English A: language and literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 41	42 - 54	55 - 66	67 - 79	80 - 100

Standard level

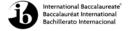| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 25	26 - 41	42 - 54	55 - 67	68 - 81	82 - 100

General introduction

There was almost a 10% increase in the number of candidates to around 25,000 in total (HL and SL), 2,000 of them in centres new to the programme.

Overall performance as shown by the grade distributions is remarkably similar to that of the previous two years at both HL and SL though are some differences to be observed at component level. The performance of candidates from the centres new to the programme was not found to make a significant difference to the overall mean marks.

Feedback from teachers in the G2 forms show that all the written examination papers were perceived by a majority of teachers to be of an appropriate level of difficulty and of a similar standard to those of last year. Impressions of the difficulty of specific questions will be dealt with in the appropriate sections of the report.

The principal examiners of the four components have identified the ways in which preparation of students for the external and internal assessments can be improved. Several common points emerge:

- More appropriate coverage of context than in previous sessions has been observed, particularly

in Paper 2. It seems to have been better understood that context needs to be specific, and an integral part of analysis, rather than general and what amounts to little more than an add-on.

- Not much improvement, however, has been observed with respect to awareness of stylistic features and their effects in non-literary as well as literary texts. There is still far too much superficial identification of stylistic devices and little meaningful analysis of their effects.
- While some centres are clearly teaching their students that a discussion of visual and graphic elements is integral to an analysis of the stylistic features of some texts, this is still by no means universally understood.
- There would appear to be a need for some centres to consider the language competence of some of the students being entered for the examinations of this programme.
- A number of centres are not adhering properly to the requirements about selecting literary texts for Parts 3 and 4. Please review pp. 20-21 of the Subject Guide to verify the conformity of your programme.

Higher level and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

Guidelines for the proper preparation, conduct, and dispatch of the Oral Commentary and accompanying documentation are to be found in the Language A: language and literature Subject Guide, the current Handbook of Procedures, and the Language and Literature Teacher Support Materials for Internal Assessment. The guidelines in these documents must form the basis for all internal assessment work. Everything else, including this Subject Report, is commentary on and elaboration of the contents of these documents.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The vast majority of centres seem to be following the guidelines and completing their Internal Assessment on time and in an appropriate manner, and these centres are to be commended for their hard work and timely handling of all the stages of this assessment. A few centres need to be a bit more diligent in assuring that their materials are uploaded before the deadline and that their recordings are audible and include name and candidate number and that all materials are properly and fully filled out and saved in pdf format. Remember that clean copies of all extracts and their guiding questions are desired.

[Note: if the orals are completed in the penultimate year, no candidate number will be available. Please do not go back and alter the recordings to add in the number at a later date. Recordings should not be altered in any fashion. Simply be sure that the candidate's name is clearly given and that the correct candidate number is recorded on the 1/L&LIA.]

Centres also seem to be doing a better job of completing the Further Oral Activity in parts 1 and 2 of the course, and of clearly describing the activities completed by the individual candidates on form 1/L&LIA. Remember that the approach to the FOA should be chosen by the candidate and not assigned by the teacher. Centres also did a better job of making sure that their part 4 works were all from authors on the Prescribed List of Authors; as a result, only a handful of centres received the new penalty in IA for using incorrect works. The Prescribed Literature in Translation list is not available for use in part 4, as all works for close study must be originally written in English.

Just a quick reminder that all part 4 works (3 at HL and 2 at SL) must be studied before doing the IOCs as all works studied in part 4 must be used for the IOC. No candidate should be aware of which text or extract he or she might be asked to analyse prior to its being randomly drawn when arriving at the preparation room.

A full gamut of marks was seen by the moderators this year, from awe-inspiring responses that showed personal insight, depth of analysis, a clear understanding of how writers shape meaning – all done in a clear and logical manner with effective use of language, to vague and halting responses where candidates seemed not to know their works, offered little or no analysis, and seemed not to understand the nature of a close commentary on literature.

Selection of works and extracts

Once again teachers are reminded to choose their works for part 4 wisely so as to offer a selection of texts that is suitable for close study and commentary. Works that require too many footnotes and explanations on the first reading might not be suitable for close analysis where depth of understanding is being measured. The candidates should be confident in the literal understanding of the work so as to put their full effort into the analysis of how that writer used a variety of devices and techniques to shape meaning. And, as best as possible, each candidate should be offered an extract of equal challenge to the next. While most moderators expressed happiness with regard to the teacher's choice of extracts, several mentioned inequities from candidate to candidate and one moderator voiced concern that so many centres are still teaching texts that are predominantly written by white males. That being said, many, many texts were in evidence this year – far too many to list. Though non-fiction was still the least popular option, it was definitely present. The point to take away is that the texts must be suitable for the candidates at hand. While one centre may offer candidates with subtle and sensitive commentaries on John Donne's poetry, another centre may fall absolutely flat when attempting Donne.

Teachers are also reminded that titles of texts (with the exception of poetry), authors, acts, scenes, chapters, footnotes, or any other helps should not be included on the extracts. Candidates are expected to know this information from their classroom study of the texts.

Guiding and subsequent questions

Several moderators commented that guiding questions seemed to be of better quality this year, with one question clearing addressing the content of the extract and the other some aspect of language (devices/techniques). More teachers are taking the time to design questions specific to the extracts and not simply using a "one size fits all" approach.

Subsequent questioning was the area most commented upon in the Internal Assessment feedback to the centres. If you received a comment here, please take a little more time to ensure that you, as a teacher, are prepared for these exams with sufficient time and rest so that you are fully attentive to what

the candidates are saying in order to take them back to points missed or obscure. It is always disheartening to hear a teacher ask a question of a candidate that has already been answered in the oral. And while previously written questions might be helpful in a pinch, it is always best that the questions are generated from what the candidate has just said. Subsequent questioning is a time when teachers can help their candidates earn more points in Criteria A and B by taking them back to the extract to show further knowledge and understanding of the extract and its literary features.

