Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/12
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Selected relevant material to address the focus of the question.
- Used appropriate textual reference to support their ideas.
- Sustained engagement with writers' use of structure and language.
- Understood the use of distinctive aspects of form in poetry and prose texts.
- Wrote informed personal responses to texts and questions.

What candidates needed to improve
- Tailor their material to address the key words of the question.
- Make careful and specific reference to the text to support their assertions.
- Integrate shorter quotations into their analysis of writers' use of form, structure and language.
- Write personal responses informed by relevant detail from the text rather than give general personal views from their own experiences.
- Avoid lengthy introductions with background information and conclusions that simply repeat the main points in the essay.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Cited the 'tyrannic power' of Love as a reason for sympathy for the speaker.
- Explored the contrast between the speaker's situation ('my poor heart alone is harmed') and that of her lover ('the victor…free').
- Considered the use of personification of Love and the hyperbole describing his cruelty.
- Explored what the speaker's words reveal about her plight.

Limited responses
- Needed to focus more closely on the key word 'sympathy' rather than simply explaining the poem's content.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Observed the comparison of the children's work with the leisure activity of watching television.
- Focused on the different ages of the children and lamented their lack of ordinary school days.
- Commented on the skill of the children in their creating a carpet of great beauty.
- Explored the significance of religion and its impact on the children in the poem.

Limited responses
- Needed to focus more closely on the evidence of the text to support their views: for example, 'melodious chime' offers a positive judgement on the way the children work together.

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Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Related the passport official's suspicion to the question's key words: 'such a frightening poem'.
- Commented on the significance of the title and the two echoes of it in the body of the poem.
- Explored the presentation of the passport official and his effect on the speaker.
- Explored the speaker's use of irony captured: for example, in the final line 'But they missed out your heart'.

Limited responses
- Would have benefited from a more explicit focus on the question's key words and close analysis of textual detail rather than basic explanation.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses
- Focused on the 'disturbing impressions' of a cruel mother who beats and shouts at her son.
- Viewed with alarm the mother's 'excessive' ambition for her child.
- Noted that it led to the boy's rebelliousness, an opposite effect to the one she had intended.
- Explored the unsettling effect of the imagery describing the mother: for example, 'circling the cowering boy'.

Limited responses
- Focused on the portrayal of the boy, though they needed to link their comments to the effects of the mother's actions and speech on the boy.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Focused on what the poem reveals of the thoughts and feelings of the speaker, known as Abdi outside the shop in Broomhall.
- Explored ideas about a sense of belonging and identity in the poem.
- Considered the significance of the foods listed in the poem.
- Analysed in detail the presentation of the stallholders.

Limited responses
- Needed to focus more explicitly on the ways in which the poet 'strikingly conveys the speaker's thoughts and feelings' in the poem.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses
- Noted the diverse range of people mentioned in the poem: the old man, the young couple killed in the car crash, and the early morning mixture of joggers and ravers.
- Commented on the old man's alienation in a world in which pubs close down overnight and are 'mounds of rubble in a week'.
- Observed the sad lives and deaths of the young couple who died in the crash.
- Analysed the specific effects of appeals to the sense: for example, the sound of 'a world of bass, blasting out'; the smell of 'weed, and too much/CK One'.

Limited responses
- Would have benefited from focusing more explicitly on the key word 'vividly' when exploring the poet's description of the setting.

Section B

Question 7

Comprehensive responses
- Showed clear understanding of the text's deeper implications: the arrival of the white colonisers and the foreshadowing of the destruction of the Igbo community and culture.

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- Linked effectively the clash between tradition and the need for change to the key word 'disturbing'.
- Analysed in detail the depiction of extreme violence and its impact.
- Explored in detail the effects of Achebe's use of imagery: for example, the albino, locusts, the iron horse and the blood red lake.

Limited responses
- Needed to explore specific ways in which Achebe makes the moment so disturbing rather than simply assert that the moment is disturbing.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses - few
- Provided textual reference to explain why Ikemefuna is such a 'memorable character'.
- Gave moving accounts of Ikemefuna's plight as he makes what he thought was his journey home to his original clan.
- Explored specific ways in which Achebe portrays the character and his relationship with Okonkwo and Nwoye.

