

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

Paper 0427/01
Poetry and Prose

Key messages

- It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**
- Responses must answer the specific question set and focus on this throughout.
- Effective and sustained analysis of language is essential, particularly in the passage-based questions.
- Detailed support from the text, either by short quotations or well-chosen references, is essential in all questions.
- Responses should show detailed knowledge of the text by ranging across the whole extract or poem in the passage-based questions and across as much of the novel or short story as is relevant in the essay questions.
- Candidates need to present a developed and well-structured response to the question.

General comments

Many candidates showed engagement with the poems or prose texts studied. Many candidates, however, continue to find it difficult to express complex ideas coherently and to frame a developed and analytical response; some show a tendency to drop too readily into description and narrative. There was frequently interesting and strong personal response, and this is to be encouraged, but quite often this was at the expense of a discussion of the details of language in the extract, which must always be at the forefront of any response.

A small but significant number of candidates answered more than one question from each section, often the passage-based question for every text. Invariably, these wrote a sentence or short paragraph for each response, sometimes demonstrating a little knowledge or understanding, but these were so brief or generalised that very few marks could be awarded. Candidates should be advised that this is always a very poor strategy. Higher marks can only be achieved by presenting a developed and detailed response which answers the question. Indeed, the most common area for improvement in the paper as a whole is ensuring that responses are sufficiently detailed and sustained. Many candidates make a really promising beginning, with several relevant points, clearly explained and supported by the text, but then fail to take things further. Students should be helped to learn how to develop their points and consider the wide range of ideas available for analysis and discussion in each passage and essay.

Passage-based questions require a response which analyses the writing and language while remaining focused on the particular question. Often a brief reference or introduction to the context of the passage is helpful or necessary, but this should not be a lengthy retelling of narrative which occurs before and after the passage; this inevitably loses focus on the question and on the language of the extract. A good response will briefly place the passage within the novel; this will enable a consideration of how characters or situations change, for example, and enable judgments to be made about the significance of the passage and how it will affect what happens afterwards.

Focus on language remains a key discriminator between the mark bands and is the area in which many candidates can improve. For credit to be given for language points, candidates need to look at specific words or phrases, selecting pertinent words or short quotations. This is covered in the mark scheme by 'the way the

writer uses language' or 'the way the writer achieves...effects'. It is not sufficient to identify figures of speech or important words without saying how and why these are appropriate and effective. Examples will be given in the comments on some of the individual questions to help demonstrate good practice. Knowing the terminology of literary criticism without being able to apply it sensibly and effectively will not help the candidates to present a successful response. In the same way, generalised comments such as 'he uses diction and imagery to put his point across' without identifying the words and figures of speech or sometimes even the point, do not in themselves demonstrate understanding.

Responses are often trying to consider language used by the writer but instead fall into the 'supporting reference to the text' category of the mark scheme. This often shows knowledge and understanding of the text, and is sometimes an appropriate choice, but tends to be a much longer quotation covering several lines of poetry or a longer sentence. These can have their place in an answer (though the rule is invariably 'the shorter the better'), but candidates who only select these lengthier references without also considering specific word choice and effects can only achieve marks in the lower bands. In the same way, large sections of narrative or description very often do show some knowledge, but will not address the writer's craft. It is worth emphasising that consideration of the language used by the writer and its effects is just as applicable to the essay question. If there is only 'reference to the text', candidates are not able to evidence A03. Some short pertinent quotations will generally be useful.

Some tried to answer the essay question by using the extract. Candidates should be advised that this is not appropriate for any essay question.

There were often indicators that candidates were unfamiliar with the poem or passage on the exam paper and seeing it for the first time. This particularly applied to the poetry section where there were several examples of misunderstanding or questionable interpretation. The fact that the poem is printed, and therefore does not have to be 'learnt', should not substitute full preparation. Those candidates who had had the opportunity to spend time with others discussing possible interpretations and use of language were clearly distinguishable and, inevitably, more successful.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Poetry

Candidates frequently discussed language in the poems and some made a creditable attempt at improving their responses by trying to show the meaning behind the poets' choice of imagery. Many, however, still appear to feel that it is sufficient to 'spot' similes, metaphors, alliteration etc. without saying how these are effective and how they add to our understanding of the poem. Examples given below show the difference between simple or straightforward comments and those which are more indicative of higher band responses.

