English A Language and Literature May 2016

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	26-39	40-53	54-66	67-80	81-100

General introduction

Overall the results were very similar to those of May 2015.

The grade boundaries were kept the same as last year. There is a slightly higher number of grade 7s this year reflecting the comments of examining team members who noticed that there were more clearly excellent responses this year than last at this level.

While the grade boundaries for SL P2 stayed the same as last year, in P1 the 7 and 4 boundaries were lowered by one point, as the team felt that the paper was possibly a little more challenging than in the previous session, though there were also signs that this year's cohort was slightly weaker; the number of candidates achieving a grade 7, for example, was slightly down on May 2015.

In the IA and the WT the results were also very similar to those of the previous year. At HL performance in both the early components was very slightly better, at SL almost identical in the IA and a little weaker in the WT.

Evaluations of the examination papers (G2 form) 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.

Many teachers expressed their satisfaction with colour being used in the HL Paper 1 but deplored its absence in SL Paper 1. It must be pointed out that the authorisation to use colour came after the examination texts had been chosen, thus the visual elements had been selected with just black-and-white in mind.

From the November 2016 examination onwards, however, candidates can expect colour to be an analysable feature of some of the texts appearing on the papers.

In their reports that appear below, 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:

Examiners were impressed by the diversity of works being studied, how interesting many of them clearly were for the candidates and what a variety of genres they represented. Increasing familiarity with and use of on-line texts, including their visual features, indicates that preparation in these areas is developing nicely.

While examiners observed that there is an improvement in understanding of the role of stylistic features in both literary and non literary texts, too many responses limit themselves to mere identification and do not explore how they contribute to shaping meaning or the effects they produce on readers.

While examiners were encouraged to observe more measured and pertinent discussion of context than has sometimes been the case in the past, generally speaking they were somewhat disappointed by formulaic responses in Paper 1 and by loose reading of the essay questions or a failure to define terms clearly in Paper 2. A conservative approach to writing the essay and a prudent reliance on rehearsed material unfortunately often substituted for what might have been a lively engagement with the question prompt. See the relevant sections for more details on this and the other points.

Internal Assessment HL & SL Combined

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

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Schools are to be commended for their hard work in executing their Internal Assessment obligations. It was evident that most centers are handling this process with care, both in the teaching of the candidates and in the setting up and conducting of the oral components. All but a few schools are properly conducting their Further Oral Assessments in Parts 1 and 2, and from the descriptions of the activities, exciting presentations are taking place that seem to be both engaging and meaningful.

Most moderators have indicated this year that schools are using a broader range of works for the Individual Oral Commentaries and that it is quite enjoyable to hear responses on works that are diverse, interesting for the candidates and representative of a variety of genres. Most schools have found works that are suitable for their particular candidates, using authors from the PLA as is mandated for Part 4, and their candidates are producing lively and thoughtful commentaries. As always, the moderators report seeing a full range of marks, but they also comment on the strengths of teachers in assisting even their weakest candidates in making strides towards accomplishment in all four criteria. It is clear that many schools are beginning early study of close textual analysis, are working on methods of organization and development, and are practicing the oral commentary process so that the onus of presentation, questioning, and keeping to time limits is not quite so daunting.

A thank-you is in order for those schools who kindly upload their IA materials as soon as the availability occurs on IBIS. Most schools seem to have completed their IOCs well prior to the deadline. This is of great assistance to the examiners who are able to start their moderations as soon as possible, their completion deadlines being very tight.
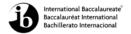
Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the text or extract

Moderators report that performance in criterion A has remained fairly steady. There is seldom reason to believe that the candidates have not read or reasonably understood their works. However, it is disappointing to see knowledge, at times, being revealed through explication or paraphrase rather than analysis or, worse, through long summaries of the work as a whole. The focus of the commentary is always to be on the extract itself; understanding of the larger work should be indicated through succinct references supportive of the significance of the extract to the whole. The better candidates are able to fully engage with the entirety of the extract and to see the interrelationship of its many parts to the overall meaning of the extract and, further, to see the significance of the extract within the work. Any biographical or other contextual information should be limited to points relevant to the analysis of the given extract.

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

This remains the weakest criterion, and the criterion most over marked by teachers. Though some candidates show superior ability to analyze how the writer has constructed meaning within the extract, most candidates struggle to do more than identify a few literary features and to comment that they "help the reader relate to the work." Few candidates grasp the sense that

style and technique work in an inter-locking nature to shape content or meaning--that a simile may work in tandem with the narrative voice to establish mood, or that lexical fields work to shape character, setting or, perhaps, tone, or that all of these may be establishing a thematic idea. The better candidates are those who see not just "features" but how those features work together to make the extract significant/meaningful in some way. The formalities of the specific genres continue to be overlooked as well. This criterion is central to the oral commentary. As one moderator noted: "This criterion more than any other distinguishes the higher scoring candidates from the lower."

Criterion C: Organization

Some schools are clearly more successful than others in helping their candidates find appropriate ways of organizing their responses. Most candidates fall back on a linear approach, but unless the candidate is clearly determined to support a thesis of sorts (a purpose based on the overall significance of the extract), this approach easily falls into an explication. Some schools seem to provide their candidates with a predetermined list to follow, but this tends to lead to a response that lacks coherence and overall purpose. This also leads to "feature identification" with no larger understanding of the feature in relation to an overall understanding of the extract. Simply to answer the guiding questions leads to large portions of the extract being overlooked and, again, produces a lack of coherency. A proper organization is also clearly relevant to being able to satisfy the demands of timing. Practice in organizing should help the candidate to recognize how much material needs to be included to fill 10 minutes, and, on the contrary, how not to overstep the time limit and lose the ability to provide a proper conclusion.

