

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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2024 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT	ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE		
QUESTION PAPER	1	2	3
DURATION OF QUESTION PAPER	2½ hours		
PROVINCE	EASTERN CAPE		
NAME OF THE INTERNAL MODERATOR	Byron Mountfort		
NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER	Orcilla Giliomee		
DATES OF MARKING	27 November – 13 December 2024		
HEAD OF EXAMINATION:	MR E MABONA		

SECTION 1: (General overview of Learners Performance in the question paper as a whole)

The paper is fair and typical of a Home Language paper.

The cognitive spread is fair. In many cases, candidates' inadequate linguistic skills and a literal interpretation of the text as well as the questions were to their detriment. This, unfortunately, caused these candidates to miss the nuances in questions. Candidates struggled to adequately develop and substantiate their responses. An ongoing concern is candidates who rely on film versions or pre-learned essays of the novels and dramas to prepare for the exam.

Feedback from candidates and educators on the paper as a whole was favourable. Some comments, though, expressed some concern that, of the novels, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* has the more challenging questions.

It is the second year that a new set of poems has been taught and examined. However, it seems as if acquiring resources to teach these poems will be ongoing for a while. It is doubtful, though that the problem lies solely with inadequate teaching: it is clear that candidates do not (cannot?) read the questions properly in order to provide fully fleshed answers according to the mark allocations. The entry level questions require a statement and a justification. Questions requiring an interpretation of imagery proved challenging as many candidates EITHER completely missed the image in question OR merely settled for a literal response OR merely paraphrased the lines in question. Questions that invited a critical discussion on the central idea or message failed to garner the expected critical comment.

The unseen poem was not well received by candidates. That might be because of the length of the poem: candidates did not have sufficient time to engage with the poem properly.

The Picture of Dorian Gray remains the clear favourite choice over *Life of Pi*. This year candidates had an opportunity to score in all the essays in the paper, since vaguely similar questions have been asked before and the topics are fairly straightforward. It would have been to the candidates' detriment to decide beforehand which contextual and which essay question they would do, as it seems as if the novel contextual questions were slightly more nuanced than the

drama contextual questions.

In the contextual questions (drama and novel), candidates tend to generalise and not focus their responses on the set extract or line reference when instructed to do so. The 'stage director' questions in Section B, however, still pose a challenge. Many candidates do not know the text sufficiently. Most candidates still do not provide a justification in context for their responses in order to obtain a third mark. Some candidates still consider facial expression as being part of body language. Facial expression would be very difficult to read from a stage during a performance. Although an improvement is also seen, many candidates are still not clear on what it means to place an extract in context and merely paraphrase the extract. Perhaps educators need clarity on the response expected with such a question so that they can prepare candidates accordingly.

The glaring problem remains that candidates do not read the questions properly and do not answer the questions, especially those that are scaffolded, in order to receive full marks. It seems as if candidates are uncertain on how to respond to the instruction words in lower, middle and higher order questions. This is to their detriment.

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

- **General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?**
- **Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning**
- **Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development, etc.**

SECTION A: POETRY

QUESTION 1: 'FERN HILL' – ESSAY QUESTION

The poetry essay is usually an excellent choice. Very few candidates opted to do this question this year. This is unfortunate as the rubric certainly favours candidates who choose this option. Perhaps some centres decided to skip teaching this poem because of time constraints. Of course, candidates might have decided to skip studying this poem for exactly the same reason. However, teachers should encourage candidates to choose this option and give enough practise in identifying and explaining technical aspects like **diction**, **tone**, **structure** and **imagery**. Candidates should also be taught how to interpret the topic statement. Candidates should refrain from quoting extensively from the poem.

In this essay many candidates tended to focus only on childhood. They did not discuss the change – how the innocence, joy and wonder of childhood do not last. Candidates also struggled to distinguish between **diction** and **imagery**. **Diction** should focus on individual words, while **imagery** should focus on figures of speech or 'pictures created in the mind'.

