

English A: Literature

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 - 15	16 - 28	29 - 41	42 - 55	56 - 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

Almost all the moderators were happy with the way schools complied with the regulations. The few schools which did not are reminded of the following:

- Observe the timing of the orals carefully: a maximum of ten minutes for the commentary (8 for the uninterrupted close analysis of the poem, 2 for the teacher's follow-up questions and 10 for the discussion on the second work).
- All the IA sample materials (i.e. the recording, poem and form 1/LIA) should be uploaded on IBIS as instructed.
- Teachers' comments on the form should be detailed enough to help the moderator understand how they arrived at the marks. The most helpful comments are those

which are based on the assessment criteria

- Schools should check again to confirm that the poem and guiding question(s) uploaded correspond to the candidate who used them for the commentary
- Schools, through the IB Coordinator, should ask the IB for guidance if the selected candidate's recording is inaudible instead of submitting it for external assessment

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As usual, there was a very wide range of works studied. The most popular poets included Seamus Heaney, Wilfred Owen, Bruce Dawe, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson and John Donne. The most popular plays included Hamlet, Macbeth and Othello; and prose works included The Great Gatsby, Gulliver's Travels, Wuthering Heights, Heart of Darkness and Running in the Family. Most school choices were interesting and suitably challenging and the discussion questions were often provocative and fair, thereby helping the candidate to deliver a very satisfactory oral. However, many moderators complained that some poems were either too short or too long, which tended to disadvantage the candidate. In addition, some teachers' questions did not generate enough critical discussion.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A (Knowledge and understanding of the poem):

Whereas most of the candidates showed good knowledge of the poem, their levels of understanding varied considerably. In many cases, candidates were able to demonstrate, by detailed reference to the poem, that they had studied the poem in close detail and that they were familiar with the poet's themes for example. However, there were also many commentaries that lacked the necessary details; often this was a result of candidates assuming that the teacher knew what they were talking about.

Criterion B (Appreciation of the writer's choices):

Many candidates ably delved into a close analysis of the poem, confidently commenting on the poet's specific choice and showing its effects (e.g. in creating mood, developing the idea of the poem, revealing the speaker's nature and attitude, engaging the reader in a particular way and so on). However, many others still lack confidence in discussing the effects of the poetic devices they identify and even illustrate." Regular practice in commentary work throughout the course is an effective way of developing the candidate's appreciation of how the poet's choices of various aspects of language, various structural elements, technique and style shape meaning.

Criterion C (Organization and presentation of the commentary):

The majority of the candidates performed very well on this criterion. One senior moderator's comment seems pertinent here: "Always a challenging portion of the criteria, the 8 minute limit seems to have moved students in a more organized direction as opposed to the sometimes random and well-focused commentaries." Candidates who had been given sufficient practice

in this area were noticeably successful. Unfortunately, some commentaries could have been organized more effectively. One moderator observes that "...many were ploddingly linear" and so recommends that if this approach is to be used well, "the development and progression of the poem" should be highlighted. If, on the other hand, the holistic approach is used "it might be helpful to have a unifying focus, like theme, and then show structure the commentary according to different points."

Criterion D (Knowledge and understanding of the work used in the discussion):

The majority of the candidates showed adequate to excellent understanding of the work used. Many moderators reported that the quality of the candidate's response was often influenced by the nature of the teacher's questions. Questions which were specific and literary in nature (e.g. "In your opinion, what is the most significant moment in the development of Heathcliff's character and why?" or "What is the most dramatic moment in Othello's downfall?") tended to draw the candidates out much more than very general ones like "What can you tell us about the novel, *The Great Gatsby*?" In addition, candidates who were engaged in a discussion revealed their understanding of the work more convincingly than those being 'interviewed' through a list of prepared questions.

Criterion E (Response to the discussion questions):

There were some excellent performances on this criterion. As one moderator puts it, this was particularly so with candidates whose "teachers handled the discussion very capably, asking a variety of questions, some difficult, and some more manageable..." Invariably, "interview-type" questions seemed to elicit mainly 'taught' responses to the work.

Criterion F (The use of language):

The language used by the majority of candidates was generally very clear, varied and accurate providing an appropriate register to the oral activity. However, according to one moderator, "the in-depth use of literary terms was limited to a few candidates."

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Already, many recommendations have been implied above already. Below are a few others.

- Throughout the course, and certainly before giving the orals, teachers should make sure that they know all the instructions for this task. They are spelt out in the Subject Guide, the Handbook of Procedures, and the Teacher Support Material.
- Throughout the course, students should be given opportunities to develop their commentary and discussion skills. Specifically, simulated orals before the actual examination can empower students to deliver their best.
- A lot more attention to the art of close analysis is needed. Again, the Subject Guide and Teacher Support Material have enough strategies to work with. Also useful is the teachers' forum on the online curriculum centre.

- The required length of the poem, or poem extract, is 20-30 lines. Passages which exceed this can disadvantage the students considerably.
- Please number the lines of the poem, or poem extract, for ease of reference by both the student and the teacher during the oral
- The guiding questions should not be numbered since they are not compulsory and, also, they are meant to serve as prompts to enable the student engage with the poem
- Teachers should use the subsequent questions to address important aspects omitted, to provide further clarification of points or to provide appropriate challenge to stronger students to enable them show their full potential.
- The discussion questions should be as clear and specific as possible. Questions like ‘What can you tell me about this work?’ and ‘Did you enjoy this work?’ are too broad.
- Whereas it is expected that the teacher will have prepared some discussion questions before hand, some of the questing should be spontaneous, depending on the candidate’s answer.
- Teachers may want to practice discussing specific aspects of the work instead of interviewing the student.

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

Almost all the moderators were happy with the way centres complied with the regulations. However, moderators wish to remind centres of the points below:

- Observe the timing of the orals carefully: a maximum of 10 minutes for the commentary (8 for the uninterrupted close analysis of the extract and 2 for the teacher’s follow-up questions).
- “Teachers must engage in a discussion with students to probe further into their knowledge and understanding of the extract or poem” (page 56 of the *Language A: Literature guide*). Not asking subsequent questions after the 8 minutes of uninterrupted commentary can disadvantage the candidate immensely.

