English A: Literature TZ1

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 17	18 - 32	33 - 43	44 - 56	57 - 68	69 - 80	81 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 16	17 - 30	31 - 43	44 - 56	57 - 67	68 - 80	81 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

In this second year of the new course, it was encouraging to note that the majority of schools had got to grips with the procedural requirements of HL Internal Assessment and the manner in which the marking criteria should be applied. Nearly all schools have adhered to the 2-part nature of the assessment being split into commentary and discussion, each lasting no more than 10 minutes. This was not true of all centers however; occasionally, students were allowed to talk beyond the 8 minute mark – leaving no room for subsequent questions, and in other instances, with teacher questions included, this first part of the assessment task continued for as much as 13 or 14 minutes. Once again, centers are reminded that nothing said after the 10-minute time allocation will be taken into account – and any intrusion into the 10 minutes allocated for the discussion will inevitably reduce the range of opportunity the candidates have to score well in that part. Furthermore, centers are reminded that the

transition from commentary to discussion should be smooth and continuous and there is absolutely no expectation that teachers link the poem with the discussion text.

Most schools conducted the orals in quiet environments; however, many moderators complained about unnecessary interruptions by endless phones ringing, intercom announcements, school bells and even distracting sounds of typing – presumably as the teacher writes comments on the student's performance.

Other procedural matters that need to be remembered concern passage length. Centers should take note that 20-30 is the recommended number of lines. Anything longer will in all likelihood prevent the candidate from being able to do justice to the details of the passage and (with the exception of sonnets by Shakespeare or Donne) most passages that are significantly shorter often afford a dearth of material and result in the candidate simply running out of things to say, or delivering a rather superficial commentary. Notable examples of the latter include certain shorter poems by Emily Dickinson, William Blake or even T.S Eliot's *Morning at the Window*, which comprises only 9 lines. Centers are also reminded that all poems should have line numbers, beginning from 0, the titles should be included and there should be two Guiding Questions, one addressing aspects of content and the other style or technique.

Perhaps because of its relatively recent introduction, some teachers still seem to find aspects of the discussion somewhat challenging. It is important to note that the spirit of this exercise is intended as a discussion, not an interview or a presentation. It is perfectly acceptable to devise questions prior to the examination but teachers must not stick to a pre-determined path; a more natural approach, wherein the response given by the student is addressed, nurtured or questioned further is far more likely to result in higher marks being awarded. Somewhat worryingly, some candidates seemed to know the questions they were likely to be asked beforehand, which resulted in a discussion that sounded somewhat 'rehearsed'; others were allowed to talk at length without interruption, so that the discussion became more of a presentation, not unlike the kind of thing one would expect from an IOP. This is not the intention of the exercise and candidates will be disadvantaged if they are invited to regard it in this light. As with last year, the nature of the questions posed by teachers makes a very significant difference to their performance. Beginning the discussion with a question such as 'So, tell me your thoughts on Hamlet' or 'What did you think of the novel?' was a sadly not uncommon practice. As pointed out last year, questions that ask questions about the candidate's personal feelings towards a particular character – whether they liked them or not, or ones that invited judgment about a character's actions did not, inevitably, lead to perceptive analytical answers or the recollection of interesting or relevant detail from the work. Teachers are reminded that the distinction between Art and Life is one that should be borne in mind, and attention almost always focused on matters of literary craft and the *presentation* of events, character and themes rather than the extent to which they feel recognisable or otherwise to the student.

Although for the most part, I/LIA forms were filled out correctly and helpfully, some teachers omitted to include comments about how they had arrived at their marks. These comments are very helpful to moderators in making sense of whether the marks awarded were accurate and should always be undertaken. Lastly, it is very important that centers with more than one teacher engage in rigorous moderation; in a number of cases it was evident that marks were

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being awarded in a rather uneven manner, as if the teachers had not undertaken any kind of collaborative marking. Obviously this is not in the students' interests.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A staple of particular works that have proved popular choices over the years proved to do so again in 2014. Poetry by Carol Ann Duffy, T. S Eliot, Margaret Atwood, John Donne, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, Billy Collins, Emily Dickinson and Langston Hughes proved very common, and it was good to see writers such as EE Cummings and Lorna Crozier making an appearance. Walt Whitman was also the choice of many, although it has to be said that not many candidates find themselves able to do justice to his stylistic character and density. Centers are reminded that Chaucer in translation is not allowed. If chosen, he must be studied in his original language. The best works for the commentary section are of course ones that provide plenty of detailed stylistic interest, and the highest achieving candidates are ones that engage meaningfully with elements of technical detail.   As mentioned above, candidates are nearly always at a disadvantage when given a poem that is either too long or too short. For the discussion, Shakespeare dominated with Hamlet and Othello but there were interesting choices of prose including Timothy Findley's The Wars, Joyce's Dubliners, Bronte's Wuthering Heights, Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge, and fairly frequent use of Heart of Darkness, Wuthering Heights and The Great Gatsby. 'Prose other than…' included essays by Virginia Woolf, Bruce Chatwin's Songlines and autobiographical work from Michael Ondaatje and Janet Frame.
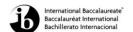
Guiding questions were for the most part suitable – providing a constructive point of departure, particularly for weaker candidates. Some centers need to be reminded of the requirement that no information should be given to students in these questions that prevents them from gaining credit. To illustrate, the question 'How does the author use imagery to generate a foreboding atmosphere?' is better phrased as 'To what effect/s does the author make use of imagery?' Furthermore, no question should include more than one demand; sometimes questions comprised of 2 or more prompts and this is not allowed.

Teachers should check the accuracy of the poem very carefully; in some instances it would appear that works had been found on the Internet that contained mistake in typography and/or lineation. Obviously, these mistakes can lead to inappropriate readings.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Knowledge and Understanding

As mentioned last year, the tendency to see the exercise as one of description, paraphrase or explanation inevitably results in a low score for this criterion. Equally, candidates who fail to provide sufficient support from the text for their assertions cannot be rewarded very highly. There seem an increasing number of centers that advise students to provide a 'pre-learned' introduction, which quite often foucuses on matters of biographical, literary or social context. Teachers should note that whilst these remarks might help to provide some security for students as they make a start on their commentary, they seldom result in marks being awarded and as a result should be kept to an absolute minimum, or not said at all. The best

commentaries are ones in which key aspects of the poem's content are covered in a thoughtful, engaged manner – with continual and detailed support from the text.

Criterion B: Appreciation of the Writer's Choices

This strand of criteria nearly always proves a challenge and tends to be where teacher marks differ most from those of the moderator.   Routinely, candidates either ignore features of language and style or see the exercise as a kind of literary treasure hunt only.   There is usually little point simply identifying a particular literary feature without exploring its impact and/or the way it contributes to the meaning of the section of the work from which it comes, or the thematic concerns that permeate the whole. As one moderator said, "Listing of techniques, divorced from any appreciation of the effect or the writer's style, was too common."   Furthermore a number of candidates omitted to talk very much at all about the writer's choices. At all times, candidates must keep in mind the 'art' of writing and remember that aspects of content are always presented in particular literary ways – they are not 'real life'.

