspects were integrated in the responses. Candidates also came to grips effectively with the term 'melancholy'.

AVERAGE

Candidates made an attempt to respond to the question 'Is that fair?' and gave a detailed treatment of 'qualities' of the poetry but did not always integrate this with response to the quotation. They made only passing reference to 'melancholy'.

BELOW AVERAGE

Effectively ignored the question and the quotation and lapsed into a narrative approach or listing of techniques. They did not really understand what 'qualities' meant.

Example of a weaker response where candidate doesn't understand the concept of 'qualities' in terms of poetic concerns:

I find that there are many qualities in Tennyson's poems. His poems are very imaginative, creative, descriptive, deep, meaningful and have the ability to draw the reader in.

Question 6. Philip Larkin

'Larkin's poems celebrate failure and insignificance – and not much more.'

What do you think? Discuss with reference to TWO of the poems set for study.

ABOVE AVERAGE

The better candidates attempted to come to terms with the idea of 'celebrate'. They presented an opinion and developed their ideas in relation to the two poems they chose. They had accurate, appropriate and integrated quotation and evidence.

AVERAGE

Candidates may have mentioned the word 'celebrate' but made little attempt to deal with the concept. Candidates concentrated on the ideas of 'failure' and 'insignificance'.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates ignored the personal opinion requirement of the question and went straight into a description of the poem/s. Some attempted to deal with the idea of 'celebrate' but responses were distorted or confused.

Example of a weaker candidate's attempt to establish an introduction which becomes confused and complicated:

To an extent it is correct to attribute Larkin's work to celebrating the themes of failure and insignificance but this is only to an extent. By no means is Larkin's work wholeheartedly negative. Essentially themes of failure and insignificance are negative terms, however there is a sense, particularly in Here and Whitsun Weddings, that there is hope. Larkin explores failure in Dockery and Son and Mr. Bleaney in regard to family and social success. In Dockery and Son insignificance of the persona is explored In Ambulances the insignificance of life is explored, as it is in Here and Whitsun Weddings but more in the context of the modern urbanised lifestyle.

Question 7. Seamus Heaney

At the end of 'The Tollund Man', Heaney speaks of feeling both 'lost ... and at home'.

Discuss some of the ways Heaney's poetry explores the paradox of feeling 'lost' and 'at home'. Refer to Two of the poems set for study in your answer. (You do not have to choose 'The Tollund Man'.)

ABOVE AVERAGE

Better candidates understood the idea of the paradox ('both lost and at home') and connected this to Heaney's techniques. Most demonstrated an understanding of Heaney's overall philosophy.

AVERAGE

Candidates in this range either did not understand the idea of the paradox or they did not deal sufficiently with Heaney's techniques.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates ignored the quotation, often presenting prepared answers and superficial reference to techniques. Candidates saw the quotation as irrelevant or were unable to make any connection between the quotation and the argument/analysis/description they presented.

Example of an effective linking of technique and ideas:

In the first stanza of 'Death of a Naturalist', Seamus Heaney uses retrospective verse to explore a loss of innocence and self-assurance of childhood. This might be expected to be detached and analytical, yet as he describes the childhood activity of collecting frogspawn in the swamp 'at the heartland' his concern is with immediacy, with a recreation of the feeling. Through the child, we are able to experience sensations seldom felt in this much strength and perhaps most importantly, with so much self-assurance. Images associated with the unconscious indulgence of childhood like 'jellied eggs' and 'clotted water' assail the reader. Every sense is involved in Heaney's sounds, images and rhythms and he makes these senses solid and tangible... By giving the reader this sensation, through the sheer tactility of images and the sense of childish involvement, we experience again something of what it is like to be 'at home' with our own sensations – almost unconscious of their implications in a wider world.

Question 8. Rosemary Dobson

'Rosemary Dobson's poems show how it is possible to be disturbed by the world and yet accept the way it is.'

Discuss with reference to TWO of the poems set for study.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Better candidates gave responses which dealt with the quotation fully and thoroughly and which consistently discussed the key issues of 'disturbed' and 'accept' in relation to close analysis of the chosen two poems. Candidates were able to discuss the metaphorical levels within the poems and showed a genuine understanding of Dobson's concerns.

