

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/21

Composition

GENERAL COMMENTS

Examiners reported some very imaginative and thoughtful material being submitted this session; some scripts were very enjoyable indeed to read.

There was a good differentiated range of candidates, but a significant number are entering this examination whose grasp of English is not secure at this level. It needs to be stressed that AS is a stage on from IGCSE/O Level (and equivalent) standard. The most frequent language problems were in pronoun confusion, syntax errors, uneven punctuation, lack of paragraphing, and (above all) tense confusion. (The latter was particularly marked in responses to **Questions 2 and 4.**)

There were very few rubric infringements and time seemed to be managed well by most candidates. Some did spend too long planning work, though, at the expense of developing their final piece. Candidates who do not endeavour to tackle all aspects of the questions chosen only deprive themselves of marks.

Teachers need to emphasise to candidates the importance of paying attention to

- purpose
- audience
- format
- tone

in their writing. The clues are in the questions: candidates should pay more attention to their wording. They should realise that a formulation such as 'in your writing you should...' is part of the question; they should not simply follow the general drift and ignore the specific instructions. The questions offer help and candidates should be urged to take advantage of this. Genre distinctions should be kept by the candidates using the appropriate style and format. 'Opening chapters' should be treated as such.

Common errors were in the following:

- failure to distinguish past perfect and past simple tenses
- wrong prepositions to verbs
- wrong tense use in conditionals
- not moving back a tense in reported speech
- shifting tenses in narrative frames
- pronoun confusion
- misuse of participles: past -ing forms
- syntax errors: adverbs, SVO structures

Candidates should be grammatically prepared for formal expression at this level. Many would benefit from revision of sentence types and mood.

Examiners noted a tendency to use the lower case 'i' to denote the first person pronoun (text-style) and to treat the comma as a full-stop.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative

Question 1

This was a popular choice and prompted some thoughtful and evocative responses. Good answers elicited sharp and focused contrasts, whilst less secure answers tended to explore narrative rather than descriptive aspects. Examiners were sometimes disappointed by the absence of differentiation in setting and atmosphere. Some candidates had simply tacked the shopping onto a prepared narrative piece, while some concentrated on the preparations – both of which made the effect rather pedestrian.

Question 2

There were some imaginative and engaging responses, with 'soldier' interpreted in a variety of ways. Essays were effective when handled as an opening to a story, with good structure towards a dramatic/sensitive narrative. Weaker essays gave information rather than developing a narrative which built up mood and character. Often noticeable – when dialogue was used – was a laxity in use of punctuation.

Question 3

This was tackled by fewer candidates. Answers were on the whole competent but seldom inspired. Most were about fame and disaster, and sometimes the 'crucial point' was not obvious or was a bit predictable. Opportunities to create a character as well as base it on reality saw some candidates attempt stories based on figures as diverse as Adolf Hitler, Nelson Mandela and Frank Sinatra.

Question 4

This was by far the most popular choice in **Section A** and, when narrative and descriptive control were applied, produced some very successful imaginative work. When material was clearly unplanned there were some rambling and unmeasured responses. The ostensible openness of the question may have tempted some to offload 'prepared' material, failing adequately to deal with tension and the unknown. Some used the opportunity to descend into general references to 'the creature' and a 'I couldn't believe it' style of narrative. Other candidates mixed genres and created confusion by going off into preoccupations of their own inadequately linked to the task. Effective answers, by contrast, continued the style of the opening and had a mix of descriptive and narrative elements, with an effective suspenseful structure.

Section B: Discursive/Argumentative

Question 5

There were some very good and thoughtful insights offered by candidates here and some very personal essays were seen. Effective answers weighed up both viewpoints or even more bravely took one of the perspectives and built their views strongly around the selected issue. There were interesting and sometimes culturally revealing interpretations of 'state control' and 'protection', and sometimes a display of a high level of political awareness. For every candidate who just discoursed on the state of the world, there was one who carefully analysed political, economic, psychological, religious and other factors.

