

May 2014 subject reports

Italian A Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-16	17-30	31-42	43-57	58-69	70-82	83-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-16	17-29	30-42	43-56	57-69	70-82	83-100

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of the schools followed the IB procedures correctly but the timing of the oral commentary and subsequent discussions was not always strictly followed. Some teachers allowed students to go beyond 8 minutes for their commentary and this consequently reduced the time for the subsequent questions and the discussion, which in some cases lasted only 5-7 minutes.

The extracts were generally appropriate in challenge, except that the choice of Dante's Comedy (the part 2 poetry work for almost 50% of the schools and therefore the only possible source of the extract for commentary) proved to be too demanding for most candidates who, rather than making a proper commentary, talked about the author and his work for a considerable span of time (often up to 3 or 4 minutes), and when they eventually tackled the text, produced more often a paraphrase than a proper analysis. The choice of poems by

Montale (20% of the schools), Leopardi, Ungaretti, Saba etc. appeared to be more suitable and allowed candidates to explore the texts in more depth. The range of the works chosen for the discussions was good and candidates were able to discuss their main elements in detail.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Overall, the knowledge and understanding of the poems was adequate. Most students seemed well prepared and able to say something about the poems, if not always a proper commentary. They could place into context and explain the main thematic and stylistic features. Stronger students developed a personal interpretation, supported by appropriate references to the texts; weaker students tended to talk about the texts more in general, without precise references. In some cases, the poem was paraphrased rather than analysed.

Criterion B: The analysis of the language, structure, technique and style of the poem varied considerably. Stronger candidates could mention the main stylistic features of the poem, and also explain their effect on the meaning and link their analysis to their general interpretation. Often, however, stylistic features were only mentioned or listed, without explaining their relevance and the way they shaped meaning. In a few cases, there was hardly any mention of literary features, and very little appreciation of the ways language and style shape the meaning of the poem.

Criterion C: Different types of structures were adopted, some more effective than others. Stronger students could easily develop their analysis and interpretation following a coherent and well-focused order. On average, students tried to include in the commentary all they knew about the poem, but this resulted sometimes in a not very articulate organization. Weaker students did not follow a real structure, and this sometimes led to an early conclusion of the commentary.

Criterion D: The overall knowledge and understanding of the work used in the discussion was good. Candidates were able to explain the content of the text and some of its implications. Students could contextualise the work and justify their analysis with references to the text. In some cases, however, the discussion remained on a more general level, and candidates could not go beyond the presentation of the plot, the main characters and some of the key themes. Only a few candidates showed independent thinking and could go beyond the simple answers and present persuasive individual interpretation.

Criterion E: Overall, students were able to answer discussion questions appropriately. This varied according to the type of questions posed by the teachers. When questions were more general (Which character do you prefer? What is your favourite part and why? etc.) candidates answered pertinently but without going in depth. When questions were more detailed and more linked to the intrinsic meaning of the texts and their use of language and style, students could develop more independent and elaborate analysis and this prompted their independent thinking.

Criterion F: The language used by the candidates was generally accurate. Candidates were able to use the right literary terminology and an adequate register, although not always sophisticated in lexis. Some forms of colloquialisms and simplistic terms were present and students struggled to vary the language used, especially in terms of vocabulary, and adapt it to different contexts.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- It is important that students are presented with passages that allow them to carry out an in-depth exploration in the 8 minutes provided. If the passage is too long or too complex, candidates tend to deliver a less focused and not enough detailed commentary. Schools and teachers should consider carefully the choice of Dante's Comedy as poetry work in section 2: Dante could be studied in another part of the syllabus.
- Teachers should remind students of the importance of planning the commentary during the preparation time, in order to develop their analysis in a coherent way, combining effectively the analysis of the thematic and stylistic features of the poem. To this effect, it is important that students are taught to focus on the effect of the stylistic devices, and how the writer's choices shape the meaning of the poem. It would also help if one of the two guiding questions were focused on literary techniques.
- The subsequent questions should further explore some of the main aspects not fully covered by the candidates during their commentary and not ask more generic questions about different aspects of the poem or the whole work.
- It is often useful for the candidates if the discussion questions started from a general aspect or reflection on the work and then moved onto more detailed analysis of specific thematic and stylistic aspects, following the students' ideas and probing their further knowledge and interpretation of the work.