Criterion D: Language

In general, the moderators felt that the candidates spoke clearly and used suitable registers. Clearly, there are some candidates who struggle with language, but usually they are able to express their thoughts with some degree of clarity. Teachers should not correct or assist with language during the oral as this is an assessment of the candidate's ability to use language at this point in time. Formal English is expected of both candidates and teachers during this assessment. The higher marks in this criterion are reserved for candidates who are able to speak effectively, showing a richness of vocabulary that allows them to be both precise and concise and that shows effective knowledge and understanding of the language of literary analysis.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Here are some ways that you can help your candidates:

Select works for Part 4 that are accessible and interesting, yet appropriately challenging, for your cadre of candidates [Remember that all authors must be from the PLA so as to avoid a penalty.]

Have candidates practice doing mock orals, concentrating on organization and timing

Have candidates work on close reading and literary analysis throughout the course

Choose extracts that are meaningful, rich in detail, and of equal challenge from candidate to candidate [Swap out any extracts that were not successful in the past or any extracts longer than 40 lines]

For three or more candidates at HL or two or more at SL, make sure all Part 4 works are represented among the extracts

Provide two clear and concise guiding questions for each extract—one to prompt discussion of the content/meaning of the extract and one to prompt discussion of language/literary features—so that candidates prepare their orals in a manner that will address criteria A and B

Provide candidates with copies that are readable, free of errors, line-numbered, and with excerpts that are the same as the original work from which they were studied, i.e. no lines/words deleted or shifted within the confines of the excerpt

Do not provide information that will take away from the candidate's ability to earn credit for something he/she should know: location of extract within the work, author, title (except for titles of poems), explanations of words, allusions, etc. Guiding questions can prompt discussions of theme, tone, etc. but should not identify what the theme or tone is. Guiding questions should be specific to the extract but still open-ended, i.e., ask about comparisons but not metaphors/similes/conceits

Take full advantage of subsequent questioning to lead candidates back to the extract to help them show further understanding of the extract and its literary features until the full 15-minute time span is used [but do not ask any questions after the 15 minutes have elapsed.] Support, but do not dominate or instruct the candidate's responses

Find a quiet place free from interruption in which to conduct the orals

Further comments

Here are some ways you can have a successful IA component in your school:

Take time to review the Subject Guide, the Handbook of Procedures, and the Teacher Support Material before starting Part 4 of the course [The same holds true for the FOA in Parts 1 and 2]

Take time to review the previous year's IA Subject Report and the school's IA feedback

Follow all instructions regarding the number and selection of extracts, guiding questions, subsequent questions and timing

Ensure that when there is more than one teacher conducting the orals that all marking is carefully standardized

Check the sound quality of all recordings as the orals proceed

Check and double check all uploads [Are the forms fully completed? Do the forms match the orals submitted? Do the teacher's comments accurately reflect the marks given? Are all materials readable and the extracts clean? Has the math been done correctly?]

If notified of any errors in the upload, remedy the errors as quickly as possible

Conduct IOCs only when candidates have sufficient maturity, practice and study

And finally, teach "skills" rather than "texts" so that the candidates are ready to apply their oral analysis skills at university.

Higher level Written Assignment

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, a greater diversity of texts and topics than in previous sessions was observed, both in the tasks on the Language and the Literature parts of the programme. Examiners reported having the pleasure of reading many creative and interesting pieces of writing that showed serious engagement with the topics and texts the candidates had been studying. Many candidates demonstrated a strong acquaintance and facility with online texts and an ability to understand and respond to their visual aspects. On the whole, teachers and students appear to better understand the requirements of Task 1, and the prescribed questions for Task 2.

Here is a summary of the main points raised by examiners about the suitability of the tasks submitted:

- While it is clear from the guidance to teachers on page 27 of the subject guide that they must not be involved in the re-drafting process, their advice to students before and after first-draft stage should aim to help them avoid submitting work that is inappropriate, under-edited, or inaccurate. Examiners are still seeing too many tasks in which the choice of topic and text type makes it difficult for the candidate to adequately meet the requirements in the assessment descriptors.

- There are still far too many candidates not submitting one task based on the literature parts of their programme and one on the language parts. Ignoring this rule is to infringe the regulations – quite apart from being contrary to the balance between the study of language and literature that the programme aims for. Certainly, literary texts may be part of the study of the language parts of the programme but care should be taken not to base both tasks primarily on literary texts.

- Articles continue to be a popular choice for Task 1 but should not serve, as is quite often the case, to pass off an academic essay or a formal analysis of a text. The former is the province of Paper 2 and Written Task 2, the latter of Paper 1. What is required in Task 1 is a combination of creativity and critical engagement with a topic and/or text that is directly relevant to the student's programme content.

- One of the most common problems reported by examiners is when candidates choose topics that appear to have little to do with the kind of language topics to be found in the syllabus. Occasionally the literary works on which tasks are based appear not to be connected to what the candidate has studied.

- The question of Task 1 'topic': this word, as it appears in the descriptors, should be understood to refer to a programme topic not to any topic the student happens to be interested in. Furthermore, a task that merely serves as a vehicle for imitating forms of styles, whether of a literary, non-literary or mass communication type and does not also critically engage with a text or topic studied is very unlikely to score more than 4 for criterion B.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A Rationale and Outline

Rationales and outlines must precede tasks not follow them.

Many candidates wrote excellent rationales that placed the task in the context of the taught course and well explained the purpose, the audience aimed at and the conventions followed.

On the other hand, some candidates were struggling to identify the aspect of text or topic that they wanted to investigate and were inadequate in their explanation of how it was linked to what they had studied.