Further issues

Problems with over-long orals seem to be resolving themselves, with only an occasional candidate going on too long or the teacher asking questions after the 15-minute mark. In fact, the problem has taken a turn in the opposite direction, with too many orals being too short. Because the subsequent questioning can help a candidate improve his or her score, it is important that teachers continue to ask questions for the full 15 minutes if at all possible. In the case of over-long responses on the part of the candidate, the teacher should have in place a plan so that a candidate knows how much time has elapsed and has a chance to make an effective conclusion before being interrupted by the teacher. When overlong commentaries occur, it is important to consider whether the extract was too long or too complicated for a candidate to cover reasonably in 10 minutes and be wary of using that extract, as is, again.

It seems that there are still a few centres with large candidatures where teachers are not standardizing their marks. This is even more important now that Standard Level and Higher Level orals are being moderated together.

There are also centres that still seem to have problems finding a quiet place or time in which to conduct the orals. This assessment should be treated with the same care as the centre would the written papers.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the text or extract

For the most part candidates seemed to show appropriate knowledge and understanding of their extracts. Many, however, could have been much more specific in situating the extract within the work as a whole and commenting on the significance of the extract to the work, e.g. the establishment of mood or setting for a particular scene, the development of character, the development of an idea explored in other poems studied by that poet, a building climax, etc. Candidates need to be reminded that the extract was chosen because it was "key" in some aspect, and it is that aspect that should be the focus of discussion. The body of the commentary should focus solely on the extract itself and how it fulfils that key role. Simply to relate what the extract says will not earn many points, nor will extensive discussions of context (other than the contextual ties of the passage to the rest of the work) and biographical information. Context is relevant in the IOC only insofar as it relates to specific points within the extract itself.

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of literary features

As always, this was a very challenging descriptor to fulfil. This, in many ways, is the heart of the commentary, as it is in this area that candidates show that they understand how language is used to shape meaning. Candidates who discuss their extracts from the viewpoint of the writer and what he/she is accomplishing and how are much more likely to score well in this criterion. Candidates who discuss

the "story" as a given or characters as if they are people are not likely to score well. A close awareness of the conventions of genre is important as well; a candidate who can discuss the relevance of a portion of a play in terms of how it would be received by a live audience in the theatre will score much more highly than one who simply sees the play as another book to read. To this end, a sound understanding of literary devices is needed, e.g., a candidate should understand that a "theme" is a central idea and that it can be conveyed only in a complete sentence – not to be confused with a "topic" such as "appearance versus reality."

Criterion C: Organization

Moderators still found problems in this area, but report that candidates seem to be doing a bit better in this regard, with most candidates offering a clear introduction, which situates the extract and indicates how they intend to approach the commentary, and then following up on that organizational pattern with an argument based on evidence from the extract. The better commentaries had a clear focus in mind (such as the "key element" mentioned above) and showed how various devices and techniques worked together to establish meaning. Candidates who simply answered the two guiding questions were less likely to produce a coherent response and were likely to ignore significant portions of the extract. Candidates who chose a chronological approach could do very well or very poorly, depending upon how well they kept a clear focus and offered analysis or simply fell into paraphrase. The particular problem noted in this criterion was for candidates to fail to give a clear and meaningful conclusion.

Criterion D: Language

The moderators felt that, overall, the language used was clear and generally accurate, but that it could be improved in various ways: making sure to use a formal register, acquiring a confident literary vocabulary, conveying interest and enthusiasm, speaking audibly into the microphone, and avoiding words such as "like" and too many "ums." In a few instances there were candidates who truly struggled to use English at the level needed for this particular course.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Before embarking on the Internal Assessment portions of the course, teachers should review all relevant instructions from the Subject Guide, the Handbook of Procedures and the Teacher Support Material.
- Choose works that are appropriate for the candidates' interests and level of sophistication.
- Provide more opportunities for literary analysis, both written and oral.
- Focus on writers and what writers do to impact their readers/audiences.
- Be sure that candidates understand the conventions of the genres that they are studying and encourage them to use the appropriate vocabulary for the genre, e.g., 'stanzas' rather than 'paragraphs' for poems.
- Work on devising effective structures for an oral commentary.
- Work on managing time, both on the part of candidate and teacher, through continued practice of giving and taking oral commentaries.
- Choose extracts carefully so that they are of equal challenge and doable within the 10 minutes allotted, remembering that very short extracts are generally disastrous for weaker candidates (Do not forget to number the lines for ease of reference.)
- Continue to improve guiding and subsequent questions so that all candidates have a full opportunity to earn as many marks as possible.

Teachers should always remember that their responsibility is to assist the candidates to do their best and to remember that this is an exam, and thus, it is not an appropriate time to teach or to express their own opinions.

Further comments

Although there are always many places where improvement can be made, the general consensus of this year's moderators was that this was a successful session for Internal Assessment. There were numerous comments about the sensitive and thoughtful handling of the process by the teachers, which showed their concern for their candidates and which set a tone of integrity and professionalism for all involved.

Higher level written task

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 28	29 - 33	34 - 40

General introduction to both levels

While it is encouraging to read appropriate, varied, sometimes stimulating and accomplished work from candidates in many centres, examiners are unanimously of the opinion that overall performance could be improved and candidates would avoid losing marks unnecessarily, if the requirements of this component were properly confirmed to. Another common observation at HL is that task 2 responses tend to be less strong than the work submitted for task 1.

One of the aims of this report is to remind readers of the written task requirements that need to be more generally and consistently adhered to and, where necessary, to clarify some of these requirements. It will try to avoid too much re-iteration of points made in previous reports, nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the ways in which performance can be improved.

Teachers new to the programme, in particular, are advised to consult the reports on the May 2013 and 2014 sessions as a complement to reading this one.

In addition to consulting the relevant sections of the Subject Guide and the assessment criteria for this component, teachers are encouraged to refer to the Teacher Support Material for the Written Task as well as to the *Handbook of Procedures*.

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The range and suitability of the work submitted

While the range of tasks submitted is very varied indeed, some types of task are clearly unsuitable, which this report will attempt to clarify. Furthermore, some centres are submitting surprisingly homogenous tasks from groups of candidates. These tasks would appear, in some instances, to have been assigned by teachers. This practice is not acceptable and, if there is any doubt about it in teachers' minds they are invited to review the section of 'Guidance and authenticity' in the Subject Guide on pp. 27-28.