Limited responses - many
- Offered character sketches treating the character as a real-life person rather than writing an analysis of a character as fictional construct.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses
- Understood the false motives of Miss Bingley as she attempts, without subtlety, to attract Darcy's attention.
- Appreciated the irony of her pretending to be interested in what Darcy is reading and her evident boredom as she 'threw aside her book'.
- Sustained a close focus on the striking ways in which Austen conveys the character of Miss Bingley
- Exploring the character's words and tone, and the nuances of her body language.

Limited responses
- Needed to focus more explicitly on 'striking impressions' of the character to lift responses above the level of a basic character sketch.

Question 10

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

Question 11

Comprehensive responses
- Grasped Raka's feelings of excitement.
- Developed with supporting reference the idea that she is mesmerised and entranced by the fire.
- Focused closely on the series of questions Raka asks that show her obsession with fire and the suggestion that she does not want the blaze to be stopped.
- Explored the descriptions of the fire and made a link with the ending of the novel.

Limited responses
- Needed a closer focus on Desai's use of language in conveying specific aspects of Raka's character and her unsettling thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel.

Question 12

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

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Question 13

Comprehensive responses
- Showed understanding of key character traits: the husband's attempts at authority, his wife's complete disregard for what he says and her eccentricity, and his mother's superstition ('Make sure the planetary configurations are good.').
- Explored the characters' different attitudes towards coping with pregnancy.
- Some candidates wrote interesting interpretations about Kulfi's increasingly lurid drawings as representing her intense desire for a creative life or retreat into a world of her own as an escape from the real world.
- Explored ways in which Desai uses humour in her portrayal of each character.

Limited responses
- Would have benefited from exploring more closely Desai's use of humour in making this early moment in the novel 'so striking' rather than making generalisations about context.

Question 14

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

Question 15

Comprehensive responses
- Charted the building of tension in the extract, commenting on the harmful intentions of the mob, the innocent intrusion of Scout and the 'flash of fear' in Atticus.
- Observed the unusual demeanour of Atticus, usually calm and collected, but here for the first time showing vulnerability and fear, 'an old man' with 'trembling fingers'.
- Explored the imagery of the shadows, darkness and light, and the use of sensuous language: for example, the comical 'near-whispers' of the men, their 'dark smelly bodies' and the 'smell of stale whisky and pig-pen'.
- Analysed closely ways in which the dialogue contributes to the building of tension.

Limited responses
- Asserted that the moment in the extract is tense without exploring closely specific ways in which Lee makes it tense.

Question 16

Comprehensive responses
- Explored different types of prejudice: for example, towards the black community and towards women and girls expected to conform to stereotypes.
- Referred to Aunt Alexandra's expectations about suitable clothes for girls, to the prejudice towards those with less money and social status, and to Mr Dolphus's summary of prejudice as 'the simple hell people give other people'.
- Offered convincing explorations of the way Lee depicts prejudice in the trail of Tom Robinson.
- Explored confidently the presentation of Scout's narrative viewpoint with her developing sense of what prejudice means.

Limited responses
- Needed to make greater reference to detail of the text to support their ideas rather than offering extraneous historical context or general assertions about prejudice.

Question 17

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

Question 18

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

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Question 19

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

Question 20

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

Question 21

Comprehensive responses

- Observed the deep resentment Philip shows towards his mother; he mistakenly thinks she is glad to see him leave and is extremely hurt about this.
- Considered the deeper implications of the story: for example, the real reason for his mother not attending her husband's funeral, comparing this with Philip's naïve interpretation.
- Explored Philip's interpretation of the relationship between his mother and Miss Pym.
- Analysed confidently Gardam's use of indirect interior monologue in conveying Philip's thoughts and feeling.

Limited responses

- Needed to consider the deeper implications of Philip's thoughts and feelings, rather than offering literal readings, which assumed his personal interpretations to be based on reliable evidence.

Question 22

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

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/22
Drama

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Appreciated the Drama text as a script for performance and themselves as members of an audience – not just as 'readers'.
- Explicitly addressed the key terms of the question throughout.
- Demonstrated a detailed knowledge of their set Drama text(s).
- Established the dramatic context for the characters and the audience.
- Wrote a brief, focused introduction to start their answer.
- Selected and integrated brief quotations to support their arguments.
- Explored the dramatic features of their texts analysing the precise effects created by the playwright's use of particular words.
- Structured their arguments coherently.
- Expressed their ideas concisely.