BILLY COLLINS – from *Sailing Alone Around the Room*

Question 1 – *Afternoon with Irish Cows*

Candidates engaged with the poem and recognised that the narrator was fascinated by the cows but were less able to articulate exactly why this was and how the language used helped us to understand his thoughts. The question asked about 'vivid' impressions, but this was largely ignored. Most who addressed this said that, for example, the 'full-bodied cry' is vivid but without saying why. Most candidates took the poem at face value, with a literal description of what the narrator saw and heard, without any attempt to explore underlying meaning or what Collins was trying to say in writing about these animals.

The most common misunderstanding was that the cow was being branded, from the words 'torched or pierced through the side with a long spear'. However, this ignored the next stanza which explained that this was not the case, nor was the cow giving birth, which had been assumed from 'laboring upward'. The strongest responses understood that Collins was trying to capture the 'unadulterated cowness', that the cow was just behaving naturally, 'not caring what the world thinks', as one candidate observed. Few took this any further to articulate Collins' attempt to show that all forms of life are unique and capable of inspiring wonder; the poem attempts to capture this sense of awe which is available to all of us, even in the most ordinary of scenes. Some stronger responses noticed the contrast between the peaceful, gentle scene of grazing cows in the green fields 'stepping from tuft to tuft', which changes abruptly to the 'phenomenal' sound, 'bellowing' from a cow with a 'wild, shocking eye'.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- The metaphor '*on the black-and-white maps of their sides*' shows that the patterns on the sides of the cows look like maps. (straightforward comment)
- Comparing the patterns on their sides to '*maps*' tells us that the patterns are irregular shapes and none of them are the same. Each cow is unique. (developed comment)

Question 2 – *Where I Live*

This question encouraged candidates to empathise with the narrator's feelings and there was some excellent personal response to the stages of grief that he is going through. Weaker responses demonstrated little understanding of the first six stanzas. Those who did understand the poem from the beginning sometimes still struggled with the first three stanzas and how they fitted in to the narrator's grieving. One strong response suggested that the only way the narrator can process the enormity of his father's passing is by reducing the physical world to cold mathematical certainties as a way of avoiding emotional melt-down. This is a good example of a candidate imaginatively putting him/herself into the narrator's shoes and exploring the possibilities of the language used. Stronger candidates related the '*orchard that no longer exists*' to his father and how the stream (Plum Brook) shows that life still goes on '*flowing*' even after death. Many candidates recognised his inability to sit still as a sign of his restlessness and unhappiness, and how he will feel strong enough tomorrow to '*talk to the stonecutter*' as the next stage in his grief where he is finally able to face someone.

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- '*the first good rain to fall*' is a metaphor for the tears the man is crying as rain is often used in poems to show sadness. (a relevant comment with a little development)
- The poet uses '*first good rain*' to suggest that the narrator is finally able to cry for the first time since his Father died and that this is making him feel better. He is able to move on a bit at last and recognises that the world also is carrying on '*as usual*' as the rain makes pools '*as they always have*'. He understands that this is normal and doesn't mean he doesn't love his father. (well-developed personal response to how the poet achieves effects)

Songs of Ourselves

Question 3 – *The Darkling Thrush*

Few responses showed an understanding of the deeper implications of the poem. Slightly better were those that were able to pick out some images which suggested the dismal nature of the day from the many available in the first half of the poem: '*spectre-grey*', '*dregs made desolate*', '*tangled..like broken lyres*', '*corpse...crypt...death lament*', '*every spirit...seemed fervourless.*' Where a suitable word was chosen, there was often little relevant comment. The contrast seen in the second part was not well understood; few appeared to know that a thrush is a bird, '*plume*' its feathers and the '*voice*' is its birdsong; most who attempted comment thought it was a person singing. As such, the final lines offering the speaker a little '*Hope*' were also not understood. It is essential that all the poems in the chosen selection are discussed with the candidates before the examination.