Many candidates wrote a narrative essay, discussing at length how the innocence and joy of childhood are lost when 'we' grow up. Unfortunately, a purely narrative essay, which is not grounded in the text, cannot score any marks.

QUESTION 2: 'THIS WINTER COMING' – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

The majority of candidates knew the poem was about Apartheid. However, when answering the questions, candidates would generalise their responses instead of phrasing their answers to refer to the context of the poem.

- 2.1 The word 'thick' as it pertains to 'rain' was – in general – understood. This is an entry level question, and as such only requires a literal interpretation. For the second mark candidates have to indicate something more about the 'thick' rain. Candidates should be taught that a 2-mark question requires more than a single point as an answer. Some of those that knew they were required to supply something more, tended to just rephrase the first point, forfeiting the second mark.
- 2.2.1 Many candidates focused too much on the figurative meaning of these lines in their responses. This is still an entry level question and was marked as such. Many responses used elementary words to describe the mood: words like 'sad' should be discouraged, unless the answer is very clearly 'sad'. Candidates should remember that with

single word answers the first option is marked.

- 2.2.2 This question requires a technical response. Candidates have to explain HOW the mood in lines 4 – 5 is created. Many candidates merely paraphrased phrases or lines from the poem. Very few candidates explained how the mood is created by linking their identification of mood to lines or words from the poem. Learners should be taught to motivate their responses by quoting from the text – or at least REFERRING to the text. This has always been expected of learners in Paper 2.
- 2.3 The question requires candidates to '[c]omment on the effectiveness of the simile in lines 24 – 26. Many candidates simply explained the simile instead of engaging with the question. (Many candidates focused on the metaphor and not on the simile.) Instead, candidates should explain the image (not merely paraphrase it) and then comment on/discuss the image: how does this image help to create clarity and depth of meaning OR what is the implication of this image in context?
- 2.4 Candidates need to 'critically discuss' the 'central message' as it is conveyed in the given lines. Many candidates could not identify the central message (the theme). They generalised a message, e.g. 'Life goes on'. This shows a clear lack of understanding of both the poem and the question. This type of question requires a critical comment from the candidate. When a critical comment is required, the candidate has to consider all the information and interpret the lines/discuss/come to a conclusion which is linked to the message and the text/lines in the question. Merely paraphrasing the lines is not acceptable. Repeating the same point three or four times also does not score a mark more than once. Candidates often miss the second or third mark in these scaffolded questions.

QUESTION 3: 'PRAYER TO MASKS'

This was the least popular option, after the poetry essay.

- 3.1 The majority of candidates managed to score one mark for this question. Most of them could identify the connotation of 'brave' or 'courageous' or 'strong' to a lion. However, many of them did not earn the second mark, as they failed to link the connotation to the ancestors.
- 3.2 Many candidates managed to identify the attitude of the speaker as one of respect or reverence, but they could not motivate/explain their answer without merely rephrasing the first point about respect.
- 3.3.1 Many candidates were able to identify the figure of speech. It is, however, disappointing to see how many candidates cannot identify figures of speech.
- 3.3.2 This question required candidates to '[c]omment on the effectiveness of the image'. Many candidates simply explained the figure of speech they identified in 3.3.1 instead of engaging with the question. Instead, the candidate should explain the image in his/her own words and then explain the implication of the image in context.
- 3.4 Candidates needed to '[c]ritically discuss' how line 20 reveals the 'central message' of the poem. Most candidates could not identify the central message (the theme). They generalised a message, e.g. 'African people are happy when they dance'. This shows a clear lack of understanding of both the poem and the question. When a critical comment is required, the candidate has to consider all the information and interpret the lines/discuss/come to a conclusion which is linked to the message and the lines in the question. Merely paraphrasing the lines is not acceptable. Repeating the same point three or four times also does not score a mark more than once. Candidates often miss the second or third mark in these scaffolded questions.

QUESTION 4: 'AT A FUNERAL'

This was by far the most popular choice.

