

Marking notes

November 2015

Literature and performance

Standard level

Paper 1

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Assessment criteria

These notes to examiners are intended only as guidelines to assist marking and as a supplement to the published external assessment criteria for written paper 1. They are not offered as an exhaustive and fixed set of responses or approaches to which all answers must rigidly adhere. Good ideas or angles not offered here should be acknowledged and rewarded as appropriate. Similarly, answers which do not include all the ideas or approaches suggested here may still be very good answers.

Of course, some of the points listed below will appear in weaker papers, but are unlikely to be developed.

Criterion A

[5 max]

The task is essentially focused on an analysis of a chosen passage from a prose text. Through this analysis the level of understanding will be evaluated by the examiner. This “understanding” of the text should include the relevance of the passage and its place in the context of the novel as a whole. A synopsis of the plot of the text may be a first step towards demonstrating understanding but “good” and “perceptive” understanding will evaluate style and theme as well as plot detail. The analysis and understanding of these elements of the text will always be conducted with a view to the performance of the chosen passage. The importance of support and validation of all ideas through reference to the text is crucial. The text is fundamental and reference to it mandatory.

Criterion B

[10 max]

The “ideas” for performance are generated from the text and should not be independent of it. The textual “justification” required to support the “ideas for performance” in Criterion B will be drawn from a thorough contextualization of the passage and a secure understanding of its relevance to whatever issues the questions raise.

The association of “good” and “excellent” with the word “practical” attests to the value of ideas that can be realized in a practical staging context. These are ideas for the stage or a staging area and temptations to propose grandiose scenarios more applicable to “blockbuster” cinema than theatre should be resisted.

The candidate may draw diagrams or make sketches if it is thought that these are necessary to communicate the “ideas for performance” but such visual additions are not mandatory.

Criterion C

[5 max]

This criterion evaluates the clarity and coherence of the language used in the essay and looks at the appropriateness of the register, style and terminology which the candidate employs.

Clearly in an exercise which demands a facility in two disciplines, namely literature and performance, the candidate will be expected to demonstrate a facility in the use of the terminology specific to each discipline. As a writer of prose the candidate will be assessed on clarity, variety, precision and concision. The clarity of a written communication depends on accuracy in grammar, spelling and sentence construction. The effectiveness of a written communication will depend on the use of vocabulary, a sense for precision or accuracy of expression and concision which argues for an economy of expression. The persuasiveness of a piece of writing will depend on choice of idiom and style.

The following elements are particularly relevant to Criteria A, B and C:

1. Credible to good candidates will identify a passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will indicate its relevance to the question by placing it into the context of the novel; this may involve a summary of the content of the passage and why the scene involving the man and woman is so dramatic. Attention will be paid to the staging choices the question encourages the candidate to make. The area of focus is character and the antagonism (conflict) dramatized between the male and female character. The focus of this antagonism is status and how this may shift as the characters play out their differences. The credible candidate may respond to this in quite general terms but the good candidate will already be narrowing his perspective around the two characters, the questions of conflict and shifting status and the challenge of conveying the essence of these to an audience.

Credible to good responses will attempt to focus on the question but may not always succeed in doing so. They are likely to introduce references from the novel and be largely descriptive in their account, tending towards a narrative register. The candidates who achieve good responses will be establishing some analytical points. Specificity will distinguish the good from the credible candidate. Since the question specifies character, gender and status as focal points, the designated performance space should work towards making such foci clear for the audience.

Credible to good approaches to the movement from page to stage will vary from the candidate who may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, to the candidate who will be more liable to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a dramatic scene. The gender conflict may convey much about the world of the novel and the statuses the characters are struggling to maintain. Such a struggle will be of interest to the audience if the staging of the scene is carefully designed to show this to the audience.

The presentation of characters and conflict will be set up against a backdrop that is designed to project this to an audience in particular ways. The examiner might reasonably expect to see lighting and staging used in conjunction to enhance these representations for an audience. Staging effects like design, lighting and sound are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail, again registering a difference in the quality of the response. The good candidates will be able to see how use of the stage setting either spatially or through design (or both) can be manipulated to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. Attention to the role of sound, lighting, costume will contribute to staging and this attention will vary depending on choices the candidates make on where they choose to place their emphasis and on the quality of the work.