What candidates needed to improve

- Demonstrate awareness of the Drama text as a script for onstage performance.
- Focus on the precise terms of the question.
- Write a brief introductory paragraph linked to the question not the writers' background.
- Make points clearly supported by specific textual detail.
- Use brief quotations and comment on specific words.
- Explore the text without retelling the plot.
- Explore the playwright's use of language and effects.

Comments on specific questions

PEARL CLEAGE: *Blues for an Alabama Sky*

Question 1

There were too few seen to make meaningful comment.

SHELAGH DELANEY: *A Taste of Honey*

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Deconstructed the question and maintained close focus on it throughout the response.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of what was revealed and the way the writer achieved effects.
- Supported ideas with relevant references to the text and quotations.
- Explored the whole passage.
- Examined Helen and Jo's relationship.
- Examined impressions of Peter and Helen's relationship.
- Understood what was revealed about Helen's lack of maternal instincts.
- Explored Jo's sarcastic comments and what they revealed about their lifestyle.
- Expressed sympathy for Jo.
- Focused on specific detail and language, for example, on Jo's fear of the dark and calling Helen a devil.

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Limited responses
- Showed knowledge of the text without linking it to the terms of the question.
- Retold the plot with little coverage of the passage.
- Gave lengthy introductions before addressing the question and passage.
- Did not support ideas with textual reference.
- Gave an overview of Jo and Helen, ignoring Peter's role in the passage.
- Explained the text rather than analysing what was revealed and the way the writer used language.
- Demonstrated an insecure understanding of the passage with unsupported assertions and misreadings.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Went beyond a character study to identify Geof's motivation and his treatment by Jo.
- Explored Peter and Helen's treatment of Geof and the significance of his being driven away.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of how life was difficult for Geof as a homosexual.
- Explored other aspects of his life and how he cared for Jo so well, only to be kicked out by Helen.
- Offered debate and evidenced the uplifting scenes revealing Jo and Geof's bond or saw him as contributing to Jo's abandonment and therefore shifting sympathy to her.
- Supported comments with examples of the homophobic insults that he is subjected to by Helen and Peter.
- Communicated a sustained personal response that showed sympathy for Geof.
- Explored attitudes to homosexuality and women in relation to Geof's behaviour and treatment.
- Supported their argument with well-selected references from across the text.

Limited responses
- Wrote a character study of Geof with limited focus on how the writer makes the audience sympathise with him.
- Narrated sections of the text where Geof is present without exploring his behaviour and role in the play.
- Did not explore his homosexuality or laboured over the homophobic insults at the expense of range.
- Needed to support their argument with specific textual detail.
- Showed some understanding of Geof's bond with and care for Jo.
- Demonstrated surface understanding of Geof's behaviour and reasons for wanting to marry Jo.
- Some responses drifted into social commentary about homosexuality and poverty.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Engaged with the questions and Blanche's motivation, her efforts to captivate Mitch and cultivate a romantic atmosphere.
- Demonstrated critical understanding of Blanche's need to hide her true self from Mitch and maintain her façade.
- Explored the use of light imagery, the significance of alcohol and her use of French.
- Understood Mitch's awkwardness and his pitiful apology for effusive sweating.
- The loneliness and desperation of both characters was understood and their continued attempts to salvage such an 'anxious and solemn' date night.
- Understood how they are reduced to discussing a coat towards the end of the passage, underlining how they had little in common.
- Supported arguments with well-selected references and quotations.
- Analysed the language, writer techniques and their dramatic impact.
- Personal responses were sustained and convincing.

Limited responses
- Retold the plot before focusing on the passage.
- Gave lengthy, general introductions.

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- Recognised the affectionate exchanges and the budding relationship at a surface level of understanding, suggesting they were deeply in love and comfortable with each other, missing the evident awkwardness.
- Missed Blanche's deception.
- Needed to support ideas with relevant, specific textual detail or copied lengthy quotations without analysing them.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Engaged fully with the terms of the question – the writer's techniques and Stanley as a 'powerful character'.
- Explored Stanley's power over both Stella and Blanche, with well-selected textual support.
- Analysed references, fully demonstrating clear and critical understanding of the character and writer's intentions.
- Gave a range of examples of Stanley's power from across the whole text.
- Illustrated Stanley's power with examples of animal imagery, blunt dialogue and violent behaviour.
- Explored his vengeful destruction of Blanche and with it, Mitch's hopes of settling down.
- Sustained a convincing personal response to Stanley's behaviour and treatment of others.