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The extracts represented an adequate range of authors (16), works and genres, and were mostly appropriate in length and challenge. Here too, as at HL, Dante was the prevailing choice, though to a lesser extent (35% instead of 50%) followed by Pirandello (8%), Primo Levi, Tomasi di Lampedusa and Verga (nearly 7% each). In spite of the fact that Dante's extracts, except one from Purgatorio, were all taken from the Inferno, and more than one third from the first Canto – obviously an easy option – Dante's text proved to be difficult. A comparison with the self taught (45% of the SL candidates) might be interesting: Dante sank to a miserable 6,5%, while Pirandello (16,4%) was the most popular choice, followed by Goldoni (13%) and Primo Levi (8%, the only one who maintained and even improved his position). Tomasi di Lampedusa and Verga disappeared completely. Although these choices may be to a certain extent fortuitous, I think there is something to be learnt from them, and I'll come back to this in my final recommendations.

Guiding questions were generally appropriate in number but not always in nature: at times too wide or too vague, not precisely focused on the extract; at times comprehension rather than guiding questions. Subsequent questions appeared even less satisfactory, as they were often not focused on the extract. Curiously, some teachers used as subsequent questions their guiding questions, left unanswered by the candidates (which probably meant that they had not understood them or were unable to answer them).

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A. Knowledge and Understanding:

Overall adequate knowledge of the works and slightly less satisfactory capacity to place the extracts into context. The understanding was not so good: candidates tended to reproduce the generalizations they had learnt but, in most cases, were unable to substantiate them through precise and relevant references to the texts.

Criterion B. Appreciation of the writer's choices:

Generally disappointing. Most candidates made lists of literary features without clearly identifying them in the extract. Only few were able to understand their function in the passage and to show how they contributed to shape the meaning. It seems that some candidates have made an effort to learn and memorize the names of many figures of speech, and this should be appreciated. But they must understand that having in mind a full catalogue doesn't necessarily imply the ability to make a proper use of it: this will need a lot of practice and discernment.

Criterion C. Organization and presentation:

Many responses showed evidence of some planning and were more or less focused.

Criterion D. Use of Language:

Language was generally clear and correct but not always fluent. The choice of register and the terminology were overall appropriate.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Students must improve their techniques of literary commentary through continuous practice. In particular, they must learn the methods by which the most significant aspects of a text can be identified, and they must learn how to make effective use of the theoretical knowledge they may have acquired, for example in the field of literary techniques and figures of speech. They must concentrate on the text (its structure, literary features, content) without relying on second hand sources. I'll repeat what I have said last year: teachers and candidates should bear in mind that the purpose of the oral commentary is not to assess the candidates' general and theoretical knowledge, but to test their ability to put it into practice analysing and interpreting a literary text.

As to the range of authors and extracts, the comparison with the self taught might suggest that some authors (for example Lampedusa and Verga) would hardly be a spontaneous choice for teenagers, that Dante is overrepresented and that a more varied assortment (including, for example, De Filippo, Saba, Calvino, Gramsci, Morante etc.) might better suit the students' interests.

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

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Teachers should make sure that the cover sheets are correctly filled in, with all the required details. It is also recommended that the works analysed are read and studied "in translation" (an Italian, not an English translation, of course).

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work submitted was generally suitable, but the topics selected for treatment were often too vague and/or too vast. In general, a problematic issue was the Reflective Statement, which quite often did not show any development of reflection on contextual and cultural elements (see below for more specific indications). In large entry schools the range of books used was sometimes limited; in some cases more than 80% of an entire group of candidates chose to analyse the same work, while one of the remaining two was totally neglected. Also, in several cases, the topics selected for treatment within a single group were quite similar. Both the limitation in the range of books used for analysis and the choice of similar topics often resulted in a lack of differentiation and originality in the work submitted.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

This was a quite problematic point. Many Reflective Statements did not contain any reference to context and culture or, even if they did, did not show any development of the candidates' understanding. Several Reflective Statements were abstracts of the Written Assignment or summaries of the works analysed. In many cases the candidates presented their personal reflections and comments on the works, without even mentioning their context.