Criterion C: Presentation

This is another strand in which candidates find it hard to score the highest marks. Some do not seem to think very much at all about some organisational principle to their commentary, and others find it hard to maintain. Many adopt a linear approach, which can often serve to ground ideas quite effectively – although this method can also make it difficult to provide a central focus. Centers are reminded of the adjective 'purposeful' as a part of the level 5 descriptor; examiners should seek to reward students who apply one kind of structure or another but particularly those who choose a particular approach because it supports their argument, or affords the most appropriate shape to the aspects of the poem they regard as the most significant. Providing a meaningful sense of introduction and conclusion is also important. Too many candidates begin in a somewhat arbitrary manner, and then end simply because they have run out of things to say.

Criterion D: Knowledge of the work used in the discussion

Most performances varied from 'adequate' to 'excellent'. Candidates seemed to have a good sense of plot and the characters and discussed these at length, although many needed to provide more detailed reference to particular moments or events in order to ground their points. 'Understanding' was more problematic, with many candidates unable to address the implications of the work.

N.B In some cases, teachers seemed to select the work used for discussion, or even worse – prompted the student to do so. Both these approaches are forbidden by the regulations. The second work must be chosen randomly e.g. by turning over a card with the name of the text printed. Some teachers are reported to have used a single short story, essay or novella for the discussion; this is wrong. Page 1 of the PLA defines 'a work' most clearly.

Criterion E: Response to the discussion questions

Almost all the moderators reported that the candidate's performance was often dependent on the teacher's mode of questioning. Prompts like 'Who is your favourite character?' or 'Which part of the scene did you like best?' did not provoke very meaningful answers. Equally inappropriate were questions asking 'why' a character behaves in a particular way; such a prompt can only lead to closed, factual answers, or ones that were speculative and hard to justify in relation to the text. Even more unhelpful, as stated earlier, were the 'how did you relate to the character personally?' kind of prompt or discussions that began with the teacher asking 'What can you tell me about this book?'

Best practice would seem to be to prepare a list of questions in advance, but accommodate student answers and develop the discussion in a more spontaneous manner as time goes on.

Criterion F: Language

Most candidates and their teachers used an appropriate register. However, there were several schools that seemed unaware of the demands of this criterion. This is how one frustrated senior examiner commented: 'The language of some of the teachers would frankly not get beyond Level 3 (and some would be a Level 2!). I am not referring to non-native speakers either who are in any case often exemplary in the tenor of supportive formality.' A number of teachers were found to use fillers such as 'like' and 'sort of', which students are of course instructed to avoid.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

All schools, but particularly those who seem to find the procedural requirements of Internal Assessment a challenge, must read the official supporting documentation (Subject Guide, Prescribed List of Authors and Teacher Support Material) very carefully. It is very dispiriting for a moderator to hear a student in possession of strong skills having evidently been given unhelpful or completely inappropriate advice from his or her teacher. In addition, the timing of the exercise for some centers should be carefully thought through.   10 minutes per component and no more than 8 minutes individual commentary time, with 2 minutes of questions ought not to be difficult to implement.

Commentary skills should be developed throughout the course, and students encouraged to develop sensitivity throughout to the way in which elements of literary craft carry meaning and create impact. Students must be taught the difference between description and/or paraphrase, analysis, interpretation and evaluation and understand that marks for the commentary are to be gained by thinking more in terms of the latter than the former approach. Practising these skills, and approaches to the particular demands of Internal Assessment, must happen as much as possible. Teachers should, however, resist any temptation to teach a prescriptive or formulaic approach, for example advising students that they must begin their commentary with a dose of biographical detail. Frameworks for organising and presenting material are of course useful, but as a means for students to develop confidence and exert some degree of independent control over the structure of their commentary.

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Questions put to the student must be meaningful. It is likely that those asked after the commentary will focus on particular details from the poem, whereas those asked in the subsequent discussion will be more varied – some drawing attention, perhaps, to particularities of character, moments, scenes or events and others asking for response to the work as a whole. Sometimes questions are asked that do not make sense, are too vague or unhelpfully 'closed' in nature.   Teachers and departments might do well to 'bank' a list of questions that work well in connection with particular works for future years. The nature of the discussion as something that is more spontaneous, however, needs attention in some centers. Teachers should of course pose meaningful questions, but then have the confidence to develop students' responses in a supportive, nurturing manner. When it is clear that a student is not going to provide the expected or 'correct' answer, there is often no point pursuing the line of inquiry to the point that they become anxious or deflated. In addition, candidates must be encouraged to refer to the text – not necessarily in the form of quotations, but certainly particular details that provide justification for their assertions.

Standard level internal assessment
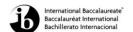
Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Many centres followed procedural guidelines with care. This is essential, as it assists the moderation process and consequently serves the interests of all candidates. A few procedural problems, however, were more than occasional:
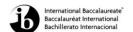
- Standardisation of marking is the most serious task that needs to be addressed by the many centres with more than one teacher of standard level candidates. In some centres, it is evident that standardisation is either ineffective, or else is not attempted at all. It is crucial for teachers in these centres to understand that only one moderation factor is assigned to each centre. If candidates in a centre are marked at two (or more) different standards, some candidates will unfairly suffer the consequences of the single moderation factor assigned to that centre. Proper standardisation eliminates this problem.
- Centres that permit candidates to read from previously prepared notes should be aware that they are violating the oral commentary guidelines and therefore putting their candidates at risk of not receiving credit for their Internal Assessment work.
- A number of centres evidently do not check the quality of recordings before submitting them. Barely audible samples were not uncommon; less often, recordings had significant technical problems that rendered the candidate more or less incomprehensible. A number of free programs are available to edit audio files. While all other manipulation of the recording after the examination is not permitted, there is no objection to boosting the volume of very quiet recordings. Centres should do this if the orals have not recorded at a suitable volume.

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- Efforts should be made to ensure ambient noise does not disturb examinations. Care should be taken to avoid the possibility of telephones ringing or loud, persistent buzzers and bells interfering with the candidate's thoughts, words or audibility.
- Please use only the forms issued by the IB during the current examination year. Centres that complete one or more parts of the Internal Assessment in the first year of study should record marks and comments, but not enter these on the 1/LIA until the form for the correct examination session becomes available.
- The 1/LIA forms should be completed electronically. It is unhelpful for teachers to print forms, hand write responses and scan documents. When using image files for extracts, please check the image quality; photos of book pages are usually poor in quality.
- Teachers' comments on the 1/LIA are more helpful if they address the different criteria separately.
- Although the recommended extract length is 20-30 lines, shorter extracts (particularly denser poems, such as sonnets) may be perfectly appropriate. More important than length is suitability. The extract should offer the candidate significant aspects of content as well as technique to treat. Extracts of more than a line or two over 30 are not suitable, because they have proven almost impossible for candidates to treat in sufficient depth in the eight minutes allotted to the commentary.
- When candidates are permitted to speak beyond eight minutes, they are being unfairly advantaged (or, in some cases, disadvantaged). Time limits for oral exams need to be treated as seriously as for written examinations. Teachers should keep in mind that at least two minutes of subsequent questions are expected, and that moderators will not consider anything said after ten minutes in their marking.
- Some guiding and subsequent questions were very helpful to candidates without being too directive. Teachers must avoid guiding questions that suggest a certain approach or interpretation, because in such cases candidates can receive no credit for taking up the suggestion. Thus, for example, the guiding question "How does the writer create tension in this passage?" offers far too much guidance, because it tells the candidate how the extract is to be read. This was a problem in a number of samples. More appropriate would be the question, "What mood is created in this passage?"
- Subsequent questions are most helpful if they return the candidate to a point that would benefit from clarification, further elaboration, a specific example, etc. Subsequent questions preceded by the teacher's own commentary, and desperate efforts to evoke comments that the teacher may have expected but the candidate did not make, are seldom if ever helpful to the candidate.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Perhaps under the influence of the higher level requirement, more standard level commentaries than ever seemed to be on poems this year. Carol Ann Duffy was very popular, but Owen, Frost, Heaney and Plath still appear in many samples, with forays into preceding centuries (Donne and Wordsworth in particular) significantly less usual, though frequently quite successful. More often than not, it is the expected poems that are offered ("Mid-Term Break", "Digging", or "Death of a Naturalist" in the case of Heaney, for example).