Limited responses

- Wrote a character study of Stanley.
- Had limited focus on the terms of the question.
- Narrated events with some insecure recall of detail.
- Were limited in range focusing briefly on just one scene or incident.
- Needed to support ideas with specific textual detail and comment on the ways the writer achieves effects.
- Focused on socio-historical background and the writer's life rather than the text.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *A Midsummer's Night Dream*

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Engaged fully with the text and entertaining aspects of the performance.
- Understood the context of the 'play within a play' and links to the lovers and chaos in the forest.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references to the text, analysing them fully.
- Recognised the ineptness of the Mechanicals, examining Quince's misuse of language and punctuation.
- Understood how the Prologue was overly detailed recounting the whole plot and characters, spoiling the performance for the nobles.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of drama and performance and the Mechanicals lack of such details.
- Explored the talking props and the nobles' reactions and sarcastic comments.
- The critical comments of the nobles were often noted yet not always fully understood.
- Although many could articulate the absurdity of a wall talking and the mocking tone of the courtiers, they did not always comment fully on how individual comical effects were achieved.

Limited responses

- Commented on the play in general with little close focus on the passage.
- Stated aspects were comical without exploring why.
- Malapropism was mentioned without being supported and few realised that it was the punctuation that was flawed.
- 'Dumb show' as well as 'lime and hair' frequently quoted though needed further development.
- There was some confusion between the fairies and the Mechanicals.
- Some stated that the nobles were being encouraging with their comments and thought the performance was good.
- Needed more specific textual detail and comment on the way the writer achieves effects.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- Engaged fully with the task and character.
- Provided a concise overview of Hermia's role and situation in the introduction.
- Explored a variety of reasons to admire her including bravery and independence.
- Offered a balanced argument with insight into less admirable qualities in her behaviour.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references and quotations.
- Sustained a critical understanding of the text and character, analysing the language and effects achieved in considerable detail.
- Offered an informed personal response to Hermia's situation and the role of women in Elizabethan and Athenian society.

Limited responses

- Narrated the plot before addressing the question.
- Commented on Hermia's defiance of her father, courage and love for Lysander in general terms.
- There was limited close textual reference or detail to the way effects were achieved.
- Had insecure recall of events.
- Some loss of focus on Hermia and drifted into comments about women's roles in society.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Briefly set the context of the passage and remained focused on it throughout.
- Engaged with the conflict between the two men and with Antony's neglect of his Roman duties.
- Examined the detail and language used to convey their strained relationship.
- Demonstrated understanding of the contrasting triumvirs and Caesar's reproachful language and dramatic impact of the situation.
- Explored the issue of the oath and the solution proposed by Agrippa.
- Contrasted Enobarbus speaking out of turn with Agrippa asking for permission to speak.
- Some identified Caesar's scornful view of Cleopatra and Antony's submission.
- There was understanding of the foreshadowing of future conflict.
- Well-selected references supported ideas and were generally analysed in considerable detail.

Limited responses

- Narrated the plot or paraphrased the passage without linking it to the question.
- Understood that Caesar and Antony were arguing.
- Tended to ignore the minor characters.
- Showed some understanding of Antony and Cleopatra's relationship preventing him from fulfilling his duties but needed to link how that contributed to his strained relationship with Caesar.
- Covered little of the passage.
- Needed to support ideas with textual detail and to examine the language.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Engaged fully with the terms of the question, 'How far' and 'cunning' to offer a balanced view of Cleopatra.
- Demonstrated understanding of the complexity of her character and motivation.
- Explored her cunning and manipulative ways with Antony.
- Explored her behaviour at the Battle of Actium and her fake suicide resulting in his ignominious death and her suicide.
- Explored her genuine feelings of love for Antony and her consequent insecurity about his commitment to her.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references and quotations from across the text.
- Explored the dramatic impact of her behaviour and demand for attention.
- Demonstrated critical understanding of the language and way Shakespeare achieved effects.
- Sustained an informed personal response to Cleopatra culminating in her cunningly foiling Caesar's attempt to parade her as a trophy.

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Limited responses

- Wrote a character study of Cleopatra with little reference to ‘cunning’.
- Showed a little understanding of her manipulation of Antony.
- Reference some textual detail.
- Some discussed Antony rather than Cleopatra.
- Recall of textual detail was often insecure.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/32
Drama (Open Text)

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Appreciated the Drama text as a script for performance and themselves as members of an audience – not just as 'readers'.
- Explicitly addressed the key terms of the question throughout.
- Demonstrated a detailed knowledge of their set Drama text(s).
- Established the dramatic context for the characters and the audience.
- Wrote a brief, focused introduction to start their answer.
- Selected and integrated brief quotations to support their arguments.
- Explored the dramatic features of their texts analysing the precise effects created by the playwright's use of particular words.
- Structured their arguments coherently.
- Expressed their ideas concisely.