Credible to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for staging may rely on a generalized grasp of the production elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected in a good candidate. The understanding of stage craft may well be a defining factor in responses to this question especially if candidates decide to engage in special effects. If they do, these should be practical and feasible, not outlandish or cinematic. Particular design gambits and specific uses for production and design elements will serve as platforms for the delineation of the characters and their status. How they combine to move the audience will be an important factor.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear. The credible candidate will express ideas reasonably well, there may be redundancy, and a lack of precision. Technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

The excellent candidate will choose a passage that is immediately apposite. There will be a powerful understanding of why the gender conflict is important in a wider context of the novel and how the relative statuses of the two characters may mark a shift in the overall direction of the narrative that it is important for the audience to see. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of analyzing the passage in relation to the foci of the question. The essence of the work will be captured in the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging it is taken up. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology. The candidate will make staging and acting/action choices on the basis of conveying the range of meanings, both explicit and implicit to the passage, in the chosen performance space for an audience. Communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre, and the possibilities inherent in the application of the production and design elements to the staging concept. The candidate will be aware of the dramatic context and the two characters in question as fluent and malleable. The chosen performance space will be a location where action and movement will combine with carefully directed presentational strategies to register meaning and significance to an audience. The aesthetics of performance will be keenly felt and the encouragement this question gives to the interplay between characters will not be neglected. The use of lighting and sound may be enhancements to these effects as will an appreciation of the effect of make-up and costume for the actor.

The excellent candidate will demonstrate an individual “style of writing”: sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.

2. Credible to good responses will identify a passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will indicate its relevance to the question by placing it into the context of the novel; this may involve a summary of the details of the passage and their further relevance to the work as a whole. Attention will be paid to the choices the question asks the candidate to make. The candidate will select the area of focus (money and its effects on character) by identifying the intention of the author which may condition the dramatic approach to the selected passage. The credible candidate may not immediately respond to this but the good candidate will already be narrowing his perspective around the consequences of a choice of passage that provides a dramatic staging for the audience.

Credible to good responses will attempt to focus on the question but may not always succeed in doing so. They are likely to introduce references from the text. These will be general in character and may look closely at plot and events from the novel with a tendency to narrate these; the candidates who achieve “good” responses will be establishing staging foci that are explicitly linked to the question. There will be quotations from the passage which will support rather than illuminate the argument and are likely to address general rather than specific issues; again specificity will distinguish the good from the credible candidate. Since the question specifies “staging and action” as a foci, the choice of performance space should be presented by the candidate as part of the introduction of the essay. The actions selected should also be explicitly considered and varying levels of relevance and focus will distinguish the credible from the good candidate.

Credible to good candidates will differ in how they demonstrate the movement between genres; the former may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, while the latter will be more liable to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a dramatic space and a series of purposeful actions. The examiner might reasonably expect to see lighting and staging used in conjunction to enhance these representations for an audience. Staging effects like design, lighting and sound are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail again registering a difference in the quality of the response. The good candidates will be able to see how use of the stage space can be manipulated to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. Attention to the role of sound, lighting, costume and movement to convey dramatic intention will vary between the credible and good candidate. The question of money may be addressed in a number of ways depending on the novel and passage selected but it will be clear that this is an important influence on how many of the characters act.

Credible to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for staging may rely on a generalized grasp of the production elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected in a good candidate. The ability to distinguish staging effects for their effectiveness in directing the attention of the audience will probably be attainable by a credible candidate who will be able to “identify” a lighting or sound effect in a functional manner. The good candidate will be able to fit effects into an aesthetic or dramatic purpose and make them work as part of subtle or forceful communication for the audience. The exploration of set design or the positioning of a set piece or the focus on movement on stage in the exploration of character in action may all typify ways “into” the question. How this might be achieved through dramatic means will also distinguish the credible from the good candidate. The credible candidate will recognize the importance of the production elements as aids to communication, while the good candidate will be capable of building these elements as dynamic elements within the staging.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear with the credible candidate being able to express ideas reasonably well, there may be redundancy, and a lack of precision, technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

Excellent responses will choose a passage that is immediately apposite. There will be a powerful understanding of why the selected area is crucial to the text and this will have more than one application both within the passage and to the novel as a whole. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of analyzing the dynamic between money and characters in action and how this connection is staged and communicated. The essence of the work will capture the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging it is taken up. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology, the candidate will make staging and acting/action choices on the basis of conveying the intention of the author in the chosen performance space for an audience. Therefore communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre and the possibilities inherent in the application of the production and design elements to the staging concept. The candidate will be aware of the text as a fluid entity and the performance space as a location where action and movement will combine to register meaning and intention for the audience. The aesthetics of performance will be keenly felt and the encouragement this question gives to the creation of staging effects will not be neglected. The use of lighting and sound may be enhancements to these effects as will an appreciation of the effect of make-up and costume for the actor.

The excellent candidate will demonstrate an individual “style of writing”, sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.

3. Credible to good responses will identify a passage from the text that is appropriate to the question. They will indicate its relevance to the question by placing it into the context of the novel; this may involve a summary of the details of the passage and their further relevance to the work as a whole. Attention will be paid to the choice the question asks the candidate to make. The candidate will select the areas of focus; guilt and its consequences, which will condition the dramatic approach to the passage. The credible candidate may not immediately respond to this but the good candidate will already be narrowing his perspective and choosing the passage most suitable for the dramatic treatment of the subject.