- 4.1 This question requires candidates to '[e]xplain the use of the phrase 'Black, green and gold' in the context of the poem.' Most candidates were able to identify the colours of the ANC and/or the colours of the academic gowns. However, the question requires an explanation of the first response, not two responses. Therefore, many candidates forfeited the second mark.
- 4.2 This is a straightforward question which requires candidates to explain the implication of 'pageantry' as it pertains to the funeral. Many candidates were able to identify the meaninglessness of the funeral. However, they struggled to explain that a pageant is an ostentatious display.

- 4.3.1 This question has the option of four responses. In spite of that, identifying figures of speech is clearly a challenge. However, it was heartening to see that fewer candidates confused 'figures of speech' with 'parts of speech' (even Reported Speech!) as in the past.
- 4.3.2 The question requires the candidates to '[c]omment on the effectiveness of the image'. Many candidates simply explained the figure of speech they had identified in 4.3.1 instead of engaging with the question. Candidates should explain the image (not merely paraphrase it) and then comment on/discuss the image: how does this image help to create clarity and depth of meaning OR what is the implication of this image in context?
- 4.4 Candidates need to '[c]ritically discuss' how line 12 'reinforces the central message' of the poem. Many candidates could not identify the central message (the theme). They generalised a message, e.g. 'It is sad that Majombozi died'. This shows a clear lack of understanding of both the poem and the question. This type of question requires a critical comment from the candidate. When a critical comment is required, the candidate has to consider all the information and come to a conclusion which is linked to the text/lines referred to in the question. Merely paraphrasing the lines is not acceptable. Candidates often miss the second or third mark in these scaffolded questions.

QUESTION 5: 'FARM GATE'

Very few candidates left out this question, which is encouraging.

- 5.1 Many candidates said that the description of the aloes reveals that they are 'blood-red'. The question requires candidates to rewrite in their own words what the description in lines 1 – 4 reveals about the aloes. Candidates have to identify the vibrancy of the colour (they are vibrant/deep red) as well as respond to the fact that they 'flank the winding road'. A two-mark question usually requires something more than just one fact/explanation.
- 5.2 In general candidates were able to identify the atmosphere in lines 9 – 14. However, they still use words from the poem to identify the atmosphere/mood/tone. An adjective should be used in this instance. The answer can be derived from a word in the poem, but candidates should be encouraged to use their own words. This is also a two-mark question, which implies that candidates should either quote from the poem to substantiate their answer, or at least refer to the lines.
- 5.3.1 Identifying tone is still a serious problem. Tone should also be an adjective. Once again, 'sad' is a favourite. Words like 'sad' and 'angry' should be avoided as far as possible, unless it is very clearly the answer. Candidates' inability to identify tone shows a clear lack of understanding of the poem.
- 5.3.2 The question requires the candidates to '[c]omment on the effectiveness of the tone.' Many candidates simply explained or paraphrased the lines instead of engaging with the question. They should be taught to discuss how the tone in these lines helps to create clarity and depth of meaning OR the implication of the tone in context.
- 5.4 Candidates need to '[c]ritically discuss' how the 'rhetorical question conveys the central message of the poem'. Some candidates responded to this question by giving the function of the rhetorical question rather than discussing how the rhetorical question conveys the central message. However, many candidates could not identify the central message (the theme). Merely paraphrasing the lines is not acceptable. Some candidates started moralising, discussing how "you" should never stop dreaming'. Most candidates missed the second or third mark in this scaffolded question.

SECTION B: NOVEL

QUESTION 6: ESSAY: 'THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY'

This was the overwhelming choice for the candidates. In general candidates fared better than in the past, since the topic vaguely mirrors past questions. Many candidates failed to discuss the topic statement succinctly. The question requires candidates to discuss the extent to which the portrait is BOTH a blessing AND a curse in Dorian Gray's life. Many essays did not explore both of these aspects and it was reflected in the results. The focus of this essay is the portrait and its influence. Lord Henry is not the focus!

The majority of candidates struggled to form an argument – linking the argument to the topic was an even greater challenge. Every argument in the essay should be substantiated with (an) example(s) from the text. The repetition of the same point

five or six times was also problematic. Markers DO see the repetitions!