- All the IA sample materials (i.e. the recording, extract and form 1/LIA) should be uploaded on IBIS as instructed.
- The comments on the form 1/LIA should be detailed enough to help the moderator understand how the teacher arrived at the marks. The most helpful comments are those which are based on each of the assessment criteria.
- Teachers' marks on the form should be reflected in the marks given, for example, a commentary which shows "knowledge but shaky understanding and interpretation of the passage" should not score highly.
- Centres should double check to confirm that the extract and guiding question(s) uploaded correspond to the candidate who used them for the commentary.
- Centres, through the IB Coordinator, should ask the IB for guidance if the selected candidate's recording is inaudible instead of submitting it for external assessment.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As usual, there was a very wide range of works studied. The most popular poets included Seamus Heaney, Wilfred Owen, Bruce Dawe, Sylvia Plath and John Keats. The most popular plays included *Macbeth* and *Othello*; and prose works included *The Great Gatsby*, *Emma*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Running in the Family*. Most choices were interesting and suitably challenging and the discussion questions were often provocative and fair, thereby helping the candidate to deliver a very satisfactory oral. However, many moderators complained that some extracts were either too short or too long, which tended to disadvantage the candidate. In addition, some teachers' questions did not generate enough critical discussion.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A (Knowledge and understanding of the extract):

Whereas most of the candidates showed good knowledge of the extract, their levels of understanding varied considerably. In many cases, candidates were able to demonstrate, by detailed reference to the extract, that they had studied it in close detail and that they were familiar with the themes for example. However, there were also many commentaries that lacked the necessary details; often this was a result of candidates assuming that the teacher knew what they were talking about.

Criterion B (Appreciation of the writer's choices):

Many candidates ably delved into a close analysis of the extract, confidently commenting on the writer's specific choice and showing its effects (e.g. in creating mood, developing the idea of the extract, revealing the speaker's nature and attitude, engaging the reader in a particular way and so on). However, many others still lacked confidence in discussing the effects of the literary devices they identified. Regular practice in commentary work throughout the course is

an effective way of developing the candidate's appreciation of how the writer's choices of various aspects of language, various structural elements, technique and style shape meaning.

Criterion C (Organization and presentation):

The majority of candidates performed very well in this criterion. One senior moderator's comment seems pertinent here: "Always a challenging portion of the criteria, the 8 minute limit seems to have moved candidates in a more organized direction as opposed to the sometimes random and rambling commentaries." Candidates who had been given sufficient practice in this area were noticeably successful. Unfortunately, some commentaries could have been organized more effectively. One moderator observed that "...many were ploddingly linear" and so recommends that if this approach is to be used well, "the development and progression of the extract" should be highlighted. If, on the other hand, the holistic approach is used "it might be helpful to have a unifying focus, like theme, and then show the structure the commentary according to different points."

Criterion D (Language):

The language used by the majority of candidates was generally clear, with a good degree of accurate use of grammar and sentence construction in spite of the occasional grammatical errors and lapse in register.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Already, many recommendations have been implied above already. Below are a few others.

- Throughout the course, and certainly before conducting the orals, teachers should make sure that they know all the instructions for this task. They are spelt out in the *Language A: Literature guide*, the *Handbook of procedures* and the *Teacher Support Material* (TSM).
- Throughout the course, candidates should be given opportunities to develop their commentary skills. Specifically, simulated orals before the actual examination can empower candidates to deliver their best.
- A lot more attention to the art of close analysis is needed. Again, the guide and TSM have enough strategies to work with. Also useful is the teachers' forum on the Online Curriculum Centre.
- The suggested length of the extract is 20-30 lines. Passages which exceed this can disadvantage the candidates considerably.
- Please number the lines of the extract for ease of reference by both the candidate and the teacher during the commentary.
- The guiding questions should not be numbered since they are not compulsory and, also, are meant to serve as prompts to enable the candidate engage with the extract.

- Teachers should use the subsequent questions to address important aspects omitted, to provide further clarification of points or to provide appropriate challenge to stronger candidates to enable them show their full potential. Questions like “Do you have anything else to say?” hardly help the candidate. If anything, they leave the moderator wondering how prepared or attentive the teacher was before and during the commentary.

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

Given the considerable shifts made to the teaching and assessment of this component, many schools are to be commended for their deft adaptation to the new demands. Some new works have appeared in the selection of texts and extended the possibilities that students will be exposed to new cultures, contexts and literary styles. Students wrote well about some of these, such as *Crossing the Mangrove* (Conde), *Tamas* (Bisham Sahni) and *The Inhabited Woman* (Belli) and continued to convey good experiences with more familiar works. It does seem to enliven student response when teachers themselves are exploring works and cultures unfamiliar to them, given the shared learning experience.

The Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement stage of the process, devoted to culture and context, are evolving and will continue to do so as teachers find the best ways to focus the work on the intended materials. There is still some misunderstanding about the primary emphasis in these two exercises, but if the teacher provides some clear direction to the research preceding the Interactive Oral, this movement toward empowering students to be active learners can prove very useful. ‘Context’ needs to be seen as the frame, as it were, in which the work is constructed. Here information about the writer, his/her time and place, the circumstances in which the work is constructed, both personal and in terms of the writer’s literary culture are appropriate. The culture within the text equally needs very careful and broad scrutiny at this stage in the process.

If students are provided with the central question for the Reflective Statement (‘How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?’) and it is foregrounded by the teacher and carefully explored, there should not be so many Reflective Statements that are either evaluations of classmates’ performances in the Interactive Oral or something that focuses on the literary style of the text itself or appears to be an abstract/plan for the Written Assignment. There are altogether many of these last two and students will not gain full marks in Criterion A when this is what they

offer. Further, it is important that candidates reveal something more than a mere sense of the century in which a work was produced; critical awareness of the richness and diversity of a culture over time and space is necessary.

Having grounded themselves in the cultural and contextual backdrop of the text in the first two stages, what is looked for in the student production with the Supervised Writing prompts and the Written Assignment itself is a clear emphasis on what makes the text a work of literary art.

There is some evidence that while some members of a school's English department have a full grasp of these matters, there are different perceptions within the same schools.

The economic backdrop of *Metamorphosis*, ideas about *machismo* and *marianismo* in Latin American writing, or the feminism putatively found in the work of Durenmatt are not going to function well as subjects for the Written Assignment, whereas an implicit grasp of these may well inform a good literary study of the works.

****NB:** Given that the candidate is asked to submit the Reflective Statement on the work chosen for the Written Assignment, it may be (and is often) inferred that a connection needs to be made between the two. That is not neither expected nor required. The Reflective Statement lets the examiner know that proper attention has been accorded the culture and context of the text. The Written Assignment reveals that the candidate has approached the text as a work of literary merit.

