

2012 HSC Notes from the Marking Centre – English (Standard) and English (Advanced)

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Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 courses in English (Standard) and English (Advanced). It contains comments on candidate responses to the Higher School Certificate examinations, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant syllabus, the Higher School Certificate examinations, the marking guidelines and other support documents developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning in English (Standard) and English (Advanced) courses.

General comments

Candidates need to be familiar with the Board's [Glossary of Key Words](#), which contains some terms commonly used in examination questions. However, candidates should also be aware that not all questions will start with or contain one of the key words from the glossary. Questions such as 'how?', 'why?' or 'to what extent?' may be asked, or verbs that are not included in the glossary may be used, such as 'design', 'translate' or 'list'.

English (Standard) and English (Advanced) Paper 1 – Area of Study

Section I

Question 1

- a. In the majority of responses, candidates selected a feature or features of the book cover and described how these introduced aspects of belonging. A lengthy response was not required for the candidate to achieve 2 marks.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to describe a feature of the book cover without making a connection to belonging.

- b. In most responses, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the nature of the relationship between the father and the child, supported by direct or indirect reference to the lines of the poem. A lengthy response was not required for the candidate to achieve 2 marks.

In weaker responses, candidates misunderstood the nature of the relationship or identified the nature of the relationship without providing a clear link to the poem. In some responses, candidates described rather than explained.

- c. In better responses, candidates demonstrated with aptly chosen textual references the individual's search for belonging highlighted in this text. In responding to the word 'ways' candidates were able to refer to techniques, features, ideas or concepts.

In weaker responses, candidates described aspects of the text or chose textual references that did not support the ideas expressed.

- d. In better responses, candidates drew on well-selected textual references to analyse how imagery was used to capture the author's intense experience of returning to his hometown. In better responses, candidates were either conceptual or language-based in their approach, or blended the two to draw out connections between imagery and meaning.

In weaker responses, candidates discussed or described aspects of the text rather than analysing them.

- e. In better responses, candidates wrote informed personal evaluations of the effectiveness of two texts in exploring how feelings of belonging or not belonging shift with time. In these responses, justification for the texts selected was skilfully supported with a depth of analysis of both texts. Textual references were chosen to advance the candidate's argument.

In weaker responses, candidates demonstrated limited understanding of the texts.

Section II

Question 2

In better responses, candidates used language appropriate to their chosen form of imaginative writing, using an image as a central element. This was often embedded metaphorically and this allowed candidates to explore the significance of the passage of time on an individual's sense of belonging. These responses were well crafted and evocative, displaying originality and artistry and the mechanics of language were applied skilfully.

In mid-range responses, candidates tended to be more literal in how they used an image as a central element. They were predictable, linear or clichéd in their examination of the passage of time to the experience of belonging. In these responses, the mechanics of language was adequate and writing structure was appropriate to form.

In weaker responses, candidates lacked structural direction and were simplistic, often describing one image in relation to belonging. These responses lacked credibility, with limited appropriateness to audience and/or purpose. Flawed mechanics of language were often a feature of these responses.

Section III

Question 3

General comments

Candidates' approaches to the question varied. Most accepted the central role of both time and interaction in the evolution of a sense of belonging while others challenged the thesis, suggesting that time and interaction with the individual's world were not the sole determinants of a sense of belonging.

In better responses, candidates skilfully engaged with the question, and applied their knowledge to develop a strong thesis, well supported by their analysis of a judicious selection of textual details and features. Candidates made discerning text choices, and used related materials that demonstrated sufficient insight into the concept of belonging to sustain a sophisticated response to the question.

In mid-range responses, candidates effectively engaged with the question, using their knowledge to develop a thesis in response to the question. In many of these responses, candidates approached the question in a logical and structured way, but often relied on an overview of texts and description as a means of discussion. In these responses, candidates tended to list rather than analyse textual details and features, and adopted a series of explanations. Some of these responses were overloaded with textual analysis at the expense of a well-developed and coherent line of argument. Links between texts were evident, but remained undeveloped, and candidates did not sustain their conceptual discussion throughout the response.

In weaker responses, candidates experienced some difficulty in effectively using their texts to engage with the question and relied on retell as a means of building their response. Textual features were limited and the discussion of these superficial. In weaker responses, candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of the question. They lacked discernment in their choice of textual evidence and often used colloquial language or applied a disjointed structure in their discussion. Discussion tended to be repetitive and demonstrated limited grammatical control and vocabulary.

Prose Fiction

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

In better responses, candidates insightfully discussed how over time the central characters have the opportunity to interact with their worlds, both Eastern and Western, and eventually come to a place of acceptance and even transcendence. Because this text centres on generational relationships it allowed candidates to fully explore ideas of time and its impact. In many responses, candidates focused on the irony of the mothers not belonging to their home country and consequently forming alliances in their adopted country while the daughters experience the reverse, having to meld their cultural heritage with their American lives.

In better responses, candidates concentrated on at least two mother/daughter relationships. This enabled them to demonstrate a breadth of textual knowledge, especially if they briefly alluded to other relationships in the text and compared them to those in their central argument. In some responses, candidates used the cyclical aspect of belonging in this text to convincingly respond to the central tenets of the question. Many persuasively argued that the more the daughters understood their cultural heritage and ways of thinking, the more enriching were their interactions with the world and the greater their sense of self-worth and understanding of their identity.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to rely on recount, were overly dependent on discussion of textual features at the expense of a developed treatment of ideas, and did not adequately address the question.

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

In most responses, candidates explored, or at least identified, how the passage of time and interaction with the world developed an evolving perception of belonging. The narrative form of the text allowed most candidates to access the question on some level. Candidates strongly focused on the elements of culture and family in defining one's sense of belonging.

In better responses, candidates established and sustained a thesis that allowed for an analytical treatment of the text, with judicious use of textual details to support their argument. In many of these responses, candidates connected the passage of time to notions of history, heritage, journey and an evolving sense of cultural and personal identity. Ideas of maturation and growth through familial and cultural interactions were shown, through the passage of time, to be linked to ideas of acceptance and understanding. In many responses, candidates used skilful analysis of form and technique to reflect on how these ideas were represented in this text. Discussion of Gogol and Ashima was used effectively to portray these ideas, with strong textual evidence and the discussion of metaphor and motif provided to support the thesis.

In weaker responses, candidates similarly linked the passage of time to aspects of narrative but relied on retell, which limited many responses, with too little attention given to analysis of textual features or the development of ideas. In many responses, candidates focused on Gogol's change of name or Ashima's connection to food, without exploring how these represented an evolving perception of belonging. In these scripts, candidates often reflected a lack of real engagement with the different elements of the question or the more complex aspects of the text.