Shakespeare, though much reduced in frequency of appearance from the previous programme, was still present, and still represented most often by *Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Merchant of Venice.* Very little other drama was in evidence, although there was a fair amount of prose, in particular Orwell's non-fiction, Ondaatje, *The Great Gatsby,* and *Things Fall Apart.* Although many prose extracts from these works offer fruitful material for commentary, prose in particular, more than poetry or Shakespeare, tends to lead average and weaker candidates to focus on nothing but content. However, it is not the extract itself, but the approach taken, that is the problem in such cases.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The arguments against using very predictable extracts (Hamlet's or Macbeth's soliloquies, certain interchanges between Iago and Othello) have been made many times before. In reality, the quality of a candidate's commentary seems to have much less to do with the particular extract chosen than with the candidate's previous preparation, control of English, and general abilities as a critic.

Some candidates still do not seem to realise that they are judged on their comments on the passage, and not on the ability to introduce extraneous information. Biographical data and other potted introductions add nothing to the value of the commentary and detract from the overall impression made. Stronger candidates demonstrated that they were well prepared and could analyse the extract in a way that effectively revealed their knowledge and understanding of the passage and the work.

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the extract

Nearly all candidates demonstrated familiarity with, and the vast majority some degree of understanding, of their extracts. Most candidates could provide some context for the extract, at least in a general fashion, and virtually all candidates could demonstrate some degree of understanding of content. Some with poems failed to consider them in the context of other works by the poet, or if they were treating an extract, the context of the rest of the poem. Many candidates failed to distinguish in any way between the poet and the speaker, so that every statement in a poem, and every sensation, became autobiographical in their comments. The best candidates noted and could articulate subtleties of meaning, although only a small minority were able to communicate an appreciation of the poem or prose passage as a literary experience.

Criterion B: Appreciation of the writer's choices

Many moderators found the greatest diversity in the quality of commentaries in criterion B, the appreciation of the writer's choices. While the majority of candidates proved capable of pointing out an alliteration here or a personification there, few could distinguish the dominant techniques at work in the extract, and very few indeed could articulate what effect was achieved by a writer's particular choice or pattern of choices, or why such a choice was significant. There was very little sense of how meaning was being created and shaped by the writer. Many efforts to link a stylistic device to meaning were arbitrary: "The style has a naïve character, as we can recognise through his short sentences", or absurd: "The words 'Deep,

deep' give the feeling of emotional depth". Too many candidates became so obsessed with identifying techniques that they focused very little on what was at work in the extract as a result of these techniques. Weaker candidates tended to substitute paraphrase for analysis. Several moderators noted the general absence of any consideration being given to the structure of extracts (drama and prose as well poetry). Questions of tone – as well as the very concept – continue to cause difficulties and confusion.

Criterion C: Organization and presentation

Most of the commentaries were focused, if not always fully planned. A very brief outline at the beginning of the commentary, while not necessary, can be helpful, but only if the candidate's commentary actually follows it. Some candidates evidently felt that mentioning what is happening in the poem or passage constituted a plan. A few candidates offered inordinately long introductions before turning to an analysis of the extract. The majority of candidates use a line-by-line approach in their commentaries, particularly in the case of poetry and Shakespeare plays, and this, though not always the most effective approach, at least provides a structure, and may force some analysis of particular sections. Stronger candidates provided a clear thesis and used this as a basis for organising their points, while still taking care to treat all significant details in the extract. The weakest candidates offered only very general comments, randomly selecting details to address, or ignoring details completely, in favour of unsubstantiated generalisations.

Some candidates were incorrectly allowed to continue beyond eight minutes – some beyond nine – before they were stopped and subsequent questions were put to them. Many commentaries ran beyond ten and even eleven minutes for this reason.

Moderators commended the commentaries that demonstrated not only understanding and analytical ability, but also displayed a genuine appreciation of the author's accomplishment in the extract. Such commentaries confirmed that candidates can be guided to analyse texts closely.

Criterion D: Language

Using appropriate and effective language consistently now appears to be the least difficult requirement for candidates. The vast majority of candidates were able to reach at least the 3 level in criterion D, and there were many more above average marks in Language than in any other criterion. Even those who, to judge by their pronunciation, had been studying in English for a relatively brief time, could usually manage satisfactory marks for this criterion. Fewer candidates now slip into inappropriate levels of language, except in cases of colloquial expressions and/or dead metaphors they use when speaking to friends ("Hamlet realises that he just has to move on").

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to look carefully at the text before them, rather than simply trying to recall what they have been taught about it (or worse, seen on internet review sites). For poems, this means considering the overall experience of the poem, and not merely individual images or particular figures of speech and other stylistic choices. The author's

choices must be examined in the context of how they contribute to the overall meaning or experience of the poem. Candidates should examine how the speaker's voice and point of view are developed, and not simply equate poet with speaker. Prose extracts, too, should not be approached as mere vehicles for the conveyance of information. Rather, they must be examined in the same detail as poems: a focus on narrative voice is absolutely crucial, as well as a consideration of how structure, diction and syntax contribute to overall meaning.

At the same time, the extensive use of critical studies of the texts is probably unhelpful, as it discourages candidates from having, developing and articulating their own responses to the works they are studying. Candidates need to be aware that the study of literature is not a matter of learning what statements are to be parroted back about a text, but rather learning how to articulate and defend their own readings, whether or not these correspond to those of published studies.

As has been noted before, candidates need to have had regular practice in oral commentary throughout the course if they are to do well in the Internal Assessment. Oral commentary can be usefully practised in all parts of the course; it does not have to be limited to Part 2 texts.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

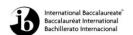| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As has been the case in the past there was a good selection of works, some familiar and much used, and others freshly added. The latter do seem at times to generate a more interesting range of topics, but given that even the most commonly used works are new to the students who are introduced to them, fresh and closely argued responses happen with these as well.

Some works proved problematic this year. Only some schools have really thought through the difference between writing about a conventional play or novel and writing about a graphic novel.

Many have chosen *Persepolis* as a choice for Part 1, but dealing with only the events of the narrative, or failing to understand both the cultural and historical aspects of the work hampered a number of students in writing well about it.

The Reflective Statement continues to present problems. The Written Assignments that are truly directed to literary matters are successful. Those that move the focus of the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement, writing about culture and context, into the essay or that focus on sociological or theological concerns are not; it's really that simple. Titles are

sometimes helpful, and sometimes give no clear indication ('True romance or not' or 'Family as salvation') of the text explored or the literary angle chosen.