- Structure is also a challenge for most learners. Paragraphs should follow one another logically, using linking words to ensure a logical flow.
- Many candidates did not plan their essays – this prevented them from forming a lucid, detailed and cohesive argument.
- Responses also showed significant stylistic problems. Words like ‘nice’ and phrases like ‘Let me tell you something’ are not acceptable.
- Candidates also did not write their essays in the (historic) present tense.
- Using first person pronouns in a literary essay is frowned upon.
- Very few candidates presented objective essays written in third person.
- Introductions and conclusions still need to be taught properly.

Merely telling the story is not an acceptable response to the question – neither is copying the previous year’s memorandum from memory. Unfortunately, these candidates scored a failing mark. Candidates cannot write their own story either. The score for a creative writing essay is, unfortunately, a zero.

It is worrying that so many candidates did not know the basic plot of the novel. Many inaccuracies influenced marks negatively. A comprehensive interpretation of the topic is NOT possible when the candidate does not know the plot.

QUESTION 7: CONTEXTUAL: ‘THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY’

In general, the questions were poorly answered. Many candidates gave superficial and/or vague answers. This makes it difficult to obtain the full marks for most questions.

- 7.1 Although placing an extract in context is an entry-level question - which is mere recall – many candidates did not know what happens immediately before this extract, as they did not know the plot of the novel.
- 7.2 Most candidates knew that Dorian loves Sibyl ‘for her acting’. However, they needed to fully explain ‘unreal’: This means he does not really love Sibyl. Candidates lost the second mark because of an incomplete answer. This is a 2-mark question. Entry-level questions usually require candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 7.3 Candidates are required to ‘explain’ what lines 12 – 14 ‘reveal about Dorian’s state of mind at this point in the novel.’ Many candidates merely lifted, ‘He did not know what to do’ from Extract A. That does not explain his state of mind. Once again, an explanation was needed after identifying his state of mind in their own words. The question prompts candidates to make sure their answers are specific to ‘this point in the novel’.
- 7.4 Candidates need to discuss the EXTENT to which Dorian can ‘sustain his decision to use the portrait as his moral compass.’ They are required to conclude that he is NOT able to sustain his resolution AND support their opinion with evidence from the novel to explain why he cannot sustain his resolution. A discussion question usually requires one or two well-developed ideas, depending on the marks of the question. Many candidates did not take a stance (he succeeds/does not succeed). Vague arguments were attempted, but no substantiation or examples from the novel were given to support the arguments.
- 7.5 Candidates really struggled with this question, because they did not understand the meaning of lines 15 – 18. They also have to refer to the novel as a whole in their discussion of the significance of these lines. Generalisations were rife, which showed that candidates either did not know the novel or did not understand the question. Candidates should be taught how to answer middle and higher order questions. The prerequisite for mastering any of these questions is knowing the plot of the network.
- 7.6 Candidates need to account (give reasons) for Basil’s disappearance. Many candidates managed to score both marks, but many started explaining the motivation for killing him. The first one or two questions after an extract are usually entry level questions again. Candidates merely have to explain how he disappeared. A comment is not necessary.
- 7.7 Irony questions still appear to be problematic. These types of questions should be an easy two marks. However, many candidates brought Sibyl Vane into their answers, while this is clearly a question about Hetty (as lines 4 – 6 refer to Hetty). The expected answer to discussing irony should always include ‘yet’ or ‘but’. If an answer is phrased like that, it is logical that irony will be discussed.

- 7.8 The question requires candidates to '[d]iscuss Dorian's resolution to be better. For three marks, the discussion has to be well developed. After a discussion on what motivates him to be better, they need to reach a conclusion: does Dorian succeed in becoming better? Many candidates left the discussion hanging, not reaching a conclusion.
- 7.9 A comment question requires candidates to interpret a statement/an event/an image. They need to link their interpretation to the context. This question requires candidates to comment on the 'change in Lord Henry's attitude towards Doran.' A change clearly implies something that WAS and something that IS NOW. The third mark requires the comment/interpretation: what does it show/why does it happen?
- 7.10 This is a higher order question in which candidates have to 'critically discuss Dorian's understanding of 'self-sacrifice', using lines 13 – 15 as a starting point. Critically discuss needs an evaluation and assessment of both sides of the topic OR an examination of the topic, giving reasons for and against. Candidates did not understand how to discuss a statement critically.