One of the teacher's roles is to help the student choose a focused and appropriate aspect of the course studied in order to be able to submit tasks that 'show a critical engagement with an aspect of a text or a topic' (Subject Guide, p.40). Students should be encouraged to seek advice from the teacher as to whether their choice of topic and text type suit their objectives. If the right guidance is given at an early stage and students are made fully aware of the formal and practical requirements (on pp. 40-46 of the Subject Guide), then benefits will surely accrue not just in the form of better marks but also in terms of more satisfactory learning outcomes.

The main points raised by examiners about the suitability of tasks submitted at HL is as follows:

- Most cover sheets were filled out correctly, though sometimes not in enough detail (see below) and some centres had candidates unnecessarily fill out separate cover sheets for each task at HL. Occasionally a cover sheet will reveal that the selection of literary works of a centre does not conform to the requirements stated on pp. 20-21 of the Subject guide, or that there is not an even balance in the programme between literature and language (p.17).
- Word limits appear to have been conformed to better this year; there were fewer instances of candidates having to be penalized for going over the limit. Reminder: only the task itself is to be included in the word count. There is a separate word limit for the rationale in task 1, and no word limit for the outline in task 2.
- Too many candidates are neglecting the course requirements and submitting two tasks based on literary texts. It is important to remember that one of the tasks submitted for assessment should be based on a literary text studied in Part 3 or Part 4, and the other on material studied in Part 1 or Part 2 (see p.41 of the Subject Guide). While literary material may be included in Part 1 and Part 2 study, this should not form the basis of study in this part of the course, and the candidate's submission must show a balance between the work done on language and that on literature.
- Too often candidates are writing on literary texts or topics that do not appear in the programme summary and some choose topics that appear to have little to do with the kind of language topics to be found in the syllabus. The candidate's failure adequately to explain the link between task and course content is the most common problem reported by examiners.

Written task 1 (SL & HL)

The main points about Task 1 were as follows:

- A task should consist of one text type only. The assessment of two or more text types (such as a screenplay and an interview, a speech and a letter to the speaker) is not practical in terms of the assessment descriptors. There are cases, however, where producing more than one text of the same type is appropriate (for example, a series of diary entries.)
- Popular choices of task are blogs, letters to the editor, diaries, magazine articles, opinion

columns, short stories and additional material for literary texts often in the form of pastiche. When the conventions of these types of texts have been examined and understood and when students are imitating stimulus material studied or researched, and when the choice of text type is appropriate to their objectives, they will produce suitable, indeed sometimes very lively, interesting or original tasks. Too often such choices as the formal or informal letter, the diary, 'articles' (of unspecified type), or reports by psychiatrists or the police do not serve the candidate's purposes well and it is often apparent that the conventions have not been properly understood.

- Examiners often come across 'magazine articles' and 'blogs' that have more in common with the essay style and format. It is important to note that a formal essay is not an acceptable text type for task 1.
- A task that merely serves as a vehicle for imitating forms or styles, whether of a literary, non-literary or media type and does not critically engage with an appropriate text or topic is unlikely to score highly on Criterion B.
- In many cases, more thought needs to be given to context and to the audience envisaged.

Written task 2 (HL only)

On the whole, examiners reported that candidates appeared to be coping somewhat less successfully with responses to the prescribed essay questions than with the more creative task 1.

A summary of the main points raised by examiners about the suitability of candidates' responses in task 2 is as follows:

- In an outline, stating a learning outcome only as a link to the programme is not as helpful to the examiner as identifying a text or topic studied.
- Too many essays written had tenuous links to the prescribed question, sometimes ignoring it altogether – or re-drafting it to suit the candidate's own agenda. Candidates must respond to the prescribed questions as set out in the Subject Guide (pp.45-46).
- The questions on 'reader, culture and text' are very popular, although answers would be more suitable and appreciated by examiners if candidates were more precise in their identification of 'readers' and of hypothetical time, place, language and audience contexts. On the other hand, there are fewer, but often more pertinent responses to the 'text and genre questions'.

In some centres, all the candidates write on the same text, often on the same question.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Task 1

Criterion A: Rationale

Candidates often lose marks unnecessarily here simply because they do not provide obvious details such as the part of the course on which the task is based, text type, topic, audience or purpose. Without a clear rationale, it is difficult to assess how well candidates have achieved their purposes. It is also very difficult for examiners if stimulus material is not provided or referenced in a clear way.

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Criterion B: Task and content

Tasks based on a text clearly related to course content are likely to be more successful than tasks based on ideas loosely related – or seemingly not at all – to what had been studied. "Topic" in this criterion refers to the programme topic, not to a topic selected by the candidate that is unconnected to the course.

The better tasks were by candidates who had learned from the styles of professional writers and who had understood, when writing media or other communicative texts, the conventions as well as the capital importance of thinking clearly about audience and purpose.

Criterion C: Organization

Where there were problems with structure, it was usually due to an inadequate understanding of the conventions of the text type. Again, those candidates who based their work on professional exemplars were more likely to receive good marks.

Criterion D: Language and style

Many candidates showed competent command of style and good understanding of the language conventions of the chosen text type. Some showed outstanding abilities here. For an examiner, it is always a great pleasure to read a piece good enough to be published.

Task 2

Criterion A: Outline

While many candidates were able to highlight the focus of the task clearly, marks were lost by many more for outlines that were vague and sometimes missing basic information such as link to a part of the programme, to a text or a topic rather than, more vaguely in some cases, to a learning outcome. Far too many candidates are not writing 'three or four points that explain the particular focus of the task' (p.43 of the Subject Guide), as they are required to do but essay plans that frequently stretch to one or more pages. Identifying the particular focus of the task should involve stating how the key terms of the prescribed question are to be interpreted. If stimulus material cannot be included, it is helpful for candidates to provide web links so that examiners can access it rapidly.

Criterion B: Response to the question

The strongest essays were based on a clear and accurate interpretation of the prescribed question in which candidates had focused on the key words or phrases. Many candidates would begin well but then lose focus, answering only part of the question or, too ambitiously, all parts of a question (for example 'a different time, place, language or audience') instead of being selective. Some appeared to have a different question or a pre-set agenda in mind and so lost marks on understanding of the expectations.