Credible to good responses will vary on what aspects of dramatic performance, production and design the candidate will focus on. This makes for an open-ended approach to these elements. The examiner may expect the candidate to designate a performance space and explore how production, design elements and acting skills might best convey the subject of guilt and its redemptive or destructive consequences. The credible candidate will tend to identify broader effects and possibilities while the good candidate will focus on specifics through analysis which explore the nature of guilt and its particular consequences. The credible candidate may be detained longer than necessary on reflections on plot, whereas the good candidate will be more selective in the approach taken, looking to respond more quickly to the question. There will be quotations from the passage which will support rather than illuminate the argument and are likely to address general rather than specific issues; specificity will distinguish the good from the credible candidate. There are many different ways of expressing guilt and clearly candidates will differ in how they relate this guilt to redemptive or destructive consequences. It is also acceptable if candidates look to register the possibility that guilt may result in redemptive and destructive consequences or, alternatively argue that destructive consequences may have a redemptive purpose or outcome. Again accuracy in this matter will be characteristic of the good candidate whereas the credible candidate might understand the experience more generically. The credible candidate may effect a literal translation from one genre to the other, while the good candidate will be more liable to explore both text and stage for how the style of the prose description might be transformed into a stage language that reflects not only the subject but will also go some way to capturing its essence through the design and performance choices made by the candidate in the staging concept. Staging effects like lighting and sound and use of space and acting are likely to be broadly drawn with more detail again registering a difference in the quality of the response from the credible to good candidate. Design elements will be distinguished using the same criterion. The good candidates will be able to see how use of the stage space can be manipulated to shape communication for an audience and will not perceive representation in an exclusively literal manner. They will also be able to move beyond simple identifications of acting style to how style may function in performance to communicate action effectively for an audience.

Credible to good ideas for performance will be plausible and have a justification from the text. The overall concept for staging may rely on a generalized grasp of the production and design elements, as this grasp becomes steadier, more assured and more nuanced the work begins to characterize that expected in a good candidate. The ability to distinguish staging effects for their value in elucidating or demonstrating setting and significant action for an audience will probably be attainable by a credible candidate who will be able to “identify” a lighting or sound effect in a functional manner. Since the focus is on guilt and its consequences, the average candidate will look for how acting and design will register either of these, the good candidate will be more incisive and will use staging, acting and design to explore the condition of guilt and dramatize its consequences. The ability to present a plan for the actor’s performance tied to action will be within the range of a credible candidate who will identify some of the following: general moods, gestures, movement, blocking and voice for the actor, a more critical understanding of how these combine to communicate the meaning of action in explicit and perhaps implicit terms will move the candidate into the “good category”. The good candidate will be able to fit effects into an aesthetic or dramatic purpose and make them work as part of a subtle communication for the audience.

The exploration of set design or make up or the focus on movement on stage in the exploration of character in action may all typify ways “into” the question. How this might be achieved through dramatic means will also distinguish the credible from the good candidate, the former recognizing the importance of the production and design elements as aids to communication, with the latter being capable of building these elements as dynamic elements within the staging.

Credible to good writing will be legible and clear with the credible candidate being able to express ideas reasonably well, there may be redundancy, and a lack of precision, technical vocabulary will be subject to error as will the terminology particular to each genre. The register will be appropriate but a greater “care” and a subsequent enhancement of accuracy will be noted in the written work of the good candidate. Concept and execution will be clearly evident in the structure of the response.

Excellent responses will choose a passage that is immediately apposite. There will be a powerful understanding of why the selected area is crucial to the text and this will have more than one application both within the passage and to the novel as a whole. The candidate will immediately focus on key detail and show an ability to be selective in the analysis of the literature, focusing only on the material that is responsive to the question. Embedded quotation will be used and this will allow both for a more concise writing style and for illuminating reference. The tone, mood and indeed the vitality of the text will be captured by the way the candidate addresses the task of dealing with the question. The essence of the work will capture the quality of the writing as the challenge of staging it is taken up. Quotation may also be used structurally in the response as a device which achieves transition between one idea and another; it will be continually relevant to the question.

Excellent ideas for performance will be conveyed in precise terminology, to evoke mood and atmosphere underlying action, the candidate will make staging choices, beginning with the stage design for which there will be justification. The communication for an audience will be the agent of staging ideas and these will reflect a sophisticated understanding of the genre and the possibilities inherent in the application of the performance and design elements to the staging concept used for the dramatization of the chosen experiences. The candidate will be aware of the text as a fluid entity and the stage as a location where action and movement in space will combine through the actor to register meaning for an audience. The aesthetics of performance will be keenly felt and the encouragement this question gives to the creation of staging effects will not be neglected. The use of lighting and sound may be enhancements to these effects.

The excellent candidate will convey ideas and proposals in an individual “style of writing”, sentences will vary in length, and the structure of the response will support the argument and ensure that its presentation is clear and convincing. There will be a precise naming of stylistic elements in the text and staging elements in the concept for performance. The candidate will present work that, while concise, nevertheless evokes the quality and dramatic potential of the chosen passage.