Poetry continues to be a good choice for study in Part One and provides very useful differentiated material for the Written Assignment. However, when it comes to Written Assignment, teachers must ensure that their students understand that the emphasis on the essay should be on literary features which surely abound in any set of poems.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A. Fulfilling the requirements of the Reflective Statement

As noted above, some serious thinking and exploration needs to be done in the schools with regard to this element of this component. While some schools are delivering work to which a 3 can validly be assigned, others are missing the opportunity for students to gain full marks, simply because they have first, not attended to the central question that needs response, and second, have not modeled for their students how to make an appropriate response to the materials of the Interactive Oral.

However, a successful Reflective Statement is contingent on the proper focus of the Interactive Oral. And that focus is context and culture, both as they pertain to the construction of the text and the same materials within the text. For example, if the text under consideration is Borges' *Ficciones*, then students need to explore, for examples, such matters as his biography, his place in the Latin American literary 'boom,' his political views and his sense of gaucho culture. They also need to look at his approach to the writing of fiction, such as his spurious footnotes, his building on international literary traditions, his philosophical games.

B. Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge of the text is often quite clearly evident: candidates know who and what occurs, they often have a general idea of the angle of a poem. The discriminating factor in this criterion is how far candidates can demonstrate that they have grasped both the text and the subtext. And it is important that candidates demonstrate their own individual 'understanding,' from their angle of experience. Often a standard line of argument about a text seems to emanate from outside their own personal relation to the

characters, the events, the position of the voice. Repeated ideas seem to indicate that they have aligned themselves with a particular view of the text, perhaps that of the teacher. It is not easy to allow and encourage this kind of personal latitude, but the fact that there are indeed schools where it happens suggests that it is a matter for departmental consideration.

C. Appreciation of the Writer's Choices

The opposite pole from no attention at all to literary features in the Written Assignment is a rather labored attempt to use and name literary devices, no matter how rarified or obscure. While such precision can be appreciated, when the candidate fails to go on to really develop an appreciation for the usage and effect of the feature, much of the value of the identification is vitiated.

The labeling of this criterion--appreciation of the writer's choices-- was deliberately adopted in the revision of the course to emphasize, not the counting of literary devices, but the sense of an authorial hand at work, making choices. For example, as one examiner nicely phrased it, how does the writer 'unfurl the narrative?' Students who indicated a sense of the relation between the artistic choices and their effect both overall in the work and at particular junctures managed to do well in this criterion.

D. Organization and Development

NB: Teachers should be aware in advance that in addition to the current penalties in the Subject Guide for exceeding the number of words in either the Reflective Statement or the Written Assignment (even by just one word), penalties for the use of works not appropriately chosen from the Prescribed List of Works in Translation (PLT) will mean that a candidate cannot receive a grade higher than 3 in Criterion B. This latter penalty will be in effect by May of 2015 which has implications for the construction of syllabuses.

There certainly are challenges in helping students put together in a readable way the ideas they have about the texts. There has been some improvement in this area, but smooth transitions and effective embedding of evidence are aspects of essay writing that need attention in some schools. Although an approach which offers three strong points to support the argument, accompanied by appropriate details from the text, (not just page numbers) may sometimes seem pedestrian, it certainly has more potential for success than the apparently random thinking that is delivered in some of the essays.

While "persuasive" structures in the essays are not all that rare, it is surprising that only some candidates in a given school seem to have the skills or the drive to produce them.

E. Language

Virtually all the examiners felt expression to be quite strong, or at least competent.

There are terms that might be used more precisely, but this issue is a perennial one.

Sometimes students have been attracted to a critical vocabulary used by their teachers and use these terms without a full sense of exactly what they mean. Paragraphing, punctuation and certain recurrent grammatical problems need to be addressed throughout the course or the candidates will have a difficult time--and a good many do--achieving the 'clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise' language of Level 5 of the criterion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Concentrating on the following three would make a difference in the number of candidates who do very well with this component.

1. Give some study and thought to how the conduct of the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement will work best for addressing the culture and context of an individual text. Different works will need to be supported by particular approaches and emphases that will help students understand the works.
2. Ensure that the Supervised Writing prompts point the students to investigations of the literary art involved in the texts, and further that the Written Assignments develop such angles and avoid primary focus on matters of context and culture.
3. Spend time with students both as a group and individually, wherever possible, making sure that the course of argument they choose for their Written Assignment is possible within the word limit, and that they are fully aware of and understand how to meet the demands of Criterion C.

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

This was the first assessment of this component for November session centres and it is pleasing to report that most centres handled procedural elements well. There were very few 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 should 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. Full bibliographical details of the work being written about must be present (normally in a bibliography or works cited; the examiner needs to know which translation has been used).

An unfortunate number of candidates are 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). There is no tolerance for work which exceeds these limits and it is a great shame for candidates to lose valuable marks which could easily have been remedied by judicious editing. Reflective statements and written assignments which fall below the word counts (300 and 1200 words respectively) are considered to be self-penalizing in the sense that they are not likely to score in the upper ranges of the criteria; however, there were very few submissions that did not meet the minimum word counts.

SL candidates study only two works in part 1. A number of centres included three works both in the advance notice of works form submitted on IBIS and on the 1/LWA coversheet. There may be two reasons for this: the class is a mixed HL/SL class (if this is the case, then the 1/LWA should indicate which work is HL only; some centres did show this); some centres appear to teach three works to SL candidates and then allow the candidates to choose which work to write about (this is more problematic as it is creating an SL course that is more demanding for candidates than it needs to be).

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It is a compliment to many centres that several examiners commented that these written assignments were a pleasure to mark. That the written assignment is based on only one part 1 work led to some detailed literary analyses with a clear appreciation of the writer crafting the work through deliberate choices in order to direct the reading of it. Although marking penalties for choosing part 1 works that do not come from the prescribed literature in translation list (PLT) will not come into play until 2015 (see the updated *Language A: Literature guide* available on the Online Curriculum Centre), teachers are reminded to check that their part 1 choices do appear on the PLT. All examiners reported that many centres chose popular works, but it is worth noting that there were some interesting and stimulating 'new' appearances; a notable example was Galeano's *Upside Down*. A couple of examiners commented on how well candidates had written about Tomasi di Lampedusa's *The Leopard* or Mulisch's *The Assault*; another examiner was pleased to report the appearance of poetry in part 1. On the whole, teachers are making choices that suit their candidates and this is clearly reflected in how well they write about them. Drama and novels continue to dominate part 1 selections, but do remember that the PLT offers such a wide range of choices. A number of teachers have done a laudable job of introducing graphic novels here, with, at times, impressive results, particularly when candidates are able to appreciate their visual qualities.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