What candidates needed to improve

- Demonstrate awareness of the Drama text as a script for onstage performance.
- Focus on the precise terms of the question.
- Write a brief introductory paragraph linked to the question not the writers' background.
- Make points clearly supported by specific textual detail.
- Use brief quotations and comment on specific words.
- Explore the text without retelling the plot.
- Explore the playwright's use of language and effects.

Comments on specific questions

PEARL CLEAGE: *Blues for an Alabama Sky*

Question 1

There were too few seen to make meaningful comment.

SHELAGH DELANEY: *A Taste of Honey*

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Deconstructed the question and maintained close focus on it throughout the response.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of what was revealed and the way the writer achieved effects.
- Supported ideas with relevant references to the text and quotations.
- Explored the whole passage.
- Examined Helen and Jo's relationship.
- Examined impressions of Peter and Helen's relationship.
- Understood what was revealed about Helen's lack of maternal instincts.
- Explored Jo's sarcastic comments and what they revealed about their lifestyle.
- Expressed sympathy for Jo.
- Focused on specific detail and language, for example, on Jo's fear of the dark and calling Helen a devil.

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Limited responses
- Showed knowledge of the text without linking it to the terms of the question.
- Retold the plot with little coverage of the passage.
- Gave lengthy introductions before addressing the question and passage.
- Did not support ideas with textual reference.
- Gave an overview of Jo and Helen, ignoring Peter's role in the passage.
- Explained the text rather than analysing what was revealed and the way the writer used language.
- Demonstrated an insecure understanding of the passage with unsupported assertions and misreadings.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Went beyond a character study to identify Geof's motivation and his treatment by Jo.
- Explored Peter and Helen's treatment of Geof and the significance of his being driven away.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of how life was difficult for Geof as a homosexual.
- Explored other aspects of his life and how he cared for Jo so well, only to be kicked out by Helen.
- Offered debate and evidenced the uplifting scenes revealing Jo and Geof's bond or saw him as contributing to Jo's abandonment and therefore shifting sympathy to her.
- Supported comments with examples of the homophobic insults that he is subjected to by Helen and Peter.
- Communicated a sustained personal response that showed sympathy for Geof.
- Explored attitudes to homosexuality and women in relation to Geof's behaviour and treatment.
- Supported their argument with well-selected references from across the text.

Limited responses
- Wrote a character study of Geof with limited focus on how the writer makes the audience sympathise with him.
- Narrated sections of the text where Geof is present without exploring his behaviour and role in the play.
- Did not explore his homosexuality or laboured over the homophobic insults at the expense of range.
- Needed to support their argument with specific textual detail.
- Showed some understanding of Geof's bond with and care for Jo.
- Demonstrated surface understanding of Geof's behaviour and reasons for wanting to marry Jo.
- Some responses drifted into social commentary about homosexuality and poverty.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Engaged with the questions and Blanche's motivation, her efforts to captivate Mitch and cultivate a romantic atmosphere.
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- Understood how they are reduced to discussing a coat towards the end of the passage, underlining how they had little in common.
- Supported arguments with well-selected references and quotations.
- Analysed the language, writer techniques and their dramatic impact.
- Personal responses were sustained and convincing.

Limited responses
- Retold the plot before focusing on the passage.
- Gave lengthy, general introductions.

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- Recognised the affectionate exchanges and the budding relationship at a surface level of understanding, suggesting they were deeply in love and comfortable with each other, missing the evident awkwardness.
- Missed Blanche's deception.
- Needed to support ideas with relevant, specific textual detail or copied lengthy quotations without analysing them.

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- Explored his vengeful destruction of Blanche and with it, Mitch's hopes of settling down.
- Sustained a convincing personal response to Stanley's behaviour and treatment of others.