Question 6

This was a popular choice and stimulated some entertaining and engaging answers. Many candidates showed a good grasp of promotional type material and selected phrases and vocabulary appropriate to the task. Most negative comments however, did not particularly use a report form or style; often these had the register of comic sarcasm rather than a sophisticated response with adequate reasoning. A significant number descended into grotesque exaggeration. Those who deftly inserted the stiletto and twisted it were few and very welcome! However, mostly, the responses were full of verve and energy all the same.

Question 7

This produced some mixed responses. There were some very good and well argued contrasting pieces, but also some material which did not always develop exemplification in greater depth. At the top of the range some imaginative answers dealt effectively with the demands of the question, especially with respect to technology and health. The most successful candidates realised that this was a discursive / argumentative

task and that their comments had to be explained and justified, not simply listed. Responses that were thoughtful and considered were fairly balanced between optimism and pessimism.

Question 8

The two-part question allowed for structured answers, the best of which were skilfully ironic. Good answers established clear and proficient contrasts between the two letters, using illustrations perceptively and with precision. Less effective answers tended to be rather brief and occasionally unfocused. Weaker answers did not really engage what might be 'terrifying'. Some misunderstood the question and wrote two general letters about being young rather than considering the era in which we live.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/22

Composition

Examiners reported some very imaginative and thoughtful material being submitted this session; some scripts were very enjoyable indeed to read.

There was a good differentiated range of candidates, but a significant number are entering this examination whose grasp of English is not secure at this level. It needs to be stressed that AS is a stage on from IGCSE/O Level (and equivalent) standard. The most frequent language problems were in pronoun confusion, syntax errors, uneven punctuation, lack of paragraphing, and (above all) tense confusion.

There were very few rubric infringements and time seemed to be managed well by most candidates. Some did spend too long planning work, though, at the expense of developing their final piece. Candidates who do not endeavour to tackle all aspects of the questions chosen only deprive themselves of marks.

Teachers need to emphasise to candidates the importance of paying attention to

- purpose
- audience
- format
- tone

in their writing. The clues are in the questions: candidates should pay more attention to their wording. They should realise that a formulation such as 'in your writing you should...' is part of the question; they should not simply follow the general drift and ignore the specific instructions. The questions offer help and candidates should be urged to take advantage of this. Genre distinctions should be kept by the candidates using the appropriate style and format. 'Opening chapters' should be treated as such.

Common errors were in the following:

- failure to distinguish past perfect and past simple tenses
- wrong prepositions to verbs
- wrong tense use in conditionals
- not moving back a tense in reported speech
- shifting tenses in narrative frames
- pronoun confusion
- misuse of participles: past -ing forms
- syntax errors: adverbs, SVO structures

Candidates should be grammatically prepared for formal expression at this level. Many would benefit from revision of sentence types and mood.

Examiners noted a tendency to use the lower case 'i' to denote the first person pronoun (text-style) and to treat the comma as a full-stop.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative

Question 1

This title prompted some very imaginative and atmospheric writing. Strong answers created a sense of menace and danger; less secure answers tended to take a more narrative approach. Some answers spent too long asking the same questions such as 'What was that noise?' and did not offer sustained development. The best pieces used imagination well, creating mystery and seizing the chance to describe vividly.

Question 2

This was popular and all kinds of 'New Worlds' seemed to be on show - from discovering land and space travel to the thoughts of the narrator as he was being born. There was plenty of enjoyable material in evidence. Those who used this task as an opportunity for contrast (e.g. that between a narrator's original country, and her/his final destination) often described shopping as a 'new world', producing rather mundane or forced answers. The best created a very palpable sense of setting and atmosphere.

Question 3

This was tackled by some candidates in an effective and controlled fashion. By and large they produced some steady and competent responses, with the best answers delaying a surprise or twist until the end of the piece. There was a great deal of thematic variety, ranging from adultery to murder to cheating. Many got involved with – and some seemed to excel in – describing feelings of guilt and anguish. However, some were plain declarations of love, usually ignoring 'psychology and motivation'. Most managed to write something relevant, though the biggest weakness was a tendency to leave the 'confession' element too implicit.