With the use of Supervised Writing prompts larger angles on the texts will be repeated. If these prompts are broad enough and clearly directed to literary analysis, ('How does the writer present the conflict between oppositional characters?' or 'What effect does the writer achieve by recurrent references to weather?'), there should be ample opportunity for individual candidates to choose both their argument and their references so that the diversity foregrounds their personal encounter with the work. Schools where all the candidates chose one text, one prompt, and the same set of references are not likely to produce highly rewarded Written Assignments.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

In this criterion, a good deal of responsibility lies first with the teacher discerning what is wanted and that is "understanding of the cultural and contextual elements through the interactive oral." Candidates are often losing 3 points that should be quite easy to earn, but they need to know what these two elements are and are not.

Schools are clearly variable in what they are requesting that students prepare if they are nominated to deliver the Interactive Oral. The Interactive Oral is not a close investigation of the text as a literary construct; it is a research project that examines the cultural and contextual 'soup' in which the literary work has been constructed. So it includes giving fellow students a rounded idea of person is who wrote the text: where, when did (do) they live? What are the social, geographical, political elements of their context? What other things have they written? How does their work relate to or contradict the national and literary traditions in which they have worked? What about the context and cultural elements within the work itself, especially if they are different to those of the authors? Some schools have successfully addressed these elements. It is highly likely that teachers of these groups have been quite directive in guiding students in the correct direction.

Unfortunate permutations of the Interactive Oral then become the material of the unsuccessful Reflective Statements. The Reflective Statement is not any of the following: a plot outline or overview of the text; a pre-writing exercise for the Written Assignment; a response to multiple texts or Interactive Orals; a survey of literary features in the text; an evaluation of the way peers have presented the material. It is also not even one word over 400. It is a reflection on the text under discussion. When the Written Assignment is submitted, that Reflective Statement should accompany the submission.

There has certainly been some positive evolution in handling the Reflective Statements, but too many students are losing marks here because they simply have not been guided to articulate how the Interactive Oral has in some way enlarged or developed their understanding of the work.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding of the text

This is the criterion where almost every candidate was able to earn some marks. Surely if the text has been discussed in class and closely scrutinized, almost every candidate can meet

levels 3-4 in this descriptor. That said, faltering by not having insight into the complex Nora that Ibsen presents or overlaying the portrayal of Meursault with half-understood notions of existentialism, will not earn marks in this descriptor. Explicit address of culture and context are the material of the preceding stages; they are not the business of the Written Assignment, except implicitly, but some schools are leading their students in that misconceived direction.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

Once again there was a clear dividing line between the majority of candidates who could identify some of the writer's choices, and the minority who were able to show *appreciation* of the ways in which these choices created meaning. Sometimes, unfortunately, that appreciation was implied rather than made explicit. The majority of papers tended to concentrate on theme or character: however, the focus on how techniques established these was not revealed. Only a minority attempted to discuss how other features generate meaning. Some ignored this element of the task completely; in some essays techniques were implied rather than clearly stated; in a few there was focus on language at the expense of argument. There is some confusion over what is meant by 'imagery' - and the term is used very broadly. However, there were also some thoughtful analyses: candidates who select a thesis with a clear literary focus are likely to score well here.

Criterion D: Organization and Development

Often candidates had some pattern or formula for arranging their ideas; when they did so they could reach criterion 2 or sometimes 3, given that their points were pursued and exemplified. However, development often falls short and that seems to be the point of differentiation between student performance. Some show they have had sufficient practice in developing their points through well-selected details from the text and the assessment of the effect of these details and how they further the line of argument. Other students fail to do any or all of these.

Happily, overlong quotations have become less frequent. However, many examiners comment on the clumsy incorporation of quotations into the body of the essays. Embedding is a skill that must be taught in this discipline, and without it the arrangement and delivery of the argument is weak, a fault of a good number of essays. One does not expect, however, to see the exact same set of references deployed in every essay in a given centre, something that happens on occasion. Introduction and conclusions, too, are variable in quality and impact the work in this criterion.

Criterion E: Language

Similarly to the work for Criterion B, there is a good deal of competent prose evident in the essays. However, clumsy sentence construction, lack of paragraphing and really poor proofreading tend to appear much too often.

Many students employed excessively complex vocabulary that they didn't understand, creating convoluted sentence structures.   At times, the register used was informal, and technical errors (split infinitives, run-on sentences, incorrect apostrophe use, singular/plural agreement errors, misspelling) were often in evidence. This essay is a formal writing situation and both the register used and the care exercised in expressing ideas should reflect the candidate's informed understanding of those factors and how they impact the marking.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Give the students clear directions and models for the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement. Make use of the Teacher Support Material, the forum and the Teacher Resource Exchange on the OCC to refine your own understanding.

- It is often useful to practise all the elements of this component with works from another part of the syllabus, particularly since many schools start the program with Part 4. Then the students can bring some level of understanding to the four stages of this assessment and teachers can help by providing ample feedback and awarding grades.

- If handwriting is used for the Reflective Statement, and there are understandable reasons for doing this, be sure that candidates give at least as much attention and care to it as they do in Papers 1 and 2. It is also helpful if every student writes the Reflective Statement question (in the criterion) at the top of the statement.

- Put some extra focus, but particularly modeling and practice, on the features of Criterion C.

- Reports of the word count should be real and not imagined. '1499' raises some red flags with examiners, and one word over the limit in both the Reflective Statement and the Written Assignment will incur a penalty.

- Rules for citation should be followed consistently within the school's submissions and should be based on some recognized system.

- Within the restrictions of your school system it would be good all around to try to move toward some new inclusions of texts; often this can be done incrementally.

- Warn students against the biographical interpretation of their texts; turning Gregor into a cockroach is not necessarily a consequence of Kafka's relation to his own father. Inclinations in this direction are common at this level, but candidates should be told how shaky their arguments in this vein are likely to be without the substantial research such an approach requires.

- Do address the issue of translation, and which elements in a work are likely to be less convincing when they are matters, such as aural features, very much affected by this reality.

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Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Most centres handled procedural elements well. Compared to the May 2013 session, there were fewer cases of the reflective statement not being submitted with the written assignment or the reflective statement not being on the same work as the written assignment. Diploma coordinators must include the candidate checklist with the mailing and indicate clearly if there are candidates who are not submitting a written assignment. Assignments should be ordered by candidate session number. The candidate session number should appear on every page that is submitted for assessment and pages should be numbered. Candidates must include full bibliographical details of the work being written about (normally in a bibliography or works cited; the examiner needs to know which translation has been used).

Too many candidates are still losing marks in criteria A and D as they have submitted work which exceeds the word counts (the reflective statement must be a maximum of 400 words; the written assignment must not exceed 1500 words). As stated in the assessment criteria, marking penalties apply to work which exceeds these limits and it is a great shame for candidates to lose valuable marks which could easily have been rectified by careful editing. Reflective statement and written assignments which fall below the word counts (300 and 1200 words respectively) are considered to be self-penalizing in that they are not likely to score the higher marks; however, there were relatively few submissions that did not meet the minimum word counts. In some cases candidates with written assignments of just over 1200 words might usefully have been encouraged to extend their analysis a little further in the drafting process.