Where a prescribed question on a literary text had been chosen, there was often a tendency to write a narrative summary, along the lines of a guide, eschewing direct reference to the text and without comment on the language. Some texts appeared to have only been partially read, with reference only occurring from a small section of the work. Some of the concepts present in the questions seem to have been misunderstood by many candidates, such as what constitutes 'a social group', who a 'reader' could be and how context of reception might influence an interpretation, or what 'the conventions of a

particular genre' might encompass and what purpose they are used for. The more successful answers included plenty of direct references to content of the texts on which the task was based. While there was much appropriate, sometimes outstanding, work on texts that were primarily visual (notably ads or music videos on YouTube), there were a good many responses that paid little attention to the analysis of textual features in the broadest sense of that term.

Criterion C: Organization

In many cases understanding of the question led to clear, well-developed argument. Very often the tighter the focus presented in the outline, the better the quality of the essay's argument.

Organization was a problem for many candidates, however. Essay parts in some cases collided more than they colluded in producing well-transitioned paragraphs and effectively developed and well-supported arguments. Too many candidates contented themselves with sweeping generalizations instead of engaging in detail with aspects of the texts and finding examples that would support a point. The candidate needs to be very focused in this task of only 1,000 words, getting straight to the point in the introductory paragraph.

Criterion D: Language and style

On the whole, language and style were at least generally accurate and appropriate for formal analytical writing. These skills are of course also developed in preparation for Paper 2.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Some recommendations are already embedded in the points made above. Here is some advice, much of it of a practical nature, that emerges from the observations made by examiners.

- Make sure candidates are submitting one task based on the language parts of the programme, the other on the literary parts.
- Impress upon candidates the need to a) present their material in the right order (task 1 before task 2, rationale/outline before task, b) include copies of relevant stimulus material where at all possible and c) acknowledge their sources.
- Read the relevant sections of the Subject Guide as well as past subject reports.
- Expose students to a variety of text types and study the conventions that support each of them.
- Guide students to choose text types that are best suited to their purposes.
- Unpack the prescribed questions with candidates before they attempt to answer them. Discuss the concepts they refer to.
- Guide candidates in matching suitable texts and questions.
- Encourage students to develop independent critical responses to literary texts rather than relying on study guides.
- Instruct students on appropriate ways to frame, insert and effectively comment on the references to the texts on which task 2s are based.
- Guide students as how to move from one idea to the next in an essay.
- Encourage rigorous proofreading.

Standard level written task

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most of the tasks submitted were suitable. There were more tasks based on Parts 1 and 2 than in previous years and many of these, not all however, were successful. The source material of tasks relating to Parts 1 and 2 sometimes needed more explanation. Some text types were rather unclear in themselves, such as a 'personal narrative' which did not have an audience or a context.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale

The rationale is very important and should precede the task itself. Some rationales were clear but some provided only 'some explanation.' The link to the content learned in one of the parts of the course must be identified, as well as an explanation of the conventions of the text type, which may include some language choices. It is helpful if the rationale can provide the written task with some kind of context.

Criterion B: Task and content

There were still some tasks which were linked to Part 2 by text type but not by topic and this would often have an impact on the marks awarded for criterion B. This problem was not as common as in previous sessions. There were many very good written tasks, relating to all parts of the course, showing clear understanding of appropriate content and clear application of the conventions of the chosen text type. In some cases there was better evidence of one than the other. Although there were not many essays submitted as such, there were still quite a few 'magazine articles' and 'blogs' which were in fact essays in disguise. The title was sometimes the only thing that identified the task as a blog or a magazine article; from then on it read like an essay which would impact the mark in this criterion.

Criterion C: Organization

Most tasks showed organization. Most were sustained and some were well organized. When writing a diary entry, it can be useful if the rationale explains the overall organization, the lack of paragraphs, the short jumpy paragraphs, or the order of thoughts for example. Overall it was evident that candidates had planned and considered the organization of their work. A few candidates lost marks because they did not adhere to the word count.

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Criterion D: Language and style

The candidates demonstrated good control of language, showing variation and accuracy. In some cases the task had not been proofread which meant that the performance was marred by careless surface errors. In a few cases there were inconsistencies in verb tense and problems with punctuation/fragments but overall the level in this criteria was adequate to good.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

In some cases the course outline on the cover sheet relating to Parts 1 and 2 was very brief and the topic on which the task was based was sometimes not mentioned. There should be a link between the subject of the written task and a topic or text studied in the course.

The rationale needs to provide clear explanation of how the task relates to the specific part of the course as well as conventions of the specific text type. Candidates who choose to write a blog or an article for example, should read texts by successful or well-known bloggers/feature writers to familiarize themselves with the text type. This is also true for other text types.

It can be helpful if candidates provide source material. This is more often the case for tasks relating to Parts 1 and 2.

Further comments

There were some very impressive written tasks, which showed clear understanding of the topic/text and form/chosen text type, as well as a very creative yet appropriate approach, which was very encouraging to see.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

General comments

The majority of candidates chose the second pair this session. This was perhaps surprising in that the poster of Text B might have been seen as attractive and interesting and, in the second pair, Text C was rather long and the song lyrics of Text D resembled a poem: a genre frequently avoided by candidates. Nevertheless, candidates may have preferred the more contemporary texts and familiar genres of the second pair.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates had a ready-made approach to organization that usually gave them an adequate mark, although it may have prevented their attaining an excellent one. In these pre-programmed responses, the formula that candidates have learned and practiced is useful only up to a certain point and may even preclude a more sophisticated response to the actual texts before them.

Context remains a challenge for many candidates. Clearly, many candidates have been instructed in how to discuss it; however, some comments were simplistic, stereotyped or generalized.

Examiners identified candidates' performance on Criterion B as being the least successful this session. Performance was not worse than last year's, but neither has there been much improvement. As was the case last May, candidates too often list stylistic features without explaining their importance or effect. Identifying the effect on readers was particularly challenging and many candidates were able only to comment that stylistic features are present "to keep the reader interested," an explanation that adds little to the commentary. Some candidates used terminology that, if not explained in terms of the text being discussed, is not helpful on its own. As one examiner notes the "Three Greek Musketeers: Ethos, Logos and Pathos" was often an issue. These terms – and others – were too frequently used rather arbitrarily with little or no explanation.