Question 4 – *At the Parrot House, Taronga Park*

Candidates found the poem accessible on the whole, with responses in a variety of bands. Less successful responses almost invariably picked out only the colour imagery in the first stanza and, again, the colours of their feathers, but said little more than that these were pretty. Most were able to understand the connection between the characteristics of the birds and human traits, though this tended to be descriptive rather than developed. Some engaged well with the many sensory references – texture, colour and sound – while many responded to the peacocks who '*pretend they own the yard*' as all too familiar and unwelcome. Strongest responses did comment on the change of tone from the gentleness of the '*soft and pink as dawn on snow*' to the harsh reality of the ending which makes it clear that this is not the whole story: '*how the beaks are hard.*'

Examples demonstrating comments at different levels:

- '*They chatter and they squawk and sometimes scream.*' This tells us that the birds make a lot of loud noises. (straightforward, simple comment)
- The birds '*chatter ...squawk and sometimes scream*' which makes us imagine the huge amount of noise which would be deafening. The poet uses onomatopoeia and alliteration to make the sounds more vivid to make us feel as if we can hear them. Some of the birds '*chatter*' as if they are people having a drink

together and the scream could be a sign that they are in pain or afraid, which makes us think of ourselves and what makes us scream. (developed comment and personal response)

Section B – Prose

RAY BRADBURY – *Fahrenheit 451*

Question 5

For those who knew the text and the context, this proved to be an inviting passage. Stronger candidates were able to articulate why the moment is powerful, relating Montag's first meeting with Clarisse to his momentous realisation that his life must change. This was then supported by references to the atmosphere which has such an impact on so many of his senses, alerting him to her presence, followed by the description of Clarisse as almost unearthly; the repeated 'white' imagery as signifying purity and innocence was picked up frequently to good effect. The fact that she made almost no sound was recognised as powerful in its own way, despite the apparent contradiction of her fragility. Some responses commented on their fascination with one another and the intrusion of the powerful smell of kerosene on this otherwise '*wonderful*' moment. Less developed responses narrated the moment, sometimes listing suitable sentences and phrases, but without comment or making clear how this meeting will change Montag for ever. Some did not appear to know the context or that this was in fact Clarisse, as she is not mentioned by name in the passage. A few mentioned just how dangerous (and therefore powerful) this apparently innocuous meeting is for Montag as a fireman.

Question 6

Many responses here confused and conflated the two questions, using the extract to show how the Mechanical Hounds are disturbing, unfortunately thinking that what was waiting for Montag around the corner was a Hound. Clearly this led to unsuccessful responses as it fails to show either knowledge or understanding. Stronger responses commented on: the horror of its 'needle', the description of the Hound as like a spider or a bee full of poison, the firemen betting on the Hound catching live animals, the Hound hunting Montag who comes 'like a wind' and 'never fails'.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD – *The Great Gatsby*

Question 7

Almost all understood the context and the varied feelings and predicaments of the characters: Gatsby determined to have his say and get his girl, Tom confused and angry, Daisy desperately trying to stop the whole scene from happening and Nick and Jordan trying to escape. Stronger responses were able to resist retelling of the scene and concentrated on the abundance of words and phrases which highlighted the extreme drama: '*vivid with excitement*', '*competitive firmness*', '*You're crazy*', '*he exploded*', '*You're revolting*', '*perceptible reluctance*'. There were many more examples from which to choose and candidates generally supported their comments with well-chosen references. Weaker responses covered only a small part of the extract, or gave an overview of the scene which, while correct and showing understanding, did not respond to the language or just quoted some of the exchanges without exploring word choice and therefore limited the mark available. All candidates showed knowledge of the text and seemed to have engaged with the writing. Strong responses closed by explaining the consequences of the events in the passage and how they triggered the tragic denouement.

Question 8

A number of candidates attempted this and it was well done on the whole. They held strong views on the way in which a hard-working but ultimately dull and weak George was deceived and abused by his vain, greedy and immoral wife, Myrtle. There was some feeling of sympathy for Myrtle's attempt to better herself but most were very much on the side of George who showed his wife loyalty and love and didn't deserve his tragic end. Inevitably, responses tended to be driven by a narrative retelling of relevant parts of the novel, but these were generally focused on the characters and did keep coming back to the question, perhaps because it was rewarding to state how these two characters provoked strong feelings in the reader. Some fairly strong responses would have been improved by relevant quotation from the text; candidates should be helped and encouraged to study and revise the set texts in detail in order to draw on their knowledge in their responses.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON – *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Questions 9 and 10

Too few responses to make meaningful comment appropriate.