The introduction of the interactive oral and the reflective statement that results from this has not been uniformly understood by all teachers and candidates, although it must be pointed out that a good number of centres performed well here, with almost every candidate gaining two or three marks in this criterion. The interactive oral needs to explore relevant elements of culture and context (what information do candidates need to know in order to comprehend the factors of time and place which may have influenced the content of a writer's work). Relevant elements of culture and context are wide and varied: details of a writer's life, prevailing social mores, key historical events, literary movements, political ideologies and so on. If the interactive orals address some or all of these and relate them meaningfully to the work, then candidates should be able to write a personal reflection on how their understanding of the work in question developed (or did not) as a result of the interactive oral. The fact that the oral is interactive is key: it is a time to ask questions and explore different points of view. Crucially, it is also a time for teachers (and candidates) to rectify impressions that are misguided or simply inaccurate. To talk about the character of Hedda Gabler or Miss Julie in terms of Victorian values is inappropriate, given the geographical setting of both plays. When the interactive oral is an exclusively literary presentation on the work and no external factors which may have influenced the writer or writing have been addressed, then, inevitably, the reflective statement will not score highly. The reflective statement probably needs to focus on just a few elements of the content of the interactive oral, otherwise the reflection itself is likely to be superficial. Reflective statements need to make explicit reference to the content of the interactive oral, but this should be done concisely; reflections which simply summarize the content are not developing a personal response.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

All examiners reported that most candidates knew their works well. The key to success here depends on how focused and appropriate the topic is. A narrow focus allows candidates to examine the topic in more depth and detail and use the written assignment to demonstrate how that knowledge and understanding can be synthesized into insight: a reading of the work that shows illumination on the part of the reader. Candidates who substantiate their claims by citation or quotation of pertinent examples are likely to score well here. When claims are not well supported by detailed references to the work it suggests that re-reading has not taken place or that the claim is dubious. As always, the use of long quotations is not effective: they are frequently left to speak for themselves, as if the analysis is self-evident.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

This proved to be the most challenging criterion for candidates. When the topic of the assignment is truly literary in nature (and most were), then the candidate's task is much easier. If candidates have been taught to understand that the craft of writing is a conscious process, where writers make deliberate choices in order to generate meaning, then they are on the road to success. Candidates do not need to explore all of the descriptors in criterion C (language, structure, technique, style), but focus on those that are most appropriate to their individual topic. When candidates still write about characters as if they were real people they

are denying themselves access to the writer who shaped these characters through the written word. When candidates make reference to the writer then the opposite is true and they can usually be rewarded in this criterion. In a number of cases there is perhaps implicit understanding that writers make choices, but in order to be safe then candidates need to make this explicit in their analysis and show how these choices impact their reading of the work; this is true appreciation of a writer's choices.

Criterion D: Organization and development

Most candidates know how to structure an essay and can gain at least a three in this criterion. More challenging is the construction of an argument that can be said to be persuasively organized and developed, although a good number were able to reach the top mark band here. Casting the net too wide, with a topic that is not sharp enough in terms of focus, prevents achievement from reaching the top levels. Discussion with the candidate of the response to the supervised writing prompt ought to help provide that direction. A sequence of logically coherent paragraphs, where the argument builds to a convincing conclusion, is what needs to happen. Transitions or connectives that are weak or effectively meaningless prevent this from happening. Introductions need to be both concise and effective, particular not general in nature. Conclusions should not contain redundant repetition or introduce new material; they need to be justified by the preceding argument. Going off topic or not having a clear sense of direction will obviously lower the mark here, as will not adhering to the word limits. It is evident which centres have taught candidates to integrate and modify quotations appropriately and this does have a positive impact on the mark awarded.

Criterion E: Language

All examiners reported that most written assignments were well-written; in many centres marks of four and five were prevalent. Poor proofreading, weak punctuation and informal register were the most frequent causes for awarding a lower mark. Contractions should be avoided in formal academic writing. 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 offset by style and diction choices that impress the reader. It is worth repeating that 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.
- Teach the integration and modification of quotations.
- Develop a common understanding in class of appropriate register in formal written work.

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

General comments

Upon examination of a substantial and varied body of commentaries, it is a great positive to report that the majority of students have a clear grasp of the requirements of the commentary and can be reasonably successful with the assessment task. Arguably, close and independent analysis of an unseen text represents one of the more difficult challenges for students and it is heartening to see the number of candidates who are clearly engaged with the work, even demonstrating genuine interest and enthusiasm in their engagements with these new texts. This November session included many good to excellent commentaries overall and evidence that there is clearly attention being given to literary devices within texts as well as structuring an overall commentary response. The very great majority of candidates revealed little trouble in at least gleaning a reasonable level of understanding with both the prose and the poetry options and most appear both comfortable and confident in moving beyond literal events to engage the texts toward further ends. While there remains evidence that students are approaching unseen texts with ready-made recipes, there are also very many candidates who are clearly approaching the task with open minds and an agility that the assessment task aims to instill.

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

As has been the case for many sessions, sustained close reading *as literature* is sometimes a struggle. Candidates often tend to focus on personal and/or limited associations with isolated terms or phrases and develop entirely new constructs that are out of context from literary purpose and literary intention. These tend to result in “over-readings,” finding far more than, if reinserted, would be sustained by original texts.

There continue to be issues with appropriate integration of a consideration of literary features. Literary features were noted by the very great majority of candidates who have clearly been taught to look for them. Unfortunately, they were often noting these devices as more of an aside that as an integrated component of a sophisticated reading. This would create a kind of “disconnect” between an interpretation of the text and an awareness of the use of many literary devices. At its weakest, this resulted in a listing or noting of devices only, the result of which is something masquerading as analysis only.

By extension, it is important to treat significant features only. Candidates can spend too much time and energy on marginal devices that really do not have much significance. Examiners are always forgiving and accepting of features that candidates highlight but spending time and energy discussing questionable devices does take candidates away from richer readings with a more effectively integrated appreciation of features. This tendency suggests, once more, that candidates can be searching out features as an add-on or “at all costs” rather than as part of the analytical work required with commentary.

Candidates also continue to struggle with some organizing principles. Several examiners commented on the need for stronger introductions and conclusions that were clearly related to the texts (rather than generic and vague filler that could be used with virtually any work) as well as the need for developing a coherent and logical argument. Even in sometimes good commentaries, a challenge for candidates is to have all points unified toward a singular purpose. Isolated paragraphs could offer a sense of cohesiveness as a stand-alone point but this would only be one of a series of stand-alone cohesive points. What is still sometimes missing is a developing/developed argument that is clear and sustained throughout the entire commentary work.