Criterion B - Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding were generally adequate, although quite often there was no specific textual reference or no bibliographic referencing at all. Direct or indirect citation is necessary to show knowledge and understanding. Also, the academic context requires detailed referencing and indications of the editions of the works analysed and pages quoted. If precise references are missing, it is hard to earn high marks for Criterion B.

Criterion C – Appreciation of the writer's choices

The appreciation of the writer's choices was the most problematic aspect of all. Only a limited number of candidates were able to show their appreciation of the way language, style, structure and technique shape meaning. In most cases this aspect was either completely neglected or superficially hinted at, without giving examples drawn from the works, that were rarely analysed from a formal point of view. Quite often this criterion was addressed in a very general and unsubstantiated way, with no specific references to the text (for example, there were observations on the fact that "the style of the author is paratactic", with no examples of paratactic passages).

Criterion D – Organization and development

Organization and development of ideas were generally satisfactory, even though several candidates struggled with transition between paragraphs and were not always able to create meaningful links between the concepts expressed. A problematic issue was the way textual references, especially direct quotations, were integrated into the development of ideas. In

several cases, quotes were not smoothly incorporated within the candidate's argument; for example, they were sometimes inserted between two full stops or hardly commented with regard to the point discussed.

Criterion E – Language

Language was generally adequate, often good or excellent; in general, accuracy in spelling, grammar and syntax was satisfactory. However, as the appreciation of the writer's choices was often neglected, in several cases there was a lack of specific literary terminology.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should encourage the candidates to include all of the following points in their Reflective statement:

- Clear reference to the interactive oral
- Clear reference, with specific details, to the cultural and contextual elements treated and the way they contributed to develop the candidate's understanding of the work (general statements about the importance of culture and context for understanding the work analysed are not enough to earn high marks)
- Clear reference to the actual development of the candidate's understanding of the work analysed; this should ideally show a progress from a position to another one, or at least explain the reason why there was no progress at all (once again, general statements on the development of one's own understanding through culture and context of the work analysed, are not enough to earn high marks).

All these points are clearly underlined in the guiding question of Criterion A, stating that the candidate should show "how his or her understanding of cultural and contextual elements was developed through the interactive oral".

Teachers should remind the candidates that knowledge and understanding of a work can only be shown through precise textual evidence, including bibliographic references (edition, page of the work quoted). Also, teachers should encourage the candidates to show their insight by relating "the detail of the point made to a reading of the work as a whole, going from the particular to the broader meaning" (IB Examiner instructions). Any generalization and any interpretation of the work analysed should be justified through examples and specific details; at the same time, any close analysis of details should be the basis for broader interpretations and should relate to broader meanings.

The appreciation of the writer's choices needs a specific recommendation. Teachers should remind the candidates that Criterion C requires them to take into consideration the formal aspects of a text. Again, such appreciation can only be shown through precise textual evidence. Generalizations on the style, language, structure and technique of a work, not supported by examples and specific quotations, are not enough to earn high marks.

As to organization, candidates should be encouraged to pay more attention to the transition between paragraphs, and to practice and improve on their technique of quotations.

Candidates should always be aware of the importance of accuracy in the use of language, with regard to the appropriate literary terminology.

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

Assignments were on the whole appropriate and investigated pertinently although a few papers did not have a clear title for the assignment but simply recorded the title of the chosen book (in English instead of in Italian) and the author on the cover page, with no indication of which aspect was going to be explored.