Question 4

This was a very popular choice. There were some very good answers which sustained the opening note of complete disorientation throughout but also some very unclear and unplanned compositions which tended to confuse tenses. Scenes from television and film were sometimes used here, which often made the account rather predictable; and the questions posed to guide the response were occasionally misused, with candidates repeating the questions along the lines of 'where am I?' and 'where am I going?' The best answers displayed the use of vivid imagery and figurative language, and effectively structured their ideas.

Section B: Discursive/Argumentative

Question 5

This was answered well on the whole, with many candidates exploring both points of view in an informed and well illustrated way. Some knew aspects of history in extremely close detail, and were able to tackle the question with understanding, apposite examples and even deep feeling. There were a good number of references to Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Most agreed with the statement. However, a small percentage of candidates wrote about peace as opposed to violence in very general terms, without focusing on the 'protest' aspect. Weaker candidates vaguely generalised about peace rather than considering what 'change' might mean.

Question 6

This was grasped well by many candidates, and they wrote organised and relevant material supported by a strong sense of purpose and audience. There was plenty of useful advice for ageing readers. Some candidates, however, forgot 'older readers' and the 'advisory' focus. Better candidates identified areas specifically, like travel/own interests or hobbies/voluntary activities, making sure that their tone was encouraging rather than condescending.

Question 7

This prompted some very strong opinions and effective compositions. Some dismissed the whole idea with relish but others displayed a fascination and sense of wonder at the very possibility of other forms of life even existing. The best answers demonstrated a strong use of analytical and persuasive language, employing

scientific knowledge to discuss the meaning of 'life'. Weaker candidates found it difficult to construct a coherent argument on this topic, with the line between fact and fiction blurring. On the whole, though, there were many very full, well-informed answers, which suggested that this topic is of great interest to candidates in this age group.

Question 8

This was very popular. There were many effective answers which explored aspects of conduct and morality in great detail. These often built on the recipe idea inherent in 'ingredients'. Answers were, on the whole, well planned and an appropriate register was employed by the majority of candidates. Some failed to capitalise on 'public speaking competition at School', which gave them a particular audience on a plate; most, though, captured the appropriate tone. Many wrote with conviction and energy, exhorting the audience to define success in their own terms. Sometimes there was a tendency to over-use inappropriate colloquialism, but in general rhetorical language was used effectively in this question.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/91

Poetry, Prose and Drama

General comments

Examiners saw many lively and intelligent responses to texts and questions this session. Good learning was often blended with thoughtful individual interpretation to produce insightful essays. It was clear that many candidates were writing with enjoyment and enthusiasm. In an improvement from some previous sessions, there was less evidence of undirected context in answers. Where candidates did refer to context, particularly with Achebe and Wordsworth, the knowledge was usually used appropriately to illuminate the answer. It should go without saying that candidates should always take careful note of the question set. There were still some answers, though, where it was difficult to recognise which question was being attempted without the question number at the beginning of the essay. In most cases this was because the candidate began with one, or indeed several, general paragraphs of background which were not pertinent to the particular question. No marks are awarded to such paragraphs. While there were examples of detailed analyses of set poems in (b) responses, many of the prose answers lacked a close examination of the language, imagery or structure of the writing and instead gave accounts of the content of the set passage. Such answers never score highly; all (b) questions demand a close reading and analysis of the writing of the selected passage.

Question Specific Comments

Question 1. Sujata Bhatt: *Point No Point*

- (a) Too few answers to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were very few answers on Sujata Bhatt's poetry and most answering on this text chose this question. Unfortunately many of these answers were narrative in style and showed limited understanding of the poem's references to political events in India, or the personal connection between the narrator and people in India. Some recognised that in apparently avoiding the subject of massacres in a determination to think and write about other things ('I'll write/ poems about everything else'), the poem cannot in fact avoid the subject of violence ('Now instead of completing this poem/ I'm thinking of Amrit.')