Please note that from the May 2015 session marking penalties will apply if the Part 1 works are not selected from the Prescribed Literature in Translation list (PLT). If an incorrect work has been chosen the maximum mark available in Criterion B is three. Most schools are already correctly choosing Part1 works from the PLT, but not all.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most centres appear to be choosing Part 1 works that are appropriate to their candidates in terms of intellectual challenge, however, in many cases these choices are limited to a relatively small range of works (Süskind, Camus, García Márquez and Ibsen dominate here). Poetry and prose other than fiction only make occasional appearances. Candidates choosing to write on drama are best advised to pay attention to theatrical/performance elements (they often write about 'readers' of plays and, disappointingly, sometimes even refer to the play as

a 'novel'). The most suitable assignments continue to be those that have a literary focus that is well-defined and appropriate for treatment in an essay of this length (assignments with topics that are more philosophical or sociological rarely do well). In addition, teachers need to remind candidates that the development of their argument is conditional on actually having something to prove in the first place: too many assignments focus more on approaches best considered descriptive rather than analytical.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

It is positive to note that, this session, far fewer of these were missing or on the other Part 1 work. The fact remains, however, that there is not uniform understanding of the objectives of the interactive oral and the reflective statement produced in response. The interactive oral needs to address the key elements of culture and context that are necessary to understand the actual work. These may cover a range of relevant elements: historical details, political culture, social and ethical mores, biographical facts, geographical location, dominant ideologies, literary movements (this list is not exhaustive). What do candidates need to know in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the work itself? It would be advantageous for teachers to check, at the planning stage, that candidates are headed in the right direction so that the interactive oral will deliver what it needs to. In addition, the teacher also has a key role to play during the interactive oral, intervening, when necessary, to ensure that the discussion is focused on where it needs to be and that inaccurate cultural/contextual information is not disseminated.

Although reflective statements need to make reference to the content of the interactive oral and the literary work itself, these must be concise, as the main focus must be on relevant elements of culture and context. Reflective statements which are simply summaries of what was presented in the interactive oral will not do well, as they are neither personal nor reflective. Reflective statements which focus almost exclusively on the content of the work are also unlikely to be successful, as they do not demonstrate awareness of and reflection on the relevant elements of culture and context which underpin the work. When a candidate identifies points raised in the interactive oral regarding these cultural/contextual elements, relates them to specific details of the work and is able to reflect on how his/her understanding of the work has developed (or possibly not) as a result of this discussion, then the correct approach is being delivered and rewarding the candidate is relatively straightforward.

There are still too many candidates submitting reflective statements over 400 words and therefore losing one mark in criterion A. Reflective statements under 300 words are unlikely to cover enough material to be able to gain full marks in this criterion. Statements which make no reference to any interactive oral are troubling. Too much personal reflection on a candidate's own life/circumstances is not illuminating understanding of the work culture and context of the work (a little of this may indeed be useful, but a judicious balance must be maintained). It must also be noted that there are a significant number of centres where this crucial process is clearly understood and delivered well, with almost every candidate gaining two or three marks in Criterion A.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

Almost all examiners reported that most candidates knew their works well. Topics that are too wide or unfocused make it difficult to show detailed knowledge and understanding. Candidates need to be able to develop their understanding of the details into a coherent and convincing interpretation; this then constitutes 'insight' into the work. When candidates from the same centre repetitively employ the same examples and make the same points, it suggests that the approach is not individual enough. Individual guidance to candidates following the supervised writing may help to rectify this. In addition, encouraging candidates to re-read the works (or parts of them) in preparation for drafting the assignments may help to take them beyond examples covered in class discussion. Many examiners lament the absence of precise textual detail required to substantiate claims made. Assignments which consist of unsupported interpretation are unlikely to do well, particularly when candidates' claims are dubious or simply incorrect. The majority of candidates fall into the 3-4 mark band in this criterion. It is pleasing to see that most candidates do know their works well enough, but paraphrase, at times, prevails over analysis and prevents them from reaching the higher marks. Examples need to be effectively contextualized if they are to be successful; this is not an invitation to provide extensive plot summary: the best candidates are able to do this concisely.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

This does remain a challenge to many candidates, but an appropriate choice of topic is clearly the key to success. When the topic is literary and the approach analytical the candidate can be rewarded. The analysis needs to be explicit: the writer has made conscious choices in constructing the text. When the approach is implicit (for example, writing about a character, but not explicitly addressing the choices the writer has made, this is dangerous, as examiners are reluctant to award marks here). Frequent use of the writer's name suggests that the candidate is on the right track, although this is certainly not an automatic indicator of success, nor the only way to perform strongly in this criterion. The approach here should be more than simply a listing of techniques: a meaningful and integrated analysis that supports the interpretative claims being made is what is required. Well-framed questions for the supervised writing and teacher support following this, and after the draft stage, should help candidates do better here. It is clear that a number of centres are preparing candidates well for this; in other centres it does seem that candidates are not familiar enough with the assessment criteria. Daily class discussion should be reinforcing this approach all the time: What do you understand of this piece of text? How has the writer chosen to construct the text in this way to lead you to that interpretation?

Criterion D: Organization and development

Most candidates are aware of the need for a focused and appropriate introduction, a series of effectively connected main body paragraphs and a justified, logical conclusion. Most candidates can achieve a three in this criterion; focused and effective topics often lead candidates to getting a four. The argument needs to be narrowly focused and sequencing of ideas logical and convincing to describe it as 'persuasive' and warrant the awarding of the top mark. There are still a number of submissions that exceed 1500 words (and thus lose two
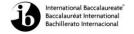
marks in criterion D), but fewer than the May 2013 session. Useful work could still be done on helping candidates connect paragraphs more effectively. A tight and controlled sequence of coherently connected ideas leads to success. Vague and general introductions waste valuable words and do not presage success. If an examiner has to ask what the topic is at the end of the introduction, the introductory paragraph has clearly failed in delivering what it needed to. Some assignments end rather abruptly. This suggests that either there has been poor management of the developing argument or that the topic itself needs revision, with reformulation of the actual focus. It is to be hoped that these structural weaknesses would be picked up on at the draft stage and thus candidates might be able to perform better on the final version. Conclusions should not introduce new ideas and ought to be logically justified by the preceding argument. Many candidates still struggle with the appropriate punctuation needed to integrate quotations smoothly. This, along with the grammatical modification of quotations where necessary, is a skill that needs to be taught; it is clear that in some centres this is done effectively.

Criterion E: Language

Poor proofreading, weak punctuation and informal register were the most frequent causes for awarding a lower mark here. Many candidates do perform well in this criterion and, given the circumstances in which this assessment is produced and the help given by word-processed work, this is not surprising. At the same time, it is clear that too many candidates are not re-reading their own work effectively and picking up on obvious errors (perhaps even caused by auto-correction on the computer; re-visiting the work after some time has elapsed might help improve performance here). Random use of commas, sentence fragments and run-on sentences, lack of understanding of what a semi-colon does: these are the most frequent punctuation weaknesses. Contractions should be avoided in formal academic writing. Colloquial expressions and language that is not informed by an appropriate cultural/contextual sensibility cause disruption in terms of effective communication. Confusing language, where the examiner needs to re-read sentences in order to comprehend the meaning, is not normally capable of gaining a mark of three; this may happen when the candidate has chosen a course of study beyond his or her linguistic capability. Occasional mechanical weaknesses can, of course, be balanced by style and diction choices that impress the reader. Teachers must emphasise that mistakes in the title of a work, the author or character name (including diacritical marks), or, indeed, the country the work is set in, will not impress any examiner ('Gabriel Marquez's novel Chronicles of a death foretold is set in Columbia and Santiago Nasser is a main character' may be an exaggeration of the case in point, but not by very much, according to the writing of many candidates). The very best are truly a pleasure to read, not just in terms of compelling academic content, but because these candidates write with confidence, clarity and sophistication.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers and candidates must be aware of the required focus for the interactive oral and the reflective statement
- Devise supervised writing prompts with a suitable literary focus
- Encourage candidates to develop independent approaches to their topics
- Ensure that the topic has a suitably narrow focus

- Make candidates aware of the word limits for both the written assignment and the reflective statement
- Remind candidates of the importance of substantiating claims made through the use of precise examples and analysis based on appreciation of the writer's choices
- Review the nature of introductions and conclusions so that these become both more effective and appropriate
- Help candidates to understand that there needs to be a coherent and convincing line of argument (aided by appropriate transitions/connecting phrases)
- Teach the integration and modification of quotations
- Develop a common understanding in class of appropriate register in formal written work
- Encourage candidates to check their work carefully before final submission.