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

In better responses, candidates skilfully explored the way *Great Expectations* embodies the notion of an evolving sense of belonging through the passage of time and interaction with the

world. This argument was often developed by connecting Dickens' social critique of Victorian England as a society based on class and wealth with the idea of limiting social interactions. In these responses, candidates also explored interactions through family and friendships. Pip's maturation over time, reflected in the choices made and his gradual move towards a more transcendent sense of belonging was also a significant part of the discussion.

Candidates supported their thesis with a discerning choice of textual evidence and appropriate and seamless integration of 'the ways' such as narrative techniques, structure, characterisation and other language techniques.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to rely on recount and description of characters and events. They tended to lack sufficient detail and analysis.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*

In better responses, candidates integrated notions of the passing of time with interaction with the world to build a cohesive thesis in response to the question. In these responses, candidates were insightful in their analysis of the way the dual narrative allowed for a more profound understanding of the impact that the passage of time had on perceptions of belonging. A developed consideration of cultural acceptance and understanding supported by perceptive analysis was also a mark of better responses.

In better responses, candidates generally supported their central argument with the judicious choice of related material and often managed to use their argument to provide a seamless integration between texts. Skilful analysis of textual details to support arguments was another hallmark of these responses.

In weaker responses, candidates were variable in their focus on the question. In many responses, candidates were able to discuss the passage of time but lacked the support of relevant textual references and analysis. In these responses, candidates relied on recount, had a less substantial consideration of the characters' interaction with the world, and lacked the support of appropriate related material.

Tara June Winch, *Swallow the Air*

In better responses, candidates skilfully explored the ways the prescribed text and at least one other related text represent the view that an individual's perceptions of belonging evolve in response to the passage of time and interaction with their world. In these responses, candidates developed and sustained their argument, augmenting their points with well-chosen detailed textual references from their prescribed text and their other related text. They skilfully analysed textual features in all texts. In most responses, candidates accessed the central strands of cultural and personal dislocation to add strength to their treatment of both the 'time' and 'interactions' aspects of the question.

In weaker responses, candidates failed to adequately engage with the question, demonstrated a superficial understanding of belonging and relied on recount rather than analysis of textual features. In many responses, candidates made superficial references to plot and did not clearly identify any significant textual details.

Nonfiction

Raimond Gaita, *Romulus My Father*

In better responses, candidates confidently explored how perceptions of belonging and not belonging evolve as a result of the passage of time and various interactions and connections with the world. In these responses, candidates developed an insightful discussion of how familial relationships and affiliations to the natural landscape and broader society can be strengthened or challenged by the passage of time. Furthermore, in these responses, candidates skilfully contrasted the experiences and the changing perceptions of belonging of Romulus, Christine and Raimond in the context of their migrant experience.

In many responses, candidates explored how the influence of previous environments, such as Romulus's powerful connection to the past, can inhibit future interactions, but how the passage of time can result in eventual understanding and acceptance. Candidates focused on the reflections of the adult narrator Raimond and his eventual understanding of Christine's mental illness and his strengthening relationship with Romulus. A judicious selection of related material allowed candidates the scope to develop a cohesive and sophisticated response. In these responses, candidates were also discerning in their selection of textual features, demonstrating a holistic understanding of the text.

In weaker responses, candidates focused more literally on simplistic ideas about belonging and not belonging. They made references to the passage of time without exploring or developing how this affects evolving perceptions of belonging. In these responses, candidates tended to be narrower in focus and limited to one aspect of the text such as Romulus's belonging being hindered by an unfamiliar environment compared to Raimond's strong connection to the physical landscape. Often in these responses, candidates relied on retell and where textual features were identified, they were often not explained or connected to the statement in the question.

Drama

Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

In better responses, candidates developed a perceptive and sustained thesis, incorporating a conceptual understanding of evolving perceptions as a result of time and interactions with the world. In these responses, candidates made consistent and discerning references to textual details in order to support and enhance their argument. Candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the text, exploring the evolution of one or more of the characters as a result of their interactions within the world of Salem. In these responses, candidates explored the evolving perceptions of individuality, acceptance, conformity and morality shaped through the interaction with characters and connections to setting over the time frame offered by the play. In some responses, candidates integrated an understanding of the play's context to further their thesis. A feature of better responses was the candidate's appreciation of the text as theatre and an ability to discuss Miller's use of theatrical devices.

In weaker responses, candidates reproduced a generic statement on belonging and relied on recount to demonstrate their knowledge of the text. In these responses, candidates made limited reference to the question, they struggled to engage conceptually, or treated it in an inconsistent or imbalanced manner. In weaker responses, candidates tended to describe textual features that did not further their argument. In some responses, candidates referenced Miller's context without making meaningful connections to the question.

Jane Harrison, *Rainbow's End*

In better responses, candidates skilfully discussed the ways in which time had shaped characters' understanding of themselves and others, consequently leading to belonging or not belonging to the wider world. Particularly well analysed were Nan Dear's perception of Gladys, Dolly and Errol over a period of time and her view of the racism suffered by the Aboriginal community. In better responses, candidates also explored the subtle changes and softening of Nan's views through the passage of time. In better responses, candidates also used the changing views of Gladys and Dolly to extend the scope of their argument.

Examining the play as a whole allowed candidates who wrote better responses to explore the evolving nature of these characters' perceptions of belonging, incorporating dramatic techniques into their essays to support their thesis. Related texts were handled in a similarly insightful way, with the evolving understanding (or lack of change) of characters' views integrated with the discussion of the prescribed text.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to select isolated dramatic techniques or textual features such as 'hessian fences' and then describe how this made characters feel, without developing a conceptual discussion of belonging and the evolving understanding of characters over time. Such limited analysis did not allow these candidates to fully explore the effects of time on the characters' worlds and led to a one-dimensional response to the question.

In some weaker responses, candidates focused on racism generally, or white–Aboriginal relationships throughout Australian history, straying too far from the characters within the play. Treatment of related texts in weaker responses also tended to refer to events, people or worlds in an isolated way, rather than exploring how perceptions of belonging evolved or remained stagnant through time.

Film

Baz Luhrman, *Strictly Ballroom*

In better responses, candidates developed and sustained a thesis focusing on the effect of time and interaction with the world on perceptions of belonging. In these responses, candidates focused on a holistic discussion of *Strictly Ballroom* as a film, providing a thoughtful consideration of filmic techniques, character development and visual metaphors to support their argument. They understood Luhrman's purpose, often linking the elements of social satire in the text to the notion that a sense of belonging can be limited by prolonged exposure to the sort of environment being satirised. Clear and purposeful language was a feature of the better responses.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to focus on aspects of belonging and/or not belonging in texts on a literal or more simplistic level. In *Strictly Ballroom* the focus tended to be on belonging/not belonging to the Dance Federation. In many responses, candidates relied on a retelling of the Scott/Fran relationship over time as the central part of their response. Plot recount was often driven by identification or description of textual features, without any development of links to the question. Limited control of language was evident in weaker responses.