A few candidates submitted papers without the Reflective Statement; in some cases the Reflective Statement did not reach the required minimum length of 300 words and thus the candidates penalized themselves.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It appears that the implementation of the new system was more successful this year. The format of the Reflective Statement, in particular, revealed that students had a better understanding of the function and nature of the interactive oral. Most Reflective Statements were truly reflective and sufficiently precise about a personally evolved grasp of contextual elements. Many candidates managed to deliver a sense of a group process and useful outcomes, not just a description of what was presented.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

Overall, this proved less problematic than in previous exam sessions as many candidates confirmed a better understanding of the function and nature of the interactive orals and how such activities helped them reach a better understanding of cultural and contextual elements. Only the less able candidates still approached the Reflective Statements referring to class discussions or accounts of personal contact between students and teacher without dwelling on what emerged.

Criterion B - Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge of literary texts was solid across the board. Even the weaker responses suggest that students had sufficiently prepared their texts. The topics selected were usually appropriately interesting and at times personal. Arguments, on the whole, were developed convincingly, often supported by pertinent references to the chosen texts. In a minority of presentations the discussion of the topic was superficial and mainly factual.

Criterion C – Appreciation of the writer’s choices

This remains a rather challenging area. Clearly the candidates are aware of the need to examine stylistic choices and in most responses there are mentions of literary techniques, and references to the way they are used. However, the approach is often more descriptive than analytical, not always sufficiently developed nor accompanied by an in-depth analysis, resulting in a limited appreciation. The majority of candidates are mainly concerned with content while language, style, and techniques are treated in a sparse or superficial manner.

Criterion D – Organization and development

While organization and development could always be more solid, poor performances in this respect were not common. Suitable structures were usually adopted, examples were well integrated and ideas were organized in a satisfactory way.

Criterion E – Language

Candidates were able to use language adequately with clarity and attention to register suitability. The weaker responses tended to summarise plots but writing skills, in general, were quite strong and students who wrote valid papers tended to demonstrate a high level of linguistic competence. In most cases references and quotes were precise and correct. However, more attention should be paid to the citation of references, which need always be bracketed between inverted commas and should be integrated into their work in a fluid manner.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- In preparing for future examinations students should be encouraged to adopt a more personal approach, based on their reading of the books and to continue to practise the techniques of essay writing, with particular attention to selection of ideas and structure.
- All assignments need a focused introduction that clearly defines the goal of their presentations. In addition to this, conclusions to the essays should not be summaries of what has been said, and thus miss the potential to state a decision about the essay’s argument. A carefully planned essay should allow the candidates to be more decisive about what they are arguing.
- Furthermore, they should be encouraged to keep in mind that quotations should be

used to support any statement or interpretation.

- The unnecessary loss of marks under “Presentation” can be avoided by careful revision and the correction of electronically created errors in layout. Also, double-checking word-count would ensure the essays fall within the 4000-word limit.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-5	6-7	8-10	11-12	13-15	16-20

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

With respect to last year, this year many more candidates showed a suitable approach to the literary commentary (see below for further details), however, some candidates still tended to simply paraphrase or summarize the text, while others tended to put forward general interpretations without supporting them by a thorough analysis of the extract. In particular, this year several candidates did not manage to justify their statements through persuasive argumentations and appropriate references to the text. Thus, in several cases some points of the analysis were vague and unsubstantiated.

Also, unlike last year, this year some candidates tended to identify irrelevant or minor elements of the text as its main theme (for example, the main theme of the prose passage was sometimes identified as “the importance of art” or “the purchase of a painting”, while the poem was considered as a text revolving around the theme of “light”). In general, this year understanding was often an issue, as several candidates did not fully grasp the meaning of the text or were not able to comment on the passage as a whole.

A major issue was still the interplay between form and content; several candidates did not manage to show their appreciation of the writer’s choices. Like last year, quite a number of candidates made a list of the stylistic features they had identified, including it within the body or at the end of their commentaries – as a separate section – without commenting on the way the form of the text shapes its meaning. Although this year most candidates showed at least some awareness of the effects of the literary features on the reader, once again the statements in this regard were often vague and generic (for example, simply commenting that the aspects analyzed “involve the reader” or that “language and style are the most important feature of the text”, without explaining how, why and which particular effect/feeling/atmosphere/meaning they create). Some candidates were still unaware of the distinction between the real author and the narrator/“io lirico” and tended to confuse and

identify the two. For poetry, metrics is always a particularly relevant issue; some candidates either completely neglected its analysis or made several mistakes in the metrical analysis. Once again, also when it was correctly analyzed, metrics was rarely put in relation with the meaning it shapes.