Limited responses

- Wrote a character study of Stanley.
- Had limited focus on the terms of the question.
- Narrated events with some insecure recall of detail.
- Were limited in range focusing briefly on just one scene or incident.
- Needed to support ideas with specific textual detail and comment on the ways the writer achieves effects.
- Focused on socio-historical background and the writer's life rather than the text.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *A Midsummer's Night Dream*

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Engaged fully with the text and entertaining aspects of the performance.
- Understood the context of the 'play within a play' and links to the lovers and chaos in the forest.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references to the text, analysing them fully.
- Recognised the ineptness of the Mechanicals, examining Quince's misuse of language and punctuation.
- Understood how the Prologue was overly detailed recounting the whole plot and characters, spoiling the performance for the nobles.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of drama and performance and the Mechanicals lack of such details.
- Explored the talking props and the nobles' reactions and sarcastic comments.
- The critical comments of the nobles were often noted yet not always fully understood.
- Although many could articulate the absurdity of a wall talking and the mocking tone of the courtiers, they did not always comment fully on how individual comical effects were achieved.

Limited responses

- Commented on the play in general with little close focus on the passage.
- Stated aspects were comical without exploring why.
- Malapropism was mentioned without being supported and few realised that it was the punctuation that was flawed.
- 'Dumb show' as well as 'lime and hair' frequently quoted though needed further development.
- There was some confusion between the fairies and the Mechanicals.
- Some stated that the nobles were being encouraging with their comments and thought the performance was good.
- Needed more specific textual detail and comment on the way the writer achieves effects.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Engaged fully with the task and character.
- Provided a concise overview of Hermia's role and situation in the introduction.
- Explored a variety of reasons to admire her including bravery and independence.
- Offered a balanced argument with insight into less admirable qualities in her behaviour.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references and quotations.
- Sustained a critical understanding of the text and character, analysing the language and effects achieved in considerable detail.
- Offered an informed personal response to Hermia's situation and the role of women in Elizabethan and Athenian society.

Limited responses

- Narrated the plot before addressing the question.
- Commented on Hermia's defiance of her father, courage and love for Lysander in general terms.
- There was limited close textual reference or detail to the way effects were achieved.
- Had insecure recall of events.
- Some loss of focus on Hermia and drifted into comments about women's roles in society.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Briefly set the context of the passage and remained focused on it throughout.
- Engaged with the conflict between the two men and with Antony's neglect of his Roman duties.
- Examined the detail and language used to convey their strained relationship.
- Demonstrated understanding of the contrasting triumvirs and Caesar's reproachful language and dramatic impact of the situation.
- Explored the issue of the oath and the solution proposed by Agrippa.
- Contrasted Enobarbus speaking out of turn with Agrippa asking for permission to speak.
- Some identified Caesar's scornful view of Cleopatra and Antony's submission.
- There was understanding of the foreshadowing of future conflict.
- Well-selected references supported ideas and were generally analysed in considerable detail.

Limited responses

- Narrated the plot or paraphrased the passage without linking it to the question.
- Understood that Caesar and Antony were arguing.
- Tended to ignore the minor characters.
- Showed some understanding of Antony and Cleopatra's relationship preventing him from fulfilling his duties but needed to link how that contributed to his strained relationship with Caesar.
- Covered little of the passage.
- Needed to support ideas with textual detail and to examine the language.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Engaged fully with the terms of the question, 'How far' and 'cunning' to offer a balanced view of Cleopatra.
- Demonstrated understanding of the complexity of her character and motivation.
- Explored her cunning and manipulative ways with Antony.
- Explored her behaviour at the Battle of Actium and her fake suicide resulting in his ignominious death and her suicide.
- Explored her genuine feelings of love for Antony and her consequent insecurity about his commitment to her.
- Supported ideas with well-selected references and quotations from across the text.
- Explored the dramatic impact of her behaviour and demand for attention.
- Demonstrated critical understanding of the language and way Shakespeare achieved effects.
- Sustained an informed personal response to Cleopatra culminating in her cunningly foiling Caesar's attempt to parade her as a trophy.

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Limited responses

- Wrote a character study of Cleopatra with little reference to 'cunning'.
- Showed a little understanding of her manipulation of Antony.
- Reference some textual detail.
- Some discussed Antony rather than Cleopatra.
- Recall of textual detail was often insecure.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/42
Unseen

Key messages

What candidates did well

- The poetry question proved especially popular, encouraging moving engagement with the poet's images and ideas, while the prose question also offered many opportunities for comment on the narrative, description and reader's perspective.
- Candidates made good use of the introductory rubric and bullet points to construct informed responses to the stem questions, with effective use of detailed textual support for their interpretations (AO1).
- Exploring beyond the surface meaning of the text is crucial for deeper understanding, and most candidates engaged with the writers' deeper purpose in writing the texts (AO2).
- Comprehensive responses engaged not only with language and imagery but also form and structure, exploring how the writers' choices and methods make meaning (AO3).
- The most effective personal response considered the texts critically, showing both personal and evaluative engagement throughout (AO4).