Rolf De Heer, *Ten Canoes*

In better responses, candidates skilfully engaged with the concept that belonging is evolutionary in response to the passage of time. Thoughtful consideration of the effect of both rebellious and conformist behaviour was addressed in terms of an individual's interaction with their world. The

power of that interaction to transform was based on a perceptive understanding of indigenous kinship, tribal values, heritage, culture and community as well as spiritual and mythical elements.

In better responses, candidates focused on the development of the complex interrelationships between people and land, employing a discerning selection of film techniques, clever analysis of music, Indigenous language and humour. Candidates explored the film's educative value and legacy in terms of belonging for both the modern Indigenous and non-Indigenous audience.

In weaker responses, candidates often retold the story by making reference to events in the film that depicted the passage of time and human interaction with the world. In these responses, candidates often struggled to make proper use of their related text to further their argument or connect to the question and were limited in their control of language and textual analysis.

Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

In better responses, candidates established a clear thesis and explored the characters' evolving sense of belonging through skilful treatment of the dramatic elements of the text, perceptive understanding of literary traditions such as Shakespearean comedy and the pastoral tradition, and exploration of gender and identity. In these responses, candidates examined the transformative role of Rosalind and the witty banter of Touchstone and explored how these were used to highlight how other characters evolved over time. These candidates incorporated an insightful discussion about how characters evolved through the time spent in the Forest of Arden and the restoration of the natural order of relationships. The examination of the character of Jacques and his seeming failure to interact with the world or develop a more enriched sense of belonging was used to compare the evolution of other characters over time. The seamless integration of dramatic features and judicious selection of related material were strong aspects of these responses.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to be limited to one aspect of the question and often relied on a general understanding of character, setting and concepts of belonging. Dramatic techniques were often identified in a simplistic manner, providing only limited support to the argument. The basic contrast between the court and the forest was often used as a basis for discussion but not explored in terms of the question.

Poetry

Peter Skrzynecki, *Immigrant Chronicle*

In better responses, candidates made valid interpretations of the significance of the passage of time and interaction with the world, particularly engaging with the idea that a sense of belonging evolves over time. In these responses, candidates linked the significance of the migrant experience to interaction with the world. Many candidates evaluated the influence of time in the person's struggle to belong in circumstances of conflicting values and attitudes. These candidates demonstrated a sensitive appreciation of the poet's personal struggle to find a satisfying sense of belonging, and their responses were characterised by skilful textual analysis, well-developed arguments and a fluent control of language.

In weaker responses, candidates limited their argument to a simplistic discussion of the sense of discomfort felt by the poet or his father, making limited textual reference and providing little analysis in support of the ideas. In these responses, candidates tended to be narrow in their exploration, referencing their argument with one salient point from each poem.

Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*

In better responses, candidates used the poems to develop a sophisticated and thoughtful discussion of the evolution of a sense of belonging through the passage of time and interaction with the world. In these responses, candidates discussed and differentiated between interaction with the human world and the world of nature. The poet's relationship with these, or the lack of it, was supported by carefully chosen references to the natural and commonplace imagery that forms the metaphoric centre of her poetry.

While in many of these responses, candidates displayed an awareness of Dickinson's personal context in light of the question, they did not allow contextual considerations to dominate their discussion, but rather used them in support of their central argument.

For the most part, candidates focused on the social structures that limited the poet's experience of belonging to the human world and society. In better responses, candidates counterbalanced this with the poet's realisation over time that interaction with the natural world was more important than belonging to the world of society.

While in many stronger responses, candidates discussed two poems, the brevity of many of the prescribed poems allowed some candidates to discuss more poems to further their discussion or to explore contrasting aspects of belonging in relation to the question.

In weaker responses, many candidates struggled to demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of Dickinson's poetry, focusing instead on an explanation of the poet's feelings of dislocation or isolation but failing to effectively build an argument that addressed the question.

Many struggled with the notion of 'the passage of time' or ignored the term 'evolved'. Poetic devices were often identified without considering their effects. In many of these responses, candidates simply attempted to paraphrase quotations or discuss in general terms with little textual evidence.

Steven Herrick, *The Simple Gift*

In better responses, candidates established a thesis that explored how and why an individual's perceptions of belonging evolve over time through interactions with their world. In these responses, candidates developed and sustained their argument and made effective use of textual detail. This examination of the concept of belonging through interactions with places, people and situations was often focused on Billy's move from initial isolation to a place of acceptance and understanding through the establishment and evolution of connections and relationships with Caitlin, Irene, Old Bill and Benderat. In these responses, candidates often wove a skilful argument about the passage of time as a key element in the development of the enriched sense of belonging in the main characters.

In better responses, candidates included a thoughtful consideration of the way perceptions of self and the world mature over time and supported this argument with a discerning selection of textual features. These candidates referred to the use of multiple narratives, characterisation and the recurring motifs of the key or gift to reinforce the development of perceptions of belonging in response to interactions and time.

In weaker responses, candidates depended on plot recount, relying on retell without making adequate links to the question. In these responses, candidates struggled to examine the effect of the passage of time on the individual's perceptions of belonging, and chose instead to present a discussion of belonging that was often superficial or not linked to the given statement.

English (Standard) Paper 2 – Modules

Section I – Module A: Experience Through Language

General comments

In better responses, candidates embedded an understanding of the language and metalanguage of the module and the elective, holistically addressing all aspects of the question in a purposeful way. In these responses, candidates took a conceptual approach to the question in order to support a thesis which explored interesting views on society. In these better responses, candidates demonstrated a diverse range of ways to engage with the question, some adopting a techniques-driven approach, while others focused on themes, characterisation, contextual relevance, authorial voice or a combination of these. Candidates used a wide variety of related texts and in better responses further developed the discussion of textual evidence in a fluent, informed voice.

In weaker responses, candidates typically made assertions about views on society and had difficulty in shaping their knowledge to the elements of the question. In weaker responses, candidates tended to make only a brief reference to the related text and often made only narrow references to elements of the voice or the visual in the text.

Question 1 – Elective 1: Distinctive Voices

Prose Fiction – Marele Day, *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender*

In better responses, candidates addressed all aspects of the question and made use of well-chosen textual details from throughout the novel. The voices of Harry and Claudia were often emphasised and effective reference to techniques was employed to demonstrate how and why the author formed these contrasting voices. In these responses, candidates used this as a basis to explore how interesting views on society were explored in the novel. They often demonstrated a strong understanding of authorial voice in response to the question.

In weaker responses, candidates often engaged with textual references and evidence from the opening pages of the novel and asserted a simple view on society based on the views of the main characters. In these responses, candidates did not draw a link between the text and views on society.