Related to the above is the problem of using literary features as the organizing principal for structuring responses (again, over the idea of a developed line of argument). It can be helpful for candidates to have approaches in mind for structuring responses but when commentaries are organized around identifying literary features, work tends to be mechanistic and misses the more authentically engaged readings asked of candidates in this assessment task. In such cases, for instance, a candidate may well have spent a paragraph on setting, another on character, a third on action, etc. but still failed to provide a compelling interpretation or evidence of a developed argument.

Unsupported assertion and not considering the significance of points, however, is the big challenge encountered over and over. This tends to result in more simple narration, summary and paraphrase which should be avoided.

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

Candidates, on the whole, demonstrated a sound ability to uncover the basic scenarios or plots and to trace the course of any “action” whether physical, intellectual or emotional. The willingness to slowly read and uncover effect in both the prose and poem were strongly demonstrated by most. This basic understanding, then, became the springboard for more interesting and nuanced interpretations.

Most candidates did convey an ability to construct a response and convey ideas with appropriate language. Candidates were clearly competent and comfortable with writing about literature using an appropriate register and a sense of organization and logic. Many examiners commented on the high level of both language and writing in general.

Candidates also demonstrated awareness of commentary as an assessment task. There was a sense of familiarity with approaching the assignment and attempting to develop a response suitably appropriate in detailed focus.

As already mentioned, most candidates were able to glean a reasonable level of overall understanding of both the prose passage and the poem. There seemed to be quite strong engagement with both options and students did well exploring the texts and even trying to extend their thinking. Though occasionally problematic with regard to integration, literary devices are overtly considered by the great majority of candidates.

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

Prose commentary: Most candidates who selected the prose passage were able to glean the basic scenario involving a broken relationship and the narrator’s decision to take a vow of silence. Candidates generally recognized the focalization of perspective via the narrator and attempted to say something of the effect. Most candidates also recognized the “dual” story of the vow of silence and some relationship to words/meaning in the world. With the prose passage in particular, candidates were generally successful in understanding the basic and “factual” elements included by Millhauser.

Many candidates focused most exclusively on the deteriorating/deteriorated relationship between the narrator and Elena and this was often to their detriment. To have avoided or omitted all issues of language often led candidates to build readings around divorce or sometimes even the death of one of the characters only. Such a perspective really only recognized some of the richness of the passage. Other candidates might recognize silence as well but went on to assume a direct line of causality between the relationship and the silence alone. In both cases, something meaning and meaning in the world was lost.

Stronger candidates were effective in recognizing two threads: the relationship between the characters and the relationship between language and meaning. With candidates better still, they were able to offer some notion of a complex connection between the two threads but

were most adept and making space for both ideas rather than trying to simply subsume one by the other (usually language and meaning by the relationship between the characters).

Some very interesting commentaries arose from candidates who read the passage critically of the narrator. In such readings, examiners encountered feminist readings or others recognizing the limitations of the narrative perspective and some even pushed to detect the humour so characteristic of Millhauser's work (which would not necessarily have been evident here). These readings tended to be very sophisticated works that displayed nimble agility with and openness to the text that demonstrated the very best kind of engaged commentary.

Perhaps surprisingly, the middle of the passage generated the most varied interpretation. The passed slip of paper was read as everything from a note declaring the narrator's vow of silence to a formal file for divorce. Most candidates did a fine job considering the following similes (crumpled paper like fire, knuckles like stones) but it was the rarer candidate that read this as actually performative of the very limitations of language the narrator discusses (i.e. the sights and sounds speak more clearly than words even as they are described in words). Further, these metaphors and their extensions (hot place at my neck, cold fascination and iciness) did lead some candidates to imagine motifs of fire and ice/heat and cold representing the different characters. While not necessarily hurtful, this could take some candidates astray if it kept them too focused on the relationship only.

While examiners were open to a wide range of interpretations, some candidates ran into trouble with very personal and/or isolated associations. The idea of a vow and/or a monk did lead some candidates far afield even as the narrator distances himself from more "spiritual" callings of a more traditional association with a monk.

Also somewhat surprising was the lack of treatment of tone on the whole. As mentioned above, some very sophisticated readings of subtle humor were evident but the use of contrasts, the tension between loss and love, tenderness and anger, calm and excited, closeness and distance, meaning and meaninglessness was often hinted at but not always more directly explored.

Several candidates did grapple with the inherent irony of writing about the meaninglessness of words and even with shifts of time and perspective which was a great strength.

Poetry commentary: The poetry commentary received quite mixed response from candidates. On the one hand, there were some excellent commentaries that demonstrated with sophisticated engagement with the poem and close attention to the words. On the other hand, there was also evidence of real struggle to treat the poem as a poem rather than as a piece of prose, to treat the different stanzas as part of a single poetic experience and to avoid making too much of association with some of the personal pronouns such as Picasso and Disney.

The opening stanza may have represented one of the bigger challenges. Many candidates developed associations with terms like "fright" and "night" and began to imagine horrific situations from which they could not break free. In such cases, the poem became a literal coming alive of inanimate objects in the vein of the walking undead or some other nighttime terror. Somehow, though, the first stanza was read not as one of meditation and reflection

but with too tight a focus on matters not to be meddled with as a devil must not be named. Unfortunately in such circumstances, this tended to color the remainder of the poem in ways that were not productive.

Candidates were generally okay with the second stanza but for occasions when too much of the treatment of stanza one above caused one to miss the word “Not” in line 12. It was sometimes harder for candidates not to privilege Picasso’s works over that of the local carpenter but the second stanza saw more candidates offering reasonable understandings and interpretations of appreciation.

The final stanza saw generally reasonable treatment of distinction between the quiet meditation and appreciation of art of night and the more blind “turbulence” of the day but far fewer were able to offer more sustained appreciation. The creaking and cough again reminded too many of a horror scenario inhabited by ghosts or “others” that were either real guests or the imagination of a lonely man. In all of these cases, candidates were led away from ideas of art and appreciation (and the “life” that this brings).

Despite the above, many candidates did recognize the poem as a still life of its own; an artistic piece contradictorily concerned with capturing a frozen moment and its “life” of meaning. Amongst such candidates, a distinguishing quality was one more of agency in the poem: candidates who read the poem as an exercise of imagination tended to offer more simplistic levels of understanding while candidates that read the poem as an exercise in appreciation of the more inherent qualities of the artists/craftsmen as represented by their works were stronger. Further, there were some quite sophisticated readings that approached the poem as an act of poetic creation or a still life in its own right. Examiners tended to see a focus on imagination alone indicated an adequate understanding of the poem, but treatment of the poet’s attempt to engage or sustain the creative moment (and frustration when it is shattered by the intrusion of everyday life) was well-rewarded.