SUE MONK KIDD – *The Secret Life of Bees*

Question 11

Candidates seem to have engaged with the text, perhaps because Lily is such a compelling narrator and one with whom they can readily empathise. Context was very important to a successful response, otherwise Lily's actions and thoughts make little sense, and most candidates provided this, though few related her newly-acquired knowledge to her recent conversation with August. Most candidates were able to articulate her anger and despair, and the subsequent need to let this out in a physical way, with stronger responses managing to identify the subtleties of her feelings towards her mother. The main area for improvement was a need to focus on the language of the passage and consider the wealth of material on offer. Many quoted '*How dare she? How dare she leave me? I was her child.*' This brought out strong personal response as evidence of a mother's duty to her child being inviolable. Fewer explored perhaps the most powerful image in the extract: '*I felt like I'd unzipped my skin and momentarily stepped out of it, leaving a crazy person in charge.*' Other language points were made, focusing on Lily's feelings after throwing the honey jars: '*I felt my heart in my chest. It hurt so badly. Like it had been stepped on.*', and '*I lay in the emptiness, in the tiredness, with everything – even the hating – drained out.*' These, again, led to thoughtful and perceptive personal response to how she must be feeling in a general way, but needed more comment on the writer's actual choice of words and images – what did Kidd intend when saying that her heart felt as if it had been stepped on or that all her feelings were drained out? One candidate commented that our hearts are seen as the very core of our being and our feelings, so for it to be trodden on means that all the things that matter to us the most have been crushed and destroyed. This is a good example of how to explore language and fits in to the 'developed response to the way the writer achieves his/her effects', which is found in the top three bands of the mark scheme.

Question 12

There were a small number of responses. Most were reliant on narrative and focused on how August took in and helped Lily, showing some knowledge of the novel but largely consisting of general comments on her kind and caring nature, and how she acted like a mother to Lily, without exploring her character and her interaction with others apart from Lily. Surprisingly little was made of her care for June and May, in completely different ways, her role as the leader of the Daughters of Mary and her competence with the beekeeping, though some mentioned that she had taught Lily a useful skill. Few made use of her strength in dealing with T.Ray and there were generally missed opportunities to achieve a developed consideration of August as an intelligent, wise and practical person who has an impact on every other character in the novel.

STORIES OF OURSELVES

Questions 13 and 14

Too few responses to make meaningful comment appropriate.

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

Paper 0427/02
Drama

Key messages

It is essential to read the whole syllabus before planning a teaching programme. Teachers are reminded that they **must select from the set text lists for the year in which their candidates will take the examination.**

- Candidates can improve their response to the writing of the play script by showing understanding of the effects of dramatic features such as: stage directions, action, dialogue and audience response.
- In successful answers, candidates support their comments with brief, well-selected details from the text: short quotations are the best way of doing this.
- To write strong answers, candidates need to focus firmly on the question and avoid narration.
- When candidates gave a strong and well-supported personal response, it increased the effectiveness of answers at all levels.

General comments

Many candidates showed a good understanding of their set text and empathised with the characters. They were asked for their detailed response to individual characters, for example to Beatrice in Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, Portia in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and Rose in August Wilson's *Fences*. There were some strong personal responses; for example, to Portia as she tries to get her husband Brutus to reveal his secret plans, or to Beatrice, as she tries to stop her husband making mistakes over their niece Catherine, or to Rose, as she cares for Raynell, her husband Troy's daughter by another woman. Personal response to a text needed to move beyond an assertion of the candidate's emotion to show an understanding of how the authors have encouraged that response through their writing or staging of the play.

Most candidates followed the rubric of the paper and answered one question in detail. There were some who answered more than one question, with a few candidates attempting all questions. These answers tended to be very short and severely limited. It is difficult to make a developed response with textual support and detailed analysis in only one side of writing.

There were some very good answers to questions on all texts. These responses directly addressed the question and developed their answer to cover a range of four or five points, which were supported by aptly selected material from the text, often in the form of a brief quotation. Candidates made clear how it supported their points. There was some detailed response to the writing, often in the form of an appreciation of the dramatic features of the play on stage and likely audience reaction.