Some very long and elaborate outlines are still being presented, often in the form of detailed essay plans. This is unnecessary and does not guarantee that 2 marks will be awarded. What is required are key points that indicate how the key terms of the question are to be addressed and what the main focus of the essay will be. Some outlines go to the other extreme; are too succinct and fail to include clear identification of the text(s) on which the essay is based or the part, text or topic it is connected to.

Identification of texts on which tasks are based must be clear. This means including the exact title and name of the author or, if a TV programme, movie, or ad, etc. providing an accurate link to the source or, where possible, appending a reproduction of the text (see recommendations).

Task 1

B Task and content

Many examiners made observations particularly about the writing of letters, diaries, blogs and additions to literary works, all of which are very popular choices. Opinion-type articles are also extremely popular, other journalistic text types less so. Some students are producing very

effective tasks that show a good understanding of genres, styles and contexts. However, there are others who do not show an adequate understanding of the characteristic features or conventions of the text types chosen. Some need to pay more attention to layout and other visual features that would better show familiarity with and understanding of the conventions of the text type. For example, it should be quite clear from presentation, layout etc., what type of publication is being imitated and whether in a paper or online form.

Generally speaking, opinion articles about advertising are more successful than letters of complaint to advertisers.

It is difficult for diaries with no audience other than the diarist and the examiner to score well on the assessment criteria. When writing a diary, an extra chapter/scene, or letters based on a literary work, the candidate should consider who the audience might be, whether the letter or the diary could be an additional part of the work, or if it is to be read in some other context. The way in which diaries, particularly, would be made available to an audience must be clear.

As a rule of thumb, to be successful a task needs an audience and a context as well as a purpose.

C Organization

Most students submitted assignments that were at least adequately organized and developed. Some text types chosen for Task 1 could have been more appropriately structured. The essay structure invariably serves as a poor model for other text types. Better understanding of the conventions of the text type chosen would improve scores on this criterion. Students who based their work on professional exemplars were more likely to receive good marks here. Pastiche, of course, is always an option and successfully handled by many. Successful parody, on the other hand, can sometimes depend on how well the candidate has explained the objectives in the rationale.

D Language and Style

Although the language used in the various genres chosen for Task 1 was at times inconsistent with the model imitated, students generally expressed their ideas clearly and with a level of diction, style and register mostly appropriate to the genre or text type.
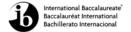
The quality of the language was in most cases good although some candidates chose text types for Task 1 for which they could not provide appropriate levels of usage.

Many students showed a strong grasp of particular styles of writing, formal and informal. Some showed outstanding abilities here.

A common problem was inadequate proofreading which, in some cases resulted in losing a point.

Task 2

B Response to the question

While many candidates chose a prescribed question that suited the literary work or other text they wanted to write about, some contented themselves with re-cycling an essay on another topic (such as the role of a specific character in a novel or play.)

In response to the most popular question about how a social group is represented and why, only the better essays took the trouble to define the group and its social context. Many essays dealt with more than one social group, sometimes with many different groups. The 'why?' of the question was quite often given superficial treatment, in some cases not dealt with at all. 'Society' is often assumed to be 'Western capitalist society' which is somewhat disappointing given the aims of the course and of the IB ethos generally.

Many students are analyzing advertisements for this question but often tend to focus more on advertising techniques than on representation and social context.

The way women are portrayed in the media and in literary works is the most popular subject by far, both in Task 1 and Task 2. Many of the essays on the 'power and privilege' questions are about the stereotyping or marginalization of women. While these can be very pertinent, even original, too many rely on generalisations. What examiners would like to see more of here are better definition of 'social group' and fuller understanding of context. As for the question about groups being marginalized, silenced or excluded, candidates typically approach this in one of two ways: either how the text marginalizes, etc., (without the author being aware of it) or how marginalization, etc., is intentionally represented or discussed. Examiners are open to both approaches.

The next most popular questions are those on 'reader, culture and text'. Responses to the second of these about the text being written in a different time, place, etc., are quite often superficial. Teachers might want to give advice to students about approaches that would lend themselves to this particular question.

The least popular of the questions are those on 'text and genre', however, they often produce excellent essays when the student has more than just a passing familiarity with a 'genre' or with the 'other texts' borrowed from.

C Organization

Most students submitted tasks that were adequately organized and developed. Essays with adequate or effective content rarely suffered from weaknesses in this criterion. The main weakness was a failure to develop an argument and to support it in sufficient detail.

D Language and style

Often students seemed to have more difficulty with the formal academic language required for the essay than with the language for their chosen text type in Task 1. However, in the vast majority of cases communication of ideas was at least adequate (even if treatment of question or topic was superficial) and, again, better proofreading might have eliminated errors that lost the candidate a mark on accuracy.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Impress upon candidates that the examiner will not have inside information about what they have been taught and how. Therefore advise them to provide in the rationale or the outline the essential information that the examiner will need in order to understand what it is they plan to do. They should start by showing how the task is linked to a particular text or topic – and only subsequently and if appropriate, to a learning outcome.

The coversheet is the only way examiners can familiarize themselves with what was taught. They expect to see there a list of *all* the topics studied for parts 1 & 2 and *all* the literary works studied, not just those on which the tasks have been based.

It should also be pointed out to students that in order to ensure equity of treatment, the school's name and location is not known to the examiner; therefore a certain amount of contextualisation may be necessary when a task deal with local language, cultural or other issues. As far as possible the candidate's submission should not be identified by name or number.