Drama – George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*

In better responses, candidates showed how Eliza's voice altered as a result of her experiences and used this to develop a thesis based on a contextual discussion about social views of the author. In these responses, candidates demonstrated a conceptual awareness of the differing voices in the text and how the author sought to use these for a purpose.

In weaker responses, candidates often asserted a view on society based on a contrast between the voices of Eliza and Higgins, often referring only to the beginning of the play. In these responses, candidates tended to lose focus on the text as a play and wrote about the visual techniques of the film version of the text.

Poetry – Joanne Burns, *On a Clear Day*

In better responses, candidates discussed the views on society offered by the poet, supported by reference to technical analysis and a range of distinctive voices in the poetry and judiciously selected related material.

In weaker responses, candidates lacked detailed knowledge of the poems and made assertions about views on society relying heavily on their chosen related material.

Poetry – AB Paterson, *The Penguin Banjo Collected Verse*

In most responses, candidates generally engaged with the range of voices in Paterson's poetry. In many responses, candidates used this engagement to discuss a view on society based on the country/city divide, though in better responses, candidates effectively analysed the techniques the poet used to achieve this range. In better responses, candidates usually drew on more than one poem to develop their answer, often moving beyond the poems to consider the authorial voice. In weaker responses, candidates tended to assert a simple view about the city and the bush.

Nonfiction – Speeches

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a detailed knowledge of rhetorical devices and language and how these are employed by the speaker to achieve a desired goal. In these responses, candidates developed a thesis which conveyed a conceptual understanding of the question, elective and speeches. In stronger responses, candidates analysed how the speeches conveyed an interesting view on society in their own context as well as subsequently. Contextual background was often used to support this discussion. In many responses, candidates demonstrated a strong awareness of the relationship between the speaker and their audience across a number of the prescribed speeches.

In weaker responses, candidates focused on an outline of context to assert a view on society. In these responses, candidates often used several of the prescribed speeches in lieu of a related text of their own choosing.

Question 2 – Elective 2: Distinctively Visual

Prose Fiction – Henry Lawson, *The Penguin Henry Lawson Short Stories*

In better responses, candidates recognised the social hardships of living in the bush and the effects on the people as exemplified in the texts; they also recognised Lawson's perspectives on these aspects. In these responses, candidates demonstrated detailed textual knowledge, analysis of techniques and consideration of concepts. In many responses, candidates integrated their prescribed and related texts via a conceptual link.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to address the question through a general discussion of colonial days; this represented their consideration of 'society' as outlined in the question. Textual evidence largely consisted of recount, although unsubstantiated assertion was frequently noted.

Prose Fiction – Peter Goldsworthy, *Maestro*

In better responses, candidates integrated their discussion of ideas with characters, their relationships, and their experiences over time. Carefully selected textual material substantiated their arguments. In these responses, candidates extrapolated from the specific examples of characters within the text, to ideas about society in general.

In weaker responses, candidates concentrated on a single event from the plot and often relied on recount. For many of these, discussion of the distinctively visual was limited to a description of character or setting.

Drama – John Misto, *The Shoe-Horn Sonata*

In better responses, candidates developed a strong discussion based on this text and the views of society presented. There was sustained analysis of the distinctively visual elements of the play, while in some of the strongest responses, candidates analysed how theatrical features such as music amplified the emotional impact of the visual and thus positioned the audience to consider various ideas in particular ways.

In weaker responses, candidates described the action of the play and sometimes contrasted the two main characters and the two main settings.

Poetry – Douglas Stewart, *Selected Poems*

In better responses, candidates integrated discussion of ideas about society arising from the poems. In many responses, candidates grappled with making the link between ideas about nature and its relationship to society.

In weaker responses, candidates concentrated on the analysis of individual poems without reference to the question or the elective. In these responses, candidates often demonstrated difficulty linking their related texts to the prescribed text or the concerns of the question.

Film – Tom Tykwer, *Run Lola Run*

In better responses, candidates developed a sustained discussion of the visual features of the film, exploring the film techniques. In these responses, candidates formed a thesis which enabled a detailed analysis of characters, as well as themes of love and chance, to make well-founded observations about views on society. In the best responses, candidates analysed how visual symbols, imagery and colour were employed by the director to convey a view on society.

In weaker responses, candidates asserted a view on society as reflected in the actions of the characters, and described key scenes. In these responses, candidates often relied on related material that was written and from which they were unable to distinguish visual features.

Media – Deb Cox, *Seachange*

In better responses, candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of the set episodes, and engaged with the ideas about society. In many responses, candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of the link between ideas and the distinctively visual and explored this through an analysis of film techniques.

In weaker responses, candidates were limited by simplistic ideas about society based on superficial engagement with scenes from the prescribed episodes.

Section II – Module B: Close Study of Text

General comments

In better responses, candidates effectively addressed the portrayal of the relationships in the different texts and their effect on the responder through a thorough exploration of the key concepts of the texts, supported by relevant textual knowledge. In these responses, candidates answered the question with purpose and a sense of personal engagement. The better responses were well structured and sustained, with candidates often using topic sentences to address the question and help further the discussion. Paragraphs were used effectively to elaborate on key points.

In weaker responses, candidates offered broader and more generalised ideas that relied on description of aspects of texts or recount. There was an over-reliance on rote-learned material in some responses that resulted in minimal engagement with the question. Textual examples that were used without elaborating on the ideas detracted from the response. Other responses were generic, thematic and formulaic with minimal relationship to the question.

Detailed responses must use relevant textual knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of the text. A mere outline of textual knowledge and techniques unrelated to the question will result in fewer marks.

When the prescribed text comprises a selection of poems, students are expected to have a critical knowledge of each poem.

Question 3 – Prose Fiction

Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*

In better responses, candidates explored different aspects of Christopher's relationship with his world and typically demonstrated that they genuinely understood Haddon's portrayal of Christopher's character. These candidates articulated the ways in which responders are encouraged to become more accepting of those who are different. These candidates also engaged with the text as a whole with purposeful selection of relevant textual details and analysis of features to support their discussion. In these responses, candidates also demonstrated a fluent and controlled use of language within an effective structure.

In weaker responses, candidates identified Christopher's world and his relationship with some characters such as his father, his mother or the teacher. In these responses, candidates made superficial links to their understanding of acceptance or to Christopher's own understanding of his world. These candidates' textual references were mainly narration with some reference to textual features such as emotions, mathematical formulae or prime numbers. These responses were frequently plot-driven or self-limiting in their brevity.

Jane Yolen, *Briar Rose*

In better responses, candidates addressed the question in a variety of ways. They synthesised ideas from the text as whole, rather than relying on isolated incidents. In most responses, candidates focused on the allegorical portrayal of the Holocaust and how Rebecca made sense of the past while others focused on how lessons learnt from the Holocaust deepened our understanding of suffering. In better responses, candidates presented a developed discussion of various language forms and features in order to demonstrate how the composer explores suffering. Analysis was ably supported with well-selected and elaborated evidence from the text, using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to address some aspects of the question. They relied on recount, narration and general knowledge. Although most were able to focus on the character Rebecca and the suffering incurred during the Holocaust, these candidates used generalised statements or short quotations that did little to establish or advance the discussion. Textual references tended to be less relevant to the question.