AVERAGE

Candidates were unable to explicitly discuss the idea of 'disturbed' but were able to treat the concept of 'acceptance' much more fully. Although they did attempt to argue, they were often lacking in evidence and the analysis of the two poems was not integrated with the argument.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates tended to describe one or two of Dobson's poems. They saw no relevance of the quotation as a whole but treated an aspect eg. Dobson's view of the 'world' as the key element of the question.

Question 9. Robert Gray

'One's attitude should be, I think, 'Everything that can be shaken, should be shaken'.'

ROBERT GRAY, in an interview.

Choose TWO of the poems set for study. Show to what extent Robert Gray 'shakes' (that is, challenges or radically examines) accepted ideas and attitudes.

ABOVE AVERAGE

Candidates addressed all aspects of the question and the quotation and explained to what extent Gray shakes/challenges or radically examines ideas and attitudes. Better candidates related their responses to the quote as a whole and explained Gray's concerns. These responses implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) explained the poems in relation to Gray's philosophical concerns.

AVERAGE

Candidates dealt with the ideas of challenges or radically examines and tended to pay lip-service to the key word 'shaken', often by substituting another term for it. Candidates were able to deal with two poems but not necessarily in balance and had some occasional description or analysis that was not closely linked to the key words of the question.

BELOW AVERAGE

Candidates ignored the key words of the question and described poems or analysed in a very superficial way. Inappropriate use of evidence and biographical detail was evident.

Part B – Fiction

General Comments

There were three questions which the majority of students answered. These were:

- *Emma*
- *Wuthering Heights*
- *Maestro*.

Examples of responses used are meant to exemplify particular qualities and typical arguments found in the scripts. Responses to texts other than the three most popular are less fully illustrated because of smaller sample.

During the marking process, students' reliance on widely available critical material became increasingly obvious and disturbing.

Fiction Marking Guidelines

'A'/'B' RANGE – ABOVE AVERAGE

- Well written, carefully structured responses that make very good use of evidence.
 - Reveal a thoughtful clear and consistent interpretation of the novel and its complexities, together with an appreciation of the underlying philosophy of the novel.
 - Able to discuss an interpretation of the novel in terms of the question/quotation provided.
 - Presents a valid consistent argument revealing a very good understanding and appreciation of the novel.
 - Reveals a complex understanding and appreciation of the devices/techniques/conventions used by the writer and the issues presented in the novel.
-

'C' RANGE – AVERAGE

- Makes a good attempt to answer the question. Responses may be well written and detailed but limited in interpretation.
 - Attempts to analyse and interpret the novel rather than simply provide opinions. Sometimes unable to clearly discuss ideas and implications of the novel.
 - Analyses and explains events of the novel rather than simply recounting them. Responses may sometimes resort to listing.
 - Responses usually reveal irrelevancies and inadequacies of some sort.
-

'D'/'E' RANGE – BELOW AVERAGE

- Simplistic, superficial understanding of the conventions/techniques/devices used in the particular novel.
 - May contain inaccuracies.
 - May have problems with the essay structure, and expression may be clumsy.
 - May contain simplistic or shallow recounting of incidents and may offer opinions on them.
 - Approach to the question may be piecemeal.
 - Sometimes reveal a limited perception of characters, making simplistic value judgements about them, their actions and motivations
 - Might not show an awareness of the complex notions involved in both the novel and the question.
-

Emma

‘A’ RESPONSE:

Has an interpretation or ‘reading of the novel’ not just a view of Emma's character. Can see that Austen uses her heroine as a device for conveying ideas and may make judgements about society. Example:

Austen explores the structured and restricting sense of the society of highbury in Emma, often exposing its snobbery and pretentiousness through the action and the words of the novel's ‘heroine’, Emma Woodhouse. Placed in a very high and commanding position within the society, Emma’s interactions with other people highlight the class consciousness of the world and identifies its true rigidity. With her position comes the responsibility of duty and it is by Emma’s abuse or neglect of this, that Austen shows true snobbery and failure to perform social obligations.

‘B’ RESPONSE:

Has a narrower interpretation of the novel, concentrating on Emma and her progress. Discusses the reader’s attitude towards Emma in a complex way, which could include: alternative ways of responding to her. Candidate discusses how the novelist shapes that attitude. Example:

The narrative is immediately seen to be in third person with authorial overview of the novel. But the way in which Emma is built uses aspects of first person, in order to build the irony that the reader will further perceive throughout the novel.