Candidates worked very hard offering analysis of the literary features in the poem including the structure and use of sound, allusion and title. While these were not always excellent, there was evidence that candidates were trying to engage the poem authentically.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Commentary is meant to be an authentic engagement with literature that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their intellectual agility with reading texts. Begin taught to produce products that sound like commentary or criticism is rarely effective. Better commentaries always make sense and convey interpretations of the works that are heart-felt rather than forced. In some cases, this can be enhanced for focusing initially on the literal events/plot aspects before trying to extend to more figurative intentions. The best advice for teachers to help facilitate this skill is to expose students to a wide variety of texts and to work with more authentic experiences in working through unknown texts independently.

- Good commentaries incorporate a consideration of literary features as part of their larger reading/interpretation rather than as additional, supplementary material or as the organizing principal for a response. Good commentaries include personal voice. Structure is something we all teach, but candidates should be encouraged to explore independently.
- Terms and phrases should be meaningful to candidates. The use of features like tone, symbol and motif, especially, need to be treated precisely. Candidates need to understand what it actually means to “symbolize” or “be a theme” and this needs to be demonstrated in commentary.
- Fluent, good quality writing does make a difference. Even candidates who were not able to extend the quality of their analysis were, with at least some level of general understanding, able to earn solid marks overall with good work in both organization and the use of language. Especially with the new rubrics, this makes a considerable difference.
- Purpose/effect/significance always needs to be considered.
- Analysis needs to be precise. Support needs careful and considered elaboration. Even ideas assumed to be self-evident should not be treated as such and need to be “proven” with specific textual referencing and elaborate explanation as to both how and why it is used.
- Larger interpretations need to be supported by the larger text. Candidates should be encouraged to “plug their interpretations back into the text” in order to verify that they are still reasonable and not merely associative. An interpretation based on a single word, line or element/aspect will likely not reinsert very easily and might then be re-examined. Avoid considering possibilities of what might have been or what might later be (i.e. avoid hypothetical considerations outside of the context of the work).
- Avoid narration.
- Teach students to plan responses. Candidates who seek to write as much as possible and think via their writing are not always successful with their responses. Strong commentaries should convey a clear line of reasoning, argument and development.
- Introductions and conclusions that are meaningful and meaningfully connected to the works are valuable. A ready-made or hyperbolic introduction and simple repetition as conclusion is neither helpful nor helpful in developing an argument.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

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

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

Examiners generally felt that neither the prose nor the poem presented any major difficulties. Any misunderstandings which arose, such as the narrator of the poem being a mummy, or the narrator of the prose a child, did not affect marks substantially. A number of the candidates who undertook the prose did not finish within the time allowance, as indicated by hasty or non-existent conclusions. Since this was not the case with the poem, one may conclude that the prose length was the reason for non-completion.

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

Overall, candidates seemed secure with the requirements of the task. On the whole, they managed their time well. They made use of evidence to support their points and used an appropriate register. Many answers showed careful planning and linking of ideas. Many conveyed a sense of engagement. Some examiners noted an "impressive ability to identify literary features". Others noted that candidates are tending to write more skilfully on criterion B.

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

Poem

Strengths:

Better candidates could link their analyses seamlessly to the idea of the fascination of the mummy; they could consider how contrasts in imagery, structure and tone worked; they could understand the feelings of the protagonist and how they altered as the poem progressed; they appreciated the use of contrast in the two stanzas. Good responses focused on the source of the boy's fascination with the mummy. There was evidence of insight into the end of the poem and "resurrection and rebirth" offered interesting thoughts on the nature of human existence and its timescale. Candidates were also able to see the importance of the setting and the items and how these were included to heighten the importance of the mummy to the boy. Many candidates were able to analyse the description of the meeting of the boy and the mummy and to write pertinently about the mummy as a source of fascination.

Weaknesses:

There were misinterpretations of the mummy roaming the halls of the museum, as in a horror movie, or, the boy in search of his long-lost mother, or, the curator searching for his dead daughter, or, the protagonist as an adult male. These claims cannot be substantiated by the text. Weaker responses paid little attention to the detail in the first stanza, identifying enjambment and pace but little more. They also tended to say that the museum was described in detail to bring it to life for the reader.

Prose:**Strengths:**

Many candidates recognised the stages in the development of tension. Better candidates noted how prior experiences had shaped the reaction of the immigrant to the situation. They also analysed the ambiguity of "smiles", its repetition, and whether the smiles were genuine or not. They focused on power relations, identifying the narrator as in both a vulnerable and powerful position. They were able to comment on the unreliability of the narrator and on his command of English. They showed understanding of the relationships between the narrator and the two immigration officers.

Weaknesses:

Weaker candidates did not acknowledge the ambiguous nature of the interactions between the immigrant and Kevin Edelman. They thought that the immigration officers were genuinely trying to help him; they forgot the fact that the process of immigration led to his legitimate concerns that he might be refused entry. Many candidates ignored the final paragraph. Some candidates failed to identify the changing moods of the extract.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Encourage candidates to read the question carefully and at least twice as a means of avoiding misinterpretation.
- Encourage candidates to look for the underlying grammatical structure, particularly in the poem. (The boy has his face pressed to the case, not the mummy).
- Try to make introductions more purposeful; lists of techniques are not a promising way to start. Similarly, try to make paragraphs more purposeful. These should extend ideas sequentially, not repeat previous information.
- Teaching literary techniques should be undertaken with caution as many candidates simply list them without any further analysis.
- Also recommended is a broadly linear or 'chronological' approach into which comments on literary features could be more naturally incorporated. Arriving at a

reading based solely on the study of literary features is not necessarily the best way forward. Candidates should be taught to convey their understanding of content, meaning and themes from a holistic reading of a poem or prose extract. Try to ensure that their focus is on the construction of thought and feeling, rather than a search for "profound ideas". It is not always a good idea to start with a hypothesis and then set about trying to prove it. It is better to explore more tentatively and to see where it leads.

- Encourage candidates to use the guiding questions (they are now compulsory) as these will direct candidates to the salient aspects of the piece for commentary.