David Malouf, *Fly Away Peter*

In better responses, candidates focused on how Jim's relationship with his world deepens understanding of acceptance. In these responses, candidates used well-chosen, relevant textual

knowledge to support their discussion. They effectively discussed how Malouf uses techniques such as structure, symbolism, rhetorical questioning and character development to enhance the responder's understanding of acceptance.

In weaker responses candidates relied on narrative, superficial textual references and generalised comments. In some responses, candidates used recount to provide examples of Jim's experiences with little appreciation of his relationship with his world.

Question 4 – Drama

Louis Nowra, *Cosi*

In the better responses, candidates had a well-developed understanding of Lewis's relationship with his world. Their idea of the world went beyond the personal, sometimes including contextual and thematic ideas. There was a sense of how Nowra constructed the character and his world, leading us to a deeper understanding of acceptance.

In better responses, candidates selected relevant textual evidence which they integrated into their discussion. They demonstrated understanding of characterisation and dramatic techniques and had effective control of language and structure.

In some weaker responses, candidates focused on one or two elements of the question, sometimes framing answers about Lewis as a character or the idea of acceptance. In a range of responses, candidates discussed Lewis's relationship with the patients but found it difficult to shape a response that incorporated the composer's purpose or audience response. In weaker responses, candidates tended to work through explanation and description of characters and actions.

In these weaker responses, candidates also relied on recount, narration or generalised remarks while some were self-limiting due to inadequate textual knowledge and inconsistent use of language and structure.

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a detailed understanding of how Shylock's interactions with various individuals moved audiences to better appreciate key aspects of suffering. They discussed the motivations of these individuals while elaborating on the consequences of their actions. These candidates purposefully selected and discussed dramatic features of the text and provided accurate quotations in support of their ideas. These responses were characterised by an effective control of language in a structured discussion.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to discuss suffering in a generalised fashion using textual references that were superficial and at times inaccurate. Frequently, a reliance on a thematic approach or a prepared response hindered their ability to respond convincingly to the question.

These weaker responses were typically plot-driven and showed a limited awareness of Shakespeare's role as a composer and the dramatic features he employed. The discussion was often hindered by a limited sense of organisation and by inconsistent expression.

Question 5 – Poetry

Wilfred Owen, *War Poems and Others*

In this elective, the prescribed text is all the poems listed.

In most responses, candidates addressed ‘suffering’, often demonstrating a broader awareness of its implications. Aspects of suffering included the physical, psychological and emotional suffering of the soldiers, as well as the effects of war on those at home. In many responses, candidates genuinely engaged with the language, content and themes of Owen’s poetry and were able to offer a personal response.

In better responses, candidates made textual references central to an elaborated discussion which successfully established the connection between ‘youth and war’. In these responses, candidates demonstrated an awareness that the effect of the poetry is to lead the responder to a better understanding of suffering. Knowledge of Owen’s context was evident in many of the responses and this was effectively used when selectively integrated into the discussion.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to include their knowledge of Owen’s context as a recount. Techniques were often listed without connection to the question and ideas were expressed in a simplistic manner based on description.

The Close Study of Text in this instance is all the prescribed poems.

Judith Wright, *Collected Poems 1942–1985*

In this elective, the prescribed text is all the poems listed.

In better responses, candidates clearly identified through sustained discussion that Wright’s portrayal of relationships with the Australian landscape leads the responder to a deeper understanding of time. In these responses, candidates displayed a strong sense of personal engagement, displaying effective textual knowledge and identification of poetic techniques to support a substantial thesis. Effective language control and structure were in evidence.

In weaker responses, candidates were quite superficial in their understanding of Wright’s environmental themes in some of the poems chosen, eg *Train Journey* and *South of My Days*. Not all the prescribed poems were successfully explored in relation to the poet’s perspective on the Australian landscape. *For Precision* and *Request to a Year*, in particular, limited some candidates’ scope to respond.

The Close Study of Text in this instance is all the prescribed poems.

Question 6 – Nonfiction

Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

In better responses, candidates successfully discussed Krakauer’s portrayal of Chris’s relationship with his world and showed how this enhanced our understanding of determination. These candidates developed a purposeful response through different interpretations of Chris’s world. Discussion was supported by well-selected, elaborated textual evidence.

In weaker responses, candidates focused on recounting the experiences that made Chris determined. In these responses, candidates also demonstrated a limited ability to discuss Krakauer’s role as composer or how he developed our understanding as an audience.

Question 7 – Film

Peter Weir, *Witness*

In better responses, candidates addressed multiple aspects of the question. For example, they had a strong sense of Weir’s portrayal of the relationship between Book and his world and the ways

this affected the responder's understanding of power. These candidates showed understanding of Weir's role in portraying Book and his world. This was often achieved through reference to textual features of the film. In better responses, candidates moved beyond a focus on Book's gun and the barn building scene. In these responses, candidates distinguished between different types of power presented in the film.

In weaker responses, candidates were limited by a narrow approach that described the world of the English and the world of the Amish without making a clear connection to power. In these responses, candidates had a tendency to rely on narrative or recount, providing a broad and generalised approach to the film. While candidates were familiar with the narrative of the text, most did not discuss how Weir used the textual features of film to portray the relationship between Book and his world or how he established ideas about power.

Section III – Module C: Texts and Society

General Comments

In better responses, candidates engaged directly with the key words and developed a clearly constructed and definite point of view by referring to specific sections of their texts. In these responses, candidates demonstrated an effective knowledge of the elective and the module and made reference to both of these elements in their discussions. Related texts were used in a purposeful manner to further the candidate's point of view. In many responses, candidates drew links between the prescribed text and the related text. The choice of related texts varied widely but it was the quality of the discussion, not necessarily the text type, that distinguished the most successful choices.

In better responses, candidates examined concepts of manipulation, privacy, consumerism and individuality in referring to 'The Global Village', while issues such as personal, cultural, spiritual and physical growth were examined in 'Into the World'.

In weaker responses, candidates did not engage with the key aspects of the question and often relied on recount with a tenuous link, if any, to the concepts of the elective and module. In most of these responses, candidates referred to a related text but the discussion did not develop the answer.

Question 8 – Elective 1 – The Global Village

Christopher Koch, *The Year of Living Dangerously*

In many responses, candidates struggled to demonstrate an understanding of the text in terms of the module, the elective and the question. In better responses, candidates referred to specific textual details from various sections of the novel and successfully linked these to the global village and limits of personal freedom.