Encourage students to do the examiner the courtesy of providing the stimulus material that the task is based on if it is short (e.g. poem, song lyrics, advert, article, etc.) or a clear, reliable link or bibliographic reference if it is not. Students should refrain from providing more media or other stimulus material than the examiner can reasonably be expected to read. Typically, an examiner will spend about half an hour reading and assessing the candidate's submission.
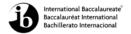
Impress upon students that Task 1, particularly, is both about being creative and inquiring. The more a student critically engages with an appropriate text or topic, the higher the mark is likely to be.

The Task 2 prescribed questions must not be re-written by candidates to suit their purposes.

Emphasize to students that the more realistic the context, audience and purpose of a Task 1 is, the more successful it is likely to be. For example, journalistic pieces in imaginary publications are usually not as successful as those written for publications or websites that exist. 'Realistic' context here can include that of a literary work studied, for example, a propaganda broadcast written as an extra scene for readers of Orwell's *1984*, or a letter from Stella to Blanche for readers of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Many examiners comment that students would benefit from more analysis of texts types before making their own choices for Task 1. Analysis of examples of well-written tasks as well as weaker ones would help students develop the skill of critiquing their own written tasks, or those of their peers.

Teachers might usefully spend time discussing with students the implications of each of the prescribed questions for Task 2 and provide examples of appropriate approaches, pointing out also the potential pitfalls of each prompt.

Further comments

It is not unusual to hear examiners who also teach the course commenting that they would never have agreed to some of the tasks that students proceed with. This suggests that in some cases teacher guidance is perceived to be lacking or slight. Remember that the tasks should be produced while the course is proceeding and selected by the candidate for submission later. An emergency rush before the submission deadline should be, as far as possible, avoided.

Standard level Written Assignment

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 was a fairly even spread of tasks over the Parts of the syllabus and many of these were done reasonably well. The source material of tasks relating to Parts 1 and 2 sometimes needed more specific explanation. Some text types were rather unclear in themselves, such as a 'personal narrative' or blog, which did not have a specified audience or a particular context.
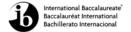
Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale

The rationale is very important and should precede the task itself – occasionally it did not. Some rationales were clear but some provided only 'some explanation' or, even worse, just a precis of the intended task. A direct link to the content learned in one of the parts of the course must be clearly established and identified, as well as an explanation of the conventions of the text type, which may include language choices. It is helpful if the rationale can provide the written task with some kind of overall context of interpretation.

Criterion B: Task and content

There were still 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. There were many interesting 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

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

then on it read like an essay, impacting the mark awarded for this criterion. There was sometimes an impression that the student was formulaically following a template.

Criterion C: Organization

Most tasks showed some degree of 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 most candidates had planned and considered the organization of their work. A few candidates lost marks because they did not adhere to the word count.

Criterion D: Language and style

The candidates overall 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 of spelling, punctuation, person and tense. However, overall the level of student performance in this criterion 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 at all. There should be a clear and direct link between the subject of the written task and a topic or text studied in the course.

The rationale needs to provide a clear and cogent explanation of how the task relates to the specific part of the course as well as how it fulfils the 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.
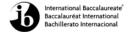
It can be helpful if candidates provide source material. This is more often the case for tasks relating to Parts 1 and 2.

Further comments

There were some very impressive and interesting written tasks, which showed clear understanding of the topic/text and form/chosen text type, as well as a very creative (occasionally even original) 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

Overall, candidates seemed to be more engaged with the texts than they were last year. Everyone had something to say: in the case of some candidates, at a quite sophisticated level. Nevertheless, this engagement did not always result in better papers and there were also many mediocre responses. More candidates chose the first pair than the second; however, there were fewer excellent papers on the first pair.

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

Too many papers were quite general and did not adequately explain or support their points. Others offered too much summary.

Although candidates are obviously familiar with on-line texts, some do not recognize that there can be different text types on-line; there is a tendency to use the word "blog" indiscriminately.

Although the majority of candidates attempted to discuss context, it was not always addressed or was addressed superficially. On the other hand, some candidates spent too much time on general historical background, in some cases of questionable validity. The link between this historical context and the text was not always made clear.

Overall, candidates were weakest on criterion B. Although a few discussed stylistic features at the expense of any other aspect of the texts, others did not mention style at all or only dealt with such matters as layout and fonts. Although quite a few candidates commented on the use of colour, many are still not addressing visual elements at all. The most significant weakness under criterion B is a listing of stylistic features with no analysis, supporting evidence or commentary on effects. Unexplained references to ethos/pathos/logos continued to be a problem. Candidates sometimes still confuse "literary" and "stylistic" features, assuming that a non-literary prose text has no stylistic features.

Although organization was generally at least acceptable, some examiners found more repetition than in previous years. As well, there are still problems with introductions and conclusions: generic ones that say nothing or overly detailed conclusions that rehash the argument of the paper.

Low marks on language often involved imprecision in choice or usage of words rather than grammatical errors, although these existed as well: particularly missing articles, poor punctuation, lack of agreement. Word-processed papers had been proofread a bit more than was the case last year; however, candidates must realize that spelling and grammatical errors may lower their marks in these papers just as much as in handwritten scripts.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

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

Most candidates seem to have been well prepared for the exam and knew the areas of analysis that are expected. They are not daunted by the task of comparing two different types of text. Most refer to context and many comment on visual aspects of the texts. Candidates are quite familiar with the features of on-line texts.

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

General comments: Some candidates did not deal adequately with genre or text type: for instance, not taking into account the fact that C is a poem and analysing it as such, and not dealing with the different genres in the two websites of A and B. Humour and irony were difficult for many candidates in text B and for most in text D. There were too many long, unexplained quotations, particularly in Question 1, but in 2 as well.