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

General comments

Many examiners were pleased to note that this exam session for paper 2 proved to be a smooth transition from the legacy curriculum and paper. Overall, the demands for a focus on generic convention along with the pointed call for comparison and evaluation were addressed by candidates and, by extension, schools and teachers. As usual, candidates had an adequate sense of the works they studied as well as a general sense of the task at hand. At the same time, the nature of this session's paper along with the more pointed criteria perhaps raised some possible concerns in relation to both the broader purpose of the task and the general preparation of candidates. While candidates were admirably focused on the question and on conventions of the genre, candidates may also have had a somewhat myopic focus which caused them to miss out on communicating a broader sense of the work or on the notion that a work functions as an artistic whole within a genre. Overall, however, the general impression in the session was that students were demonstrating admirable fluency in discussing literature.

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

While it is heartening to see that with the pointed emphasis in the assessment on comparison and evaluation many candidates are clearly attempting to incorporate these aspects into their responses. While at times comparison is successful, many candidates rely on simply using words such as "similarly" or "in a different way" when often neither is the case. It is much more difficult to push to significant or interesting comparison. Meaningful evaluation also seems to be somewhat elusive. While some candidates have been trained to make explicit

comments in relation to the success or lack of success of a particular feature, most candidates have not arrived at either a significant weighing of impact of features or of an interpretive evaluation (an global or more holistic interpretation of a text that gets at the meaningful import of features).

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

Despite some candidates lacking precision in their discussion or sophistication in their analysis, comparison and evaluation, candidates still, on a whole, were well prepared for the paper itself and in relation to their works studied. Candidates showed consistently detailed knowledge of texts and were well aware of the broad and specific demands of the question. There were very few mistakes made in terms of using the appropriate texts or responding to appropriate questions.

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

1. There was quite a range of answers to this question. Some answers strayed into discussions of just about any element of stagecraft while others simply listed props and suggested, without much discussion, effect of character or theme. Perceptive answers, however, managed to tie props to the works as a whole and to the dramatic effects on stage.
2. This question also posed some problems for candidates who did not have a strong grasp of the meaning of the terms in the questions. Performance tended to be weak if candidates did not have a firm grasp of dramatic irony. In addition, those who understood the term were not necessarily able to tease out the possible effects.
3. This was a very popular question. While some candidates resorted to a narrative recounting of opening moments, others used the question as an opportunity to demonstrate their understandings of the functioning of plays.
4. The best answers to this question managed to tease out the narrative aspects of poems and to demonstrate ways that these might communicate thoughts and feelings. The most successful candidates had both a strong sense of narrative and of poetic techniques. The weaker essays tended to involve taking the question as a broad opportunity to write commentaries on the works studied.
5. There were not enough responses to this question to make comments on overall performance.
6. Students with a strong grasp of the details in their poems were able to perform well in this question. One examiner commented that some of the responses “brought the liveliness of poetry back into the realm of song.” Of course, some responses were

limited to discussions of rhyme or alliteration and never convincingly discussed effect.

7. While this was a popular question, it often proved to be difficult for candidates. Many responses involved re-telling almost any action in a novel and suggesting that this was a “decision.” Many papers also moved into the realm of the theoretical (if Jane hadn’t left, the novel wouldn’t have continued). There were some candidates who managed to focus on the choices posed to character, the way these moments were presented or framed, and their possible functioning as turning points or even climactic moments.
8. There were some very successful discussions of symbols in response to this question. Many candidates had a detailed understanding of how the objects functioned in significant ways in works. On the other hand, this question, like the question on dramatic irony, proved difficult if the candidate had a weak grasp of a reasonable definition of symbol. There were some candidates who approached the question as pertaining to the thematic significance of just about anything in the work.
9. While the definition of “historical” was sometimes broad, candidates who had worked closely with their texts handled this question well. The difficulty often proved in making a connection between the demonstrated historical material and its use or significance in the works.
10. There were not enough responses to this question to make comments on overall performance.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Based on candidate performance on the exam, a couple of amendments were made to marking instructions that would be relevant to the teaching of future candidates:

- In relation to literary conventions, better response would also offer some sense of how the conventions of the genre together in a coherent work of art.
- In relation to knowledge and understanding of the works: perceptive answers are likely to show independent and/or incisive thinking in answering the question, while also demonstrating an understanding of the works as a whole.

Key to these suggestions is that at times students are so narrowly focused on a particular convention that they do not see how it operates in a larger system of generic features or do not demonstrate a sense of the genre (e.g. the nature of poetry, of drama as something performed). Also, students should always be aware that they must offer some sort of context for their discussion, or some sense of the meaning or significance of a work in order to show very good understanding.

In general, teaching candidates should always be concept based or inquiry driven, allowing candidates to find their own meaning in works. The more time that is spent reading, discussing, and communicating ideas, the better. Certainly, this work need not always be “free form.” There are plenty of ways to structure class discussion and group work. At times, we rely on “teaching paper 2” rather than on digging into the text at hand. However, as evidenced in this report, there is still a need for some direct instruction and there are elements that can be stressed (as mini-lessons? Activities? Formative assessments?) even in the most inquiry-based programs. Examiners suggest some of the following:

- Pointed work on deconstructing questions or even choosing questions in the first place. Students need to sit and discuss what a question actually means.
- Practice in writing useful introductions (that give direction, a sense of the answer to come, the texts under consideration) and interesting conclusions. A less formulaic practice might be to simply allow students to write paragraph long answers to open-ended questions about a text.
- Work on discussing literary conventions as part and parcel of the meaning of works rather than as distinct, isolated elements.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

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

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

The examining team congratulates the cohort of candidates on their overall strong performance. Candidates were well informed about their texts, many attempted to integrate a comparative element into their responses and the great majority presented well-organized responses that reflected an impressive command of English.

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

Two less successful points that form the central two recommendations for future teaching are the following: 1) clearly focusing on the main and full implications of the question, including a meaningful comparison, (criterion B) although there were notably fewer cases where candidates attempted to disguise a pre-learned response as a spontaneous one, and 2)

incorporating literary conventions into the discussion (criterion C). Even when the candidate has done a good job responding to the convention that might have appeared in the question, in order to gain marks at the higher end of the band candidates must still show how that convention operates in a larger system of generic features that work in conjunction with the one focused on in the question.

The further points below (not in any rank order of importance) ought to be taken into consideration by all centres regardless of the level of the results. The report will also attempt to give some insight into why some approaches to the questions were more successful than others.