Example:

Throughout the novel, Austen has used the reader's attitude towards Emma to influence our opinion of the issues the novel represents. Sometimes she used the reader's outrage at Emma to satirise social stratifications and at others she suggests it is necessary.

Example:

Emma is the central character of Jane Austen's novel, and our attitude towards her greatly influences our reading of the novel. If she is seen as mistaken, but likeable, the novel becomes concerned with her self-realisation, and eventual forgiveness. If not, the theme of justice is brought in – does Emma deserve to get off so lightly, given all her intelligence? The happy conclusion of the novel could work both ways, pointing to the justice or injustice of the social system.

‘C’ RESPONSE:

Emphasis in the essay seems to be on character analysis. Discusses the reader’s reaction by attempting to analyse and interpret rather than by simply giving opinions.

Example:

Jane Austen never allows us to totally dislike Emma. She gives Emma far too much intelligence, wit and sincerity to allow us to form a hatred or dislike of Emma.

Example:

From early on in the novel, we are made aware by Jane Austen that Emma has a lot of confidence in her judgement as she 'had a disposition to think a little too well of herself'.

'D' RESPONSE:

A simplistic recounting of incidents and giving opinions about them, eg., 'like', 'dislike'. No awareness of Austen's manipulation of the reader is apparent.

Example:

The next 'flight of fancy' of Emma is her attempted match of Frank Churchill and herself. Jane Austen's character of Frank Churchill is deceptive at first, even to Mr. Knightley. However, in flirting with Frank Churchill, Emma also offends Miss Bates, and his actual intended future wife, Jane Fairfax, at Box Hill.

Example:

In conclusion, Emma's three major blunders of self-delusion develops the reader's attitude through Emma's self-knowledge and because the novel by Jane Austen is about self-knowledge.

'E' RESPONSE:

Fails to deal with the question. Writes in a superficial, generalised way. Gross inaccuracies, vagaries, clumsy expression. Has possibly not read the book.

Example:

Personal judgements of Emma may differ from person to person, but on behalf of many, it is seen that the hate directed towards Emma inspires us to read on.

Example:

As many novelists of readers may believe, if the heroine of main character of the novel is not well liked the story may also be unsuccessful.

Example:

With out Mr. Knightley there to set Emma along straight lines she may have become a very dislike spinster.

Example:

I was carried through a world of fantasy by Emma in which one feels that anything is possible if it is gone about in the correct manner.

Wuthering Heights

'A' RESPONSE:

Good overall interpretation of the novel (range of definitions of 'order', 'barrier'). Able to discuss that interpretation in terms of the quote, especially 'defines all order and breaks all barriers'.

'B' RESPONSE:

Strong line of argument, understands requirement less complex understanding of the novel than A but able to deal competently with all parts of the quote. Possible some problems with language, structure.

Example:

Hence, Bronte is showing that human passion is too unrestrained to cope in an adult, moral society, and that it is destructive if contained for too long in this environment.

Example:

The conflict in Wuthering Heights is between the raw, natural energies of the natural world and anonymous forces and the social world of conventional reality and moral codes.

Example:

When Heathcliff first arrives at Wuthering heights, he disturbs the order in which Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange operate. He represents a disturbance, by evoking strong emotions in every character.

'C' RESPONSE:

Concentrates on 'human passion' in the novel, probably do not deal with 'order' but might attempt 'barriers' (or vice-versa). Might discuss the destructive consequences of passion. Don't just relate what happens but analyse and explain. Good knowledge and understanding of the novel.

Example:

Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship was extremely passionate. The nature of such a strong bond meant that it was also destructive, both to themselves, and to others. The self-destructive nature is shown by the fact that they both virtually killed themselves by wishing to die.

Example:

Together, Cathy and Heathcliff break several barriers in the novel, the most notable being the barrier between the living and the dead.

'D' RESPONSE:

Concentrates on Catherine and Heathcliff's passion/love but talk about what happens. Attempt to address the quote/questions by mentioning its terms. Narrow, restricted use of the text

Example:

Revenge is on Heathcliff's agenda, primarily for his savage treatment by Hindley, Edgar's marrying of his beloved Catherine and Catherine's 'betrayal' of their love.

Example:

The unearthly passion of Heathcliff within the novel shows the reader that, although love can conquer all, passion lives forever.

'E' RESPONSE:

Wuthering Heights, as rewritten by Mills and Boon. Shallow, generalised narration of incident. Inadequate knowledge – possibly has not read the novel.