Higher level paper one
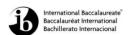
Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

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

The majority of candidates at most levels were able to identify literary features to some degree. However, many weaker candidates did not move far beyond the mere listing of these techniques and even stronger candidates lost marks on occasions because their exploration of the effects of these techniques was not developed enough.

Candidates need to understand the importance of a thorough and sustained close reading of the text, where they explore the different layers of meaning in each stanza / paragraph. There was a tendency by some candidates to focus on certain literary features at the expense of others (characterisation?), over - analysing and attaching meanings that were not convincing. Others appeared to be following a literary technique 'tick list', writing whole paragraphs on techniques which only had superficial significance.

Some candidates lost valuable marks as a result of poor technical accuracy in their written expression.

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

Despite the above comment about technical weaknesses, the majority of students were clearly able to structure a coherent and effective response and write about literature using an appropriate register.

The majority also demonstrated an understanding of how to approach literary analysis and, though not always successfully developed, focused on the use of literary techniques. There was real engagement with, and genuine interest in, the ideas explored in both the prose and poetry and examples of some accomplished and highly convincing personal responses.

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

Prose commentary

The majority of students who chose the prose were able to grasp the main scenario of the passage - the fact that Mona had been asked to leave home and her journey towards independence. Weaker students missed the reasoning behind the mother's actions, choosing to ignore the indications of her clear love and concern for her daughter.

Many could comment on the choice of imagery used and analyse its effect. Analysis of Mona's bed, the description of the highway and the blank walls of the new apartment was generally handled well. Only a relatively small number of candidates linked Mona's compulsive knocking on the tree to the superstition of 'knocking on wood'. However, stronger candidates were still able to offer a convincing interpretation of the significance of this action.

Surprisingly, a significant number of candidates offered only superficial analysis of the characterisation of the parents and the relationship of the family members, choosing to focus on elements of the passage that were less fundamental to understanding. The most successful candidates, however, offered a sustained and persuasive reading of the different characters, exploring subtleties in the text.

Students of all abilities could understand that the number 9 was significant to Mona and the more successful explored this in detail – some making a link to the knocking and suggesting Mona's behaviour demonstrated signs of OCD.

Only a small number picked up on the humour and the contrast created with the darker elements of the passage. Structural elements were also often passed over or completely ignored.

Overall, there was a wide variety of responses on this passage but stronger candidates were able to do very well and produce some impressive literary analysis.

Please see comments on the poetry response in 'further comments' below.

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Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Narrative/paraphrase is not literary analysis. Candidates need to understand the difference. Examples of good and bad practice are a helpful way for candidates to recognise this and then apply it to their own writing.
- While candidates obviously need to understand how key literary devices can create effects, they should guard against having a rigid 'tick list' of techniques that they try to 'spot' in the text. Literary analysis should be about engaging with the whole text and consideration of techniques should be part of a larger reading rather than a section of the commentary tacked-on at the end. Additionally, structuring a commentary around 2-3 techniques leads to a narrow reading of the text.
- Candidates should guard against attaching a symbolic meaning to the text which cannot be well-supported with textual evidence. Layers of meaning should be explored through a close and thorough reading of the texts, ambiguity should be recognised and discussed. Some candidates seem to think, particularly with poetry, that they have been confronted with a puzzle for which there is only one definitive solution.
- Candidates should be given plenty of opportunity to explore how structure is used for effect in both prose and poetry, so they feel confident exploring this in an exam situation.
- Being able to write fluently, precisely and accurately, is an important aspect of commentary writing. Candidates should be given the opportunity to write by hand under timed conditions to help develop their writing skills and to highlight weaknesses which they can address. A significant number of very good students were still making basic spelling errors with words such as simile, separate and disappointment.
- The evidence is that candidates who plan their response first, not only produce more effectively structured commentaries, they also demonstrate higher level thinking and more developed analysis. Teachers need to 'teach' candidates to be effective planners.

Poetry commentary

This poem proved accessible to students of all different abilities. All were able to glean it was about passengers on a boat searching for dolphins and most tried to explore the deeper meaning of this 'search' with varying degrees of success. A significant number of students failed to appreciate that the dolphins didn't actually appear and while they were not unduly penalised for this, it did indicate the need for a close and through reading of the poem.

Again, candidates had clearly been taught to identify the key literary features in a poem and were able to do this; imagery, word choice and alliteration were focused on in particular and there was some persuasive and impressive analysis of the effects of these techniques. A note of caution about alliteration – candidates need to be wary about placing too much emphasis on this technique. There was a significant amount of alliteration in this poem and some commentary on its effect was certainly justified. However, some candidates wrote long, rambling paragraphs about the repetition of 's', which were not particularly convincing. Stronger students were able to offer astute analysis of the effects of the poem's structure and the use of irregular rhyme. However, weaker students tended to either ignore structure completely or address it by summarising the main points of each stanza, which must have

been time-consuming and again, did little to demonstrate their skills of literary analysis.

The modal ' should have' caused difficulties for a significant number of students who read it as an expression of past regret rather than the establishment of a hypothetical scenario about what would have happened had the dolphins appeared.

Some students took a very formulaic approach to the structuring of their response. Commonly, the introduction would focus on 2-3 literary devices, followed by three long sections on each of these devices. This appeared to be a very limiting approach and tended to lead to a rather narrow reading of the poem. Other candidates seemed intent on attaching a symbolic meaning to the poem at the expense of all else. This approach encouraged them to ignore a lot of significant detail in the poem and make sweeping statements which they were unable to support convincingly with textual evidence. Overall, by far the most successful responses were those from candidates who engaged in a thorough, close reading of the poem and who were prepared to explore and speculate rather than to attach one definitive meaning.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

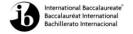| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

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

Many examiners cited analysis as a major difficulty. This affected marks awarded for criterion B, where candidates have to show some appreciation of the effects of stylistic devices in both prose and poetry.

Where prose was concerned, examiners noted that candidates failed to comment on humour and tone. It was not seen as "a crafted literary artefact" and invited subjective responses on school experience. The use of the word "situation" in the guiding questions seemed to cause confusion for some candidates, despite stipulating "in this classroom".

In the case of the poem, the final stanza proved problematic. It was felt that some of the problems were caused by candidates failing to read to its end before beginning to write. The result was "gross errors of interpretation".

A further difficulty for some candidates was the smooth integration of quotes.

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

With one exception, examiners found candidates to be well-prepared in organising their responses and in using appropriate language. Thus many scored well on criteria C and D. Very few candidates failed to complete, or to complete to a reasonable length. Candidates were able to identify literary devices and comment on structure.

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

Prose

The cultural background proved problematic for some – "a very English public school is an unknown entity for most international candidates." The prose responses often became social and didactic commentaries on education.