Examiners found a lack of textual support in some papers. As well, stylistic and literary features were confused by weaker candidates, who could find no stylistic features in non-literary passages.

Although more candidates this year commented ably on graphics and formatting, there were also many who did not. It is by no means yet universally understood that a discussion of visual elements is integral to a good discussion of stylistic features.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates seemed quite comfortable with the task. Most candidates attempted to comment rather than just make observations about the texts. There seemed to be fewer papers this year that were only or mostly summary.

Purpose and audience were mentioned by almost all candidates, although sometimes in a rather general, unhelpful way: for instance, "to entertain anyone who listens to music."

As was the case last May, organization was usually at least adequate. Some candidates used transitional devices incorrectly or not at all, but there seem to have been fewer papers that dealt with the texts separately, comparing them only in a conclusion. Some papers were organized in a sophisticated and insightful manner. Criterion C probably had the fewest marks under 3, with very few indeed at the bottom end of the mark range.

Similarly, there were few marks at the lower end of the mark range for Criterion D, although there were more on than for Criterion C. Candidates' performance in this area may have improved from last year and there were fewer candidates who showed serious language problems. With some exceptions,

candidates knew how to write in the appropriate register, but too often there were careless errors in spelling and punctuation.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

All in all, candidates seemed to find the texts accessible. Although there were challenges that separated the weaker from the stronger candidates, there seemed to be few recurring problems of comprehension. While almost all candidates basically understood the texts, there were subtleties that were missed and that made a difference between adequate and good responses: for instance, the fact that Text A was from a personal journal, the difference of dates between Texts C and D, the "you" of Text D. Some candidates found comparison difficult: missing the change of size and its impact on perception in the first pair and assuming that both texts in the second pair were about the internet and social media.

Responses to the first pair included some of the best but also some of the poorest papers. Some found the vocabulary of Text A somewhat challenging; most, however, were able to comment on its descriptive elements.

In terms of historical context, very few candidates indeed picked up on the World War I era of Text A; references to radioactive fallout or Cold War paranoia in Text B were scarcely mentioned. In the second pair, the difference between 2000 and 2013 was not always noted and some candidates wrote that both texts were about the internet.

Candidates writing on Text B sometimes dealt with the words and the fonts more than the drawings and, surprisingly frequently, some writing on Text C said nothing at all about the graphics. Although the weblog would certainly be a familiar text type, candidates missed many aspects of its formatting as well; familiarity with the genre did not necessarily mean an understanding of the elements that make up the text.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are clearly learning about context, but need further guidance on how to approach it during an examination. Working with the growing bank of past papers should be helpful in this regard.

Style:
- Candidates continue to need work on the analysis and comparison of stylistic features, especially in non-literary prose texts.
- Candidates need to understand the difference between literary features and stylistic features: literary features may not always be present, but stylistic features are.
- Practice in understanding the effects of stylistic features is required.
- More work needs to be done in commenting on visual and graphic elements of a text.

It is good for candidates to learn an overall approach to organizing the commentary. However, they should practice linking content and structure so that their organization can be adapted to a given pair of texts.

Appropriate register for an examination should be reviewed, as should editing for correct spelling and grammar. Candidates should also be encouraged to practice handwriting, as it is often a challenge for examiners to understand what has been written.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The paper was interesting, topical and accessible at all levels of candidature, although the vast majority chose to answer on Text 1. Most candidates were generally well-prepared, which was pleasing, although some did struggle with analysis and comprehensive understanding of text and context. Both texts provided a range of material on which candidates could comment so, for both texts, the full range of the mark range was achieved, candidates making everything from minimal and superficial observations to perceptive and sophisticated analyses.

Text 1

Text 1 immediately appealed to candidates, perhaps as a result of its subject matter being intrinsically within a candidate's experience and its illustration, which elicited interpretations. In the responses there were some inevitable and significant misunderstandings of idiom, but most were well reasoned despite those misunderstandings. Few candidates picked up on the economic allusions in the text.

Some candidates appeared to have a predetermined hierarchy of responses to such texts, spending too much time on layout features such as the font size of the title, or the use of columns, etc., at the expense of attention to analysis and interpretation or to language and significant stylistic features. For weaker candidates identifying the mood and tone of the text was a problem, with many not interpreting the use of sarcasm and irony.

Text 2

Text 2 was chosen by a small percentage of candidates, which may be because they found Text 1 more accessible, although this is hard to judge. Some candidates were confused with the multiple audiences and approached the text as simply a letter to a wife during war and missed the subtleties of the text. Responding to the positive language elements in the text was a problem for some who wanted to impose a negative mood on the entire text and missing the humour and attempts at reassurance.

As in Text 1, idiomatic expressions were challenging for some and many struggled to make inferences, for example, most did not understand the letter-writer's status as an officer, missing the allusions in the text.

Criteria A and B: Understanding of the text & Understanding of the use and effects of stylistic features

There is an understandable tendency for candidates to want to make as much as they have learned 'fit' the text, rather than respond to the text itself and this frequently led to quite dubious analysis. Candidates did seem to get a clear overall interpretation of the essence of the texts but this was not always sustained throughout the commentary.

It is disappointing to have to report yet again that Criterion B still appears to pose the most difficulty for candidates. The candidates in this examination also appeared to have difficulty with the analysis of intended effects of stylistic features; they seem to rely on the superficial identification of devices, but find it hard to go deeper in the exploration of the impact of these features on the meaning/message of the text.

Criterion C: Organization and development

Some candidates find it hard to organize their work coherently with a development of argument rather than disparate paragraphs which lack a connection. Weaker candidates exhibited a tendency to rely on summary, paraphrase or simple explanations, which could be linked to a marked orientation to follow a fixed pattern in the organization of ideas. There were formulaic structures that, to some extent, limit the candidates' creativity in their lines of thought. There is concern that candidates find it difficult to contextualize their ideas, writing a response that is more like a list of features than a coherently situated analytical response.