Strengths in dealing with Question 1 included a genuine engagement with the message of the texts. Candidates, even the weaker ones, generally understood the texts, viewed the issues raised as important and found plenty to write about. Quite a few, however, failed to understand fully the ironies of B.

Candidates often did not take into account the two authors in B and many focussed only on the comic strip, ignoring both the text underneath it and the reply. Many found the point made in the reply difficult to understand. Some listed website features of the two texts without commenting on them.

Candidates also frequently demonstrated a high level of engagement with the task in Question 2 and there were some impassioned responses. However, the voice and audience of the poem were sometimes misunderstood and discussion of historical context sometimes unhelpful. There were some excellent comments on the photo in text D, but this graphic part of the text was sometimes ignored. The memo style of the web magazine article confused a fair number; some thought this was a letter. Many candidates had difficulty with tone of one or both of the texts.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Too many candidates are producing formula responses. Although these may be adequate, they will never achieve the highest marks. While candidates must certainly be aware of the examination requirements and what aspects of the texts they will need to cover, they should also be taught non-formulaic strategies for engaging with hitherto unseen texts and responding according to what the texts demand.

Handwriting is a major problem for some candidates. If the examiner cannot read the paper, the candidate cannot be given credit for brilliant insight and excellent language use.

The use of terms like *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*, as well as other sophisticated-sounding terms for literary devices, without any further analysis of the text itself, will not garner any marks.

Discussion of context must remain an important part of the course, as well as the analysis of stylistic features and, especially, their effects.

It is clear that candidates have had a good deal of preparation in regard to on-line texts; however, they need practice in distinguishing between different types and genres of these texts.

More work could be done on the identification of audience. Candidates should steer away from generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes about audience that could lead in erroneous directions: for instance, that people over 40 years old do not use the internet. Candidates should also be prepared to consider that a text might be for multiple audiences.

More work could be done on dealing with quotations: integrating them smoothly and grammatically into the analysis, keeping them at an appropriate length, commenting on them.

Candidates should be encouraged to allow time to read through their work and check for errors.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

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

General comments

Text 1 seemed to provide better answers than text 2 and many candidates wrote very superficial responses to text 2. The texts were very assessable for all candidates and provided a wealth of features for candidates' commentaries but many candidates failed to identify the techniques.

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

The paper provided two texts that students engaged with and could find a range of features to discuss. There seemed to be equal responses to Text 1 and Text 2 by candidates where in previous sessions there has been one text that candidates seemed to favor. The paper seemed less place-oriented, so may have been more accessible to international candidates.

Criterion A and B

As seen with previous papers context was not handled well as candidates relied on residual historical and cultural knowledge and did not deal with the text and the content presented in the

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

text. Quite a few candidates appeared to take their cues for the interpretation of the texts from the first few lines and then base their response on this, rather than looking at the text as a whole. As a result, there was a tendency for candidates to overlook some important elements of both texts. Not all candidates commented on the basics of context like text type, the publication and reception, time period, target audience, and purpose. Many candidates still tended to skirt around the specifics when analyzing, or relied on simple paraphrasing. Candidates appeared to struggle with inference and interpretation. Some candidates found it difficult to write analytical rather than descriptive responses, especially for text 1 where they seemed to get caught up in the detail of the text rather than their own thoughts.

Understanding the "effects" of stylistic features probably presented the greatest difficulties, with candidates tending to rely on generalized effects for example, "engaging the reader...makes the point stand out". Some candidates merely identified techniques, gave examples but ignored the effects altogether. Similarly, when candidates discussed structure they failed to analyse and more often provided a summary of the layout or paragraphing with no analytical depth at all. Candidates seemed to focus on superficial/evident features of the texts but failed in the analysis of deeper meanings.

Criterion C

Organization was a struggle for some candidates who were unable to develop a strong organizational thread that linked to audience, context and purpose. Many candidates still struggle to write a strong introduction that leads the reader through their argument. There is a lack of focus on developing and keeping a strong analytical thread that links stylistic features to effect and thence to audience and purpose. Construction of a cohesive and persuasive argument within the response also presented challenges. Some candidates randomly assign connectives such as "moreover", "consequently", "furthermore" at the beginning of sentences/paragraphs without having clear logical links between the ideas presented.
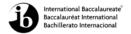
Criterion D

A number of candidates seemed to struggle to convey ideas in appropriate academic language. For example, writing about text 2 and its gender stereotyping, there were a lot of generalisations made (e.g. "in the 1980s everyone thought that men were dominant") without either substantiation or hedging. Many candidates lacked a depth of vocabulary to fully discuss diction of an unseen text or use appropriate language to explain effects.

Text 1

Few candidates actually stated specifically the writer's profession implying that all readers, because of the semantic field and narrative viewpoint, understood this.

Very few candidates mentioned punctuation- sadly- perhaps a teaching point for the future, as punctuation is so important here.

In the middle to lower bands there was much addressing of "structure" which led to recounting what happened in the excerpt. At the lowest levels candidates wrote very generally and put focus on the baby rather than the stethoscope uses and traditions.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

The better responses commented on the awe inspiring majesty of the heart, the romance of medicine, etc..

Some misunderstanding in relation to the audience.

Text 2

Many candidates demonstrated a tendency to narrate.

There was omission of author's viewpoint and context.

Many candidates remained on the surface with this text and failed to analyze.

Many struggled to find stylistic features to comment on in any depth, writing instead about the use of 'examples' and simply recapping.

Not many candidates picked up well on the analogy with the animal kingdom.

Even the use of images, which usually draws candidates in, was not dealt with as well as might have been expected. Far too many treated them in a descriptive fashion and struggled to analyse their function beyond a very simple level.