Question 2. *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) The topic of personal doubt and anguish allowed candidates quite a free rein in interpretation and subjects ranged from writer's block, the loss of love, death, war and illness among others. The extracts from 'Long Distance' and 'Modern Love' proved fruitful, as did 'The Woodspurge', 'The Man with Night Sweats', 'The Cockroach', 'Away Melancholy' and 'Continuum'. The most successful answers explored language, tone, imagery and their effects, rather than restricting themselves to a discussion of content. Such discussion demands detailed knowledge of the chosen poems and the ability to support the answer with quotation. Weaker answers relied on summary of the content of the poems and thus were unable to develop comments on the poets' treatment of the subject matter.
- (b) 'Morse' was a very popular option and was clearly relished by many candidates who appreciated its narrative, humour and auditory effects. Successful answers demonstrated how the structure creates the setting then develops the story; comments on the 'James Bond-style' opening of 'Tuckett. Bill Tuckett' were frequent. The answers went on to note the preponderance of hard-consonant rhymes and the references to dots and dashes to recreate the aural effect of the Morse code keys which are central to the narrative. Many candidates here were able to discuss poetic techniques and their effects with real confidence. A few answers went further to examine the use

Murray makes of puns in his description of the operation and some perceptive answers on the conflicting moods of the final stanza – celebration of the successful operation tinged with the passing of Morse code. There were also answers where the candidates showed they were uncertain of the setting or events and relied on uncertain summary, which suggested that they were approaching the poem as an unseen text rather than as one they had previously studied.

Question 3. William Wordsworth: *Selected Poetry*

- (a) Since Wordsworth's 'spots of time' are such a central issue, this question was often disappointingly answered. It was apparent that many candidates lacked the detailed textual knowledge needed to produce a high-level answer. There were comparatively few who were able to identify particular moments recalled in the poems and who were able to quote to support their points. Those who were confident with such knowledge wrote well and purposefully, using particularly such poems as 'Tintern Abbey' and 'The Prelude'. Other candidates relied on general knowledge and a simpler understanding of the concept of key moments recollected in tranquillity, but this in some cases did help some candidates to produce a competent answer. There was, however, quite a large number of generalised and unspecific answers.
- (b) 'To the Cuckoo' was by far the more popular choice on Wordsworth. Here a little contextual information might have served candidates well, as several wrote about 'the magnificent song' of the 'beautiful' cuckoo, when the plain brown bird is, in fact, onomatopoeically named after its only call. Successful candidates used knowledge of Wordsworth and pantheism to inform their view of the poem, with a perceptive analysis of content, diction and tone. Some answers showed an appreciation of the subtle shift from the obvious joy of the opening stanzas to the more nostalgic, reflective mood of the later ones, while several expressed well the sense of mystery conveyed by the invisibility of the bird and the spiritual significance of its call.

Question 4. Achebe: *Anthills of the Savannah*

- (a) This was a popular question and candidates showed solid knowledge of the major relationships in the novel, with those between Sam, Chris and Ikem the most often discussed, alongside Beatrice. Stronger answers considered not only these examples of disintegrating relationships, but also those relationships which are actually strengthened by political events, such as that between Beatrice and Elewa, and Chris and his fellow travellers to Abazon. Some considered the hopeful ending of the novel carefully, suggesting that Elewa and Beatrice are presented as a sign that politics can bring people together for the common good. While weaker answers were limited to a listing of the relationships in a narrative fashion, they usually showed some knowledge of the novel.
- (b) There were some strong responses to this question. Some candidates compared Beatrice favourably with Sam, considering her modesty, frankness, lack of ambition, and desire to help, while looking at her role as one of the novel's narrators. However, many candidates wrote with confidence about Beatrice without paying sufficient regard to the question, which asked for close comment on the passage. Such candidates demonstrated good textual knowledge and knew much about the character of Beatrice, but their answers became general essays on character rather than an analytical consideration of the language and tone of the passage itself. They missed opportunities to examine the way Beatrice narrates here and ways her character is revealed by the modes of her narration.