Criterion D: Language

Some candidates struggled with using precise, sophisticated language and variety in the use of language was only achieved by a reduced number of candidates. Candidates also struggled with literary terminology, either over-using terminology as if to impress or using it inappropriately.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Text 1

Most candidates had clearly been trained in dealing with the structural and organizational elements of the text as well as the linguistic, with a significant number of candidates displaying an adequate approach to the analysis of the illustration, reflecting their ability to interpret visual texts.

Text 2

The stronger candidates considered the range of audiences and contexts for the letter, its readers and the subsequent purposes. The wealth of features here gave much scope for criterion B. Candidates made developed comments on "city of the dead" and its semantic field.

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Criteria A and B: Understanding of the text & Understanding of the use and effects of stylistic features

Candidates were generally well-prepared to write an analysis of one of the given texts displaying reasonable understanding of the text and able to respond with some degree of success. There was evidence of good preparation in the understanding and awareness of ideas and messages within texts. Most of the scripts revealed clear understanding of purpose, audience, and themes. Knowledge and understanding of how tone is created and conveyed in both texts and analysis of the effects of diction (criterion B) were strengths this session.

Criterion C: Organization and development

Most candidates took care to structure responses coherently. While some candidates set out their arguments in the initial paragraph, others developed an argument as the analysis progressed. Both approaches to structure were successful. The better candidates seem to have been well prepared to incorporate direct quotes into their work as supporting evidence for their arguments.

Criterion D: Language

Most candidates had an adequate to good level of English, which came through in their work.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text 1

Candidates responding to Text 1 were able to place the text in its right context and discuss the purpose, audience and attitude of the writer as these areas are explicitly stated at the beginning of the extract. The guiding questions became a natural starting point for candidates. Most candidates had a clear vision of text source and context and perhaps the subject matter was appealing to those studying English in a global community, given the topic of the text. Most candidates were aware of the context being England, but only few were aware of how the cultural context of England played out in the text. Quite a few responses missed the opinionative nature of the text and tried to make it fit as a persuasive text.

The best responses to Text 1 linked the illustration specifically to the text, for example, "isolated"/ "cage" and covered the entire text, noting changing viewpoint and creation of tone. Most offered a valid interpretation of the text and were helped by the inclusion of the visual, which gave candidates plenty to analyse. Some responses still summarized the text with no further development. Although, the illustration and the embedded metaphors were easy for candidates to include, the idea of a larger audience, and the global and economic repercussions of having only one language to communicate in, were missed by many candidates.

Text 2

The fact that a majority of the candidates chose the first text indicates perhaps their difficulty in relating to the theme of WW1. The implied relationship of the letter writer to his wife and to the audience at large appeared to be too subtle for many candidates to handle with any sophistication. Some candidates, who did choose to write about this extract, were sensitive and showed a lot of perceptiveness in their

interpretations. These stronger candidates tended to be able to deal with the seeming formality of the letter in its cultural and historical contexts.

Unfortunately, the weaker candidates answering Text 2 often answered with responses that were overly descriptive rather than analytical. Several candidates misunderstood the multiple audiences, some feeling that the letter was written primarily for Temporary Heroes, or at least intended for publication. Some candidates tried to impose a reading based on their background knowledge of WW1, while the stronger candidates were able to employ this knowledge to illuminate their analyses without imposition.

A number of candidates also missed the ironic tone of some of this text. Better answers were able to analyse the context and these scripts often made reference to the secondary audience. The literary devices in Text 2 also fell into more traditional categories of figurative language and were easier for the candidates to notice and comment upon.

Criteria A and B: Understanding of the text & Understanding of the use and effects of stylistic features

Most candidates were able to identify a range of stylistic features, but many were very weak on their effects. Comments such as "it makes the idea stand out" were common. Stronger candidates were able to understand and comment on the cumulative effects of the features employed. While a smaller percent of scripts dealt with the literary aspects very competently, many were able to just name and describe.

Criterion C: Organization and development

Organization was an issue for a significant number of candidates. The tendency to continually pick up previously overlooked points restricted the ability of some to develop a coherent thread of argument. Better candidates used both thematic and structural linking strategies to develop a clear overarching argument. Many candidates successfully built responses upon the guiding questions, integrating them harmoniously into their analyses.

Some candidates far less successfully included responses to the questions as isolated items within their answers. Some candidates are well equipped to smoothly integrate quotes and examples into commentaries, but some candidates could benefit from more instruction and practice of this skill.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should teach candidates to:
- analyse content and not summarize the text,
- respond to the text as it is, rather than through the lens of a preconceived pattern of response,
- have a strategy which makes sure there is enough time left to finish the response and preserve its structure,
- consistently support comments on text and context and not digress into personal anecdote,
- go beyond identification of literary techniques to understand their purpose and how they affect meaning,
- provide a more integrated approach which allows the candidates to see the connection between language and thought,
- develop their vocabulary, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and overall essay organization.

Teachers should ensure that they:

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- expose candidates to different text types,
- provide activities to allow candidates to de-construct texts,
- teach candidates to respond to multimodal texts by integrating analysis of the elements into a cohesive argument where the images, layout, graphics, etc. work together,
- prepare students always to look for the primary and the secondary audiences of texts, as well as for possible multiple purposes,
- show students how cultural context can be commented on to show it affects the meaning of a text.

Further comments

Most candidates chose Text 1 for their response, possibly because there appears to be more to work with in a multimodal text. Unfortunately, this often resulted in a fragmented response as candidates began to develop an argument around the language and then broke that development to deal with the image and layout. Most were able to link these elements reasonably well, but the integration of these elements into a cohesively developed argument is a challenge. This seems to be a focus area for teachers to develop before the next examination session.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Candidates were able to find questions which were accessible to them. For the weaker candidates there was a tendency to simplify the questions and only focus on a small part of what was being asked – such as only searching for emotional responses in works, not looking at techniques used by authors to evoke those responses; or identifying an 'authority' but not how it was challenged; or describing the author's biography and merely making assumptions about its connection with the text; or identifying male and female viewpoints without looking at the presentation or the differences in those viewpoints.