Too many candidates focused on superficial/obvious elements of the texts.

Weak identification and analysis of context.

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

Criterion A and B

Many candidates used evidence effectively to support their ideas. Evidence was well integrated and supported the point being made. Most candidates had a basic understanding of each text.

Candidates appear well drilled in spotting techniques to write about but, as noted above, they need to develop skills to identify the effect of these features and articulate their own personal responses to the texts.

Criterion C

Those candidates who are confident in how to organize their ideas could provide solid introductory paragraph/s that attempted to address audience, purpose and context on various levels. Organization was generally sound, however the student was taught to approach it. The framework with which to attack Paper 1 was clearly well drilled into the majority of students. The majority of candidates appeared well prepared to write introductions, though these were often formulaic and sometimes missed nuances of the texts.

Criterion D

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Most language is comprehensible and in an appropriate register. Most candidates had fairly sound command of language, even when there were issues with syntax, grammar and vocabulary in general.

Text 1

The best responses encompassed the scientific and the literary aspects of the texts and therefore its purpose. If candidates understood the audience correctly then all else followed on. There were some beautiful interpretations of the writer's purpose e.g. that the range of musical sounds paralleled the uniqueness of each individual. Few candidates actually stated specifically the writer's profession implying that all readers, because of the semantic field and narrative viewpoint, understood this. The good candidate managed to discuss the switch between formal/informal register, inclusive aspects etc. They also discussed the effective structure to the essay which gave some of the better candidates a good framework for perceptive comments - noticing the rhythm and parallels with the heart, and the lyrical ending.

Text 2

Some candidates engaged extremely well with text 2 and were able to explain and analyze its agenda and context with well chosen supporting detail. The better candidates did deal with the gender and contextual aspects, allying this with good analysis of the images and the language creating the implied credibility of the author.

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

Text 1

Strengths

Stronger candidates generally:

- discussed audience, purpose, content and context based on the source information

- discussed the literary/scientific features as the guiding question suggested
- understood the structure to the essay which gave some of the better students a good framework for perceptive comments - noticing the rhythm and parallels with the heart, and the lyrical ending

- understood the role of the anecdotes and the use of pronouns

- were able to recognize main themes

- were able to express how the writer blended the personal and the medical.

Weaknesses

Weaker candidates generally:

-failed to discuss the use of punctuation

-tended to address "structure" by recounting what happened in the excerpt

-treated the text as a history of the stethoscope, a history of medicine or a scientific article on cardiology

-had problems understanding the purpose and effects of the similes and metaphors employed.

Text 2

Strengths
Stronger candidates generally:
- identified the text as a part of a wider self-help guide
- noticed themes of aggression
- detected the gender bias and contextual aspects, allying this with good analysis of the images and the language creating the implied credibility of the author
- picked up on the jargon aspect and analyzed it well.
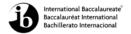

Weaknesses

Weaker candidates generally:
- had problems writing in an academic style about the more contentious themes of the text (especially the male bias)
- many struggled to find stylistic features with some candidates writing 'there are not many stylistic features'!
- the use of images were largely dealt with in a descriptive fashion and candidates struggled to analyze their function beyond a very simple level.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are advised to be detailed and specific in their commentaries. Encourage students to delve beneath the surface, even if a text seems simple.

The best responses discussed in detail the effects of the features. Many candidates still tend to "spot" and list features without really detailing their purposes and effects in this particular context.

It is important to allow candidates to be aware of a range of forms of organization as some are very formulaic and the approach to a commentary will only work if the response is coherent and the argument well developed. Such an argument will only arise from good knowledge and understanding of the passage. Some candidates used a fragmented style as if writing random

thoughts; this lack of structure could be aided by using a plan/preparation as very few plans were evident. Detailed textual analysis linked to a strong organizational thread needs to be encouraged.

Candidates must be encouraged to proofread their work before submission as often the errors are slips in spelling and omissions of words in sentences. In a few cases very weak expression limited/obscured candidate ideas; the criterion D outcome therefore had an effect on criteria A B   and   C   too.

Ensure the register is appropriate, as many candidates slipped into a colloquial tone, even some of the better candidates, and this often dragged a 4 down to a 3 in Criteria D.

Ensure that candidates are aware of how to use the guiding questions.

Read a range of texts, identifying the audience, context and purpose and then focus on how language shapes meaning. These skills are fairly straightforward but it takes lots of practice to be able to apply them directly to a range of texts and to write about ideas with sophistication.

Ensure that candidates understand the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing compared with analysis.

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

General comments

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

Some candidates seemed ill prepared to respond to works of literature. These candidates did not appear to understand the texts they had studied and often attempted to engage in narrative retelling. Their responses often simplified the question and identified examples of what was being asked ("home", "intolerance" or "artificial") without addressing how those examples led to any understanding. These papers were often very short and undeveloped.

The choice of texts for some students proved troublesome. For students who are struggling with the language, texts which use dialect and linguistic idiosyncrasies often compounded the problems for these students. Their Eyes Were Watching God, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Clockwork Orange and The Colour Purple are some examples of texts in which the

language choices of the authors were very challenging. Texts such as Heart of Darkness, The Stranger, and Love in the Time of Cholera were all texts with fairly dense diction and sophisticated phraseology which again appeared to be problematic for some candidates leading to limited understanding of the plots and the character relationships. Contextual topics such as "the American Dream" in The Great Gatsby or Death of A Salesman or A Streetcar Named Desire or "absurdism" in Waiting for Godot often led to generalizations and an attempt by the candidates to include their teacher's notes into their papers. Care must be taken when choosing works to find the most accessible works for the candidates on hand.