Example:

'Wuthering Heights' is a novel in which barriers are broken and order is disturbed. This all stems from the main focus of the story; a rough and wild gypsy boy falling in love with a girl well above his social standards.

Example:

Catherine finally accepting her love for Heathcliff. In doing this Catherine defies order by rejecting the love of a wealthy upper-class gentleman in favour of the love of a man known for violence and cruelty.

Maestro

'A' RESPONSE:

Takes a point of view and argues it consistently. Convincing definitions (implied or stated) of 'irony' and 'maestro'. Interpretation offered can be supported by the whole text (and shows an understanding of the adult Paul's perspective).

'B' RESPONSE:

Attempts an interpretation, a point of view on the question, but not as successfully argued. Some problems – unusual interpretation, inaccuracy etc.

'C' RESPONSE:

Cannot successfully discuss irony but tries to keep coming back to it. Mainly discusses the title, the term 'maestro' and the main characters. Sound discussion of the novel.

'D' RESPONSE:

Attempts some part of the question. Inadequate argument, use of the novel or limited understanding. Fails to convince.

‘E’ RESPONSE:

Does not deal with question (mentioning its terms = ‘dealing with’). Brief, superficial argument. Confused, limited understanding of the text.

Notes: It was obvious that the question of irony in the title was a peripheral issue to most students. Because of this, the question failed to discriminate between the average and the better responses. The standard response said either that the title was or was not ironic. The same evidence – what Paul learns about life and music from Keller was used to support either point of view.

Example:

Some of these factors include Keller's musical talents as a virtuoso, his ability to teach Paul so much about life, love, humility, perfection and his most t unique and insightful characteristics as a human being.

Example:

Peter Goldsworthy's title of ‘Maestro’ is extremely appropriate to his novel. There is no irony whatsoever implied in the use of this title, because ‘Maestro’ is primarily concerned with the aspects of learning, teaching and personal growth. The word ‘Maestro’ implies a master, an expert teaching to others and this is replicated numerous times throughout the novel.

Example:

The fact that Paul was not a Maestro, despite his determination to become one, is what makes the title ironic.

Example:

Keller learns to love Paul and tries to teach him many things about life and music.

Example:

A maestro may be considered perfect musically but Keller is not perfect as a human being as none of us are. This is what makes the title ironic.

Gulliver's Travels

Major discriminator is how well students select, organise and explain what they have 'learned'.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Universalise Swift's satire and have very clear understanding of what we learn as distinct from what Gulliver learns. Discussion of the novel sees it as a unity, has a sense of the development of 'Swift's satire'. Well-written, carefully structured, very good use of evidence.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Make a good attempt to explain what we learn but there are gaps, irrelevancies, inadequacies of some sort.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Might discuss what Gulliver learns or Swift presents rather than what we learn. Simplistic, superficial understanding of the satire of the novel – labelling what we learn, rather than explaining. Silly statements, inaccuracies, notable problems with essay structure.

Example: Illustrates the better responses, with its comprehensive introduction. The rest of the essay expanded on this argument.

Often, the reader learns far more from Gulliver's narrative than the narrator has seemed to. By the end of the novel, Gulliver is a comic figure who prefers horses to people. But we have learnt far more. By the end of the novel, the reader has learned about the dangers of absolutes, caught a glimpse of utopia and has been tricked by Swift's use of perspective into a condemnation of mankind's follies.

Example: Illustrates the superficiality and the simplistic interpretation of the weaker responses.

In Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels', the lessons taught to us firstly relate to size, because morals are something that you have, just because you are bigger doesn't mean that you have more than someone smaller.

Washington Square

Better candidates dealt well with the comment 'both a comic and tragic situation'.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Have a sense of the complexity of the novel. Make a good attempt to deal with tragedy and comedy throughout the essay. The best can see that the situation has elements of both comedy and tragedy.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Discuss the father-daughter relationship very well, often by dealing with the complex moral issues involved. Only mention comic and tragic but don't integrate well into the discussion.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Inability to discuss the character in terms of the question. Limited perception of the characters, making simplistic value judgements about them, their actions and motivations. Retelling of the story.

Example: A good introduction, signalling a line of argument which was sustained by the rest of the essay.