1. Treat two works in depth instead of three or (in the case of poetry) more.
2. Centres: pay attention to each candidate's handwriting as they enter the IB Diploma Program. If it is likely to hinder the understanding of a future examiner, get the necessary testing done and apply for assessment accommodations. The IB is very cooperative on this matter.
3. Work on cleaning up the details of presentation: possessives, plurals, subject/verb agreement, spelling and noting titles throughout the response with underlining or quotation marks. Although examiners are instructed not to place too much emphasis on common grammatical weaknesses, when a response comes along where these elements are dealt with correctly, examiners cannot help but take note.
4. Candidates should not count on examiner knowledge of the texts to fill in the gaps. Context should be given for each work treated, some brief identification should accompany the introduction of each character discussed and details should support every claim, even when the claim is valid in itself.
5. The first opportunity in the essay to compare and/or contrast the works occurs in the introduction. Few candidates appear to have planned in such a way that significant comparative points form part of the plan. To say in the introduction that two authors do something 'similarly but differently' does not skilfully use the introduction to create a clear direction.
6. Some combination of luck and skill operates in terms of fashioning a personal response. Candidates understandably call up class discussions and notes as they face this task. Sometimes one of the questions matches nicely with something from those sources. These candidates perhaps believe they have been lucky even though the resultant responses often carry that practiced and uniform sense as opposed to those responses that bristle with the energy of a candidate working out an independent response. Skill is involved when candidates have been taught to transform and apply their knowledge to the question at hand. This can happen more frequently when candidates practise spontaneous questions rather than when they are drilled on common ones.

7. Candidates should develop the confidence to hold back things they know about the texts when that knowledge is not relevant to the question. It is the secure candidate that can resist the gratuitous exposition of knowledge.
8. Make clear the need for detail. It can play an important part in criteria A, B, C and D. The problem often seems to be that candidates cannot distinguish a general claim from a detail. A generally valid claim (for example, “Blanche Dubois often twists the truth”) is not in itself a detail. The claim needs specific examples; otherwise the claim is undeveloped.
9. Discourage candidates from complicating the process of marking by engaging in crossing out passages or using arrows or asterisks to indicate passages that occur elsewhere in the response but need insertion here. Planning is essential and can help avoid breaks in logic as well as improve the product in a number of other ways.

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

All three of these questions stress drama as performance in addition to as literature. Candidates who prepare for the drama questions need to be made aware of the distinctions between seeing and reading a work.

1. Generally a well-handled question except that some candidates did not understand the limits of what qualifies as a prop. Lighting and music are not props although a paper lantern and a radio playing a Viennese waltz are. Some candidates pointed to objects named in the stage directions but not actually seen on stage. This was especially true for Tennessee Williams’ poetic playwright notes. The absence of the prop, as in *The Glass Menagerie*, provided an interesting variation in perception. However, if the elements that did not really qualify as props were well discussed, they could then be given some credit in criterion A or C.
2. This was the least popular and least well-done response in the drama section. Too many candidates did not have an exact understanding of what dramatic irony involves, confusing it with irony that can appear in a number of other ways in a work. Again, those candidates who knew what it meant and placed themselves in the position of the audience as they answered the question did quite well.
3. This was the most popular question and again urged the candidate to approach the question from the audience’s perspective. Many candidates were very familiar with the openings of the plays discussed. Some of them also discussed elements further into the plays than the expositions. If these elements were presented in terms of extending audience engagement developed in the ‘opening moments’ (that phrase was interpreted liberally in some responses), then the response stayed relevant to the question. Others wandered off into narration, thus usually losing focus on the question. What the candidates needed to do here was to take the time to think about what is likely to be happening in the minds of the audience. What interests them and why? What questions are they asking themselves? If they are enjoying something,

what is it and why are they enjoying it? There were too many conclusions in the nature of "...and this engages the audience" without specifying the nature of the engagement. Foreshadowing may be happening in the exposition, but the audience is not likely to realize that until later.

Poetry

4. Examiners were instructed to allow a wide variety of approaches to 'story' and 'narrative', so that candidates who followed the standard meaning as well as those who provided some idea of what approach he/she was taking were off to a good start. In many cases the responses ended up being commentaries in one way or the other. The success of a response depended on the depth of understanding of the poem, the amount of detail that could be used in support of claims and some sense of continuing reference to however 'narrative' had been defined implicitly (the less clear way) or explicitly (the stronger way).
5. This was not a very frequently chosen question but those that chose it did so because they were confident that the poems they had studied would provide sufficient relevant examples. In most cases that confidence was well founded although some candidates' responses ran short of examples or did not take the tack of using those relevant examples to link to other conventions in order to go into greater depth of understanding of the poems or of the use of literary conventions. One had the idea that here was a question that had not been foreseen in candidates' preparation but that led the candidates who chose it to make discoveries about their selected poems as they wrote their responses.
6. The borders between 'soft/harmonious' and 'harsh/discordant' seem to be flexible indeed with often the same sounds having one effect at one moment and the opposite effect at another. Candidates needed to posit why the poet might create a discordant, or other, sound at each moment.

Prose: novel and short story

7. This was perhaps the most frequently chosen question on the entire paper. It was also generally quite well done. Most candidates, but not all, were able to distinguish between a decision (something which actually involves a choice and in which some tension between alternatives arises) and simply an action that has consequences. Effective choices developed both the motivations and consequences of the decision not only to move the plot along but also to develop the work in other ways. The question notes 'to move the plot along'. However, examiners gave credit to relevant discussion of other effects brought about by these decisions.
8. It would seem that practically anything is considered a symbol these days. Or, for the somewhat craftier candidate, a particular element could have 'symbolic qualities'. Consequently while giving credit to those who correctly identified and discussed symbols, some leeway was also given to those who addressed elements which were

not technically symbols but to which so much meaning was ascribed that the argument gained in weight.

9. Very few candidates attempted this question although those who did gave the term 'historical' a wide range of meanings. Credit was given to approaches that also included aspects of cultural, economic or social mores. The best candidates knew enough about the conditions that formed part of the background to the works and also knew enough when to stop with the history and get on with analyzing the details of the work.

Prose other than fiction

10-12. No comments were submitted by the examiners concerning these questions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Based on candidate performance, a couple of amendments were made to the examiner marking instructions that would be relevant to the teaching of future candidates:

- In relation to literary conventions, a better response would also offer some sense of how the conventions of the genre operate together in a coherent work of art.
- In relation to knowledge and understanding of the works: perceptive answers are likely to show independent and/or incisive thinking in answering the question, while also demonstrating an understanding of the works as a whole.

Key to these suggestions is that at times candidates are so narrowly focused on a particular convention that they do not see how it operates in a larger system of generic features or do not demonstrate a sense of the genre (e.g. the nature of poetry, of drama as something performed). Also, candidates should always be aware that they must offer some sort of context for their discussion, or some sense of the meaning or significance of a work in order to show very good understanding.