While candidates were often prepared to discuss context, for some the discussion of the historical context of a work, became a simplified biography of the author—see George Orwell, or Tennessee Williams, or Arthur Miller—with only vague references to the texts.

As a result of the above, some candidates, not fully understanding either the text or the question, retreated to summary and descriptive narration.

Struggling candidates had difficulty structuring and organizing their responses. They identified an aspect of the question in their introduction, but gave little sense of why their chosen texts reflected this term (see "home" or "artificial"). Conclusions in these papers were at times vague or going against their introductions.

Finally, there were some students who are struggling with the English Language in way that impacts understanding.

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

Many candidates this year seemed to be fairly knowledgeable on their Part 3 works. They were able to show an adequate or better understanding of these works in relation to the questions being answered.   These candidates were able to illustrate their ideas with appropriate references. They saw the subtleties of the question and responded accordingly with interesting arguments, and detailed illustrations.

It was impressive to see students deal with the "graphic" in *Graphic novels* through a discussion of the black and white "panels/drawings" in Persepolis; the "detailed imagery" in Heart of Darkness or the "point of view/voice" in Death of a Salesman or The Glass Menagerie.

Many candidates organized their papers well, including an introduction which defined the terms "intolerance" or "atmosphere" or "artificial" or "home" as well as a general introduction to the texts and their context. They established an argument around the given question and guided the reader through the entire process (although if the chosen question was not clearly understood the structure was often directed at the works being discussed and not to the question being addressed).
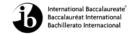
The conclusions (some didn't get to fully finish them) connected with the introduction and the question bringing all of the ideas together in a summative manner.

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

The questions on this year's exam came across as straightforward and accessible for candidates. They were focused and clear and opened up the texts for some interesting analysis and some insightful arguments.

Q1. This question asked students to identify some forms of intolerance and explain the effects of this intolerance on both the victims and the intolerant. Some students seemed to stop at identifying some forms of intolerance and as a result had a difficult time seeing Nora or Blanche, for example, as victims of intolerance. Candidates needed to define the terms for themselves in a way in which they were not "vague" and "elastic". The responses needed to reflect the interplay between victimization and intolerance. For some candidates there was little difference between the "victims" or the "intolerant" (justifying Stanley's action in *A Streetcar Named Desire*).

Q2. This question dealt with "atmosphere" as a literary feature in a work. It required the students to show a basic understanding of "atmosphere" as a "literary" term. Candidates were asked to reflect on the kinds of atmospheres being created (many followed the prompt and discussed peaceful, menacing (in 1984 or Handmaid's Tale) or ironic (in Antigone or The Glass Menagerie). Some candidates stopped at identifying the atmospheres and did not discuss the impact of the specific atmosphere on the work as a whole.

Q3. This question about "words, phrases, and names" was the least chosen question. It directed candidates to consider symbolism, metaphors, allusions etc. but left it open for them to decide which aspects of a work they were going to develop. This question was a perfect bridge to discussing literary features, although most candidates did not choose this one.

Q4. This popular question on the term "artificial" was short, yet gave candidates enough focus to develop some aspect of their chosen texts. Some candidates found everything to be "artificial" (artificial sets, characters, plots, themes etc.) but without a definition of the term they were often floundering in vague generalizations. Stronger responses dealt with the effects of "plastic theatre in Williams" or "artificial relationships in Pride and Prejudice or The Great Gatsby", or "religion as an artificial crux in The Stranger or Purple Hibiscus".

Q5. This was one of the most popular questions but also one that gave the least amount of specific direction and as a result often led to general papers which showed limited analysis and more than some narrative description and retelling of the author's biography. The question asked students to explain how and why the text invited readers to identify with situations, characters and/or ideas. Merely identifying rape as an issue in our society is not enough to show how we can connect with the rape in A Streetcar Named Desire, or how since racism still exists today we can relate to the racism shown in A Raisin in the Sun.

Q6. This question on home often began with "Home is where the heart is" but for some the cliché provided little connection to the chosen texts—1984 or Lord of the Flies or The Visit, and provided little sense of the significance of the depiction of home in the works.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Practice with the questions—understand what is being asked, and what is the direction of the argument. For example, question 1 asks students to identify some forms of intolerance and explain the effects of this intolerance on both the victims and the intolerant. The question for some students though, seemed to stop with only identifying some forms of intolerance.

Practice organizing papers so that the arguments are clear and focused—use the words of the question in the introductions and conclusions.

Practice avoiding generalizations by giving evidence from the texts for all of the assertions that are made.

For those whose handwriting is a problem, double space your work.

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

General comments

It was clear from the responses made by students that generally knew their texts well and were able for the most part to write coherently about them. This is undoubtedly the product of conscientious and thoughtful teaching. At the same time examiners were concerned that there appeared to be reluctance among students to engage directly with the question and to construct a reading of their texts in the light of its demands. Far too many students seemed unable to adapt their understanding and knowledge to the requirements of the question or seemed to feel that what was required of them was to shoehorn a general essay that was part of their exam preparation, into one of the questions generally failing to address the question except in a rather offhanded way. This was further evident in other areas of student performance in this assessment. Many students for instance seemed to find great difficulty in developing and defending a thesis and drawing on detail from the texts such that they could substantiate the claims they made. Weaker students, who found the questions more difficult, often responded by writing down almost everything they knew about the text without having an argument to give it shape and focus.