What candidates needed to improve

- Quotation is most effective when brief and closely related to the point made (AO1).
- More limited responses read the text quite literally and construct a narrative paraphrase; some personal engagement with deeper implications can help candidates to move beyond surface meaning (AO2).
- Commentary on language needs to move beyond simple identification of devices. Rather than simply using terminology or lists of terminology in introductory paragraphs, straightforward explanation of the effects of choices of words or images is more effective (AO3).
- Interpretation is more effective with attention to key words in the stem question, while attention to the bullet points can help to structure an answer (AO4).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Most responses engaged strongly with the powerful language and imagery with which the non-binary African American poet Danez Smith gives voice to the yearnings of the excluded in '*Summer, Somewhere*' using the stem question to explore the sense of an imagined earthly paradise, and the most comprehensive explored the implications of the poem's title, and the poet's recreation of Eden and its fruits in the 'old forest'.
- The first bullet point assisted many candidates to explore the different definitions of a safe place, noting the lack of boundaries implicit in 'no need for geography', the free choice explicit simplifications of each, and above all the idea of 'sanctuary' removed from the threat of violence: 'where nothing is a gun'.
- The second bullet, which usually directs attention to language and imagery, encouraged comprehensive responses to engage with the personified poplar, and the way the poet calls the fruits of the forest 'uncle'. The most successful of these also engaged with the idea of both growth and how 'it knows its place/in history' to suggest fertility, tradition and stability, as well as familial relationship. There were a wide range of effective interpretations of the fruit 'bursting red pulp' and 'set afire', some seeing abundance and colour aflame, some seeing the dangers of destruction leading to contrasting interpretations of whether the 'harvest of dark wind chimes' was reassuring or disturbing. For example: 'fire could imply violence, here it connotes the opposite – warmth and energy. The subsequent line "harvest of dark wind chimes" switches from visual to auditory imagery … often used to lull babies to sleep … a serene, soft and calm sound evoking childhood memories so forging an association to the forest with that same feeling of comfort'. All more comprehensive responses engaged with the sensory language here. While there were different readings of why the poet or speaker 'fell from its limb', most

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engaged powerfully with the maternal or familial reassurance of how the tree 'kissed sap into my wound' bringing out the use of sensuousness and sibilance to convey reassurance.

- The third bullet point, which usually gives assistance to candidates to conclude their responses and consider their personal responses, led to moving explorations of 'what it's like to live/someplace that loves you back?' They showed critical appreciation of how the poet's use of pronouns as well as the rhetorical questions draw the reader into the text, some commenting empathetically on the lack of love that the excluded feel, and some sadly reflecting on how little the real world reflects the mutual love and affection of the poet's visionary imagination. Some of the most comprehensive responses reflected on the poet's use of language and structure, including informalities of orthography, punctuation and poetic form, to suggest the freedom of the imagination, away from the formal restrictions of an unloving world.