When answering a passage-based question, candidates needed to consider the whole passage, and to select the most suitable material from it with which to answer the question. Some candidates provided a commentary on the passage line-by-line from the start, rather than selecting the best material. Candidates needed to know their set text well to place the passage in context. For example, when answering **Question 1** on *A View from the Bridge*, candidates needed to know that Catherine and Rodolpho now plan to get married, and that Eddie has come to Alfieri as a last resort to find a legal way to prevent the marriage. This provides the context for Eddie's feelings of desperation and helplessness when Alfieri repeatedly tells him that there is nothing he can do. However, lengthy narration of plot does not focus on the passage nor answer the question.

Candidates can improve their response to the writing by analysing the effects of dramatic features such as: stage directions, action, dialogue and audience response. For example, some answers on **Question 3** from *Julius Caesar* considered that the visual effect of Portia kneeling before her husband was to show her begging him to do as she wishes. An example from **Question 5** from *Fences* is where Troy shows his stubborn reluctance to lend money to Lyons by not handing it to him directly. Instead he gives Rose his money, and it is Rose who hands the \$10 to Lyons.

When answering discursive questions, candidates needed to know their text well to select the most relevant material from throughout the play with which to support their answers. Good answers showed clearly how their selected material supported their argument, but weaker answers often referred to the text without comment. Candidates often improved their answers by showing an appreciation of staging.

Comments on specific questions

Arthur Miller: *A View from the Bridge*

Question 1

Responses were most effective when they placed this passage briefly in its context: Catherine and Rodolpho intend to marry and Eddie consults Alfieri to use the law to stop them. This explains why Eddie is so frustrated when Alfieri's answer is '*There's nothing you can do*'. Alfieri's repetition of this phrase shows that Eddie will not accept it, and so he becomes desperate. Successful answers analysed how Alfieri powerfully confronts Eddie with the truth about his feelings for Catherine. Some candidates saw that he does this sensitively at first by not accusing Eddie directly: '*sometimes...there is too much love for the niece*', but Alfieri has to become more direct: '*Let her go*.' Eddie puts his case angrily, shown in his derogatory language: '*son-of-a-bitch punk*', '*a goddam thief*'. Several strong answers contrasted Eddie's emotional outburst with Alfieri's calm words, which contrasts Alfieri's common sense with Eddie's out-of-control emotions. Some candidates commented that Eddie's informing on the illegal immigrants has been foreshadowed earlier in the play (by Vinnie Bolzano) and here by Alfieri: '*There's only one legal question here...they entered illegally*.' Eddie protests too vehemently that he wouldn't inform: '*Oh, Jesus, no, I wouldn't...*' but at the end of the extract he is desperate, and he can't agree to: '*Put it out of your mind*.' The audience is now prepared for Eddie to break his code of honour and 'snitch'. The personal cost of this to Eddie is conveyed by his broken speech and heightened emotion: '*I'm – [He feels the threat of sobs...]*'. This focus on the writing and Eddie's powerful emotions was the key to a successful response.

Question 2

Candidates responded with a range of personal views on Beatrice. Some pitied her, some criticised her, some sympathised with her, but most candidates felt sadness for her at the end of the play, when her husband shows his love by calling for her before he dies. The success of these answers depended on the detail of the textual support offered. Some answers remained general, without textual support, and so comments remained as assertions. Most answers used some reference to the text, such as when Beatrice says: '*When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?*'; stronger candidates explored the implications of this for their marriage and also for his relationship with Catherine. Candidates tended to admire Beatrice when she confronts Eddie with: '*You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!*'; but they sympathised when this seems to have little effect on him. Candidates often considered Beatrice's relationship with Catherine; there was a mixed response to this too, with some feeling she was extremely jealous of Catherine, and others feeling that she was acting like a good mother to her. Candidates are encouraged to present their personal response in reasoned argument, and supporting this with details from the text was the key to a developed and convincing answer.