Generally, while candidates were able to construct an appropriate response, with an introduction and a conclusion, many candidates had difficulty illustrating their ideas with adequate references from the texts. This in turn led to many generalizations as a result of a limited use of the texts. While many wrote about *The Handmaid's Tale*, few mentioned or considered the Historical Notes; or reflected on the diction in *Death and the Maiden*; or discussed point of view in *The Great Gatsby*, etc.

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Candidates were better able to deal with context this year, but for some this only led to more generalizations and stereotypical assumptions. They at times did not see that context needs to be connected to the content.

Candidates' responses to Criterion C, "understanding the use and effects of stylistic features", were often the weakest part of a candidate's response. Apart from Q2 where "techniques" were specifically mentioned, many responses made little or no reference to techniques, and certainly exhibited little idea of how these features impacted the texts.

At times scripts gave the distinct impression of being answers prepared for other kinds of questions, or recently written essays made to 'fit' questions to which they bore little real connection.

Some candidates dealing with drama found it difficult to relate to the texts as plays, and saw them more as books/novels to be read. Similarly those dealing with graphic novels sometimes showed no awareness at all of the visual aspects of the texts. Candidates dealing with novels sometimes seemed to be overwhelmed by the sheer length of the texts and concentrated on a very limited portion of their text.

Finally, some candidates had a difficult time with the language – awkward syntax, spelling issues and punctuation problems.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Having said the above, it must also be said that many candidates had no problems at all with HL Paper 2 this session. They knew the works very well and were able to provide appropriate illustration through textual references.   These candidates wrote longer, developed engaging responses which were focused and detailed and showcased an ability to select relevant aspects of the texts to support their argument. Many grasped the importance of stylistic features (although some tended to be somewhat clumsy in analysis of the effect). Still it was clear that most candidates had read their texts with enthusiasm and were responding in an engaged manner.

These candidates showed a grasp of the contexts of their texts and quite a few had clearly carried out their own research. They were usually able to write confidently and convincingly about characterization, plot and setting in relationship to the backdrop against which the text was set. Finally, they demonstrated an ability to write clearly and accurately, to construct a coherent argument and to support that argument with at least some pertinent textual references.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

- Only a few candidates chose this question – those who defined the terms "rural" and "urban" were able to establish the differences in the way they were being employed. *1984* was one example of a text where Winston and Julia's relationship outside of the city was contrasted successfully with what happens inside the city.

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Question 2

- This was a question answered by a fair number of candidates. Candidates who only identified elements of emotional response were at a disadvantage as they were not sure what techniques were being employed and the effect of those techniques on the outcome. The better responses discussed irony in Sophocles; or symbolism in *A Streetcar Named Desire*; or imagery in *The Great Gatsby*; or diction in *Death and the Maiden*.
- For some candidates the inability to define "emotional response" made it difficult to identify the actual emotions and side-tracked the paper into dealing with the stylistic features instead of the central issue being explored.

Question 3

- One would have expected more to choose this question, but in fact few did. The weaker responses merely identified sub-themes and did not deal with how they connected to the main theme. The best answers explained the main plots and themes first, and then went on to indicate how the sub-plots supported them.
- There was also limited consideration of differences between main and sub-plots and between primary and secondary themes.

Question 4

- This was a popular question. Limited responses identified authorities and assumed the protagonist/main character was challenging that authority. The stronger responses looked at the subtleties of the "challenging of authority". They looked at, for example, how Offred was not only able to challenge the Commander but also challenge the whole society (in fact one student wrote quite convincingly that Offred was weak and passive and did not do enough to challenge authority in that text); or showed that while John Proctor challenged the authority of the court, he almost gave in to the authority; or explained how Nora was challenging the authority of a patriarchal society and not just her husband in *A Doll's House*.

Question 5

- This was also a popular question and many candidates had enough historical and biographical contexts to make it work for them. McCarthyism in *The Crucible*; or Truth and Reconciliation in *Death and the Maiden*; or Ibsen's belief in Humanism and equality in *The Doll's House*; or Camus understanding of absurdism and existentialism being reflected in both parts of *The Stranger*. Candidates seemed to find the requirement to comment on specific examples helpful in framing their responses. Weaker candidates at times merely assumed a connection between the text and the writer, making much use of modals such as 'could be', 'may possibly', 'it is likely that' without concrete support.

Question 6

- Another very popular question in which the poorer responses only identified males and females in the texts while better responses focused on central concerns or issues such as comparing the way that Offred is presented through her unreliable journals versus the Commander's attempt at justifying the Gileadean society.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should help candidates to identify exactly what the question is asking for and ensure that comments on stylistic features offer some analysis of effects. This will include an emphasis on the need to address the actual question rather than using recycled material from assignments used in their classes.

- Ensure candidates know the written text and not merely the film version (e.g., *The Great Gatsby*).
- Candidates should consider the conventions of the genre with which they are working, especially drama and graphic novels.
- More practice in writing essays with a focus on the structure – a candidate's response needs to be an argument, so the ideas need to be ordered logically, building up to a convincing conclusion. Introduction, topic sentences, concluding statements all need to be considered.
- Candidates need to be aware of the assessment criteria to ensure that they are fully aware of what examiners are keen to reward.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

There was a general feeling that this was a fair and accessible paper and this was reflected in generally better performance against the demands of the questions. Examiners did, however, feel that candidates seemed less able to produce sustained, well-organized responses that showed structure and development. Responses that achieved well in criteria A and C, for example, often came down in criterion D due to the failure to provide a clear thesis that was then defended systematically in the light of the question. Similarly candidates are not generally analysing stylistic features effectively, tending to side-line them and favour discussion of content that, for many candidates, amounted to summary and paraphrase; furthermore they were often unable to link their analysis of stylistic features to the demands of the question. This could be seen in the way that many candidates gave, for example, lengthy and often quite sophisticated analyses of the use of symbol in *The Great Gatsby*, or *A Streetcar Named Desire* but did not integrate this into their answer to the question. Among weaker candidates it was still common to find stylistic features being 'spotted' and checked off, as it were, without much consideration apparently being given to their contribution to an argument. Despite the popularity of graphic novels, particularly *Maus* and *Persepolis*, candidates rarely looked closely at their visual qualities and tended to write their responses as if the texts were merely vehicles for theme and narrative uninflected by their form. Elsewhere, there appeared to be an unusual number of candidates who were unable to finish

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their responses and examiners also commonly found poor use of paragraphing and transitioning between texts leading to a failure to give a developed argument.