'Washington Square', apart from its deft use of social tensions and psychological insight, also holds important messages for the reader in its examination of the relationship between Dr. Sloper and his daughter Catherine. Much of the vitality and interest of the book arises from the interactions between these two, particularly when concerned with Catherine's relationship with Morris Townsend. The characters themselves seem more suited to pure comedy; Catherine, the plain, humble daughter, Dr. Sloper, the tyrannical yet dryly humorous father, and Morris, the elegant young conman. Yet despite this, the story itself is more tragic than comic; an innocent, unworldly girl is torn between an unfeeling parent and a suitor who intends to trick her out of her inheritance.

Henry Lawson, Short Stories

The discriminator is whether the scripts move beyond what happens in the stories to Lawson's philosophy of life in the bush.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Deal with concepts and ideas. Have a more complex view of the quote, the interrelationship of mateship and loneliness. Effectively deal with two stories.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Tend to amplify the statement by discussing evidence of loneliness and mateship. Well written, detailed answers but limited interpretation of the quote. Balanced in their treatment of two stories.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Say what happens in the story as a way of discussing the question. Probably concentrate on loneliness. Don't deal effectively with two stories.

Very few of the responses on this question were of the highest standard. A typical response begins with an introduction such as the following:

It is true that Lawson's stories are full of examples of mateship and that he is celebrating this mateship through his stories however Lawson is also concerned with pain of loneliness that his characters suffer from living in the harsh, isolating conditions of the bush, and his stories reflect this.

The essay then gives examples of loneliness and mateship from several stories. An example of the generalised comments about Lawson's philosophy as found in the better responses is as follows:

In Lawson's stories the characters try to lessen the pain of isolation and helplessness caused by the bush by drinking, close companionship and financial success. This can in a way lessen the pain of the bush but as seen by the continued alienation of Joe from Mary can in no way eliminate it.

The weaker responses make statements like the following:

Lawson's poems may be written as stories of pain and loneliness but read into a little bit more and out comes the typical Australian mateship, always willing to lend a hand when their mates is in trouble.

Brighton Rock

BETTER RESPONSES:

Can deal with the philosophical implications of the characters' actions. Have a thoughtful, interesting and clear, constant interpretation of the novel. Can discuss 'individual freedom' as well as the constraints, manipulations.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Often deal systematically with the main characters' choices. Do present a point of view and make some good points. Do not have consistent argument and seem unable to discuss clearly the implications and ideas.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Have a flawed, very confused view of the novel – some obvious misreading. Discuss choices in a very concrete way. Might not show an awareness of the complex notions involved in both the question and the novel.

Example of a better response:

In his novel 'Brighton Rock', Greene examines the way in which character's actions are prompted or manipulated by their own belief systems and by the influence of other characters. Beyond this however, Greene examines the degree to which these characters, as representatives of mankind are responsible for their 'sins'. Greene examines these themes through three characters, Ida Arnold, Rose and Pinkie.

Example of a weaker response:

Greene's presentation of individual freedom is displayed in a very complex way. In order to understand the manipulation and individual freedom within Brighton Rock, the characters mentality and past must be considered in order to evaluate their capabilities in relation to accounting for their own actions.

Lives of Girls and Women

The major discriminator is the discussion of the Epilogue.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Discussion of the epilogue takes up the bulk of the essay. Show its relationship to the major themes in the text, concentrating on the connections rather than the earlier stories. Present a valid, consistent argument.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Mention the function of the epilogue. Make some connection between it and the rest of the book, but in a limited way. Have a point of view, but do not argue convincingly.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Do not deal with the epilogue in any effective way, despite making some good statements about the novel.

Example of a better response:

In the 'Epilogue' Del comes to a deeper level of understanding about reality. A budding artist, Del has constructed her own idea about life in her makeshift novel. The realisation made in this last chapter is the shock of 'dealing so cunningly, so powerfully with reality, to come back and find it still there'. Del's immature understanding of the lives of people around her comes to a conclusion when Bobby Sheriff isn't what she had depicted him to be. The reality which Del has stumbled upon is of the lives of people in Jubilee which are dull and simple, amazing and unfathomable 'deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum'.

A Dry White Season

BETTER RESPONSES:

Present a clear case for optimism or pessimism, including some discussion of the alternative view. See the struggle in terms of issues, not just characters. Are conscious of the framework of Ben's story and the significance of the narrator. Integrate their discussion with consideration of Brink's purpose.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Probably give a list of reasons for 'optimism' or develop a simple line of argument such as 'it is optimistic because the characters are courageous'. Probably ignore the narrative framework and deal only with Ben's story. Well-written, competent use of evidence.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Discuss the characters and/or plot incidents, then say they are optimistic or pessimistic. Make random observations and a piecemeal inclusion of details. Storytelling.