William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Question 3

There were some sound responses to Portia's behaviour as candidates explored her tactics to get Brutus to tell her his secret plans. They considered the depth of love she initially displays as 'moving', as she is aware that something is troubling him, and as a loving wife she desires to '*be acquainted with*' his secret. Strong candidates commented on how she takes his excuse of being '*not well in health*' and uses it to persuade him to reveal his secret to her as his wife to whom he has made '*vows of love*' and from whom he should not have secrets. Some candidates successfully explored the staging of Portia kneeling down to show that she is begging him to share his secret. When he implores her not to kneel, she uses it to her advantage to retort that she wouldn't need to beg if he would only tell her his secret. Several candidates selected her use of '*harlot*' as a derogatory term, but fewer explored her tactic of using this to say she may as well be a '*harlot*' if

Brutus would not treat her like a wife – and tell her his secret. Stronger candidates analysed how she uses rhetorical questions to convey the ridiculousness of disagreeing with her; and the rhetoric of her repetition of *'I grant I am a woman'*, which is superficially derogatory, but intended to cement her superior status as *'a woman well reputed, Cato's daughter'*. Candidates tended not to comment on her dramatic revelation at the end of the extract – that she gave herself a *'voluntary wound'* in the thigh and had not complained, to show how trustworthy she is to keep secrets. This is extreme behaviour and foreshadows her later suicide.

Question 4

Candidates needed to know the text well to select the most relevant material with which to support their answer. Thus, they considered the soothsayer's warning to Caesar: *'Beware the Ides of March'*, coupled with the storms and strange happenings such as fire dropping from the sky and lions on the streets. These unnatural occurrences are dramatically used by Cassius to argue that they are a result of heaven's anger with Caesar's unnatural actions in desiring to be king. Others considered Caesar's belief in ill-omens as he initially decides not to go to the Senate after hearing Calphurnia's nightmares of the statue running blood. Most candidates quoted Caesar's ghost appearing to Brutus saying *'Thou shalt see me at Philippi'*. The effect of this is to forewarn Brutus of his defeat; the audience believes that the ghost is avenging his murder at Brutus's hands. Stronger candidates took some overview of the role of the superstition and supernatural within the play to suggest that they set an atmosphere of foreboding for the audience by signalling that something bad is going to happen; the effect is to involve the audience in discovering exactly what the omens indicate.

August Wilson: *Fences*

Question 5

Many candidates felt that the relationship between Troy and Lyons is 'rocky'. Some felt sympathy for Lyons, because he only wants to borrow \$10, which is the least Troy could do, since he wasn't around when Lyons was growing up. Weaker candidates explained this without detail or development. Reasonable answers developed further and felt that, at 34 years, Lyons should be financially independent from his father, and used the text to show that Lyons is not prepared to take on work such as garbage collecting to pay the bills, but is fixated on his dream of playing music to earn money; and that he is using Troy, because he leaves as soon as he gets the money. Stronger candidates explored how important music is to Lyons: it's *'the only way I can find to live in the world'*. Some thought Troy is jealous, because he had to give up his own dream of baseball to take on responsibilities – and ended up in jail when Lyons was born. Some candidates focused more on Troy; on his reluctance to lend the \$10 because he feels Lyons should put his responsibilities first and earn money *'to live'*; he finds it hard to show love for Lyons and stubbornly lectures him. Some candidates considered how staging conveys Troy's reluctance to give Lyons the money, by having Rose do it. Successful answers presented a reasoned personal response to the relationship, and supported this with details from the text, often in the form of brief quotation. Candidates needed to make clear how the text supports the point being made. Some candidates made factual errors about: Troy's time in jail during Lyons's childhood; Lyons's mother (not Rose); and Troy giving Rose his wages to manage. All candidates could improve their responses by exploring Wilson's writing: for instance, the staging of Rose handing Lyons the money; Troy's use of rhetorical questions to belittle and lecture; his criticisms and sarcasm; the contrasting emotions of Troy getting angry and Lyons being resigned and leaving as soon as he gets his money.

Question 6

Most answers wrote well about Rose as the caring mother of Cory and caring wife to Troy who manages the household finances for eighteen years, and who cares for Gabe too. Those who quoted briefly from the text to support their comments strengthened their answer. Some considered how Wilson presents her caring nature: often she is seen as nurturing by providing food. Not many mentioned the fence, which is Rose's idea; she wants to keep her family safe and evil out. Stronger candidates explored Rose's hopes and dreams: how she grew up in a poor family with half-siblings but always wanted a 'whole' family, with children by the same father; how she chose Troy as a strong man for her husband and believed in him – *'planted'* herself in him and *'waited for the harvest to grow'*, but was disappointed. When Troy's cheating on her with Alberta is revealed, she is devastated because she *'tried to be a good wife and mother'*. She tells Troy she had her own hopes and dreams, but chose to stick with Troy and do the best for her family. Her pride makes her tell Troy he is now a *'womanless man'*. Her decision to care for Raynell split candidates' opinion: some saw her as admirable, others as too submissive. Candidates needed to consider her reasons: she sees the baby is innocent and needs a mother. She maintains the structure of the family and insists customs are maintained; she insists Cory attends Troy's funeral at the end. Candidates needed to present their personal

response to Rose in a developed argument, and the key to a convincing answer was to support this with details from the text.