Nick Enright, *A Man With Five Children*

In better responses, candidates developed a clear point of view and chose specific scenes from the play to develop their answers. These candidates often focused on the limits imposed by the global village and centred their discussion on Gerry and the difference between his words and actions. The effect of this was traced through the lives of other characters effectively, furthering the candidate's thesis.

In weaker responses, candidates struggled to shape a response which came to terms with the concept of the global village.

Rob Sitch, *The Castle*

Candidates generally responded well to this text and demonstrated direct links between the film and the global village. In many better responses, candidates referred to film techniques that were designed to highlight the negative impact of the global village.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to focus on the story of the Kerrigans without identifying any broader implications.

Wikimedia, *Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia*

The few candidates who attempted to respond to this text did not appear to have studied it in class and received generally low marks.

Question 9 – Elective 2 – Into the World

J C Bourke, *The Story of Tom Brennan*

In better responses, candidates often traced the development of Tom's character as he struggled to enter a new world. In these responses, candidates had a clear understanding of the module and the elective, and made strong reference to the assistance provided to Tom on his journey and to techniques used to highlight his emotional and physical growth, such as water imagery.

In weaker responses, candidates made generalisations and did not effectively discuss the related text in terms of the question.

Willy Russell, *Educating Rita*

In better responses, candidates focused on the central relationship between Rita and Frank and traced its development through the play. Effective reference to textual details including dramatic techniques was a characteristic of successful responses. Often the related text was used to highlight similar aspects present in the play.

In weaker responses, candidates did not construct a clear point of view and sometimes confused the play and the film.

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience in Selected Poems*

Many candidates struggled to formulate an adequate response to this text, often demonstrating a superficial knowledge of one or two poems. In better responses, candidates revealed a clear engagement with the text in terms of the elective and many successfully contrasted the ideas in 'Songs of Innocence' with those in 'Songs of Experience'. In these responses, candidates made detailed reference to their chosen poems and their related text.

Ken Watson (ed.), *At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners*

In better responses, candidates used the diversity of poems to identify with specific issues relevant to them. In these responses, candidates successfully discussed a broad range of poetic techniques in terms of the question.

In weaker responses, candidates had difficulty linking their discussion to the broader aspects of the elective.

Stephen Daldry, *Billy Elliot*

In better responses, candidates made reference to the limits placed on other characters through Billy's movement into a new world, and the extension of Billy's personal freedom was linked to a range of film techniques used by Daldry. In these responses, candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of the key aspects of the elective and the broader implication of the module.

In weaker responses, candidates did not refer to specific scenes or attempt to refer to broader conclusions about society.

English (Advanced) Paper 2 – Modules

Section I – Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context

General comments

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a genuine understanding of both the elective and the module and impressive control of the metalanguage required to effectively answer the question. Textual knowledge was both detailed and appropriately selected to support their arguments about the impact of textual form on the responses to their chosen pair of texts.

In some responses, candidates did not apply their often impressively detailed knowledge of the texts to the requirements of the question. Such responses did not gain high marks.

Question 1 – Exploring Connections

Shakespearean Drama and Film

In better responses, candidates skilfully explored the authorial purpose of Shakespeare and Pacino, using Shakespeare's text as a framework to evaluate the ways in which the forms, features and structures of the parent text became apparent in its appropriation. In the best responses, candidates integrated details of the meta-theatrical form, stylistic features, characterisation, theme and contextual emphasis, and demonstrated a close engagement with Shakespeare's text and Pacino's unique documentary style. In these responses, candidates recognised Pacino's multiple representations of Richard as a dramatic and historical construct with whom a contemporary audience might more readily connect. They also acknowledged the parallels evident in the 'propagandist' roles of each composer. The construct of power within and outside the texts was often a prominent feature of better responses.

In weaker responses, candidates retold plot and relied on a description of Pacino's approach without details relating to the reconstruction of the play to film. In these responses, candidates recognised the function of the docu-drama but did not see the stage play as a blueprint for performance.

In weaker responses, candidates simply described how texts were similar and different, revealing limited knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare's purpose and the significance of his language and dramatic devices.

Prose Fiction and Nonfiction

In better responses, candidates skilfully explored the 'authorial purpose' of Austen and Weldon, using Weldon's text as a framework to successfully evaluate the role of literature in shaping

parallels between the texts. Weldon's own evaluation of Austen's intent was cleverly harnessed to draw out contextual similarities and differences as enhanced by the differences in textual form.

In weaker responses, candidates commented on contextual details, and had a narrow focus on the issues of marriage, reading and education. Austen's use of irony and satire was largely ignored, thus the analysis of humour was absent. These candidates had difficulty in dealing with differences in textual form. Generalisations rather than perceptive selection of evidence weakened the overall structure of their responses.

Poetry and Drama

The effectiveness of the responses was often dependent on the selection of the Donne poems, as not all were relevant. In some responses, candidates used Edson's play as a framework to evaluate Donne, mirroring the expertise and ideas of the protagonist, Vivian Bearing.

In the best responses, candidates skilfully crafted a cohesive evaluation of specific textual techniques associated with textual forms. In these responses, candidates were fluent, explicit and in control of their language throughout the entire response, often synthesising context, analysis of textual form and well-selected textual references.

In better responses, candidates effectively engaged with the module rubric through detailed comparison of the key ideas (parallels) relevant to the context of Donne and Edson which have influenced their textual form. To further their thesis, these candidates carefully selected evidence, rather than describing every historical fact they could remember regardless of relevance.

In weaker responses, candidates were limited in their discussion of dramatic techniques, relying on 'breaking the fourth wall' as their key point of engagement with textual form. Context was commented on in a generalised and superficial manner. Death was the limited literal focus of many candidates' responses; this led to candidates misunderstanding of the metaphysical aspects of the play, especially the ending. In many responses, candidates did not address textual form.

Question 2 – Texts in Time

The response must refer to the text the candidate studied closely and not a related text.

When the prescribed text comprises a selection of poems, essays or speeches, students are expected to have a critical knowledge of each poem, essay or speech.

Prose Fiction and Film

In most responses, candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of the parallels between the two texts.

In better responses, candidates effectively engaged with the various strands of this question by integrating insightful, well-supported evaluations of context and textual form into a well structured, succinct and sustained thesis. In these responses, candidates were explicit and appropriately knowledgeable in their use of metalanguage across both texts, and these responses were often characterised by an identifiably personal response emanating from a holistic understanding of the texts and module.

In weaker responses, candidates provided an enormous amount of information about historical context and the thematic parallels between the texts. The evaluative requirement of the question

and the notion of textual form were treated peripherally, if at all. In many weaker responses, candidates seemed to be writing everything they knew, with little selectivity.