Limited responses

- These often repeated the stem question and bullet points without interpretation of their meaning and using them to explore effects on the reader.
- Some were more narrative than analytical, reading the poem over-literally as about personal experience rather than exploring the poet's craft.
- Some spotted imagery and other devices without comment on their use and effects; tended to use overlong quotations losing focus on individual words and their context within the poetic moment described; sometimes treated the bullet points as an exclusive list and avoided engaging with more complex and ambiguous imagery; explored word choice exclusively without attention to the poet's other methods.
- Some used the last bullet point as an opportunity for moralistic or personal comment, instead of an invitation to conclude a critical response on the writer's methods and purposes.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- The extract from H. E. Bates's novel '*The Jacaranda Tree*', set in Burma at the time of the Japanese invasion, was less popular but still attempted by a good number of candidates. There were fewer very comprehensive responses, but most were competent. Responses that were most effective gave an overview offering personal interpretation of the girl's experience, moving beyond supported narrative and did not confine the response to the bullets alone but considered the range of experiences the girl went through, and how the writer makes them so vivid through language, imagery and narrative suspense and tension.
- The first bullet enabled more comprehensive responses to make some comment on the 'hideous' moment of hanging suggesting something both terrifying and ludicrous. Some of the same idea is present in her landing: 'The girl's perception of her collision with the sand as simply falling "quite harmlessly" and the act of losing the glasses as 'painfully silly' creates contrast between ignored physical strain and personal lament.' More effective responses contrasted the long sentence which conveys the moment of suspension – which in fact only lasted 'about ten seconds' – with the short sentences which describe her fall and how 'she did not cry out' but remained 'brightly aware' of the sounds around her, while covering her face.
- The second bullet encouraged more detailed comment on sensory language in more comprehensive responses including the unexpected beauty of some of the imagery of the world with no glasses to see through distinctly. Comments on that blurriness causing disorientation were still helpful. Many commented on the link between the alarming sound of the 'punctuations' of irregular leaps of the falling rock and how the danger this posed seemed heightened due to the girl's lack of clear vision as she 'stood in a world of golden mist, groping'.
- The third bullet led candidates to explore more than one moment as they are referred to at various points. These responses were able to consider the various implications of the girl's dependence on and feelings of being 'naked' without her spectacles, exploring her vulnerability and dependence, and how unusual it was for her to be alone and forced to work out what she was sensing for herself. Some candidates saw this as a metaphor for adolescence and for the girl being forced to become more resilient and independent in her thoughts as well as her actions. Some commented on the sound imagery of 'the sharp crack of a scythe biting into the straws of dry corn' as the rock hits the bamboo as an image of the death and destruction that the girl has narrowly avoided, with most comprehensive responses showing awareness that to her this was a 'miracle' with a sense of supernatural deliverance.

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Limited responses

- These often confined the response to the bullets alone and omitted detail from the rest of the extract, such as the girl's falling from the car to the sand, the crashing sounds which indicate what happened to the car she fell from or how it is only the search for her spectacles that saves her life from the falling rock.
- Some candidates misunderstood moments in the text, for example interpreting the girl's comparison of the effect of the sun on her eyes to smashed glass as an actual shattering of the spectacles.
- Some candidates avoided more ambiguous imagery such as the 'sun-dazzled water' comparison or 'flying corridors of space' which might have brought more nuance to their interpretations.
- Some candidates understood the spectacles to be important to the girl and could offer a quotation in support of this yet took the discussion no further. To strengthen their responses, candidates could have focused more on the 'miracle' that occurs or explore how the girl's worry about the spectacles leads her to make instinctive decisions that save her life.

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0475/05
Coursework

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates included relevant and detailed knowledge and understanding of texts.
- They focused their responses explicitly on the wording of their tasks.
- Candidates used relevant, concise references to support analysis.
- They analysed in detail the ways in which writers achieve their effects.
- Candidates gave a personal response which was grounded in the text(s).

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates needed to be selective in the areas they choose to explore from the text(s).
- They needed to focus their exploration of the text on key words in their chosen task.
- Candidates should incorporate precise quotations and textual references.
- They needed to explore the effects of the writers' techniques and avoid simple explanation.
- Candidates must support their personal response with relevant textual detail.

Comments on specific tasks/activities

Critical essay tasks

What candidates did well
- Candidates planned and structured a relevant response to their chosen text and task.
- They wrote concise introductions which set out the main areas for exploration in the response.
- Candidates wrote concise conclusions which summarised their personal response to the text and task.
- They analysed literary techniques used by the writer(s) by focusing on specific phrasing.
- Candidates proofread and edited their first draft responses, working within the recommended word count.
- They gave personal responses which were fully grounded in the text(s).

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates should spend time understanding the key words in the task and select areas of the text(s) to explore.
- Candidates should practise writing introductions and conclusions to essays.
- In poetry responses, candidates should explore poetic form, structure and language.
- In drama and prose responses, candidates should explore narrative and dramatic devices.
- Candidates should read their first drafts and use permitted feedback from teachers to improve their essays.
- Candidates should write within the recommended word limit.

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Empathic tasks

What candidates did well

- Candidates adopted an authentic and convincing voice for their chosen character, using their distinctive language features.
- They grounded their response in a specific moment in the text.
- Candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the character and their relationships with other characters in the play.
- They wrote about events that took place in the text from the lens of their chosen character.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should make a careful selection of the moment in the text from which they are writing.
- They should incorporate some key words spoken by the character in their response.
- Candidates should include reference to relationships and events that are significant to their chosen character.
- They must not go beyond the events of the text in their response.

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