Question 5. Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

- (a) Candidates recognised that Helen Burns is a minor, but important character who influences Jane Eyre at Lowood. They were able to show that she is a friend, a guide and a role-model to Jane. More successful candidates went beyond this, considering the role of books, education and religious faith and the influence Helen continues to have on Jane beyond the Lowood part of the novel. Some candidates considered different kinds of religion portrayed in the novel through Helen Burns, Mr Brocklehurst and St John Rivers, with Helen representing true Christianity and teaching Jane valuable lessons which she would apply later in the novel, for example when forgiving Rochester his deceit. These answers which considered Helen's role in the structure of the novel, rather than just her character, were markedly more successful.

- (b) This was a popular and fruitful question. While less confident candidates relied on paraphrase with some comment on the characters, some looked very carefully at the dark gothic setting and ways it reveals the two characters. Some candidates detected the shifts in attitude between the two characters apparent in the description and the dialogue, and hints of a future relationship. Some pointed out the irony of Rochester's rejection of Jane's assistance in contrast to his total dependence on her at the end of the novel. This was a question where most candidates answered the question about the reader's first impression very clearly, often comparing it with later impressions gained by the reader as the novel develops.

Question 6. Katherine Mansfield: *The Garden Party and Other Stories*

- (a) A very popular question, this gave candidates clear opportunities to marshal their knowledge of stories and characters. *The Woman at the Store*, *Frau Brechenmacher* and *The Little Governess* were the most frequently cited stories, but *A Married Man's Story* and *Her First Ball* also featured frequently. From this range of stories it is clear that candidates interpreted the oppression of women in a variety of ways and some good answers made comparisons between these different forms of oppression. While many candidates subscribed to Millie's 'Men is all beasts' view, more alert answers showed an awareness that Mansfield often suggests that women bring oppression upon themselves by naïvety or acquiescence.
- (b) Many candidates wrote successfully on the interior monologue of this passage, picking up on the details of language and structure to support an exploration of the narrator's character as well as focusing successfully on the question. Some candidates successfully ranged beyond the passage, showing knowledge of both the story and the short stories as a whole, exploring how this is, in many ways, an uncharacteristic passage in Mansfield's work. Often candidates picked up subtle details in the writing which indicate the husband's separation from his family, and the dream sequence was particularly fruitful.

Question 7. Athol Fugard: *The Township Plays*

- (a) There were very few answers on this text, but those candidates who had studied it were able to show the effects of racial pressures on human relations. Textual knowledge was good on the whole. Most answers took the obvious line of commenting on the treatment of black people by white, while more thoughtful answers extended this discussion to a consideration of the effect on relationships between black characters. Some evaluated the statement in the question and reached the conclusion that some relationships are strengthened and some characters made more humanitarian because of their experiences of oppression, citing John and Winston in *The Island* and Johnny and Queeny in *Nongogo* as examples.
- (b) Answers tended to show knowledge of the text and candidates were able to comment on the concerns shown in the passage, notably anxiety about poverty, imprisonment and injustice. Though some candidates referred to the symbolic significance of the coat, very few made any sustained reference to Fugard's dramatic methods.

Question 8. Arthur Miller: *A View from the Bridge*

- (a) This question did not attract large numbers of answers, and from some of them it seemed as if candidates had not considered Beatrice as a character in her own right before. Several essays considered Eddie, Catherine and Rodolpho, with Beatrice only peripherally, which did not make satisfactory answers to the question. Some answers listed the problems Eddie has with Catherine following the arrival of the Italians and Eddie's confused sexual feelings about her. A few more confident candidates picked up the cue quotation and explored the complex feelings apparent between Beatrice and Eddie and the ways in which these are shown to develop during the course of the drama in response to Catherine and Rodolpho. Such answers looked at the play's sexual undercurrents and Miller's presentations of the ambiguities of Eddie's own sexual feelings.
- (b) Many candidates recognised the climactic nature of this extract and the ways Miller has prepared for it, from the inclusion of the phone box in the early stage directions to the first scene's discussion of Vinny Bolzano. Eddie's feigned innocence, followed by his aggressive confrontation of Beatrice and her subsequent realisation of his guilt were, on the whole, handled well by candidates. Marco's assault on Eddie allowed candidates to comment on the ethical codes of the community which have been established in the play. The best answers were evidently aware of the dramatic nature of the scene on stage, taking their cue from the question's reference to 'dialogue and

action'. Such answers examined the stage directions and noted the physical movement on stage, the tone of the dialogue and Marco's attack on Eddie. This awareness of genre was, however, sadly rare.