Example of a better response:

Even though the 'inner' story of Ben contains little light in the gloom of pessimism, it is the 'outer' story that is the real point of the book. This changing of the computer's attitude can be seen as our potential to change with Ben. Thus the book is an optimistic one, it allows every reader to see the darkness yet build through themselves a great hope and optimism for the future.

Example (the simplistic approaches were a catalogue of the awful things in the novel):

In 'A Dry White Season' the main character Ben after the events and his decision to find reason in an irrational world brought him loss of family, loss of job and status, loss of friends, it brought death to him at every corner, his privacy was invaded, he was surveyed, his lover was banned from the country the friends who helped him either died or disappeared and eventually he himself was killed, so I feel that the novel is very pessimistic.

The Well

BETTER RESPONSES:

Have a complex understanding of how the intruder functions in terms of the narrative scheme of the novel as a whole. Are an intelligent, clever discussion of the novel and the question

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Probably discuss intruders as disrupting the central relationship and/or affecting Hester – but do not go beyond that. Limited view of the novel as a whole. Well-written and detailed, although there may be some minor deficiencies, misconceptions.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

List intrusions and attempt to describe, but not analyse what happens. Have difficulty seeing what the novel is about beyond that simplistic/concrete level.

Example of a better response:

The Well is a novel concerning a relationship which does not operate in the normal social setting, but is one characterised by caprice, fantasy and romance. Hester Harper and Katherine construct a world for themselves in which they create their own rules, and shut everything else out. Hence, there is a great deal of subverted emotion, fear and sexual tension in the book, symbolised by the well itself, down which Hester and Katherine discard any problem they do not want to face. The idea of subversion, and 'shutting out' is what makes the novel such a 'horrific little drama' – Katherine and Hester are willing to destroy anything that threatens the society of their fantasy world. In order to convey this, Elizabeth Jolley gives a portrait of the relationship, and Hester's past, characterising the fantasy world by showing how it deals with intrusion. It is the response to intrusion that characterises the 'horrific' nature in The Well and results in murder and destruction.

Example of a weaker response:

The Bordens of course are the first intruders. By renting then buying Hester's old house Hester has been usurped from her important position in society. Mrs Borden takes this place over. At the dance at the Bordens it seems almost that Mrs Borden hates Hester and later she criticizes Cathy's dress saying its too young for her with its Peter Pan Collar (Cathy is around twenty at this stage). By this intrusion Hester feels compelled to tighten her hold of Cathy even further.

The Great World

Problem is the meaning of 'common ground' and 'worlds'. There is a wide range of opinions about what these mean.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Have a consistent, well-argued, total view of what the novel is about. They are able to use that to discuss the question

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Are much narrower, restricting their discussion perhaps to common ground between characters, shared experiences or to the different worlds in the novel. Often these scripts use a listing structure and do not seem to have an overall sense of what the novel is about.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Write about Vic's and Digger's characters, experiences and relationships. They do not answer the question, except by using its terms occasionally. Story telling.

Example of a response which illustrates the holistic view of the novel which characterises A/B responses:

The idea is that the 'many worlds' talked of in the question are not Bondi Junction and Kings Cross and the POW camps. The 'many worlds' are more to do with perspective. For example, the perspective from which Digger, Vic and Jenny each view the world are the 'many worlds' so important to the theme of a struggle to grasp some real image of the Great World by each of the characters. There is a great deal of evidence to support the idea that the different minds and perspectives of the different characters are the many worlds, but the best evidence, necessarily, comes early on in the novel. Digger himself believes that his own head could contain the Great World 'and really was the world, only on a much smaller scale'. This image should guide the readers' interpretation of the rest of the novel.

Example of a response with a narrow view of both the novel and the question:

Every event in the novel involves either Vic or digger or both, and therefore every world in the Great World is inhabited by at least one or the other. The main characters are 'the common ground'.

Fineflour

Usual interpretation of the question seems to be: discuss the narrative techniques which Mears uses to describe the past.

BETTER RESPONSES:

Complex understanding of the narrative techniques and how they work. Deals with the question of the past. Have a sense of the unity of the text, not just individual stories.