In several cases organization was not smooth. The most problematic issue was transition between paragraphs; the candidates tended to jump from one point to another one without creating meaningful links (the list of stylistic devices is one example of this structure). Coherence and development were thus often missing and ideas were not ordered in a logical way. Also, several candidates did not manage to cover appropriately all of the meaningful parts of the passage. They often ended up writing very long and repetitive commentaries only on one part – quite often the first one – of the text, and completely neglected the other parts, even the most important ones. In most cases this is likely due to bad time managing and planning, but eventually results in poor organization of the essay and also makes it more difficult to show understanding of the text.

As to quotations, I have to repeat last year's notes, as this is another important matter; an adequate technique of quotation is often lacking. The most common faults are:

- The phrase quoted is badly cut, so that its grammar is defective (e.g. subject or verb missing etc.) and the meaning unclear;
- The phrase is not appropriately modified with square brackets in order to clarify it and/or better integrate it into the body of the commentary;
- The phrase quoted is clumsily incorporated in the commentary, for example by putting it between two full stops or without linking it to the argument;
- When two or more lines of a poem are cited, they are not separated with a slash that should indicate the ends of verse lines written continuously;
- The line numbers, whether it be prose or poem, are not indicated;
- Quotations are at times too long.

As to language, it was not always accurate, especially with respect to syntax, spelling and literary terminology.

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

In general, the very approach to the literary commentary has improved with respect to last year. Most candidates were at least aware that they had to work on the interplay between form and content; they managed to identify one or more themes and supported their statements with reference to relevant details and images. In most cases the analysis of the form of the text was not separated from the comment on its themes; most candidates focused at least to some extent on the way a specific theme was shaped and communicated through the writer's choices.

Even though, as mentioned above, several candidates were not always able to make effective use of their knowledge, this year most of them showed at least some awareness of the effects of literary features on the reader. Even when the text was misunderstood in its global meaning, most candidates could analyze its images, sounds, figures of speech and their immediate effect on the reader. In general, the candidates showed familiarity with the major literary devices and were able to identify them correctly. With respect to last year, this year there was much less confusion about the distinction between author and narrator/“io lirico”.

Like last year, organization and use of language should be improved, but cases of mostly unclear and illogical structure and/or language and style were rare.

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

Similarly to last year, the candidates chose the prose and the poem in almost equal measure. The former was generally adequately understood both on the thematic and the stylistic level. Most candidates were able to identify the importance of space and paintings/pictures in mirroring the theme and commented adequately on the narrator. Some subtleties of the passage were though often ignored; for example, only some candidates commented effectively on its symbols or focused on the circularity of the text. However, several candidates tended to focus only on the literal and most superficial aspects of the text; as said above, some identified the purchase of the painting as the only theme, neglecting its symbolic meaning, while others only focused on the difference between the North and South of Italy, stating that the whole passage revolved around poverty in the South of Italy.

This year the poem proved to be quite challenging for the candidates who chose it. Most candidates were not able to grasp and comment on the importance of the title and its repetition within the body of the text. The interlocutor of the poet was either ignored or arbitrarily identified with different subjects, without any justification. Also, the development of the poem and its function were often neglected. However, most candidates managed at least to grasp the atmosphere of the text and could identify its meaningful images and main figures of speech.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- As recommended last year, students should be encouraged to start from a careful reading of the text, ensuring that a sound comprehension of its literal meaning has been achieved before going on to further analysis and interpretation. Any interpretation or statement should be closely linked to the text and justified by quotations, examples, details and a coherent argument development. Any broad interpretation should be based on details of the text and related to them.
- Students should be encouraged to plan in great detail their commentary and prioritize the most important aspects of the text for close analysis. Candidates should make sure not to neglect the interpretation of crucial elements and should be reminded that the incipit, conclusion and title of a passage are generally fundamental elements for

close analysis.