QUESTION 8: ESSAY: 'LIFE OF PI'

In general candidates fared better than in the past, since the topic vaguely mirrors past questions. However, many candidates failed to discuss the topic statement succinctly. The question requires candidates to discuss 'how Pi's experiences at sea are equally a blessing and curse to his personal development.' The responses showed that many of the essays did not explore both of these aspects and it was reflected in the results. Many candidates did not discuss Pi's 'personal development' either.

The majority of candidates struggled to form an argument – linking the argument to the topic was an even greater challenge. Every argument in the essay should be substantiated with (an) example(s) from the text. The repetition of the same point five or six times was also problematic. Markers DO see the repetitions!

- Structure is also a challenge for most learners. Paragraphs should follow one another logically, using linking words to ensure a logical flow.
- Many candidates did not plan their essay – this prevented them from forming a lucid, detailed and cohesive argument.
- Responses also showed significant stylistic problems. Words like 'nice' and phrases like 'Let me tell you something' are not acceptable.
- Candidates also did not write their essays in the (historic) present tense.
- Using first person pronouns in a literary essay is frowned upon.
- Very few candidates presented objective essays written in third person.
- Introductions and conclusions still need to be taught properly.

Merely telling the story is not an acceptable response to the question – neither is copying the previous year's memorandum from memory. Unfortunately, these candidates scored a failing mark. Candidates cannot write their own story either. The score for a creative writing essay is, unfortunately, a zero.

QUESTION 9: CONTEXTUAL: 'LIFE OF PI'

- 9.1 Although an entry-level question which is mere recall, many candidates did not know what happens immediately before this extract, as they did not know the plot of the novel.
- 9.2 Account for requires learners to give the reasons for an event/words/an image. Most candidates knew that Pi practises three religions, but they failed to explain the lines in context: Why does Pi call on these three religious figures? Entry-level questions usually require candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 9.3 This question requires candidates to explain (give reasons for) what lines 2 – 3 reveal about Pi's 'state of mind at this point in the novel.' Of course, Pi's state of mind has to be identified first. Many candidates disregarded the lead 'at this point in the novel' and discussed events after these lines, which scored no marks.
- 9.4 Another irony question which – for many candidates – seems to be problematic. This is a three-mark question, which means candidates have to discuss more than just the irony. Candidates failed to score all three marks in this

question. They could mostly explain the irony, but most failed to discuss the effect/implication of the irony as it pertains to THESE LINES.

- 9.5 Many candidates failed to focus on Richard Parker as Pi's alter ego – they merely discussed Richard Parker's role in the first story.
- 9.6 This question requires candidates to discuss (state the importance and explain how it influences Pi's life) 'the role that REASON/INTELLECT plays in Pi's life.' Many candidates confused this concept with 'the reason'.
- 9.7 Most candidates were able to answer this question well. Once again two distinct points are needed for two marks as this is a lower order question.
- 9.8 Many candidates did not score marks in this question. The question requires a technical response in which candidates have to explain HOW the mood in this extract is conveyed. Candidates have to identify the mood and then motivate their answer with reference to diction/style/tone, etc.
- 9.9 This is a higher order question in which candidates have to comment on the significance of (what do they think of...? and motivate why) 'the French cook's actions in this extract.' Many candidates scored the first and second mark, but the third mark was unattainable for most.
- 9.10 This is a higher order question in which candidates have to refer to lines 19 – 20 and 'critically discuss how Pi's comment is crucial to understanding the impact that his ordeal had on him.' These lines have to be the starting point of the answer. When a question requires a critical comment, candidates have to evaluate and assess both sides of the topic OR they have to examine the topic, giving reasons for and against. Candidates did not understand how to discuss a statement critically.

SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 10: ESSAY: 'HAMLET'

In general candidates should have done better in the essay, as the topic has been asked in various forms in the past. However, many candidates merely narrated the plot (some fascinating plots emerged) to explain the contribution of the women 'to the attitude and actions' of Hamlet, instead of interpreting the topic.

The majority of candidates struggled to form an argument – linking the argument to the topic was an even greater challenge. Every argument in the essay should be substantiated with (an) example(s) from the text. The repetition of the same point five or six times was also problematic. Markers DO see the repetitions!

- Structure is also a challenge for most learners. Paragraphs should follow one another logically, using linking words to ensure a logical flow.
- Many candidates did not plan their essay – this prevented them from forming a lucid, detailed and cohesive argument.
- Responses also showed significant stylistic problems. Words like 'cool' and colloquial language like 'But did they learn? No, they did not!' are not acceptable.
- Candidates also did not write their essays in the (historic) present tense.
- Using first person pronouns in a literary essay is frowned upon.
- Candidates often rely on pronouns (often incorrect pronouns) instead of mentioning the characters' names.
- Very few candidates presented objective essays written in third person.
- Introductions and conclusions still need to be taught properly.

Merely telling the story is not an acceptable response to the question – neither is copying the previous year's memorandum from memory. Unfortunately, these candidates scored a failing mark. Candidates cannot write their own story either. The score for a creative writing essay is, unfortunately, a zero.

Many learners clearly watch the movie instead of reading the play. **This is to their detriment** as changes to the plot are inevitable when translating one medium to another.

QUESTION 11: CONTEXTUAL: 'HAMLET'

- 11.1 This is a 'place-in-context' question. Candidates must explain the events that transpire between Hamlet and Ophelia immediately prior to the extract. References to Polonius and Claudius could not be credited. Candidates tended to generalise about the 'fight' Hamlet and Ophelia had, instead of going into the details of the fight.
- 11.2 This question requires candidates to explain WHY Claudius and Polonius are hiding behind the arras. Many candidates did not understand 'arras', which led to some rather creative answers. Entry-level questions usually require candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 11.3 Candidates have to explain (give reasons for) Ophelia's state of mind as revealed in lines 11 – 12. Many candidates identified her state of mind as 'sad' or 'unhappy'; however, her state of mind is much more intense than that! Candidates should be discouraged from giving vague answers.
- 11.4 This question requires a discussion of the insight (stating the insight and explaining it) given in lines 16 – 19 of Claudius's character. For middle and higher order questions that count three marks, the marking guidelines have always stated that candidates need to have 'two ideas well developed'. They should be taught to answer in this way.
- 11.5 This is also a discussion question. Candidates have to discuss how Polonius's actions in lines 32 – 34 are 'typical' of him. A discussion requires candidates to state the action (what does he do here?) and then motivate from elsewhere in the text how this action is typical – where has the same action been evident. Few candidates managed to score all three marks.
- 11.6 Candidates failed to account for (give reasons for) Hamlet's words to the ghost. The first question or two after an extract are usually entry level questions again. Candidates, however, failed to understand 'tardy' and did not score both marks.
- 11.7 The question requires candidates to explain (give reasons for) the 'significance' of the weed image in line 25 in the context of the play as a whole. Many candidates did not understand the meaning of 'weeds' (other than perhaps a hallucinogen), which implies they could also not score the second mark for the 'context of the play as a whole'.
- 11.8 This is a higher order question in which candidates have to comment on the irony of the Ghost's words in lines 11 - 14. Most candidates did not score these marks, as it seems they did not understand what the lines mean. If there is no understanding, the irony in the lines cannot be discussed and they cannot comment on the irony either.
- 11.9 The 'stage director' question is asked every year! Candidates need to be prepared for this question. They need to discuss body language and tone and explain why the character would act like that and/or say the lines in the chosen tone. It is clear that most candidates are not prepared for this question. Since it seems as if they have trouble placing the extract in context or even understanding the lines, it is impossible for them to motivate the character's delivery of the chosen lines. Candidates should be motivated to picture the scene in their minds, because sometimes their stage directions are physically impossible.
- 11.10 This is a higher order question which requires learners to critically discuss the 'accuracy of the Ghost's observation that Hamlet's purpose has been 'blunted'.' Candidates did not understand lines 9 – 10, so a critical discussion was impossible. When a question requires a critical discussion, candidates have to evaluate and assess both sides of the topic OR they have to examine the topic, giving reasons for and against. Candidates did not understand how to discuss a statement critically.