The tone proved difficult to identify. Also, it was felt that some vocabulary might have been glossed (such as "wryly affable"). Finn's response was not well-understood and sometimes seen as "joke-y" and "arrogant" when in fact it tackled the issue of causality in history. Humour was also overlooked.
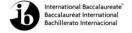
Poetry

Effective analysis of literary devices proved difficult. Many candidates saw the poem as a reflection on the mother's death when in fact it is a reflection on her inability to express love. Thus the final stanza was imperfectly understood. Only a few candidates convincingly discussed the moon as a metaphor for the mother.

A strength noted by examiners was frequent careful planning and the use of the guiding questions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Ensure names and words are copied correctly.
- Show candidates how to analyze literary devices, including tone. Identifying structure is relevant, but candidates must give an interpretation as to why it has been used.
- Point out the differences in genre - "The Sense of an Ending" is not an autobiography although it was often treated as such.
- Teach separate techniques for writing about different genres.
- Encourage close reading; examination questions should be read in their entirety at least twice before making plans and interpreting.
- Expose candidates to a wide variety of texts and practise skills.
- Revise punctuation, especially the possessive apostrophe.
- Legible handwriting is of the utmost importance if marks are not to be compromised.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

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

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

Students were prepared for the demands of the examination but often seemed to have difficulty mustering detail in support of answers. While candidates had a strong general knowledge of texts and also of the general overall significance of a work, candidates at times struggled to use particular details and particular moments in support of an argument. Also, while candidates usually focused on the question, they often had difficulty crafting an argument in relation to the question. For example, essays often made an assertion in relation to the question in the introduction and then followed with long summary and a concluding sentence in each paragraph that made an explicit link to the question. Candidates weren't building an argument or presenting ideas in relation to the question with the texts used as support.

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

In general candidates seem to have read the works and have approached them in interesting ways in their classrooms. Candidates have also been trained to respond to the question and to be attentive to generic conventions. While in the past there were noticeable "gaps" in terms of criteria "A" and "C," this didn't seem to be the case during this session.

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

Q1. This was a popular question for which there was a wide range of answers in terms of quality. Examiners allowed for many possible definitions of subtext ranging from the hidden emotions of characters to the allegorical or thematic implications of a work. Candidates, however, still needed to provide a consistent sense of the meaning of "subtext" in their responses. It was somewhat difficult for some candidates not only to be consistent with what they viewed as subtext but to go on to suggest how this was important to the dramas.

Q2. Candidates who dealt with at least one play that made use of a narrator or commentator (The Glass Menagerie) for example, tended to do best on this question. Some candidates provided interesting and successful responses suggesting how other elements often serve as a kind of commentary (ranging from soliloquys to minor characters who provide a balanced

perspective on events). Candidates who only dealt with plays without any kind of "narrator" were still able to handle the question well if they consistently tied their response back to some idea of "filtering."

Q3. This may seem like a challenging question and for those candidates who only made vague references to time, it was. Many candidates, however, were able to write interesting responses to the way time works in terms of the amount of time actually presented in a play or in terms of the way time can be manipulated (through flashbacks, gaps, etc.).

Q4. The question offered many possibilities for candidates. Those who were able to make specific references to texts and who built an interesting argument in relation to, for example, connotation/denotation or figurative language, tended to be successful.

Q5. There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment.
Q6. They key to this question was the use of detail. While many candidates were able to write to the broad concerns in poems, fewer were able to show how this broad concern was reflected in a more focused way if there was not a strong familiarity with the poems.

Q7. This was another question that—to teachers and examiners—seemed to be challenging. Candidates, however, managed to produce a range of interesting responses. Some discussed the ways in which the thoughts of characters remain hidden from other characters (in a work like 1984, for example) while others dealt with characters like Gatsby who may be interesting   partly   because   his   thoughts   are   hidden. Some candidates struggled to discuss journey as an organizing structure and instead focused on the broad thematic elements of journey. At the same time, a thematic approach was possible and some candidates linked stages of growth to movement through the novels or through key turning points. Examiners were careful to allow candidates to look at literal journeys (Huck Finn, Heart of Darkness) and more metaphoric "life journeys" (or "journies" as spelled by at least half of the candidates) but successful candidates needed to make a reasoned or supported case for the notion of journey.

Q8. This was a very popular question that, like many others, demanded some attention to detail in the works. It was relatively easy for candidates to talk about sympathy in terms of broad events. More interesting responses tended to find subtleties in the question and saw the ways in which sympathy may shift or tended to examine conventions beyond events and character background (such as imagery or irony) that might control sympathy.

Q9. There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment.

Q10. There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment.

Q11. There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment.

Q12. There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

There seemed to be two elements that were fairly obvious during this session that could be "fixed" with direct instruction. The first, is for candidates to be sure to write enough and in great enough detail to show a strong knowledge and understanding of a work. This does not mean that length, in the end, wins but it means that a sound general overview of a work is not enough to demonstrate intimacy with a work (or knowledge and understanding that moves beyond "adequate.") It is possible to remain tightly focused on a question but to still communicate necessary elements of context (from within the works) and it is imperative to use detailed support for claims, even when they seem self-evidently "correct." Writing what we all seem to know about A Streetcar Named Desire, for example, without reasoned and supported arguments does not suggest strong knowledge and understanding. The other issue that seemed to surface during this session was the artificial structuring of essays or the kind of writing that suggests that structure came before thought or the desire to communicate an idea. Introductions that start with broad generalizations about life or literature and then get to a more pointed thesis with three parts can be fine but too often candidates seemed to be arbitrarily finding three things to talk about or arbitrarily linking a feature to a theme rather than spending some time thinking about the possible answer to the question. Considering how the works suggest a response to the particular literary "problem" lead to more focused and authentic essays than letting a formula dictate thinking.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

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

Candidates are still experiencing some difficulty in maintaining relevance to the question in their essays. The notes on individual questions will clarify this but there is a wider issue in that too many students come to this paper with a body of rote-learned material (Aristotle's definition of tragedy, Freytag's Pyramid, the Great Circle of Being) and this is coupled with a fixed determination to offload it all. Candidates sometimes devoted a third of the essays to material that had, at best, only implicit relevance to the question selected and was more often an intrusion and a digression that weakened the responses enormously.

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

Examiners were pleased to note increased willingness to write about literary conventions and discuss their effects. Although this is an aspect that can always be improved upon, there are signs of increased awareness of the need to draw on conventions other than the one specified in the question and to offer a more holistic approach, looking at the interplay of, for example, setting and figurative language to support characterisation in prose works; or light and sound effects adding emphasis to key moments in drama.

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

Drama

Question 1: This proved a very popular choice and yielded a mixed range of responses. The opening sentence directed thought towards 'levels of meaning not directly stated' to help clarify the convention of 'sub-text'. Unfortunately, some candidates tried to supply their own definitions, surmising that it might mean 'stage directions' or in one case 'words written in italics'. This did not go well for them. Success with this question depended on choice of strong, precise examples. Thoughtful comment about what lies behind Blanche's aversion to a naked light bulb and Willy's dismay at the lack of growth in his garden proved more profitable than loosely focussed comment on Old South/New South or The American Dream. When this question was handled well, there were many instances where candidates were able to engage with the writer's use of context, setting and symbols to good effect. For example, although apartheid is never named in *Master Harold and the Boys*, it underpins all that goes on in the tea house, where dialogue ostensibly about flying kites and ballroom dancing generates meaning not only within the relationship of Hally and Sam but also points to the wider situation in South Africa.