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) (US)

Paper 0427/03
Coursework

Key messages

- Set tasks which allow candidates to meet the requirements of both the syllabus and band descriptors.
- Support the moderation process with the use of focused ticking and purposeful annotation, linked to the mark scheme.
- Carry out a clerical check of the transcription of the centre's internally moderated marks to the relevant forms.

General comments

The observations in this general report should be read alongside the individual report to the centre.

A wide variety of texts was seen in the work submitted, and there was much evidence of personal engagement with, and enjoyment of, the topics chosen for study. Overwhelmingly candidates opted to write critical rather than empathic responses to texts.

The most successful critical essays sustained sensitive analysis of the ways in which writers achieved their effects in presenting characters and themes. These essays always had an appreciation of the writing, what might be termed the poet, novelist or playwright 'at work'. Less successful essays were marked by the use of explanation and unsupported assertion rather than a close critical probing of the text. The focus in these latter essays tended to be on character rather than characterisation, with candidates writing about apparently real-life people rather than fictional constructs. Stronger essays combined apt succinct quotation and critical comments whereas weaker essays used lengthy inert quotation, used perhaps to illustrate a point but not to contribute to a critical analysis of the text.

Most centres set tasks which enabled their candidates to demonstrate the skills of close analysis of writers' effects required in the highest bands. Tasks which do not target this can have the effect of limiting candidate performance. For example, the following questions do not explicitly direct candidates to explore the writing: 'To what extent is Shylock a villain?'; 'Who is responsible for Lennie's death?'; 'Social responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*'. Centres are reminded that examples of effective task-setting can be found in the *Coursework Handbook*.

Moderation has to take into account any failure to meet syllabus requirements. It is not acceptable for tasks to focus exclusively on one scene or chapter from a text. In assignments on poems and short stories, candidates should write about two poems or two stories. Centres which set tasks requiring candidates to compare two poems are reminded that comparison is neither required by the syllabus nor rewarded in the band descriptors. Moderators reported that the mechanics of comparing two poems took candidates away from the central task of developing a critical analysis of either poem. Furthermore, centres are reminded that set texts can be used for only one of the coursework essays.

The most successful empathic responses focused on a key character and specific moment from a novel or play. Sensible choices enabled candidates to construct an authentic voice for both character and moment.

In view of the importance of setting tasks that enable candidates to address the assessment criteria, the suitability of tasks should be agreed within departments early on in the course so as to avoid problems later on.

There was much evidence of good practice in the presentation of coursework folders. Each assignment started with a clear indication of the full wording of the task. In the case of empathic responses, the chosen character and moment were clearly stated. This is important since it allows the Moderator to determine how successfully the candidate has addressed the task. Where there was good practice, teacher annotation comprised the focused ticking of valid and thoughtful points, and concise marginal and summative comments which related to the wording of the band descriptors. Where marks were changed during internal moderation, a brief explanation was provided. Such purposeful annotation aids transparency and contributes to the robustness of the assessment as it allows a centre to justify its award of particular marks. The following examples of unhelpful annotation should be avoided: excessive ticking (e.g. of every paragraph or every line); hyperbolic praise; labelling of AOs. Simply putting the supposed relevant AOs in the margin is of little benefit to the Moderator, as it does not reveal the extent to which a particular assessment objective has been addressed; instead, more specific reference should be made to the relevant band descriptors.

Most centres carried out administration efficiently. The cover sheet (or individual record card) was secured by treasury tag or staple which allowed easy access to candidate work. In these centres care had been taken to:

- include all candidates on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form
- transcribe totals accurately, including the internally moderated mark to the Mark Sheet (the MS1 or its electronic equivalent)
- schedule time for internal moderation.

All centres are advised to include a clerical checking stage in their moderation procedures before submitting their paper work to Cambridge. This check should be carried out by a different person from the one who completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets originally.