AVERAGE RESPONSES:

Give a detailed discussion of what the stories are about and how they interconnect. Cannot make useful statements about the narrative techniques, don't often/always link what they are discussing to the question.

WEAKER RESPONSES:

Do not see what the question is asking. Contain no analysis of narrative technique. Reveal an inadequate knowledge of the text as a whole work. Hotchpotch of ideas/details.

Example of a typical average response which concentrated on the use of several narrators:

In all the chapters of Fineflour, past and memories are dwelt on, however briefly. The fact that the past has a way of eluding description is overcome by having the exposed thoughts of characters at different stages of their life – such as Judy Pendle and the Mann children Hugh, Matt and Kate. The past is also dwelt on by glimpses of memories people have, such as Jibby in Afterthought. Almost all characters in all chapters have memories, whether present or distant, good or bad. In this way the past is described with no difficulty by Mears.

Part C – Drama

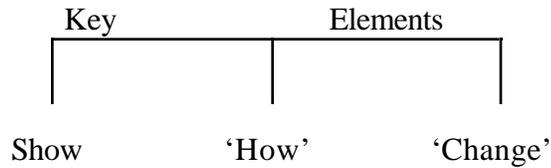
Students were obliged to answer this year's question by formulating a case that dealt with the given quote. The quote in turn required that students present an argument which discussed the way in which 'Drama shows the world as it is' using dramatic techniques to highlight the playwright's thematic concerns.

A distinguishing feature was how well students were able to argue the playwright's purpose of advocating 'change' or not; 'only to reflect the world in its reality'; or 'to provoke a response from an audience that might lead them to change aspects in our society'.

The better candidates discussed the world the playwright 'shows' and the didactic purpose, if any, of this depiction. They explained how the theatricality of the play developed the dramatist's main issues.

DRAMA – MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria – for distinguishing categories of response.



‘A’ RANGE RESPONSE

- Clearly defines and argues whether the playwright is trying to depict our world or change our world. This is consistently argued.
- Understands the purpose of the playwright and the elements/techniques of Drama used.
- Synthesises each element of the question.
- The linkage between dramatic techniques and themes is explicit. It explains how the techniques are used to illuminate the themes.

‘B’ RANGE RESPONSE

- Addresses the question and the quote, establishing and developing a clear argument.
- Most still argue whether the play is trying to depict our world, or change our world – but this is a less rigorous discussion.
- Identifies and understands the links between techniques and themes but argues the linkage less effectively.

‘C’ RANGE RESPONSE

- Addresses the question establishes a case but argues in a limited manner.
- Concentrates on theme and/or character analysis without actually understanding their theatricality.
- Mentions dramatic techniques but does not link them to theme or character.
- Must identify dramatic techniques even if superficially.
- Must have identified concept of ‘change’.

‘D’ RANGE RESPONSE

- May address the question in the introduction or conclusion only.
- General discussion of themes and/or characters.
- No mention of dramatic techniques or simply mentions them in passing, eg., as part of plot summary.
- May repeat wording of question in order to pad.

‘E’ RANGE RESPONSE

- Does not address the question.
 - Retells the plot
 - Textual errors.
-

Common examples of techniques discussed:

Much Ado About Nothing

- use of the three plots to show the world of Messina – appearance, reality
- masks at the ball; song – disguise, deceit.

The School for Scandal

- dramatic irony in the disguises; the screen scene – deception, reality
- stereotyped characters – their names, language – hypocrisy, morality.

The Real Thing

- play-within-a-play, use of repetition – reality, love, commitment
- symbolic music – change, honesty.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

- the three games – roles, illusion, reality, materialism
- smashing the bottle, parasol gun – conflict, success, failure

The Floating World

- the green light, Dippy birds, costumes – isolation, fear, alienation
- Drum Poems – prejudice, nationalism, fear

Top Girls

- historical figures, time shifts – issues of feminism
- overlapping dialogue – lack of communication and understanding

Cosi

- setting – a burnt out theatre – symbol of reality, appearance
- play-within-a-play, Nick's song – love, fidelity, conflict

Diving for Pearls

- coal trucks, siren, tuba – impact of environment
- costume, lights – success, failure.

The less substantial answers focused on the 'show' part of the question rather than the 'change' aspect. The major part of their discussion was based around an analysis of themes or characters. Dramatic techniques were dealt with superficially, often merely listed. Many students appeared to view drama from a literary perspective only, failing to show any awareness of theatricality.