Prose Fiction and Poetry

In better responses, candidates identified the distinctive qualities of textual form in each text. They integrated critical commentary on the ideas and values of each text with the context from which they had emerged. There was a seamless synthesis of discerningly chosen textual evidence supporting the candidate's thesis. In better responses, candidates examined the composer's representation of gender restrictions in their respective contexts through the lens of Platonic, spiritual and physical love. In some responses, candidates took a Feminist approach to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and made insightful comments about her textual form, making reference to writers and philosophers contemporary to Barrett Browning. Similarly, in better responses, candidates linked, even by contrast, the Modernist issues reflected in Fitzgerald's portrayal of his era. They also found other parallels in the text-pairing, such as hope, fulfilment and identity for discussion.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to rely on less judiciously chosen quotes to frame their response, often with no other theme than love which narrowed the scope of their discussion. Poetic techniques used in the sonnets were often not identified and candidates often failed to recognise the distinctive qualities of either of the textual forms. In weaker responses, candidates often struggled to articulate an understanding of how textual form affects meaning.

Drama and Nonfiction

In better responses, candidates provided good textual details underpinned by clear discussion of parallels in themes and issues, never losing sight of 'textual form'. In these better responses, candidates showed their understanding of textual form through analysis of stylistic features. Selection of textual evidence across the breadth of each text rather than the labouring of key scenes or motifs enabled as cohesive evaluation of the statement.

In weaker responses, candidates struggled to present a coherent and balanced comparison of Woolf's and Albee's contexts, often ignoring specific social and cultural ideals of Woolf's time. Narrow focus on 'first and second wave feminism' showed limited understanding of historical context and its implication for the evaluation of 'parallels'. Textual form was less effectively dealt with; the differences and similarities between forms were not fully explored.

Section II – Module B: Critical Study of Texts

Question 3 – William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

In better responses, candidates explored how tension between confrontation and resolution was revealed through characterisation, adopting a variety of approaches. In these responses, candidates often chose to focus on the inherent tensions in such areas as morality, religion, mortality and existentialism. In the best responses, candidates demonstrated an insightful understanding of context and language features, using a judicious choice of textual references to substantiate ideas. Perceptive references to the play's dramatic construction and Shakespeare's metatheatricity were often indicative of stronger responses. A discussion of readings or evaluations of the play was not necessary to achieve higher marks.

Question 4 – Prose Fiction

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*

In better responses, candidates argued skilfully that an inherent tension between confrontation and resolution is revealed through characterisation in the text. Most candidates chose to explore the characters of Patrick, Nicholas Temelcoff or Alice, revealing tension in such issues as migrant marginalisation, class conflict, capitalism and identity. In the best responses, candidates demonstrated a perceptive understanding of context, language and form. In more insightful responses, candidates explored the metaphoric and metafictional aspects of the novel, substantiating their ideas with well-chosen, detailed textual references.

Tim Winton, *Cloudstreet*

In better responses, candidates skilfully argued how the characterisation in *Cloudstreet* reveals tension between stability and change. In the best responses, candidates argued that within the text, if characters were to reach a level of stability they must immerse themselves in the often painful experience of change. In these responses, candidates predominantly discussed the characters of Oriel, Quick or Fish within an exploration of spirituality, familial bonds and sense of place. In better responses, candidates presented sustained and insightful arguments, using detailed textual references to reflect a perceptive understanding of context, language and form.

Gail Jones, *Sixty Lights*

In better responses, candidates aligned the character of Thomas with stability and Lucy with change, perceptively drawing out the tension between their stances. In the best responses, candidates demonstrated an insightful understanding of context, language and form, often drawing on the layers of metaphoric references to photography.

Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

In better responses, candidates argued skilfully that an inherent tension between stability and change is revealed through characterisation. Most candidates focused on Jane's journey in transcending the limitations of class and gender, with better responses teasing out the contextual origins of Jane's obstacles. In better responses, candidates employed detailed textual references throughout to present a sustained argument and to reflect a perceptive understanding of language and form.

Question 5 – Drama

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*

In better responses, candidates skilfully argued that an inherent tension between stability and change is evident through the characterisation of both Nora and Torvald. In better responses, candidates explored these societal and personal tensions with detailed textual references and perceptive understanding of context, dramatic features and form.

Question 6 – Film

Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*

In better responses, candidates skilfully argued that an inherent tension between stability and change is revealed through the characterisation of Kane. In many responses, candidates focused on Kane's quest to find an ultimately elusive stability. His perceptions and actions result in

tension emanating from the instability imposed on him in childhood. Candidates explored issues of power, materialism, relationships and love within these tensions. In better responses, candidates included detailed relevant textual references reflecting an extensive and perceptive knowledge of film techniques.

Question 7 – Poetry

William Butler Yeats, *WB Yeats: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney*

In better responses, candidates skilfully argued that recurring imagery in Yeats's poems reveals an inherent tension between stability and change. In better responses, candidates also presented an extensive analysis of the nominated poem, *The Second Coming*, and often included a highly integrated approach with the other chosen poem(s). In these better responses, candidates explored the poems in terms of ageing, humanity's moral decline and changing society. Recurring apocalyptic and natural imagery was discussed in a skillful manner, candidates demonstrating an extensive, perceptive understanding of poetic techniques in each poem.

Gwen Harwood, *Selected Poems*

In better responses, candidates presented a skilful and sustained analysis of *At Mornington* and at least one other poem, arguing that an inherent tension between stability and change is revealed through recurring images. Candidates explored concepts of mortality, change, memory, love and loss through recurring natural imagery. Better responses tended to be well integrated, with carefully analysed textual references and a perceptive understanding of poetic techniques.

Kenneth Slessor, *Selected Poems*

In better responses, candidates explored the nominated poem, *Out of Time*, in an evaluative manner, skilfully arguing how an inherent tension between stability and change is revealed through recurring imagery. The analysis was often integrated with a discussion of other poems and linked to Slessor's nihilistic view of the world. Issues of the inevitability of change and mortality demonstrated the struggle of seeking stability through memory against the relentless forces of change. In these better responses, candidates revealed a perceptive understanding of poetic techniques and analysed Slessor's recurring imagery linked to water, the sea and colour.

Question 8 – Nonfiction – Essays

George Orwell, *Essays*

In better responses, candidates evaluated ideas in Orwell's essay, *Notes on Nationalism*, in a perceptive way. The development of ideas linked to Orwell's disillusionment with power orthodoxies and the difficulty of attaining political idealism were traced in a skilful way. In better responses, candidates included a discussion of language and form, with detailed textual references and a clear understanding of how Orwell's context underpinned his ideas.