QUESTION 12: ESSAY: 'OTHELLO'

In general candidates should have done better in the essay, as the topic has been asked in various forms in the past. However, many candidates merely narrated the plot (some fascinating plots emerged) to explain how 'Desdemona and Emilia's innocence and naivety contribute to their fate' instead of interpreting the topic. Many candidates who managed to discuss the innocence and naivety, unfortunately did not discuss their 'fate'.

The majority of candidates struggled to form an argument – linking the argument to the topic was an even greater challenge. Every argument in the essay should be substantiated with (an) example(s) from the text. The repetition of the same point five or six times was also problematic. Markers DO see the repetitions!

- Structure is also a challenge for most learners. Paragraphs should follow one another logically, using linking words to ensure a logical flow.
- Many candidates did not plan their essay – this prevented them from forming a lucid, detailed and cohesive argument.

- Responses also showed significant stylistic problems. Words like ‘cool’ and colloquial language like ‘But did they learn? No, they did not!’ are not acceptable.
- Candidates also did not write their essays in the (historic) present tense.
- Using first person pronouns in a literary essay is frowned upon.
- Candidates often rely on pronouns (often incorrect pronouns) instead of mentioning the characters’ names. This easily causes confusion.
- Very few candidates presented objective essays written in third person.
- Introductions and conclusions still need to be taught properly.

Merely telling the story is not an acceptable response to the question – neither is copying the previous year’s memorandum from memory. Unfortunately, these candidates scored a failing mark. Candidates cannot write their own story either. The score for a creative writing essay is, unfortunately, a zero.

Many learners clearly watch the movie instead of reading the play. **This is to their detriment** as changes to the plot are inevitable when translating one medium to another.

QUESTION 13: CONTEXTUAL: ‘OTHELLO’

- 13.1 This is a place-in-context question. Candidates have to explain WHY Desdemona is in Cyprus. This is a lower order question. Candidates should, therefore, supply two distinct points for two marks.
- 13.2 This is a lower-order question which requires candidates to merely explain the effect of Iago’s referring to Othello as ‘the Moor’. Entry-level questions usually require candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 13.3 This question requires candidates to discuss (write down and motivate what they think about the given aspect of the text) Iago’s FEELINGS towards Cassio as revealed in line 25. Many candidates explained what Iago DOES to Cassio instead of engaging with what is asked.
- 13.4 Candidates are required to discuss how Othello has changed. Many candidates were able to do so. For middle and higher order questions that count three marks, the marking guidelines have always stated that candidates need to have ‘two ideas well developed’. They should be taught to answer in this way.
- 13.5 Few candidates were able to score full marks for this question. Many candidates managed to explain the initial statement and then followed with the ‘yet’/‘however’ part. However, the third mark is awarded for a comment: why does Iago say this? Most candidates missed out on this mark.
- 13.6 This question requires candidates to comment on the ‘accuracy’ of line 9 ‘in relation to Othello’s personal life.’ Most candidates knew that Othello will now wage a personal war, but they did not include a cogent comment for the third mark.
- 13.7 This question was badly answered, in general, as learners did not know the plot.
- 13.8 Account for’ requires the candidate to explain an event/action in the context of the play/scene/extract. Many candidates were unable to score both marks as they did not know that Lodovico has just witnessed Othello’s physical and verbal abuse of Desdemona – once again showing that they did not know the plot.
- 13.9 The ‘director question’ is asked every year! Candidates need to be prepared for this question. They need to discuss body language and tone and explain why the character would act like that and say the lines in the chosen tone. It is clear that most candidates are not prepared for this question. Since they had trouble placing the extract in context, it was impossible for them to motivate the character’s delivery of the chosen lines. Candidates should be motivated to picture the scene in their minds, because sometimes their stage directions are physically impossible.
- 13.10 A critical discussion is required on the ‘unlikely friendship that develops between Desdemona and Emilia’, by using knowledge from the play as a whole. When a question requires a critical discussion, candidates have to evaluate and assess the topic OR they have to examine the topic, giving reasons for the validity of the statement. The majority of candidates failed to discuss this statement critically.