Examiners felt students knew their texts well and have a better understanding of context and how it contributes to the construction of meaning in the text than has been the case in previous sessions. Teachers are clearly doing a very good job of getting students to engage with and study the texts hard. Disappointingly, however, students did not appear to want to risk the

challenge of developing an argument that explores their ideas about the text in the light of the question they selected. The difficulties many students found in presenting a thesis and using detail and literary analysis to support an argument appear to support this. Students need then to be helped to understand that this assessment is asking them not to repeat their knowledge but to use it judiciously to support an argument they wish to present. Ironically playing safe is leading to unambitious essays that lack focus and belie the clear levels of knowledge and understanding shown elsewhere in the response.
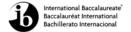
The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Particular challenges highlighted in examiner reports this session were a failure by students to establish a thesis and retain focus both generally, in terms of structure, and specifically in terms of answering the question. It was noted that marks in criterion B were commonly lower than expected. A clear thesis was surprisingly rare and many essays appeared to offer everything the student knew about the texts regardless of its relevance to the question or the coherence of the response and it appears that many students continue to have problems zeroing in on the chosen topic: too often, the terms of discussion remained undefined, and even though in most scripts key words of the topic on which the question focused would come up in the course of the essay, the outcome was an illusion of focus, rather than a systematic and substantive exploration of the implications of the topic. This was often compounded by poor use and understanding of stylistic features and how their analysis might be used to substantiate the claims   being   made.

Some examiners raised the concern that too many students appeared to be trying to adapt essays that were written as part of their programme of study to the question they selected or felt obliged to rehearse what was clearly previously taught material. The essay consequently only addresses the question in a rather distant way and several examiners noted that while the questions were fairly evenly selected there was a widespread failure to answer them. Candidates also seemed to find it difficult to supply sufficient detail to support their answer. This was particularly disheartening to see where candidates had established an argument but then only offered generalizations about the works to support it. Many candidates do not seem to understand that they need to offer a textual analysis and to show a fairly full understanding of the works they have studied--not just one or two isolated points. The approach to the works in these cases tends to be more of a synopsis than an in-depth discussion.

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

Candidates seemed well prepared in the sense that they generally knew their texts well and most made an attempt to address stylistic features and several examiners commented that while these were not always integrated into the argument or used to support a reading it was clear that this area of analysis has improved on previous years and was focusing on more on subtle and complex features than the more straightforward ones like characterisation. Their effects, however, were rarely explored in any detail.   Essays were generally given at least a

basic sense of organization and structure but this was not always supported by analysis. Students seemed to have a better grasp of context and its role in the meaning of a text with far fewer examples of responses exploring at length biographical or historical material that lacked relevance to the question being answered.

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

The questions appeared unexpectedly challenging for students to understand especially 2, 3 and 5. Generally students either did not appear to understand terms like "artificial" or used it in a variety of senses without defining its meaning for the essay they wanted to write; in fact there was generally a failure to define terms clearly.

Q1. Many students failed to establish what they meant by "intolerance" or understand it except in the broadest sense of something not liked, as in one example where it was asserted that a character "had no tolerance to death". In a number of scripts "intolerance" appeared to be misread as a synonym for social conflict or different forms of oppression. Some examiners noted however that if intolerance was clearly defined there were some excellent responses to this   question.

Q2. Many students did not seem able to define "atmosphere" clearly, often shying away from a definition or asserting that every element created atmosphere. One felt that students saw this as a question where they could write what they felt comfortable with and often discussed atmosphere as if it were theme or setting.

Q3. Many examiners felt this was the question, with 5, that students did least well on. Responses were often fragmentary with little sense of what words were important to the texts as a whole. Very few responses looked at connotation and a number seemed almost to pick any key word and argue its significance without addressing the question's directive to look at further meanings. Some interpreted it as about symbols or took objects, Nora's macaroons from A Doll's House were a common example, as words with further meanings without showing how this was the case, instead simply discussing the object's significance in the drama.

Q4. Again many responses to this question scored low marks in B due to a failure to understand "artificial" or define it in a way that showed how it might be understood in the terms of their argument. It often was used to simply mean "not real" in an ill-defined way with little sense of false or lacking in authenticity for instance. This was perhaps the least commonly chosen question but some examiners noted some very good responses where terms were clearly defined.

Q5. This was perhaps the most popular question but the "how" and "why" of the way the text invited the reader to identify with ideas etc... was often ignored. Weak students tended to simply discuss an element of the text, setting or theme for instance and then assert that this was something the reader could identify. It was not always clear here that the idea of "identify with" was understood as opposed to "identify" as in recognise. One examiner felt the question encouraged a relational way of looking at texts leading to very reductive answers where the

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

text was seen as good because and only if the audience could relate to it. There were, however, a number of good responses where the students saw the question as addressing an important part of the context of reception.

Q6. Perhaps the most straightforward question, though not the most popular, there were many good responses. Again weak responses were marred by lack of definition, "home" being mixed with family or given a trite "home is where the heart is" reading; this was generally a successfully answered question, however.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Examiners' comments in this area coalesced around the desire that students should be able to confidently present an argument that showed their ideas about the texts in relation to the question.

The tools required to do this that need to be focused on in teaching and practised throughout the course are the development of a thesis that drives an argument shaped in response to the question rather than reiterating generic material. Substantiating this argument requires that students can refer appropriately and in detail to the texts and use relevant quotation to support their ideas. Furthermore it is important they are taught to analyse a range of stylistic features in the context of themes and narrative development as well as the one most commonly explored which is character.

Schools need also to pay attention to the requirement that only one of the texts studied in this part of the course (3) should be in translation. The fact there is no penalty for this does not alter the fact that this part of the course was designed to create balance and variety and that schools should conform to this.

Finally graphic texts that are very popular in this assessment and rightly so, are often treated as if they are conventional verbal texts. It is important that students can refer, using where relevant the appropriate terminology, to the technical aspects of these texts and how these features might be evidence for the argument being made.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional