

# Examiners' Report

## June 2018

IAL English Literature WET01 01

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# Introduction

WET01 requires the application of knowledge of literary techniques and features, to produce crafted, analytical answers that are informed by the identification of connections between post-2000 poetic texts (Section A) and the variety of contextual factors that shape the production of post-2000 novels (Section B).

There are two sections to the paper, each carrying 25 marks.

Section A requires a comparison between two poems- one named poem from the anthology and one chosen by the candidate. Candidates are expected to use the appropriate terminology (AO1) to explore the poet's craft (AO2) and make meaningful connections between the poems in relation to the question (AO4). Section B requires the analysis of a novel from the post-2000 period. In section B, there are 5 texts to choose from, and candidates select one of two questions on their chosen novel. The personal response of the candidate to the question is expected to be supplemented by a demonstration of knowledge and understanding of contextual factors germane to the text (AO3). Depending on the specific focus of the question, contextual factors might include historical and political events, biographical details and literary movements.

## Section A

Generally, the poetry questions were answered in a more competent fashion than in previous series. There is still a tendency to simply describe the events in the poems in question. Candidates should be discouraged from this practice. The mark scheme emphasises the importance of analysis and evaluation, and, therefore, stronger responses will focus on how the poems create atmosphere and how language, structure and form help develop the theme the candidate is exploring in the poems. The questions in Section A explicitly state that candidates should consider the development of themes, the use of language and imagery and the use of other poetic techniques.

## Section B

There was clear evidence of improved performances in responses to the questions on the novels. Weaker responses were prone to lapses into narrative/summary in places. Whilst recognising that there will be reference to events in answers, candidates should try to avoid description. Generally, candidates were more adept in this series at integrating context and identifying literary techniques used by the respective novelists.

## Question 1

Question 1 asked candidates to 'Compare the ways in which poets explore regret in *Effects* and one other poem'. In general, there was an improvement in the quality of responses to both the poetry questions and Question 1, in particular, elicited some interesting and proficient answers. There was a pleasing range of poems chosen from the Anthology to compare with *Effects*, but the most common choices were Barber's *Material* and Boland's *Inheritance*.

In order to access the highest level, candidates need to analyse and evaluate connections between the texts as they relate to the thematic concerns embedded in the question. Strong responses are likely to integrate the discussion of the poems, rather than explore them separately. Although this latter style can be productive, an integrated approach is more conducive to the capacity to exhibit the 'sophisticated connective approach' stipulated in the Level 5 mark scheme.

A successful example of this integrated approach:

We have another comparison between '*Effects*' and '*Material*' when the persona in '*Material*' digresses into a memory of earlier times, of 'greengrocer George with his dodgy foot...' The list of vivid images that follows is mirrored in the resonance of memory in '*Effects*' where we read of 'faded snapshots, long-forgotten things'.

The presence of analysis and evaluation of the writer's craft are essential to high level responses on this question. It is felt that the stronger candidates had spent time studying the tone of the poems they were analysing and learning how the language and structure of the poems worked to convey the particular atmosphere of the texts. Less assured answers offer 'surface' readings of the text. The following excerpt from a level 3 response exemplifies this superficial approach. The candidate is comparing *Effects* and **On Her Blindness**:

*We see pieces of symbolism through objects/atmosphere in both poems. Within On Her Blindness, the death of the mother in the hospital compared to the outside atmosphere contrasted the feeling of the mother. Thorpe uses adjectives to describe the surrounding atmosphere as she passed away, 'was golden weather, of course, the autumn trees around the hospital ablaze with colour.' This further accentuates the irony of the situation as the mother has lost her vision and is incapable of seeing the view.*

The candidate here makes some effective points, including a valid comment on the irony of the juxtaposition of the description of the brightness of the vista and the sadness of the mother's condition. However, there are missed opportunities to develop a more insightful exploration of the way the language works to create an elegiac tone.

Featured below are full scripts with some comments and tips.

The response successfully integrates exploration of both poems and includes well judged commentary on the themes related to the question set.

'Effects' is a poem which holds a lot of strong emotive diction and a regretful tone. It explains the persona's childhood memories that link with the death of his mother and his remorse. The persona himself is the writer of the poem. This poem also links with 'Maternal' which is also about the death of a mother and the under-appreciation ~~to~~ made by the daughter.

To begin with, we have media res for both of the poems as they both jump into the action. 'Maternal' begins with 'my mother was the hanky queen.' this visual imagery is quite juxtaposing as hanky is associated with something cheap <sup>quality</sup> and inexpensive whereas 'queen' is associated with a more high superiority. <sup>we get</sup> ~~there's~~ a next declarative statement; which reflects the line in 'Effects' which also has a short next statement, 'I held her hand, that was always scarred' this line, gives us a vivid image, however the pronoun 'her' is used and therefore we don't know specifically who <sup>the persona</sup> ~~she~~ is talking about. The diction 'scarred' is quite a harsh word, we associate it with pain, which therefore allows the readers to comprehend that maybe this woman has

had a rough life.

Secondly, in '<sup>effects</sup> Maternal' we get an enlistment that acts as an explanation as to why her hands are so painful. "From chopping, slicing... washing-up" this enlistment of tasks reminds the reader of a stereotypical mother. The visual and tactile imagery here emphasises that she has a ~~lot~~ list of tasks to do, the ~~enlist~~ enlistment stresses how much chores she has by accelerating the pace, we can see the motherhood in this stanza. This is similar to 'maternal' as she also has a stereotypical theme of motherhood, "She'd have one, always up her sleeve" the adverb of frequency "always" reinforces that the mother is always prepared for any situation when she has to take care of her child. It's also an idiom, which means that she always has a plan prepared which further highlights her mothering instinct in the play.

Moreover, '<sup>effects</sup> Maternal' shows the reader that this mother only knew one way to love, "And giving love the only way she knew... old-fashioned food" the tone here is quite melancholic, the mother only knew how to look after her child, which is through preparing food, the visual imagery along with the past and present tense of the verbs "cooked" and "ate" reinforce that this in fact is a memory, which reflects



back on to 'material' which is also a memory.

If food is a metaphor for love, then this means that the mother consistently gives love to the child and never gets anything back and therefore, ~~is~~ "old-fashioned food she cooked" in other words she had an old fashion - stereotypical love that she gave to the children, however they did not return this favour, instead they just "ate" it.

~~the~~ ~~customer~~ moreover, we see the comparison or 'material', in 'effect' the ~~children~~ <sup>child</sup> did not appreciate the love <sup>from</sup> for the mother but instead just "ate" it, which is the same for "material", "She bought her own; I never did" the tone here is quite regretful and full of remorse. The pivotal Caecuras here acts as a balance between the line, it shows the difference between her and the mother.

"She bought her own" means metaphorically that the ~~man~~ mother always bought the hankies, she always gave the love. However the adverb of frequency "never" shows the reader that the daughter always got loved and appreciated by her mother no matter what and therefore she never felt the ~~the~~ need to give the love back.

On top of this, we have yet again another comparison between 'material' and 'effects', in 'material' the persona has a digression and a

Stream of consciousness as we see in the Stanza through the long enjambment, which shows her fast flow of thoughts, "greengrocer George -- marble slab of hammock ..." the enjambment technique, along with the visual imagery, show the reader that the persona is diverted from what she was talking about, as she remembers her memories, her tone is quite bitter as she sees the past vs present. In the past & small friendly businesses & had good relations, everyone was friendly and talkative which contrasts Stanza 1 as we see the ~~future~~<sup>Present</sup> generation "killed in tv's lassitude."

This compares with 'Effects' as we have a reference to memories, "(with faded snapshots, long - forgetting things)" here again we see the past but in a ~~diff~~ different way, through the visual imagery, we see that the mother role is so important, that she puts everything else aside, the pre-modification of "faded snapshots" renders even more, how her motherhood is far more important than it's her main bar, and the brackets act as ~~a small~~ as a further explanation.

However, the difference between these poems is the structure, '~~Effects~~ Effects' has one long stanza, which highlights the stream of consciousness and flow of thoughts made by the persona whereas 'material'



is broken up into 8 lined stanzas, this shows her ~~is~~ regulated ~~thoughts~~ thoughts and shows her control, it could possibly hint at her slow process of memories as she's remembering the past due to her mother's death.

To continue, again we see a difference in mothers, 'material' shows us that the mother has no such luxuries, "a mum's embarrassment of lace" lace is associated with something very luxurious, however in this case, we see that it's an embarrassment, this shows the reader, through the diction that the mother only owns lace in a sense to create hankies and use it as a mother rather than have it as a fancy luxury. whereas in 'Effects' the mother owns, "Classic ladies' model, gold strap -" this emphasises the mother's watch, it gives us a bit of detail of how the watch looks, therefore highlighting her wealth but in this sense it's also used as a metaphor due to the fact that now ~~the~~ "it was gone" this is metaphorical due to the fact that a watch represents time, which is now absent this ~~can~~ may hint at possibly the death of the mother.

On top of this, both poems differ from one another. One poem, which is 'Effects' explains how the mother's death has affected him, "the little bag of effects on me" the <sup>visual</sup> imagery & portrays that now the mother is dead

the nurses have given ~~her~~ him the belongings however metaphorically these belongings hold memories that create ~~a~~ bitter emotions for the persona as he now has to cope with his feelings; whereas 'maternal' the persona is comparing herself to her mother, "there's never a hanky up my sleeve" the adverb of frequency "never" contrasts the ~~previous~~ stanza, as her mother "always" this shows the contrast between the persona and the mother, as she is never prepared to help her children which differs from her mother.

Also, in the poems, ~~both~~ both of the poets use geographical features, italics, in ~~'effects'~~ the ~~persona~~ <sup>poet</sup> uses italics to express directly what the mother says, "Please don't leave" this tone is pleading, her last dying wish is for her ~~son~~ <sup>child</sup> to sit by her side. 'maternal' also uses italics to directly express what the mother is saying as well, "this is your maternal/ to do with, daughter; what you will" the italics here along with Caesuras emphasise the mother's message, the daughter doesn't have to have the same maternal to be like her mother but instead needs to make the best out of the maternal she has, this message is more of a life lesson.

Furthermore, in 'Effects' and 'maternal' both have a lot of visual imagery, in 'Effects' "my turn came to cook... 'funny foreign stuff'" this visual imagery as well as the enjambment show the difference

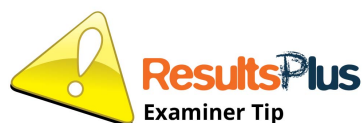
between the older and younger generation, the older generation such as the mother, likes the old traditional food such as "chops or chicken portions" whereas the younger generation prefer ~~to~~ "funny foreign stuff" the poet put these on two separate lines, next one after the next in order to create a juxtaposition and to further render the difference between the younger and older generation.

'Material' also deals with the younger vs older generation throughout the poem as well. "Every mother would whip a hanky from their sleeve" Contrasts with, "Tere's never a hanky up my sleeve" in this statement, she says "every" the diction used here portrays through the core that all mothers in the older generation were the same, they were always prepared, the use of the alliteration and the diction "would whip" creates a more magical, super-power feel to it as well as the structure of it, these words being the first on the line make them more memorable as well as the visual imagery, this contrasts to how the persona is, she is never prepared, she refers to her children as "broads" which is more of a scientific word therefore emphasising the disconnection that she has with her children, in the present generation the relationships between people and family is not as strong as it used to be.

In conclusion, the poem "effectr" and "material" both speak about the death of the mother. However "material" the persona compares herself to her mother, whereas in "effectr" the persona is coping with the loss of his mother. However both persona's understand that at the time of their mother being alive they did not appreciate them enough.



As a top level 4 answer, the response displays controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. There is discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in the poems and the subtleties of the writer's craft analysed. The answer does not quite meet the criteria to reach level 5. There are missed opportunities to evaluate the connections between the poems and expression could not be classified as 'sophisticated'.



As the candidate here successfully demonstrates, effective responses will adopt an integrated approach and use detailed examples. Students should strive to develop a writing style that allows for the blending of a connective approach to the texts, evaluation of these connections and an understanding of how the writers create meaning. The response here could have been improved by more evaluation of the effects of literary features deployed in the poems.



This is a good example of a candidate emphasising description and narrative over analysis and evaluation. The response demonstrates some knowledge of the given poem and attempts to draw out some comparisons with the chosen text. However, the candidate spends too much time making general points without showing how the poems work.

In the poem "Effects" by Alan Jenkins ~~portrays~~, the theme of regret in both characters. The one stanza poem is very narrative, has no rhyme scheme and run on lines. This shows how blunt and straightforward the speaker is. as if he was pouring his heart out after the death of his mother. The title "Effects" gives us an idea that this is an aftermath scenario.

The regret portrayed in this poem first starts with the speaker talking about his mother in a very loving way. "And giving love the only way she knew". This shows that maybe he did not appreciate it as much when she was actually there to do so. He also talks about a holiday they took abroad which also suggest a good time in their lives that ~~was~~ is now only history. "Not all the weeks I didn't come" shows that he wasn't there for her and talking about her having a drinking problem might suggest that he blames himself for it and regrets that he wasn't there for

her.

Her regret is portrayed when he says "That, when he was alive, she wouldn't touch" talking about the scotch. This gives us an idea that she had been missing out on it and now is so addicted to it. This implies that she regrets not ~~drinking~~ drinking it before. Her staring, which was mentioned more than once ~~in~~ where it says "blinked unseeing at the wall" and "blinked and stared" suggests her reminiscence from her past which she might have regretted. Her dream of her childhood also implies that there is something she is overthinking which in most cases it is always regret.

The speaker's regret was that he wasn't there enough for her. He says "whose fingers couldn't clasp mine anymore" which suggests that he wishes he had been there to experience that more. She told him not to leave but he did anyway and when he came back, she wasn't there for him anymore. The speaker's words throughout the poem are because of this particular ~~event~~ reason. He left too soon!

In the poem "The Lammas



"Hireling" by Ian Duhig, the theme of regret is also portrayed but in more different ways than similar. The even number of lines in all four stanzas suggests the very thought out murder that occurred in this poem.

The speaker uses the image of animals and <sup>unrealistic</sup> ~~unreal~~ creatures like "warlock," "cow" to ~~personify~~ impersonate his wife. He is "disturbed from dreams" of his late wife.

Dreaming of something disturbing is usually caused by guilt and regret. He no longer sees his wife as the woman she is but as an animal which represents the fear of ~~her~~ his doing being reversed on him. "I levelled and blew the small hour through his heart" describes the ~~very~~ murder itself suggesting that he stabbed ~~her~~ her in the chest.

He says "I carried him in a sack that grew lighter at every step... There was no splash". This shows that it wasn't over for him and just because he killed her or it doesn't mean that she's not going to come back to haunt him. His regret drove him to repent. ~~His~~

In the final stanza, he says "Bless me, Father, I have sinned". This more than anything ~~sug~~ implies that he regrets his deed and is seeking forgiveness from God. ~~His too~~ He keeps making his way to confess very often "It has been an hour since my last confession". This shows how guilty he feels and how he wants it all to go away like it never happened.

There is a similarity in both poems. They both portray regret in dreams. One regretting what she didn't do and one ~~at~~ regretting what he did do. The titles however come from entirely different meanings. One giving us an idea of aftermath and one about a festival of harvested crops which implies ~~no~~ in no way that this is a ~~&~~ troubling poem.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate attempts to explore both poems, but doesn't show clear understanding of writer's craft.



There is a logical, clear structure present in this response and the candidate demonstrates some understanding of the themes. However, it is important that students include identification of literary devices and do not make general points without support and the deployment of terminology and concepts.

The response also shows the importance of making the appropriate choice in selecting a poem to write on along with the given text. In this case, the chosen poem did not allow for strong connections between the texts.

This mid-level 4 response pays close attention to the language of the texts and successfully deploys carefully chosen language to construct a controlled argument.

Plan:

Effects and on her blindness

Effect →

- Regret His absence → "Obedience I left"

- Her hardship

- The mother's regrets ← Ring watch } Father

on her blindness →

- Regretting the way they handled her blindness

- Father → "joked"

- Mother regretting her way of handling her disability

Difference — structural  
Mother's attitude  
Hardship  
level of regret

Essay begins:

In both "Effects" and "On Her Blindness" <sup>regret</sup> ~~regret~~ is explored the poets explore ~~effect~~ through the relationship between ~~the family and~~ in the family and their response to difficulties, though in different context. <sup>However,</sup> the structural differences ~~show the~~ show two different levels of connection in a family, and therefore, differing degrees of regret.

The speakers in both poems <sup>are</sup> play the son, and the victims <sup>are</sup> the mothers. In the poem "Effects" the mother is <sup>described</sup> ~~portrayed~~ to <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ gone through hardship and domestic



labour; ~~the~~ the verbs "washing", "frying" and "scrubbing" all allude to a traditional housewife. ~~In addition,~~ However, the "reddened" knuckles suggests an extensive amount of work and ~~therefore~~ pain. The listing effect puts emphasis on the amount of tasks the mother had to endure ~~and the fact~~ and the fact the speaker mentions this in connection to his mother expresses an ~~extent~~ extent of regret. Furthermore, she is described to ~~be~~ be essential to the well being of the family, as expressed in the line "She cooked and we ate"; the speaker mentions such basic daily routine only after his mother's death, in this poem, showing a lack of gratitude in her presence, <sup>turner</sup> suggesting a sense of regret. ~~The~~ The feeling of regret is also implied by the <sup>absence</sup> ~~symbol~~ of the watch, which the speaker says that he had "never known her not to have that on"; ~~the~~ "that" is written in *italics*, putting emphasis on how shocking it is for the mother ~~not to~~ to be seen without her watch. The ~~speaker's~~ ~~speaker~~ "watch" can also be seen as a symbol for the speaker's "watch" over his mother. His emphasis on the absence can therefore be seen as an expression of regret towards his own lack of attendance.

Similarly, the speaker in "On her blindness" is also regretful of <sup>his relationship with</sup> ~~how he has treated~~ his mother. However, ~~instead of regretting~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ lack of care, ~~the~~ <sup>differing from the speaker in "Effects"</sup> this speaker regrets his flawed method of dealing with his mother's blindness, and perhaps, an excessive amount of ~~exaggeration~~ and caution and lack

of acceptance. ~~The~~ The title of the poem is an alternation of another <sup>poem's</sup> title "On His Blindness", written by a poet who was about to ~~lose~~ lose his sight. This alludes to a sense of resilience, like how the "Romans" endured pain. The ~~mother~~ mother is portrayed to be stubborn and ~~be~~ ashamed by her blindness, <sup>as seen in the oxymoron "saw things she couldn't see"</sup>, she insists on keeping "her dignity" ~~by~~ but ignores the potential danger. ~~The~~ ~~main~~ ~~direct speech~~. The father and son's response to this attitude is what the speaker requires most. The direct speech "no built in compass" allows the reader to ~~poem~~ <sup>whilst also showing</sup> more personal, ~~and~~ <sup>that reveals</sup> ~~show~~ the frequency of ~~such~~ <sup>this</sup> awkward ~~be~~ ~~joke~~ ~~which~~ ~~shows~~ the father's inability to deal with <sup>mother's illness.</sup> the ~~circumstances~~. The speaker, whilst ~~describing~~ <sup>expressing</sup> how his mother is "looking the wrong way", metaphorically expresses his wrong methods of coping, and ~~the~~ ~~mother~~ how he <sup>was</sup> looking the wrong direction, but only realized after his mother's death, suggesting a sense of regret.

Structurally, ~~the~~ whilst ~~the~~ "Effect" is <sup>He is also regretful of how he was the "locked in son" not capable of emotion.</sup> written in one stanza, showing fluidity and connection, the frequent enjambments in "On Her Blindness" expresses a stronger strive for connection, and therefore, a deeper sense of regret. ~~The~~ In addition, the final line of Thorpe's poem, "she was watching, somewhere, in the end" breaks the pattern of couplets, suggesting a sense of isolation and loneliness ~~in~~ in the absence of the mother. Furthermore, the enjambment between stanzas

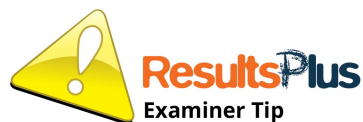


most obvious in the breaking of the ~~the~~<sup>sentence</sup> in bracketed " (try it in a pitch-black room)." shows the extent to which to ~~writing~~ writer is trying to regain connection, with either his ~~dead~~ mother who had passed ~~to~~ or with his mother back when she was still alive. Either way, this desire shows regret, he is attempting to reestablish a connection which, as expressed by the fragmented structure, ~~re-establishment~~ was never established. Contrastingly in "Effects", the poem is written in one stanza, though this should suggest connection, the last line of the poem ("A nurse bring the little bag of her effects home") & ~~conveys~~ implies that the one stanza is ~~showing~~ putting emphasis on the speed at which time passed and therefore the speaker's frequent lack of ~~at~~ attendance ~~and~~ which exacerbates his regret, seen in the line "obviously, I left" which expresses an inevitability to his careless actions.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

An effective response with the candidate demonstrating clear focus on the question and discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts.



In this response the candidate uses frequent, fluently embedded examples to make relevant points. Candidates should be encouraged to quote frequently from the texts and to comment on language as well as thematic issues raised in the poem. Lines used to support the argument, as in the script here, should be brief and, ideally, accompanied by analysis of the writer's craft. The candidate here is admirably focussed on the question and this quality is to be encouraged.

This is a lower level 3 response. The candidate has included some effective detail, but the understanding of the poems is not always clear.

In *Effects* and *On Her Blindness*, by both Alan Jenkins and Adam Thorpe use innovative and creative ways to convey the ~~theme~~ ~~of~~ universal theme of regret. They also use structural techniques, to guide the reader through the poem in a manner where it further reinforce their poem to earn the biggest impact on the reader. In a similar strain, the poet both poets also use imagery to carry and explore their points and message more explicit throughout the poem. Within *Effects* Jenkins, regrets the part in which her mother was still within her presence. However, with the deteriorating condition, she herself was not with him, which guilt comes to the poet as well. Similarly in *On Her Blindness* the poet laments memories in which he regrets that he did not cherish at the time.

Within effects, the theme of regret is shown through harsh and unconditioned love that the mother is showing towards the poet, at the beginning of the poem. This unconditional love provides the feeling of love to the reader and pity for the poet as his mother steadily loses her mental awareness. This is shown, when: "The knuckles reddened, rough from scrubbing hard" we see here that the mother will do anything, regardless of the demands of the task hence reinforcing the theme of regret further as we approach the end later on.

In contrast within On Her Blindness, the mother's mental awareness is within her, and her presence is loved by her surroundings. However, the disability of her eyes is what sets her apart from her family, the poet uses imagery to reinforce the unfortunate disability that she has developed. "the fact that catastrophic handicaps are hell" the word "Hell" is used as the mother absolutely wishes she had vision as she said



"It's hung hell", this imagery is further ~~for~~ reinforced by the use of an alternative rhyme that Thorpe uses. The alternative rhyme shows the reader the disorientation that the mother feels of being blind, and with the aid of enjambement & stanzas <sup>provides</sup> constant could flow, and maintaining a conversational tone, as if it was <sup>heavy</sup> ~~speaking~~ with <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ life of a blind person. An example of alternative rhyme is "If I gave up hope of a cure, I'd bump <sup>th</sup>... but it must have been the usual sop," the alternative ~~low~~ rhyme here explains how the poet would do anything in search for a cure.

~~Evidently, we see pieces of symbolism through objects / <sup>atmosphere</sup> ~~at~~ in both poems, within On Her Blindness.~~

In Contrasts, within Effects, Jenkin uses ~~1~~ <sup>one</sup> continual, lengthy stanza with enjambement, to show how much that the ~~poet~~ mother had an "Effect" on her and how much regret that she feels. she uses a conversational tone, to

provoke the sympathy of the reader to show the pain of regret that she is enduring.

Evidently, we see pieces of symbolism through objects/atmosphere in both poems. Within *On Her Blindness*, the death of the mother ~~was~~ in the hospital compared to the outside atmosphere contrasted the feeling of the mother. Thorpe uses ~~descriptive words~~ adjectives to describe the surrounding atmosphere as she passed away "was golden weather, of course, the autumn trees around the hospital ablaze with color" This further accentuates the irony of the situation as the mother has lost her vision and is incapable of seeing the view. Personally, my in my a divided opinion the mother has suffered through troubles with being blind and the challenges that she has to go through and pretend that she could see "kiss... (last drawing)" now that she has ~~part~~ passed her, agony has ended, and she may rest in ~~per~~ peace not needing to pretend. However, the feeling of regret



will impact others life surrounding her which may seem selfish for the poet ~~that she is not~~ to constantly look for a cure when in reality the mother is better resting in peace. Hence, the feeling of regret from my view could be subtle incompare to the poet.

In ~~the~~ contrast, the poet uses the mothers ring ~~that is~~ within Effects to show the consistent mental awareness that she has, showing to the public view that she is married. However, the poet notices that "they have had taken off her rings" The ring symbolizes that the poets mother is no longer with him regardless of her ~~the~~ presence physically, this further accentuates the feel of regret that the poet feel, ~~as~~ especially, towards the end of the poem. ~~her last~~ the mothers last words was "Please don't leave me" and, when he came back "a nurse bring the little bag of her effects to me". This final line, rippled with many emotions that was provoked to the reader. The theme of regret, is reinforced,

by not being there for her mother  
~~which~~ when she passed and when  
she had her full mental capacity.

In conclusion, both Alan Jenkins and  
Adam Thorpe successfully displayed ~~that~~  
show ~~to~~ the theme of regret through  
the many poetic techniques which  
was carefully structured to gain the  
emotions from the reader. Both have  
created a poem in which the pain  
of regret has displayed where the presence  
of the <sup>mother</sup> ~~poem~~ mattered most.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a good attempt to compare the poems *Effects* and *On Her Blindness*. The candidate has made some valid connective points, but the response loses focus as it develops.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

There is some attempt in this response to analyse the structure of the poems. However, the candidate makes points that are not supported. The link between the mother's blindness and the rhyme scheme and use of enjambment in *On Her Blindness*, as an example, is tenuous. Candidates should be encouraged to study and write on structure in the poems, but should be wary of making unjustified inferences.

## Question 2

The second poetry question asks candidates to 'Compare the ways in which poets present people coping with difficulties in *Please Hold* and one other poem.' There was a range of poems chosen to partner with the named poem, but the most popular choices were Thorpe's *On Her Blindness* and Fanshawe's *A Minor Role*.

Here is an example of a candidate responding to question 2: **Both poems are told from the first person point of view. This allows the reader to gain greater insight on and empathy for the individuals and their plight as it makes the work more direct and personal. They also both make use of a free verse rhyme scheme. This is symbolic of the lack of control each persona feels in their respective pieces as the irregular, unpredictable pattern mirrors the chaos and difficulties they must face in their own lives.**

The excerpt is not perfect. It could have been improved by embedded examples from the texts to illustrate points being made. However, it is a solid example of a candidate drawing comparisons and making valid connections between poems.

An excerpt from a stronger response follows below. Here the candidate is comparing *Please Hold* and Thorpe's *On Her Blindness* and the response proficiently compares aspects of the poems' language and themes.

*Both poets explore preconceptions regarding their respective issues. O'Driscoll references the classical composition 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik'. Here he comically toys with stereotypes surrounding being on hold. The music is typically considered relaxing or soothing and yet it is only making him even more annoyed which can be seen through the profanity in 'Eine fucking klein Nachtmusik'. He also highlights the irony in his situation as 'the robot transfers me to himself'. The persona feels as though he is 'going around in a circle' which is reinforced by the use of repetition. Thorpe uses a simile to explore the preconceptions around disability: 'bear it like a Roman'. This seems to highlight how those in pain can bear their suffering with stoicism, but Thorpe is also perhaps criticising the idea that the afflicted can 'somehow find joy'.*

Particularly effective in this response is the candidate's recognition that a poem is open to more than one interpretation. Stronger candidates will likely 'open up' a poem to a variety of readings, rather than 'closing down' a poem and seeking to state a single meaning.

## Question 3

*The Kite Runner* was the most popular novel on Section B of the May 2018 examination and the majority of students elected to answer question 3 which required them to respond to the following proposition: **'This novel shows the importance of thinking about others, not merely caring for oneself.'** Respondents are expected to consider relevant contextual factors in their answer. The less assured candidates tended to lapse into narrative or summary of the plot when approaching this question. To access the higher levels on section B, candidates need to explore novelistic technique and language choices, integrating these features with consideration of the contextual factors that helped shape the novel in question. Here is an extract from a candidate's response to question 3.

*One way in which Hosseini conveys the importance of caring about others is by showing the consequences if one does not. In the novel, the reader is eventually introduced to the Taliban regime, who rose to power in Afghanistan following the defeat of the Russian occupiers. Numerous instances of cruelty perpetrated by the Taliban are presented by Hosseini. For example, many characters, such as the antagonist Assef, choose to partake in substance abuse and child prostitution. The author is clear in his condemnation of Assef who receives retribution for his sins when he is defeated in a poetically just manner at the hands of one of his victims, young Sohrab.*

The candidate in the above example interweaves focus on the question with pertinent contextual points on the rise of the Taliban. The candidate illustrates the ideas being conveyed by referencing knowledge from the text and uses appropriate terminology relevant to the question.

The following is the full script with accompanying comments.

1 Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' follow the story of Amir on his quest for redemption and his journey from childhood to adulthood. The latter is typical of a bildungsroman, which the novel is, which allowed the author to capture the many life lessons Amir learns even well into his adulthood. One such lesson is the importance of altruism and empathy. One way in which Hosseini conveys the importance of caring about others is by showing the consequences if one does not. In the story, the reader is eventually introduced to the Taliban regime, who rose to power in Afghanistan following the defeat of the foreign Russian occupants. Numerous instances of cruelty perpetrated by the Taliban are present throughout the novel. For instance, many choose to partake in substance abuse and child prostitution, such as the antagonist, Assef. The author is clear in his condemnation of Assef and causes him to receive retribution for his sins as he is defeated in a poetically just manner - at the hands of one of his victims, young Sohrab. Therefore, the author's



disapproval of the harm of others is evident. In addition, the ~~and~~ writer often highlights the theme of unatoned sins and redemption. Thus, while he shows the importance of redemption through the character of Amir, he also uses his character foil, Assef, to show the consequences of sins left unatoned.

The author is also very effective in his communication of this message through the nature of the book. 'The Kite Runner' is a post-modern text and a common characteristic of such works is that they are relatable.

One reason for this in this respective novel is Amir's unique narrating style. Hosseini ~~is~~ personifies the boy's darkest thoughts by portraying them as an inner voice in his head. This is exemplified when he thinks "<sup>Hassan</sup> [~~Amir~~'s] not my friend [...] He's my servant!"

The statement is cruel but it honestly reflects the value he places in Hassan in that moment. While the majority of readers would prefer to consider themselves as being the selfless Hassan who "could do no wrong,"

Amir's thoughts are something we as readers can relate to. By providing him with this inner voice, Hosseini allows to empathise with the less desirable aspects of Amir's personality and admire how he is able to overcome them. Also, by allowing the reader a close perspective of his journey through the unique narrating style and <sup>the</sup> use of first person ~~in~~ point of view, the



reader is able to appreciate why it was important for him to atone for his sins. They are able to see why it is not only beneficial to the recipient of kindness but also for the person being selfless ~~offering~~ as it frees them of guilt. The author best exemplifies this guilt when he describes the "pair of steel hand [that] closed around [his] windpipe" when Amir is reminded of Hassan and thereby how he betrayed his companion. When comparing this metaphor to the ~~visual image~~ simile of Amir's smile being "as wide as the Valley of Panjsher" upon redeeming ~~itself~~ himself, the reader can clearly see how being a kinder, better person also benefits oneself and one's mental health.

Hosseini also showcases the benefits of compassion when he ~~is~~ contrast the image of Kabul in the 1970s versus Kabul following the aftermath of two wars, especially when referencing the theme of Old Afghanistan versus New Afghanistan. This is evident in the way he depicts the image of Kabul in the past where trust was so great within the community that Amir would use a stick with notches carved in it <sup>by the baker</sup> ~~to determine~~ as a record of how much to pay him at the end of the month rather than paying him outright for each transaction and Kabul under the Taliban regime where a war victim was

forced to barter his prosthetic leg to afford to ~~feed~~<sup>feed</sup> ~~and~~ ~~his~~ his family. Hosseini also goes one step further to emphasise the negative impact of the apathy that ~~was~~ came with the war through his presentation of nature. While Amir was a child, the reader could see the true beauty of Kabul and the "poplar trees" where "the sunlight would flicker through the leaves". However, following the aftermath of the war nature had decayed and all that was left was "dust" and corpses.

Here, the author is intending to show the reader the greater implications of indifference and cruelty to one's fellow man.

'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini is a fictional tale, however, like most postmodern texts, is grounded in history and helps depict a realistic experience. It also ~~functions~~ as features numerous teachings and life lessons which are not explicit but are ingrained in the text, such as the importance of caring for others even in harsh situations.



This is an evaluative response, with a sophisticated appreciation of the themes of the novel and the writer's craft.



The candidate in the example interweaves focus on the question with pertinent contextual points on the rise of the Taliban. The candidate illustrates the ideas being conveyed by referencing knowledge from the text and uses appropriate terminology relevant to the question.

There is an attempt to comment on the form of the novel. The candidate makes some relevant points about *The Kite Runner* as a post-modern novel. Although the points are not fully developed, there is some attempt to explore features of narrative structure. Candidates are to be encouraged to study and comment on the form and structure of the novel. *The Kite Runner*, with its complex narrative structure, is open to an analysis that appreciates how form, structure and meaning are inextricably linked.

## Question 4

The second question on Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* asked candidates to respond to the following statement: **'The action-packed ending, after Amir responds to Rahim Khan's letter and goes to see him, disappoints the reader because it resolves the novel's issues far too easily.'** This question elicited a range of responses in terms of perspective of answer and quality of writing. Less assured responses merely recounted the events in the novel leading to the denouement. Stronger responses analysed and even evaluated the structure of the novel and some candidates went so far as to refute the proposition in the question, arguing that, in fact, the novel's issues are not resolved 'far too easily' and that the climax of the novel is both apt and satisfying. This latter approach validates the importance of students thinking analytically about the question before beginning to write.



## Question 5

The first question on *The Life of Pi* asked that candidates respond to the following statement: **'What strikes the reader most about this book is the author's remarkable powers of description.'**

The challenge of writing about Martel's descriptive powers afforded candidates the opportunity to explore the range of the novel's literary styles. Some candidates met this challenge with admirable skill and knowledge.

The brief excerpt here is a section from a successful response that fuses knowledge of the text with analysis of Martel's literary style and thematic concerns.

*Pi metaphorically associates Zoos with religious belief as he makes the statement, 'I know zoos are no longer in peoples' graces, but religion faces the same problem, certain illusions about freedom plagues them both'.*

The range of literary styles employed by Martel in the novel was addressed by a few stronger candidates who recognised the author's utilization of genres from romance, to adventure to the scientific/factual.

## Question 6

The second question on Martel's *Life of Pi* asked respondents to explore the '**ways in which Martel presents the distinction between animal and human behaviour**' in relation to the following statement: '**It is difficult for the reader to work out whether the novel is about animal or human behaviour.**' Less proficient answers to this question exhibited similar weaknesses as the other answers to the Section B novel questions. For example, there was a tendency to merely summarise the incidents on the lifeboat and a lack of ability to analyse the terms of the question itself. Stronger responses demonstrated the capacity to explore the ambiguity of the novel, and the manner in which Martel uses anthropomorphism and zoomorphism to collapse the distinction between animal and human behaviour.

## Question 7

Question 7 on *The White Tiger* required that candidates respond to the following statement: **'The novel seems to say that disrespect and disloyalty are perfectly acceptable.'** The main thrust of the question allowed candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the corruption and venality highlighted in the novel and to explore the idea that 'disrespect and disloyalty' are presented as the values animating the new India and as attributes necessary to emerge from 'the Darkness'. A small number of strong responses linked the themes embedded in the question with the vituperative tone of Balram's narrative voice. Less confident answers tended to merely narrate the examples of violent behaviour in the novel.

The script featured here successfully blends political and even philosophical context with clear focus on the question and knowledge of the text.

This is a confident response which demonstrates clear knowledge of the text and the themes addressed by Adiga. There is strong focus on the ideas of 'disrespect' and 'disloyalty' with well chosen examples from the text used to illustrate points made.

Plan:

Disrespect + disloyalty

- (P1) → Presented as acceptable → crucial to emancipation
- (P2) → Unacceptable → only in certain circumstances
- (P3) ~~Raham's act of disrespect~~  
Raham → forgiven?

Essay:

"The White Tiger" is a political commentary on the corruption in India. Raham is portrayed as a anti-hero who shares similarities with Nietzsche's "ubermensch" which changes the portrayal of disrespect and disloyalty in the novel. ~~Raham's~~ Raham attempts to justify his actions by emphasising their importance to his emancipation. ~~the novel~~ the novel is therefore portraying morals to be flexible.

To a certain extent Raham succeeds in justifying his disrespect ~~to~~ and disloyalty, he portrays these traits to be ~~the~~ <sup>only way</sup> for him to break out of the darkness and become a better person. ~~He~~ He says that in the light ~~that~~ if a man wants to be good, he can be



good. In Laxmangarh (the darkness) he doesn't even have that choice". As ~~the~~ 1% of India's richest people own 53% of its wealth, a majority of Indians live in the darkness with 1 USD a day. Balram is stating here, that when you live in a society ~~where~~ that is as corrupted as the one in India, ~~the only way to succeed is to~~ you don't have the choice but to turn a blind eye on your morals. Furthermore, ~~Balram~~ satirically Balram classifies the people in India to be either part of "men with big bills" or "men with small bills". After the bankruptcy in 1991, India had begun a period of "economic boom", however, in reality, this only increased the gap in society. ~~people~~ ~~as~~ when attempting to promote social mobility, they've abolished it. Therefore, in a society where one can only fall in two polar opposite categories, ~~Balram~~ <sup>the novel</sup> proposes that "you can a good driver must roar to get ahead on it."

~~There is~~ Although disrespect and dishonesty are seen as "bad" characteristics, ~~in fact~~ Balram proposes that in order to be "good" you must first be prepared to be a 'pervert of nature' and ignore your morals. Furthermore, the fact that Balram (the new Mr Ashok) doesn't "slap, or bully, or mock" his employees and establishes the civil ~~agreement~~ agreement that "they're my employees, I'm their boss, that's all", shows a level of morality, proving the reliability of his ~~state~~ previous statement that one must first break out of the ~~egg~~ "rooster

coop" to be able to become a "good" person.

However, on the other hand dishonesty and disloyalty is also frowned upon<sup>in the novel</sup>. ~~Rajaram~~ <sup>Ghandi</sup> Rajaram attempts to change ~~Ghandi's~~ <sup>Ghandi</sup> words, "honesty, ~~dedication~~ <sup>sincerity</sup>, and ~~unselfishness~~" to "dishonesty, lack of dedication and insincerity", as most of Indians believe in Hinduism and fatalism, they have a large amount of respect for Ghandi, and therefore Rajaram's "disbauchery" and "depravity" is ~~never~~ portrayed to be ~~more~~ unacceptable here. ~~on the other hand~~ In addition, Rajaram lack of ~~loyalty~~ and dishonesty not only applies to Mr Ashok, but also to his family. As ~~stated by~~ <sup>reemphasized</sup> by Mr Ashok, "family is a good thing" and is viewed by many Indians to be something they're proud of. Rajaram's disloyalty to his family can be seen as a betrayal to his ~~&~~ culture and therefore portrayed as negative.

~~However~~ Overall, moral <sup>values</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>and</sup> dishonesty are portrayed to be flexible. Rajaram is still uncertain whether "we loathe our masters behind a facade of love; or do we love them behind a facade of loathing"? He is uncertain of his set of moral <sup>even till the end</sup> and is still failing to find the correct reason to "why Mr Ashok died".

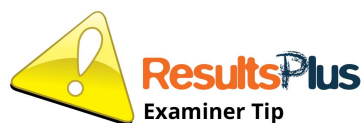
However, he doesn't regret ~~the~~ the fact that "just for a day, for an hour, for a minute, to know what it means not to be a servant." His lack of regret suggests further acceptance of his previous dishonesty

and disloyalty. His geographic movement from Laxmanagarh (population of 80,000) to Dhanbad (population of 1,100,000) to Ranchi (population of 10,000,000) shows the progress of his "enlightenment". Furthermore, his methods of improvement had led him to a place with more people and therefore more opportunities to do good, further justifying his previous actions.

Overall, the ~~novel~~ <sup>novel</sup> explores the mobility of moral and political dichotomy and disloyalty to be <sup>viewed as both</sup> ~~characteristics~~ <sup>acceptable</sup> ~~good~~ and <sup>unacceptable</sup> ~~bad~~ depending on the situation. Most importantly, this shows the extent of the corruption in India and how it forces people to ignore fundamental virtues.



Adiga's novel is distinctive for its strong sense of narrative voice. The candidate touches on this aspect of the text and integrates knowledge of context with some awareness of literary/novelistic techniques.



Candidates should be encouraged to draw contextual knowledge from a range of ideas. The response here uses contemporary political and historical knowledge to inform the answer. Additionally, there is a consistent development of a line of argument based on the question. It is essential to remind students of the importance of remaining focussed on the question.

## Question 8

The second question on Adiga's *The White Tiger* asked candidates to respond to the following statement: **'This is a novel about a world made for men in which women are insignificant.'** Unfortunately, this fascinating question on the presentation of women in the novel elicited a very small number of responses. The answers that were attempted tended toward narrative or/and character description, instead of the exploration of the role of women. The question of women's agency in the novel, whether they are presented as victims or predators, was not explored in the responses submitted.



## Question 9

Question 9 was the most popular choice of the two questions on Toibin's *Brooklyn*. Candidates were asked to respond to the following statement: **'This is a novel about transformation: Eilis comes back to Enniscorthy a completely different person from when she left.'** The stronger responses to this question were able to analyse and evaluate Toibin's restrained, detached style and comprehend that this method of writing is integral to the presentation of Eilis' character and her transformation. Some candidates focussed on the two settings of the novel-Enniscorthy and Brooklyn- and noted that there was a pattern of 'doubling' in the novel: there are two settings, two male love interests, two beach scenes. The idea central to the question, 'transformation', allowed candidates to integrate context in various ways. For example, some responses wrote about Eilis' lack of agency in the earlier sections of the novel and commented on the role of young women in the 1950s. The understated references to social transformation in the novell such as African-American women buying stockings in Bartocci's and Eilish's Jewish lecturer, act as a prism through which the reader sees the transformation of the protagonist.

Eilis's personality, so artfully presented by Toibin, is captured in the candidate's example excerpted here:

**We are introduced to Eilis as a shy, introverted individual who follows in her older sister Rose's footsteps and is influenced by her mother's decisions. Although she appears to be easily influenced, throughout the course of the book we realise that she is a simple girl with a complex mind. Eilis has intense analytical skills and carefully inspects the situations she is confronted with, '...even though she let these thoughts run as fast as they would, she stopped when her mind moved towards real fear or dread, or, worse towards the thought that she was going to lose this world forever.'**

This is an excellent piece of writing. The candidate demonstrates textual knowledge and uses an apt illustrative quotation to support a valid point.

It is recommended that candidates integrate context in their answers. Below is an excerpt from a top level 3 response in which contextual remarks are accurate and meaningful.

**Brooklyn by Colm Toibin is set in the Post World War Two era. In the novel, Toibin explores the journey of a member of the Irish diaspora; an emigrant from a country that economically was still developing after independence and where opportunities for young women were limited. Many Irish people had to travel to all corners of the globe in search of a better future. Eilish Lacey, our protagonist, has to move to the United States, leaving behind her family friends and familiarity of her small town.**

The complete script follows with further comments.

As referenced above, the candidate includes some sound contextual remarks and accurately places the plot of the novel within the historical conditions of the setting. There is also some focus on the question (transformation of the protagonist). The candidate shows knowledge of the novel and understanding of the question.

Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín was set in post world war ~~2~~ two (II), in the novel Tóibín explore the journey of an Irish ~~the~~ diaspora of immigration to the United States of America, Ireland during the time had only achieved independence in 1929, hence economically Ireland was only in its infancy, thus meaning that job opportunities and income was hard to come by and scarce. Many Irish people had to travel to all corners of the globe in search of a better future and life outside of Ireland. As many as our Irish people did our protagonist Eilis Lacey had to move to America leaving behind her family, friends, and familiarity in the comfort of her own small town.

The novel starts began and ended in Colm Toibin's small town of Enniscorthy, where in the 1950's it was common for Irish people to migrate to different ~~country~~ countries.

We see Eilis at first & that is over shadowed by the breadwinner of the family her sister Rose. Toibin exposed Rose as the most vigorous, glamorous, and stylishly dressed in the ~~book~~ novel she provides Eilis with a role model that she intends to follow. Like stage directions, Eilis's life was controlled and manoeuvred mainly by her sister or her mother in Enniscorthy this is the conventional behaviour during that time for Eilis to follow all their commands and be a dutiful daughter to her mom, this soon will change as she will embark on a journey to transform her view of & society.

Eilis's initial opinions of Brooklyn, NY was that she feared the "unfamiliar" she hates that ~~her~~ the rest of her life will be "a battle with the unfamiliar". Eilis was forced to settle in, which requires her to become familiar and open up to others surrounding her, this was difficult for Eilis as she ~~he~~ came from a small town that majority of the people was conservative in the way they ~~g~~ judge others.

Eilis's move to Brooklyn in fact gives her the massive opportunity in which allows her to broaden her view to a multicultural and life and her professional life abroad with also working ~~with~~ ~~at~~ at Bartecis. Eilis ~~was~~ ~~let~~ felt like a ghost in ~~a~~ Brooklyn, and was constantly upset, not because she had no friends and family it was the thought of that she feels lonely all from walking to work, staying in her room alone, nothing in Brooklyn was ~~a~~ ~~few~~ apart of her. Father Flood



attempts to comfort Eilis with telling her that she is suffering with "home-sickness" but Eilis, being a very young woman was in training to carry herself as she matured as many Irish people did in order to fit in and attempt to blend in with the culture that they are in.

Brooklyn, was a massive multicultural group occurred after the world war II, its ethnic neighbourhood, first intimidated Eilis. However, once Mrs. Fortini said "treat every the same" by this Eilis already is transforming to become apart of a multicultural society in Brooklyn, NY. After her seems to be never ending sadness of the wanting home this soon changed as she meet a man in which is the turning point of the novel.

Traditionally Eilis expected to earn a job in her small town of Ennisclorty and marry some one Irish

have children, and give up her job, as a mother. This is common and the most conventional status of many women during that time, however, Eilis has met Tony which provided her with a sense of belonging, a family, and a sense of home, gaining what she wanted all along her journey. This transform Eilis to a woman that is capable to perceive the society in a different view, not many female will able to mature and develop as Eilis did as they will be judge by their surrounding in Ireland. However, Eilis's situation forces her to take decisions into her own hands.

Furthermore, as she transform even further as the cause of Rose's death she was forced to withdraw from her life in Brooklyn and travel home, which was not normal during the time, many Irish immigrants was not expected to come back to Ireland once they have left, in fact "people

from town who lived in England missed Enniscorthy, but no one who went to America missed home, instead they are proud and are happy to be there" Eilis initial often wondered if that was true.

As she travelled home, we see that Eilis has developed a split personality for herself, one that has found a good earning job, and has found love in a form of a man in Brooklyn and the other, a dutiful daughter to her mom back home in Ireland. After Tibbin has exposed Eilis with many elements of challenge she goes back to "home" which use to represent comfort, safety, and familiarity, which has ~~turned~~ turned into a place where her old self is expected, this clarity that she feels is normal as she has transformed into a woman that can handle her own emotions and take life decisions ~~that~~ in her own hands.



as evidence of Ellis's transformation "she noticed that a woman was studying her" she sees a woman look at her in amazement of her glamour confirming her initial thought of America "Brooklyn is weird to her with its "utterly foreign manners and systems, yet it had a compensating glamour to it" The ~~transformation~~ transformation made by Ellis is incomparable from the start. She has matured and grown into a heroine for other Irish female Irish individuals which looks for a better future for themselves in a foreign country.

Personally, the novel Brooklyn relates to many individuals in the world who is forced to leave the comfort of their own home, and in search of a job, finding a better life and future for themselves. This is majorly true in many cases for Irish people till today which are far from home in order to provide income for families back home.

With Colm Toibin's successful use of literature devices, and contextual setting allows him to expose Eilis to challenging elements with ~~con~~ historical accuracy. Provoking the reader with many different emotions, and display Eilis's transformation throughout the novel.



This is a response that does not quite capitalize on the knowledge demonstrated by the candidate. Some discussion of Toibin's literary style would have improved the answer.



Try to integrate contextual remarks along with exploration of language, form etc. The context here is used as an introduction. This is an acceptable structural approach, but not sophisticated.

As the response develops, the candidate demonstrates some understanding of the author's presentation of character. It would be helpful to include closer reference to the text. In the case of the description of Eilis and Rose, some detail of their language, dress etc would highlight their differences in the early parts of the novel.

The response makes intelligent and perceptive remarks about the novel and communicates ideas in a lucid style. The writer's craft should be addressed more specifically and the candidate misses opportunities to comment on Toibin's use of language, narrative perspective and so on.



## Question 10

Question 10 required candidates to explore Toibin's presentation of Tony and how he 'represents change and a new beginning' in the novel. There were relatively few responses to this second question on *Brooklyn*, but there were one or two interesting answers nonetheless. Central to the successful answers was the ability to see Tony as symbolic of the allure of America: open hearted, fresh and enthusiastic. More perceptive candidates were able to delineate the ambiguity of Tony's appeal to Eilis. Weaker responses to this question exhibited the failings of other responses to section B: over-emphasis on narrative/summary, inability to identify novelistic techniques and an absence of focus on the question.

## **Question 11**

Question 11, the first question on *Purple Hibiscus*, required that the candidates explore Adichie's presentation of love and tenderness and particularly how these virtues can survive in a harsh environment. Unfortunately, this intriguing question elicited very few responses. The candidates that did answer this question tended to focus on Eugene's tyrannical treatment of his family. This was a perfectly acceptable perspective to take, as long as candidates went on to include the ambiguity of Adichie's presentation of Eugene. Better responses would have been likely to have included discussion of other relevant aspects of the novel: the warmth of Ifeoma's home, the extended family, the simple faith of the grandfather and so on.

## Question 12

Question 12 asked candidates to respond to the following statement: **'Most of the problems in this novel are caused by religion'**. There were relatively few responses to this question. The candidates who did answer tended to focus exclusively on Eugene and his extremist position, often beginning with the novel's explosive opening which depicts Eugene's violent response to Jaja's absence from communion. Unfortunately, there was generally a failure to explore the range of issues pertaining to religion and its implications. Contextual factors related to religion in the novel were generally handled in a cursory manner. Few candidates, for example, alluded to the interplay between traditional and 'Western' faith systems and how the arrival of white missionaries may be considered to be the root cause of problems in Nigeria.

The following excerpt is typical of the type of response submitted in this series. The candidate makes some effective points, but neglects to capitalise on the ideas being presented:

*Father Benedict, a European priest, is the one Papa follows. The reason behind this is that Papa was raised viewing European tradition as the one that is right. Papa follows Benedict's religion because everything he preaches is in English and is from a European country. The Igbo religion however is far simpler than the Catholic, European faith. Auntie Ifeoma and her children follow the Catholic faith, but, unlike Papa Eugene, don't ignore their traditional faith. They live according to their nature and origin; they prefer not to lose their identity as Nigerians.*

The candidate here is presenting some cogent knowledge of the colonial/religious context. Unfortunately, there is an absence of depth in the response and failure to integrate the contextual knowledge with exploration of the theme of religious conflict.

The full script with further comments follows.

*The Purple Hibiscus* script featured here can be seen as a typical mid-level 3 response. As indicated in the short extract excerpted above, the candidate has addressed context in terms of the question (on religion), but has not developed the contextual remarks with sufficient depth to reach the next level.

In Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, religion is portrayed in two ways, the extremist Catholic way and the Igbo Catholic way. Father Benedict, a European priest is the one Papa Achike follows. The reason behind this is that Papa was raised viewing European tradition as the one that is right. Papa follows Father Benedict's religion because everything he preaches is in English and is from a European country. Father Inogu however, is a priest who combines Catholicism and Igbo tradition. His religion is far simpler and more complex than Father Benedict's. Aunty Ifeoma and her children follow this religion. They live according to their nature and origin. They prefer not to lose their original identity as Nigerians.

Papa's extremism leads to abuse in his home. He abuses his daughter Kambili, his wife and his son Jaja in very brutal way. Papa has a law that they should

not eat before mass but one morning, Kambili woke up with stomach pain and Mama told her that she must eat before taking any medicine. She did as told by Mama but when Papa found out, he beat her mercilessly. The children are not allowed to visit their grandfather as frequently as they would like. They could only see him for a certain time and will be taken home immediately as that time is over. They had to be ingilitated by someone during their visits. All this is because Papa Achike concludes that Papa Nnukwu is a "Heathen" and therefore a sinner, anyone who interacts with him too much is also a sinner. When Kambili and Jaja visit Auntie Ifeoma, she convinces the children to spend more time with their grandfather. When Papa hears of this, he pours boiling hot water on Kambili's feet as a way of somehow ~~eterna~~ cleansing her of sin because she interacted with her grandfather and stayed in the same house as him. Papa is so harsh and controlling of everyone in his household that they ~~can't even~~ even had a schedule made by him for everything they are supposed



to do like when to pray, when to eat, when to study and when to sleep. Is papa trying to portray a Godly figure? It seems that way in his household. He ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> so frightening that everyone only speaks in words and phrases and completely agree with him whatever the case may be. When Papa brings some ~~drinks~~ for them to taste from his factory, even though they were tasteless, the kids agreed that it was good. When the ~~food~~<sup>tea</sup> was too hot, they drank it anyway without a word of it. This led Kambili to ~~feel~~ feel left out at school, because of her tight schedule, her lack of speech and her fear of Papa.

Jaja on the other hand was the first to stand up to Papa by refusing to ~~take~~ go to communion at the start of the book which is portrayed like a ~~cinema~~ cinematic form by starting at the end and then taking us back. Jaja was very influenced back at Auntie's house. He saw how Igbo tradition was far better than Papa's religion. He felt laid back and less of a man when his

cousin Obiora who was three years younger than him had to perform a ritual about manhood but Jaja couldn't because he wasn't taught how to. Jaja eventually lost faith and the only person to blame was Papa.

Papa Achike also violated Mama a lot in this book. He beat her several times leading to her several miscarriages. Papa denies them when she was hospitalised ~~as~~ by saying things like she fell off the stairs. Similarly, this was done when Kambili was hospitalised after he poured ~~at~~ the hot water on her feet by saying it was some sort of accident. This shows that Papa is not even true to his religion. In Christianity it is a sin to lie and then Papa clearly lied in those situations. Papa's image of a Christian was completely different inside his home and out. He lies his way through life. He portrays in his newspaper that he is against the army's dictatorship over Nigeria when he himself is a dictator in his own home. Papa is known to the outside world as a very generous person.

who gives out outstanding charities, but truly, to his own family, his father in particular who barely has enough to eat on his plate, is giving nothing to.

Kambili falls in love with the Igbo Catholic religion and joins her cousin Amaka in several activities. In Papa's home, Gospels could only be listened to in English but in Aunt's home, they were free to express themselves in whatever way they want. That phase ended when they had to go back home into the prison their father had built for them with fences so high they wouldn't even see anything outside. Mama had finally grown tired of it all and poisoned Papa to death. Taji took the blame seeing it as prison not being so different from Papa's house.

Papa's extremism in religion backfired greatly. ~~Instet~~ Instead of bringing his family closer to religion, it pushed them very far from it. They hated it and liked the more traditional one instead. There is great irony in that.



Although displaying understanding of the text and some appreciation of the themes, this response needed to develop some analytical depth and to include some exploration of literary devices/novelistic techniques.



*Purple Hibiscus* is a novel that relies for its power on the narrative voice and the careful deployment of powerful, descriptive language. The candidate in this case, while navigating the theme of religion with some skill, does not explore the writer's craft and is more descriptive than analytical. Students should be encouraged to include discussion of language, narrative technique and other aspects of writer's craft consistently throughout their response.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

### Section A:

- Ensure that the question is read clearly and the themes or ideas embedded in the question are addressed directly in the response.
- Adopt an integrated approach to the question and strive to explore the poems in an interconnected fashion.
- The exploration should include discussion of contrasting features, in addition to comparisons.
- Develop an evaluative perspective of the poems being explored and comment as to whether the poems are successful in presenting their thematic concerns.
- Attempt to provide sustained analysis of how the language, structure and form of the poems combine to create effects and help to create meaning.

### Section B:

- Read the chosen question carefully and respond directly to the ideas and themes embedded in the question.
- Avoid the tendency to describe events or narrate incidents from the novel in question, unless the description used furthers the explication of the novel and assists in the candidate's response.
- Ensure context is addressed in an integrated fashion. Ideally, candidates should use contextual remarks to develop the response and context should be explored consistently throughout the answer.
- Candidates should not limit themselves to the most obvious contextual discussion, but be prepared to explore a range of ways context can inform understanding of the novel.
- Exploration of Literary devices and features-aspects of writer's craft-should appear frequently in the response.
- Devices most commonly used in the creation of novels, such as foreshadowing, symbolism, points of view, etc should be discussed in the development of the response. Appropriate terminology should be used to further this discussion.



## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>