- Students should be reminded that a display of purely technical analysis will not earn them high marks. The essential requirement of the Assessment Criterion B is the appreciation of the way in which the literary devices shape the meaning of a text. Such appreciation is shown by detailed references to the text and precise statements on how, why and which particular effect/feeling/atmosphere/meaning they create.
- As to organization, teachers should push students to focus on transition between paragraphs, coherence, development and balance in covering the passage.
- Candidates should be encouraged to use an appropriate terminology, register and style. They should also be constantly reminded of the importance of accurate spelling, grammar and syntax.
- As recommended last year, the technique of quotation should also be the object of specific teaching and training.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20

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

For many candidates it was difficult to identify and organize the relevant features of a text: quite often they picked out minor details and overlooked the most significant ones; this usually resulted in a limited comprehension of the extract or a misrepresentation of its meaning.

Connected with this was the difficulty of inserting quotations and making good use of them. This problem is related to that of identifying the relevant features because quotations are the best way to highlight such features and use them as evidence in support of arguments and interpretations. Any idea or argument that is not based on clear and relevant references to the texts, such as quotations, will inevitably appear unfounded. Therefore, quotations are of paramount importance; yet many candidates did not know how to make effective use of them.

Firstly, citations were often incorrectly inserted, that is, they didn't fit in the syntax of the discourse in which they were included, or they were badly cut (e.g. in the middle of a sentence), or taken out of their context without a word of explanation, so that the reader didn't have the faintest idea of what they could purport. At times quotes were too long (if they exceed a certain measure – three lines is just about too much – they inevitably lose focus). It also happened that, in copying long quotations, candidates added spelling or grammar mistakes that of course were not in the original. This is a minor aspect which however could contribute, with many similar others, to the general shabbiness of a script. But a more substantial misuse of quotations occurred when they were not at all explained, that is, when candidates didn't bother to say what they were aiming at, what they intended to demonstrate through that quotation, as if they left it to reader to find out. This is unacceptable: it is up to the candidate, not to the reader/examiner, to develop and complete arguments.

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

Overall candidates showed an adequate appreciation of the literary features of the texts and a satisfactory, though not always precise, knowledge of the figures of speech. Mere lists of such figures and other stylistic devices were less frequent than in previous sessions, but candidates weren't always able to show how the writers' stylistic choices contributed to shape meaning.

There was also evidence that candidates tried to make a plan before starting their guided analysis, although their effort was not always successful. This does not mean, of course, that this method should be abandoned but, on the contrary, that it should be practised more thoroughly and consistently.

The language was generally clear, with some exceptions. Greater accuracy, especially as far as fluency and sentence construction are concerned, would have been appreciated. The fact that many candidates, especially among the self-taught, are the only Italian speakers in a different linguistic environment, certainly doesn't help. However, some more effort should be made to improve this aspect.

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

By and large, the comprehension of the prose extract was adequate, except in a number of cases (roughly 15%) in which candidates, as I said in the second section of this report, concentrated on minor details and missed the most significant aspects. Few candidates failed to understand the author's irony and therefore misinterpreted significant parts of the passage, such as the description of the few people in distress or the dialogue between the young widow and the florist. But on the whole Collodi's passage received a warm reception by the candidates and inspired quite a number of competent and interesting commentaries, some of which absolutely outstanding.

More or less the same could be said about the poem, as far as the general comprehension is concerned; but in some cases candidates embarked upon irrelevant and unsubstantiated