Question 9. William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

- (a) Candidates answering this question compared Brutus' idealistic motives for the assassination of Caesar with the less noble motives of Cassius and the others. Textual knowledge was usually good with some candidates focusing on the other conspirators' cynical manipulation of Brutus to ensure his participation. Some also looked at the degeneration of the conspiracy, with the arguments between Brutus and Cassius and the confusion which leads to defeat at Philippi.
- (b) Most candidates focused on the relationship of Brutus and Portia and Portia's view of herself as the dependable wife from a patrician background. This was usually successfully done, but candidates would have done better to include consideration of the dialogue and of physical theatre in the realisation of character, noting the implicit stage directions in 'Kneel not' and the revelation of the 'voluntary wound'. The most successful answers focused explicitly on the language and structure of the passage, discussing the mixture of insecurity, conveyed by repeated questioning, and authority, based on Portia's rights as a wife which her dialogue reveals. Some candidates commented on the genuine love between the two characters, which is shown in the tenderness of Brutus' brief contributions to the passage.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 8695/92

Poetry, Prose and Drama

General comments

Examiners saw many lively and intelligent responses to texts and questions this session. Good learning was often blended with thoughtful individual interpretation to produce insightful essays. It was clear that many candidates were writing with enjoyment and enthusiasm. In an improvement from some previous sessions, there was less evidence of undirected context in answers. Where candidates did refer to context, particularly with Achebe and Wordsworth, the knowledge was usually used appropriately to illuminate the answer. It should go without saying that candidates should always take careful note of the question set. There were still some answers, though, where it was difficult to recognise which question was being attempted without the question number at the beginning of the essay. In most cases this was because the candidate began with one, or indeed several, general paragraphs of background which were not pertinent to the particular question. No marks are awarded to such paragraphs. While there were examples of detailed analyses of set poems in (b) responses, many of the prose answers lacked a close examination of the language, imagery or structure of the writing and instead gave accounts of the content of the set passage. Such answers never score highly; all (b) questions demand a close reading and analysis of the writing of the selected passage.

Question Specific Comments

Question 1. Sujata Bhatt: *Point No Point*

- (a) There were very few answers, but those candidates who attempted this question chose to discuss appropriate poems from different perspectives, such as 'Angels' Wings', 'The Stare' and 'Genealogy'. The most successful candidates showed the ability to create a fluent argument about spontaneity, the innocence and naivety of children and Bhatt's interest in language.
- (b) Candidates found the meaning of 'Swami Anand' accessible and were able to comment on the mentoring role that the Swami plays. However, those answers which did not develop beyond narrative commentary, explaining what happens in the poem, did not score highly. Better answers were able to contrast the inexperience of the poet and the patience of the Swami, who takes the poet 'from the kitchen' and advises her to 'continue' writing. Many answers would have been improved by specific comment on style, language and imagery.

Question 2. *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) Answers to this question made reference to a wide range of poems, including 'The Cockroach', 'The Bay', 'The City Planners', 'The Woodspurge', 'Summer Farm', 'Pied Beauty' and 'Hunting Snake' among others. The most successful answers clearly looked at 'the different ways' indicated in the question and organised their material as a comparison of the chosen poems. Success also often depended on how well candidates knew the poems, and whether they could quote confidently from their chosen material. There were some extended, very detailed discussions which gained high marks.
- (b) This was a very popular question. Strong candidates were able to make intelligent observations about the physical manifestations of writers' block and to make suggestions as to the interpretation of the more difficult imagery such as 'the child who died', 'his will to die' and 'my child exploding into dynamite'. Such candidates also made thoughtful comments on the use of caesura, exclamation and ellipsis, particularly the discontinuities suggestive of fragmented thoughts. There were some confident observations about the two sonnet structure, noting the frustrated, almost suicidally despairing tone of the first stanza and the contrasting lifting of the mood. inspired by the

appearance of the poet's wife, in the second. There was also a large number of candidates who confused this poem with Gunn's 'The Man With Night Sweats' and wrote extensively about the sufferings of AIDS victims.