Question 2: This worked well both with plays that did have a clear identifiable narrator, such as Alfieri in *View from the Bridge* and also in plays that did not, such as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Stronger comparisons often came from a choice of two plays representative of each approach but examiners were aware that candidates did not always have such range at their disposal and accepted a wide variety of interpretations for 'narrator' (soliloquy and asides, for example). There was a pleasing flexibility in many of the responses with some students questioning whether Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* could be considered a reliable narrator and arguing that, if the audience is left in a state of confusion in response to the seemingly random, absurd events in *Rosencrantz*, that is entirely appropriate to the dramatist's purpose. One unfortunate blemish in answers to this question involved the creation of hypothetical arguments around what the plays might be like if they were written in a different way. This is never going to be a useful line of enquiry and inevitably took candidates away from the texts.

Question 3: Candidates who took time to delineate their understanding of 'compressed' or 'expanded' time frames brought greater focus to their essays and had greater success. Many simply indicated the length of time covered – a day, a week, a month – and then moved on to

general thematic comment.   The extended time frame in *A Streetcar Named Desire* prompted some thoughtful lines of enquiry, considering how the passage of time made Blanche's decline believable and drew out the simmering resentments between Blanche and Stanley ('You have to understand just how many times Stanley has been locked out of his own bathroom.') Another candidate pointed out that the time frame follows Stella's pregnancy to the birth of her baby, giving symbolic value to the close of the play. In contrast, other well-presented answers looked at how a whole family's tragic stories could be woven into the passing of just one day in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Poetry

Question 4: The specific task was to explore 'creation' and 'effectiveness' of multiple levels of meaning. Mere assertion that lots of levels of meaning were indeed present and a list of what they might be, seldom hit the mark.   Candidates offering poetry often appear to have good detailed knowledge of the poems, evidenced through direct quotation, yet many essays did not centre their responses on the task.   Indeed, it often seemed as if candidates were presenting a prepared general 'commentary' on interesting features in each selected poem. In these cases, candidates might end with an assertion that what just preceded was evidence in support of the question. Where this occurred, the connection was often only implicit and whilst some sense of 'meaning' might be present, techniques that supported the creation of 'levels' was often omitted.   Such answers generated only minimal comparison, sometimes just the assertion of a shared theme.

Question 5: Very few candidates attempted this question and this prompted speculation as to whether candidates feel confident in discussing the structure and organising principles of a poem. Feedback from examiners on questions 4 and 6 highlighted that candidates studying this genre have either too little detailed knowledge, deriving from a predominantly thematic approach or else only partial knowledge of their texts through focus on examples of figurative language in isolation. Having said that, where candidates did know their material with an appropriate measure of precision, there were some fine responses, most notably on Emily Dickinson's poetry.

Question 6: Sometimes responses were disappointing if, for example, candidates assumed that simply providing a little biographical information would prove the case. A statement such as 'Sylvia Plath never got on with her father' did not do much to help exploration of the savage imagery in *Daddy*; candidates simply identifying Walcott's place of birth were not going far into the deeply personal identity crisis played out against references to world history in *A Far Cry From Africa*.   Nonetheless, there were some very good studies of Hardy's war poetry, looking at how he could both view troops en masse ('Vespasian's legions') yet bring focus on the individual faces and hands of the relatives waving them goodbye,   and considering the strong emphasis placed on the name of the dead drummer boy, Hodge. These poems, from a writer who did not see war first hand, yet had distilled something personal from a potentially broad and impersonal subject worked very well alongside poems by Wilfred Owen who, in describing a commonplace event of war, the gas attack, was able to write with such immediacy, 'In all my dreams …/He plunges at me'.

Prose: novel and short story

Question 7: There were two parts to this question, both the 'hidden thought' aspect and the creation of interesting characters; sadly, many responses did not balance the two requirements and did not extend discussion into how the lack of revelation had contributed significantly to the texts. Many candidates worked with *A Handmaid's Tale* connecting the passive narrative of Offred to the oppressive setting of Gilead (a need to keep one's thoughts to one's self in a society where one should not be thinking at all) and noting how the hiding of Nick's thoughts contributed to suspense in the novel, particularly in the closing pages. There was some useful exploration of narrative perspective in responses to this question with several instances of a character's true nature being veiled by the partiality of the narrator. Nadine Gordimer's enigmatic character, Rad, from *Some Are Born to Sweet Delight* was a popular choice and it was surprising that no candidate commented on the significance of the title 'We are led to believe a lie / When we see not thro' the eye'.

Question 8: Many texts did offer examples of specific, physical journey e.g. *The Road*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Huckleberry Finn*. Plenty of other texts offered opportunities to discuss metaphorical or thematic journeys, such as Sethe's attempts to move away from an oppressive and traumatic past in *Beloved*, or Edna Pontellier's attempts to find a measure of independence and personal freedom in *The Awakening*. Often, even if the characters were not travelling throughout the novel, a change of address proved significant and candidates were able to comment on the role of the setting in advancing a character's understanding of self. Weaker responses tended to become mired in plot events without constituting them as 'a journey'.

Question 9: Here, the largest drawback to success was where students simply described the characters (often as real people), and the events they go through, concluding that sympathy should be self-evident in the experiences. *Beloved* was a popular choice of text here but simple statement that Sethe was once a slave and this creates sympathy does not reveal *how* the author is controlling our response to her actions. Many candidates stated, 'They took her milk' with so little awareness of emotive language that one examiner commented, 'it might have been a bottle picked up from her front porch'. However, revealing and exploring some of the events/symbols of Sethe's life story (the chokecherry tree of scars, for example) does eventually enable the reader to view a shocking action - the murder of her own daughter - in a sympathetic light. The question offered plenty of opportunity to draw on other supporting conventions and many candidates considered how the unrelenting bleakness of the setting heightens our sympathies for the characters in *The Road*.

Prose other than fiction

Questions 10, 11 & 12: There were not enough responses to this question to allow for general comment. However, a few candidates attempted to answer these questions using novels and short stories and, in a few cases, their drama texts. This error did not incur a penalty in this session but it will in 2015.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teaching should continue to focus on specific conventions – ideally candidates should not be seeing terms for the first time on the question paper and they should have some familiarity with the vocabulary of the subject and their chosen genre. However, mindful of all that has been said, such teaching must be delivered in a meaningful way, avoiding formula definitions but looking all the time at how various techniques work within a text to create effects, manipulate readers' responses and generate meaning. It might be worth re-evaluating some text choices and combinations to ensure that candidates are equipped with a wide range of ideas and an understanding of literary qualities that will lend themselves to meaningful comparison and not just general, situational connection or a shared theme.

Further comments

Examiners felt very positive about the responses they had read, reporting no significant difficulties. The majority of candidates were able to select a question they could work with and take the opportunity to demonstrate what they had gained from the works studied. Whilst there were some weaknesses in performance and a few difficulties relating to particular questions, overall a greater level of preparedness and sense of purpose in the writing could be detected. Rubric error was relatively infrequent but still a significant number of candidates were offering incorrect texts in their responses. This did not attract a penalty in this session but will do so in 2015 and teachers must ensure that their students know that they cannot revert to writing about texts studied elsewhere in the programme. One point worth making is that again in this session we had feedback from schools expressing surprise that the Standard Level questions were the same as the Higher Level questions. This does reveal that there are teaching staff whose information about current protocols needs updating.

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