speculations, not supported by pertinent references to the text. In particular some candidates were too eager to provide a clear cut definition of the poem's main theme, prior to a thorough analysis of the text, thus disregarding many other aspects and providing a one-sided, incomplete interpretation. The analysis of the stylistic features was generally satisfactory, in many cases well detailed and effectively used to build up the interpretation of the poem. Here too there have been some excellent commentaries.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Continue to practise as regularly as possible the literary analysis;
- Read carefully the passage, make sure that the literal meaning of the text has been clearly understood;
- Highlight all the important features of the text; learn how to identify the most significant and/or essential ones, distinguishing them from the less relevant or trivial;
- Avoid hasty and too clear-cut, one-sided interpretations, especially if they cannot be corroborated by precise and relevant references to the text and if a complete and thorough analysis of the extract has not been previously carried out;
- Make a plan before starting writing;
- Learn to quote correctly: select, adapt, incorporate and explain/comment on quotations; make sure that the sense and the purpose of the quotation is clear to the reader;
- Bear in mind that the requirement of criterion B is not just to identify literary features (the writer's choices) but to show how they are used to shape meaning.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-10	11-15	16-18	19-22	23-25

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

Notably, no students chose to attempt questions 7, 8 and 9 possibly indicating that this category presented significant challenges.

Fulfilling the requirements of Criterion B – Response to the question – proved a particularly weak area this year. Here the most critical aspect was an evaluation of the effectiveness of

the chosen texts, explicitly required by most titles but an aspect overlooked by the less able candidates. There was a tendency to present the texts separately, without developing a proper comparison between them, highlighting similarities and/or differences in relation to the question. A number of candidates used the title of the essay to organize a general discussion of a work, with little development of the specific demands of the question. Only the stronger candidates were able to focus and respond to the main implications with relevant ideas.

Criterion C - Appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre - proved less than satisfactory this year. Again, a tendency to identify and list literary features in a mechanical sense was noted.

Many candidates were mainly concerned with content, while language, style and techniques were often treated in a sparse and superficial manner. A better awareness of literary terminology would help candidates focus on the ways in which a topic is shaped in the texts.

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

Knowledge of literary texts was solid across the board. Even the weaker responses suggest that students were sufficiently prepared. In most cases references and quotes were precise and correct, even if not always fluently incorporated into the essay.

Suitable structures were usually adopted, and ideas were organized in a satisfactory way. Most candidates were able to use language adequately with clarity and attention to register suitability, demonstrating a pleasing awareness of form and meaning. Occasional colloquialisms were still found, but overall wording and sentence construction were usually clear and correct. A curious note: few students used clear paragraph breaks, most elected to write continuously.

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

This year candidates were generally well prepared and confirmed good knowledge and understanding of the texts. The best results were achieved by students who selected Poetry and Drama for their presentations.

Question 1

The task required identifying and defining the techniques used by the chosen poets to express the theme of 'brevità della vita' and the philosophy of 'carpe diem'. The majority of students discussed 'carpe diem' quite well, but not all responses explored in depth the first portion of the question. Furthermore, only the most able students proceeded to compare and discuss the effectiveness of the chosen poets, confirming a perceptive understanding of the issue at stake.

Question 2

The task was to identify the techniques and methods in which poets positioned themselves within their work, in order to answer the question of whether “the poet is the true protagonist of the poem”. Most students presented two or even three poets, with good focus demonstrating them as protagonists, showing good knowledge of the works studied through the use of specific quotes; some difficulties emerged in an in-depth approach to analysis of the techniques and methods used in relation to the demands of the question, as well as their effect on the reader.

Question 3

Generally, there was good focus on the characteristics of poetic language; in particular, the combination of unexpected words and concepts used by the chosen poets. While most students offered examples of each, many did not compare the poets to each other nor evaluate which one worked more effectively.

Question 4

Most candidates produced lively responses, mostly focusing on the relationship between men and women, with particular emphasis on the portrayal of non-conformity of these ‘modern’ women. The authors’ methods and techniques used to represent the theme were generally satisfactorily compared, while focusing on the function and their effectiveness in the development of the plot proved more challenging.

Question 5

This proved a rather challenging task. Most essays showed a limited development of the issue at stake. Although most candidates managed to confirm an adequate knowledge of the chosen texts and a pleasing awareness of literary conventions (by discussing how characters in a play are often delineated by symbols that show specific features such as social status, psychology or role in the development of the plot), not all essays compared how authors used such symbols.

Question 6 was chosen by one candidate.

Question 7 not chosen.

Question 8 not chosen.

Question 9 not chosen.