Question 3. William Wordsworth: *Selected Poetry*

- (a) While many candidates only seemed prepared to write about nature, some were able to adapt their ideas and focus on Wordsworth's celebration of the natural world. There was variety, however, with some candidates writing about celebration of childhood, simple life and honest labour. Poems cited included 'The Prelude', 'Resolution and Independence', 'Upon Westminster Bridge', 'To a Sky-Lark' and 'The Solitary Reaper'. Contextual knowledge of Wordsworth's background and philosophy was often, though not always, well used, and the best answers considered how the tone of celebration is communicated in language, imagery and form.
- (b) This question was answered quite confidently on the whole, with contextual knowledge about the 'Dear Child' often used sparingly and appropriately. Candidates wrote well on the central ideas of the divinity of nature and 'the mighty Being'. Perceptive candidates argued that elements of the poem are both characteristic and uncharacteristic of Wordsworth's wider work and make deft references to other poems to support their points, while closely teasing out an analysis of the selected poem. Less confident answers summarised the poem and added paragraphs on pantheism or nature.

Question 4. Achebe: *Anthills of the Savannah*

- (a) This novel continues to be very popular and is written about with interest and detailed knowledge. While some answers drifted into narrative or character summary, most candidates demonstrated good understanding of, for example, Elewa and Emmanuel as representations of key elements in the novel – the former standing for the uneducated woman (in contrast to Beatrice) and the latter communicating Ikem's beliefs and representing hope for the next generation. Elewa was a particularly popular choice of character, as candidates looked at her significance as a foil to Beatrice. It was refreshing to see the candidates who engaged confidently with the word 'significance' in the question, rather than simply describing what the minor characters do in the novel. It was generally the case that answers on two characters were more sustained and better structured than those on three.
- (b) There were numerous answers to this question and candidates responded well to the political discussions and events described, though many candidates overlooked the requirement to comment closely on the writing of the passage. They therefore missed opportunities to discuss Beatrice's narrative style – detached, analytical, knowledgeable, observant and ironic. On the other hand, most candidates were aware of Beatrice's contempt and anger for the American and her dismay at Sam's deferential attitude. Confident candidates focused usefully on the contrast between Beatrice and the American girl and the latter's behaviour towards Sam. Some answers showed an engagement with Achebe's presentation of Beatrice's thought processes and stronger candidates picked up more subtle points such as the ulterior motives of the journalist and the false hilarity of Sam's sycophantic cabinet.

Question 5. Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

- (a) Many answers to this question were thoughtful and based on detailed knowledge of the text. Nearly all candidates found ways to challenge Rochester's assertion and thus gave themselves grounds for argument. The strongest answers often accepted 'sacrifice' but queried 'delight', illustrating how, for Jane, decisions often cause discomfort and pain. Various interpretations of the word 'sacrifice' were considered and some candidates noted Jane's refusals to sacrifice her independence and principles. Examiners were pleased to see some very sophisticated analysis of character and structure, with clear understanding of Brontë's writing. Less confident candidates struggled with characterisation and some relied on summary, listing all the relevant events in Jane's life. Such answers often had a more limited view of sacrifice, seeing it more in material terms and discussing Jane's financial situation at various points of the novel.