Question 9 – Nonfiction – Speeches

In better responses, candidates perceptively argued that an inherent tension between the actual and the possible is revealed through the development of ideas in the speeches. In better responses, candidates analysed the nominated text, Faith Bandler's *Faith, Hope and Reconciliation*, in a detailed and holistic fashion, tracing Bandler's progression of ideas about the need for Aboriginal reconciliation. In these responses, candidates demonstrated a very fine understanding of the techniques Bandler uses to achieve this, particularly her use of metaphors linked to barriers and

future challenges. Other rhetorical devices and language features were also analysed in a skillful way, demonstrating a strong sense of the persona and the audience. In the best responses, candidates demonstrated an understanding of how Bandler manipulates and positions the audience to ultimately embrace her perspective. In better responses, candidates also dealt with other speeches perceptively, often linking the treatment of each speech in a well-integrated argument. While in most responses, candidates focused on two or three speeches, some also drew on aspects of the collection of speeches.

Section III – Module C: Representation and Text

General comments

In stronger responses, candidates demonstrated a perceptive understanding of how composers represented divergent viewpoints or past events and recollections, leading us to a greater awareness of the complexity of human attitudes and behaviour. In these responses, candidates showed a purposeful, confident control of all components of the question, which contained elements from both the module and the elective. The analysis and evaluation of textual forms, features and language from the prescribed text and text(s) of own choosing were used to support a perceptive thesis. In better responses, candidates gave a persuasive evaluation of texts and showed understanding of the compositional choices that had shaped meaning and positioned responders. Incisive control of expression was a feature of such responses.

In weaker responses, candidates focused more on a description of techniques of representation in the prescribed text and text(s) of own choosing without considering the effects of representation on meaning and responders. In some of these responses, candidates did present a simple line of argument, but it was not developed sufficiently to answer all components of the question. Generally, selection of the text(s) of own choosing was appropriate but not used to further the response to the question.

In most responses, candidates displayed competent literacy skills, though poor handwriting remains a problem, as does a reliance on prepared responses. A prepared response does not equip a student to cope with the all the demands of the question in the examination.

Question 10 – Conflicting Perspectives

Better responses explored the author's positioning of the responder and the consequent impact this has on the development of their personal insight into the complexity of human attitudes and behaviour. In some responses, candidates explored divergent viewpoints between characters, while others focused on internalised divergence and the impact this has on eventual understanding about humanity's complexities.

In stronger responses, candidates were conceptual and analytical. They demonstrated perceptive understanding of the requirements of the module, elective and question, and presented well-chosen textual references from all of their selected texts.

In weaker responses, candidates superficially referred to conflicting perspectives, and this was sometimes limited just to conflict. They were descriptive and did not demonstrate an understanding of the module.

Julius Caesar

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a deep and holistic understanding of the entire play rather than focusing only on limited scenes or incidents, such as the funeral orations. In these responses, candidates used judicious textual support to exemplify Shakespeare's representations of conflicting perspectives in order to demonstrate the complexity of human attitudes and behaviours. For example, some candidates scrutinised ways in which perceptions of Caesar's character were represented by Shakespeare to generate diverging viewpoints.

In weaker responses, candidates described scenes from the play, rather than using ideas and textual examples to support their thesis. Analysis was limited to a description of techniques with little awareness of the effects of representation.

Snow Falling on Cedars

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a perceptive understanding of the concept of divergent viewpoints and fully engaged with the question. In these responses, candidates analysed how divergent viewpoints, both between and within characters, resulted in greater personal understanding, both for the characters and the reader. They clearly articulated how characters developed a stronger awareness of the complexities of humanity, and how the characters then adjusted their own attitudes and behaviour. In many responses, candidates explored the complexity of internal divergence and the consequential growth in awareness. In these responses, candidates had a perceptive, sustained thesis and a strong awareness of how the representation of conflicting perspectives in the text shapes the meaning for the reader and leads to increased understanding. Textual references were judiciously selected and seamlessly integrated into an evaluative response, with skilful control of language.

In weaker responses, candidates described rather than analysed. In these responses, candidates focused on recounting the relationship between Ishmael and Hsueh and the conflicting opinions evident in the text, but without any awareness of increased understanding about humanity. There was some evidence of an attempt to list and describe language features and techniques, but it was at a superficial level.

Wag the Dog

In better responses, candidates perceptively addressed all elements of the module, the elective and the question. They demonstrated a strong understanding of the concept of audience positioning and analysed the impact this had on increasing our awareness of the complexities of humanity. In these responses, candidates had a sustained thesis which aligned the concept of a greater awareness with the satirical focus of the text, and demonstrated skilful use of language and a seamless evaluation of how representation shapes meaning.

In weaker responses, candidates were descriptive and did not address the question. In these responses, candidates included some reference to techniques but lacked analysis and personal insight.

Birthday Letters

In better responses, candidates demonstrated an understanding of divergent viewpoints in the texts and how they influence our understanding about the complexity of human attitudes and behaviour. In these responses, candidates used a personal voice to articulate their own increased awareness of humanity. They also identified how Hughes positioned the reader through his choice of poetry as his medium for writing. In these responses, candidates skilfully integrated an evaluation of language, forms and features of the poetry and of the texts of their own choosing, with a skilful and controlled use of language.

In weaker responses, candidates focused on the Hughes/Plath relationship and treated the topic as a superficial comparative study. They either ignored the complexities of humanity or treated this idea superficially. They presented a description of Hughes's guilt and sought to apportion blame to either Plath or Hughes. The use of all the set poems tended to limit the depth of discussion.

Justice Game

In better responses, candidates addressed themselves skilfully to the question, supporting their thesis with an extensive range of textual details to explore how representation enabled a greater awareness of the complexity of human attitudes and behaviours. In these responses, candidates analysed and evaluated the ways in which composers represented divergent viewpoints in order to shape meaning and how a greater awareness had been gained through these representations.

Question 11 – History and Memory

The subtleties of the elective were often considered through a rigorous exploration of the significance of compositional choices. In these better responses, candidates engaged with the ways that the nexus between past events and recollections might generate a complex range of responses, through a judicious appraisal of how composers position responders.

The Fiftieth Gate

In better responses, candidates dealt implicitly with the idea of complexity through judicious textual references, which were used adroitly to explore elements of the elective. In many of the better responses, candidates used discerning theses around events or perspectives which were derived from the texts. These candidates framed an evaluation of ways of representation in the prescribed text and text(s) of own choosing.

In weaker responses, candidates dealt superficially with most elements of the question. In these responses, candidates tended not to explore an analysis of the textual details and features, nor to establish a response to the concepts of 'the complexity of human attitudes and behaviour.'

Limited reference to representation was apparent.

Smithsonian National Museum of American History September 11 Website

In better responses, candidates selected from a wide range of examples from the website and explored specific form, as well as features, with sagacity. They perceptively considered 'the complexity of human attitudes and behaviour' in relation to the memorialisation of recent historical events.

In weaker responses, candidates described the content of the website and lacked a sense of the deliberate and complex acts of representation in the composition of this text.