The weakest candidates had no understanding of the question's requirements, devoting much of their response to repeating the wording of the question/retelling the plot or discussing the characters or themes in a general way. Irrelevancies were common.

By far the most popular text was *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

A student's mark is the product of several factors but some key indicators were obvious.

'A' RANGE RESPONSE:

These scripts clearly identified and established the playwright's purpose, producing an integrated approach to themes and the devices used to illuminate these themes. Each element of the question was thoroughly synthesised and knowledge was specific and detailed.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? example:

The proposition for discussion that drama attempts to portray the world as it stands, and does not attempt to change it, is largely valid of Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? This theory is largely applicable to the notion that Albee has of the crumbling fabric of American society: he portrays this, and his clarity of denotation is only hindered by his use of unnaturalistic characters. These people are 'representatives', they all stand for something much larger than they appear to be in their microcosmic world, and become part of the allegorical nature of the play. However, at the end of the play, although Albee leaves the conclusion ambiguous he does establish or mark the notion of 'imminent change': far too much has occurred for the characters not to change from their previous stances. However, Albee indeed portrays a sick world, incorporating games and role playing, conformity and Fascism, the hollow shell of the American Dream, the pale and decaying institution of marriage, and religion. He attempts to show the viewer the blurred edges between appearance and reality and how vile and crushing illusion can render one's life.

Diving for Pearls example:

The environment of the city is constantly reinforced by the omnipresence of the coal truck – post script to Den and Barbara's lovemaking. This is an intrusive and repetitive sound that constantly reinforces the dullness of the lives of the characters and their setting to the audience. Also the hooter/siren that is the sound of the start and end of Den's working day. It's constant presence reflects the routine of life, the boredom of the cyclical process that is brought upon by a lack of enthusiasm and self esteem.

'B' RANGE RESPONSE:

These scripts addressed all elements of the question developing a clear argument but producing a less rigorous discussion. They understood the links between techniques and themes but analysed the connection less effectively.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? example:

Albee's view of George and Martha's world is not of a traditional marriage. The world in which they live is vacuous and confined, and on this particular night, soaked in alcohol. The presence of alcohol is important in the exposure of truth and damning of illusions, because it releases the inhibitions of George and Martha, and their guests.

Top Girls example:

Another structural technique is the use of juxtaposition. This sets up a variety of contrasts such as Angie and Kit or Marlene and Joyce that assists the audience in making up their own mind over which way feminism is headed and over the true nature of women.

'C' RANGE RESPONSE:

Candidates in this range identified the concept of 'change' and presented a case but argued in a limited way often concentrating primarily on themes and/or character analysis. They mentioned techniques without establishing their connection to themes.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? example:

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? is a play by Albee that explores the relationship of two couples over the events of one night and finally the culmination of the night as a whole, which finally reveals the illusions, pretences and deceptions that both couples have been living. Thus the play seeks the answer to 'Who's afraid of living life without illusions'.

Top Girls example:

Churchill shows us the life of Marlene, a Modern Successful Woman. In Act 1, all the guests from different societies and different times recount the problems that they have encountered because of their gender. Marlene makes a toast referring to her success and how far women have come. But throughout the play Churchill asks if women have come very far at all.

'D' RANGE RESPONSE:

These scripts attempted to address the question and the quote but often in introduction and conclusion only. They frequently repeated the wording of the quote or question without presenting a case and themes and/or characters were discussed in a very general way. No dramatic techniques were mentioned or merely as part of a plot summary.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? example:

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? does not during the course of the play try and change the world but it is through the characters, namely George and Martha that we find possibility for resolution.

Much Ado About Nothing example:

Don John's plot to thwart the marriage of Hero and Claudio is not unusual, however, in doing so, why did Margaret not ask why she was to dress in Hero's attire and play out a scene in bed with Borachio. One woman cannot be that naive to not realise the reasons behind the request. Realistically this would not occur in the world as it is!

Some students persist in including irrelevant information, such as biographical detail.

Cosi example:

Nowra's initiation into the world of madness came about as both his grandmothers went mad. One grandmother was stuck in a time warp and believed that he was his father. Nowra has said that it was 'not so much a Freudian nightmare, but as Alice falling down a hole into topsy turvy land'. His personal experience sparked an intense interest in madness which he said 'both frightened and excited me'.