Accounting for this is difficult; candidates were clearly well and conscientiously taught and few showed poor knowledge of the texts but there often appeared to be a lack of engagement and one senior examiner suggested that too many candidates had "stock answers" prepared that took them away both from the question and engagement with the texts. This was particularly evident in responses where candidates insisted on giving inaccurate, Marxist or psychoanalytical readings of texts like *Oedipus Rex*. It is great to see teachers introducing students to these ideas and theories but it is important that they inform the candidate's response rather than overwhelm it. Another reason perhaps was the use of combinations of texts that were very hard to write about under a single theme. Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, for instance was teamed up on different occasions with both *Pride and Prejudice* and Shaw's *Pygmalion*. *Life of Pi* and *Antigone* was another example. Even though there is no explicit rewarding of the way the texts are linked and, unlike the Literature paper, no requirement to compare texts, candidates have to answer a single question and show development, structure and focus and this is very difficult if the texts selected have only very limited areas that can be discussed in common.

A final procedural issue here was the surprising number of centres selected texts that were outside what the Subject Guide requires. The Subject Guide (p.20) states clearly that:

Standard level: At SL students study **two** literary texts.

- One text must be taken from the PLT list
- One text can be chosen freely- from the PLA or elsewhere – and must written in the language A studied.

A significant number of centres selected two translated texts failing to note the need to have at least one text originally written in the Language A. Moreover not all translated texts were drawn from the PLT. There are currently no penalties applied for this error but the stipulation is made to ensure teachers select suitable texts and should be adhered to.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Examiners were generally impressed with the work submitted and it was especially pleasing to see candidates really beginning to grasp context, aware that it needs to be specific rather than general and related to the text. Much less information giving broad historical or biographical background regardless of relevance was supplied and that given was generally more focused and informed.

Examiners were also impressed with the fact that, in general, candidates showed good knowledge of their texts and were able to express this using appropriate and effective language that adopted an appropriate register. How often this was also part of a clear structure, however, varied considerably.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

A general point here was that many candidates did not read the questions fully, particularly Q6 and tended to focus on one or the other of the areas they were asked to examine, notably in 2, 3 and 6. The

other concern was that, as one examiner put it, candidates need to fit their knowledge of the text to the question rather than try to fit the question to their knowledge of the text.

Question 1

This question was attempted by very few candidates and generally candidates tended to perform less well in response to this question. Responses tended to be unable to make the setting of town or country relevant to the knowledge of the texts, usually pointing out the setting of the works and then continuing as if there were a self-evident link between this and the theme being discussed.

Question 2

This was a very popular question and generally answered well though candidates tended at times to emphasize either techniques or emotions and did not always demonstrate a strong enough link between the two or clearly define emotions. Generally, however this was a question that almost all candidates could respond to appropriately with the best candidates offering specific examples of how textual detail, specific drawings in *Persepolis* for example, or the voice of a child narrator in other texts, could evoke complex emotions in the reader.

Question 3

This was fairly popular but many candidates found it difficult to clearly define sub-plots and secondary themes in relation to what they felt were the central issues in the texts. Examiners did find however that when well done, candidates were able to show how sub-plots and secondary themes enriched the meaning of the works as a whole.

Question 4

This was a popular question that candidates rightly saw as fairly straightforward so long as they remembered to address the impact on readers and audiences. It was nice to see some candidates moving away from solely looking at the characters' challenges to authority to seeing the work itself as a challenge to society and received ideas.

Question 5

A number of candidates seemed to select this without having a clear understating of what was meant by "personal history" and simply focused on historical context, assuming it could be used in place of the term given in the question. This often led to poor marks in criterion B. Conversely a number of candidates who did understand what was meant by "personal history" focused on this to the exclusion of the texts. This area is an important aspect of context and a good question to include; while responses were mixed, with those falling at the hurdles described above seemed to form the majority of responses, there were some considered and careful responses that showed excellent preparation.

Question 6

More than any other question, this one highlighted the perils of not reading carefully and many candidates wrote what appeared to be prepared responses on the tensions in gender roles especially in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *A Doll's House* and failed to look at what the question was actually asking.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It needs to be stressed here that examiners were clear that there was a great deal of good teaching going on and that points made in earlier Subject Reports are being taken on board, especially in relation to the way context is being taught and understood. It is still true, however, that many candidates are performing less well than they could for quite straightforward reasons that could be addressed relatively easily.

In terms of technique candidates could be asked to:
- Practise writing sustained responses.
- Practise writing introductions including a reference to both works and a thesis statement.
- Spend time working on paragraph construction, including purposeful topic sentences.

In relation to the use and exploration of the texts:
- Practise writing exercises that demand supportive evidence is given for each assertion made, this works very well as a peer reviewed piece.
- Teach candidates how to select specific details from the texts which would be suitable for answering certain questions.
- Encourage candidates to draw examples from throughout the texts they have studied not just the most well-worn ones, Torvald's patronising language to Nora could also be accompanied by an examination of the areas of the house closed to her and how this is represented on stage, for example.
- Use past papers to select questions most suited to the texts they have studied. In relation to this point teachers need to look closely at how the texts they have selected can be related together as is likely to happen in the examination, how well is the combination of *Macbeth* and *Persepolis* likely to work, for instance?

General:
- Ensure candidates understand the differences between genres, noting, for instance, plays as texts fully realised in their performance and not to subsume all genres under the themes they present.
- The teaching of critical theory is to be applauded but too frequently candidates reproduced this as a discrete item in their responses rather than something that informs their analysis of the texts.

Finally, teaching candidates to construct a reading is more important than giving candidates readings. The best responses show a freshness of approach that reveal real interest and engagement with the texts rather than the stale reproduction of ready formed approaches. While this is a high stakes assessment teachers can be confident that the kind of close reference to the texts that can only come when a candidate is engaged and involved will be rewarded appropriately.