- (b) This passage offered candidates fruitful opportunities to explore detail and nuance and in general it was done very well, with good attention to language. Many used the passage in its context to demonstrate the sense of foreboding created by Brontë, which creates doubt and hesitation in the reader's mind as well as Jane's. Though both characters are ignorant of Rochester's marital state, the narrative provides a number of suggestions, from Mrs Fairfax's Blanche to Jane's cry of 'am I a monster?' Candidates who picked up on these, as well as Miss Fairfax's hesitations and Jane's clipped dialogue, were very successful. A number of candidates noted that this was one of the few moments in the novel where Brontë presents Jane and Rochester through an outsider's eyes, even though it remains within Jane's narration. There were, on the other hand, less successful answers which missed the details of the writing and relied on summary of both the passage and the rest of the story.

Question 6. Katherine Mansfield: *The Garden Party and Other Stories*

- (a) This seems to have been an unexpected question and a number of candidates found it very difficult to write about male characters, instead veering towards consideration of the women associated with men. Straightforward answers tended towards Millie's 'Men is all beasts' philosophy, illustrating it with reference to stories such as *Frau Brechenmacher* and *the Little Governess*. Those candidates who did challenge this easy assumption tended to be working at a higher level, and Examiners saw some interesting contrasts as well as comparisons between male characters. Candidates writing on Stanley in *Prelude* and *At the Bay* or Harry Young in *Bliss* generally picked up some more subtle points. The most successful responses were answers which examined the different styles of Mansfield's writing, noting the third person narration and interior monologue of *Frau Brechenmacher*, viewing the male externally, to the unreliable male first person narrative of *A Married Man's Story*.
- (b) The extract from *At the Bay* was generally tackled well, with candidates noting Beryl's loneliness and solace in her imagination. Thoughtful candidates carefully examined Mansfield's use of free indirect thought within which the imagined romantic dialogue and reported speech of Mrs Kember take place. There was also some particularly effective commentary on the contrast between Beryl's life by day and by night, and on Mansfield's description of the garden. Some of the strongest answers noted Mansfield's ambiguous treatment of Beryl – the naïve self indulgence of a young woman whose social life means she dashes in and out of her room fixing her make-up at the same time as realising that this is an empty life amongst 'ninnies'. Sophisticated candidates noted that Beryl's joy in ownership of things needs to be seen in the context of her dependence on Stanley Burnell and her resultant desire to meet her saviour. Surprisingly, very few candidates showed they were aware of the irony of Beryl's encounter with Harry Kember just after this extract.

Question 7. Athol Fugard: *The Township Plays*

- (a) and (b) Too few answers to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 8. Arthur Miller: *A View from the Bridge*

- (a) Examiners saw very few answers to this question, but candidates showed solid textual knowledge in their discussion of Catherine. More confident answers noted the ambiguity of some of her behaviour towards Eddie and the ways Miller shows her growing up with financial independence through employment and in response to her meeting with Rodolpho.
- (b) In the few answers to this question, candidates noted the way Marco and Rodolpho discuss their home, with its poverty and limited opportunities for employment, as well as their resilience and optimism.

Question 9. William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

- (a) This question led to candidates reviewing Brutus' idea of honour in the play, although comparatively few actually committed themselves to stating their level of agreement with Antony's description. A number of answers compared Brutus' concern for honour with the mistakes it causes him to make in his calculations for the conspiracy, notably the sparing of Antony. Antony's ironic destruction of the idea of 'honourable men' in his funeral speech also featured frequently. Many candidates also compared Brutus' high motives with Cassius' jealousy of Caesar and noted that the other conspirators do not share Brutus' conception of honour.

- (b) The most successful answers to this question noted the word 'dramatises' in the text. Candidates wrote about the action indicated in the stage directions, the sequence of short scenes, the dialogue and the cumulative effects on an audience. The dynamics of Brutus' dialogue ('Ride, Messala') was noted, along with the use of Pindarus relaying his observations of the battlefield to Cassius and the audience, all devices to create for the audience the sense of action, battle and confusion. Those candidates who were aware of Pindarus' and Cassius' misinterpretation of Titinius' ride and reception were able to extend these ideas. However, a substantial number of candidates believed that Titinius is indeed captured by the opposing forces, showing insecure knowledge of the text.