Question 10

Most students answered with specific references to the chosen texts, demonstrating a good knowledge of the chosen works. However, not all responses to this question were explored in-depth. Students were quick to give examples, but few provided critical insight as to the question, ‘for what purpose, and to what effect do writers accompany some moments of the narrative with descriptions of atmospheric phenomena.’

Question 11

Most of these responses proved rather factual. A number of candidates had difficulty focusing on the extent to which a character 'can be described by the reactions and feelings aroused in other characters', and used the title of the essay as a starting point for a general discussion of the work, with little or no relevance to the specific question.

Question 12

The task focused on comparing the use of variable or unchanging point of views authors used in their works, for which purpose, and their effectiveness. This was a frequently misunderstood question. Many students interpreted the question to discuss the changing opinion of the protagonist throughout the course of the narrative, while others demonstrated adequate knowledge of the texts, but had a limited perception of the implications of the issue at stake.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Recommendations can be easily inferred from the previous comments. Summing up the main points:

- Paper 2 requires commentary that relates explicitly to the literary devices used in the works analyzed. Students should not simply mention such aspects without relating them to the meaning of a text and the issue at stake or the question answered.
- Special attention should be paid to the comparison between the works selected for analysis. Candidates need to identify similarities and/or differences between the texts in relation to the question. To score high marks, the candidates should work on the evaluation of the texts used to answer the question, for example, in relation to their effectiveness and the effect on the reader.
- In the organization of the essay, it is important to focus on transition between paragraphs and development. Candidates should be encouraged to present their ideas in a coherent and logical structure, with relevant connections between the points made.
- The use of language should be precise with regard to the technical terminology employed; this will also help the candidates to focus on the literary conventions of the genre.
- In preparing for future examinations students should continue to practise the techniques of essay-writing paying particular attention to the structure and the selection of ideas before starting to write, keeping in mind that quotations should be used to support any statement, or/and any interpretation.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	19-22	23-25

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

The quality of the student's performance is evenly distributed along the whole spectrum of the grade range, with a substantial concentration of candidates in the central to top area, namely defining performances from satisfactory to good. At the two extremes stand out some very good/excellent performances, together with a few mediocre to poor ones.

Further comments

The overall outcome of this year's papers is fully satisfactory.

All the four genres were tackled, even if very few chose the questions on "Essay". The most popular were undoubtedly Poetry (especially 2 and 3) and Prose (mainly 11 and 12), with some attempts in the Theatre section. On the whole candidates were able to satisfactorily define and explore the aspect chosen for investigation: the skill and insight with which this was done is, obviously, rather heterogeneous, ranging from papers that show true personal involvement, sense of investigation and an engaged perspective to a more superficial, at times merely factual perception of the issues at stake. This attitude explains why some candidates missed the sense of question 12, which invited reflections on single/multiple narrative standpoints, which they read as flat/round character dynamics.

Apart from that, all students appear to have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of the works studied and, if in some cases this remains factual and standard, bordering into paraphrase, on many occasions there is evidence of a sound understanding of the work as a whole, of the meaningful areas of comparison available and of the various possible implications to be taken into account for a substantiated and convincing work of personal analysis. Students also show an adequate perception of the importance of the cultural background to the texts and of their main features; similarities and links among texts are usually relevant and at times developed and investigated in depth. Presentation is generally effective; assignments are well organized, discussions usually follow a coherent sequence, are cohesive and, if not original, references are fitting and congruous with the overall outlook proposed by the candidate. Language is increasingly accurate and appropriate; if clarity, preciseness, choice of register and style do actually vary according to candidates, the overall quality is definitely satisfactory, with only few cases of poor linguistic performances due to severe syntactic, grammar and more often lexical deficiencies to the point of tampering understanding. A parallel welcomed improvement can be detected in the extent to which students are able to identify and

appreciate the use of literary conventions. This skill is becoming increasingly sounder in most of the candidates, even if I would recommend that the ability to detect and identify devices be always strictly connected with actual meaning, since some candidates seem to be contented with a mere identification of technicalities, which remain such if not supported with their meaning.