QUESTION 14: ESSAY: ‘THE CRUCIBLE’

In general candidates should have done better in the essay, as the topic has been asked

in various forms in the past. However, many candidates merely narrated the plot (some fascinating plots emerged) to explain how 'the role of women in Salem contributes to the outcome of the play' instead of interpreting the topic. Many candidates did not discuss 'the outcome' of the play.

The majority of candidates struggled to form an argument – linking the argument to the topic was an even greater challenge. Every argument in the essay should be substantiated with (an) example(s) from the text. The repetition of the same point five or six times was also problematic. Markers DO see the repetitions!

- Structure is also a challenge for most learners. Paragraphs should follow one another logically, using linking words to ensure a logical flow.
- Many candidates did not plan their essay – this prevented them from forming a lucid, detailed and cohesive argument.
- Responses also showed significant stylistic problems. Words like 'cool' and colloquial language like 'But did they learn? No, they did not!' are not acceptable.
- Candidates also did not write their essays in the (historic) present tense.
- Using first person pronouns in a literary essay is frowned upon.
- Candidates often rely on pronouns (often incorrect pronouns) instead of mentioning the characters' names. This easily causes confusion.
- Very few candidates presented objective essays written in third person.
- Introductions and conclusions still need to be taught properly.

Merely telling the story is not an acceptable response to the question – neither is copying the previous year's memorandum from memory. Unfortunately, these candidates scored a failing mark. Candidates cannot write their own story either. The score for a creative writing essay is, unfortunately, a zero.

Many learners clearly watch the movie instead of reading the play. **This is to their detriment** as changes to the plot are inevitable when translating one medium to another.

QUESTION 15: CONTEXTUAL: 'THE CRUCIBLE'

- 15.1 This question requires candidates to account for (give reasons for) Abigail's accusation. This is a lower order question and candidates should, therefore, supply two distinct points for two marks.
- 15.2 This is a lower-order question which requires candidates to respond with their knowledge of the plot. It is disturbing how many candidates do not know the plot. Entry-level questions usually expects candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 15.3 In general candidates managed to explain the irony of Abigail's words in line 2. A two-mark irony question does not require the comment that a three-mark irony question would need.
- 15.4 This question was badly answered. Very few learners managed to score the third mark. Candidates need to establish the attitude of the villagers towards Tituba and then use Extract I as a starting point to comment on this attitude.
- 15.5 This is a discussion question. Candidates have to discuss how Parris's actions in lines 33 – 34 are 'typical' of him. A discussion requires candidates to state the action (what does he do here?) and then motivate from elsewhere in the text how this action is typical – where has the same action been evident. Few candidates managed to score all three marks.
- 15.6 Account for requires the candidate to explain an event/action in the context of the play/scene/extract. Many candidates were unable to score both marks as they did not know why Giles refuses 'to provide the court with a name.' Once again, the entry-level question expects candidates to mention the same number of points as the number of marks allocated to that question. Candidates should, therefore, provide two distinct points.
- 15.7 This question requires candidates to discuss what lines 4 – 6 'convey about Parris and Proctor's relationship.' Most candidates could say that 'they don't like each other, but they could not motivate their answers adequately.'

- 15.8 Candidates need to comment on (what do they think of...? and motivate why) the 'state of affairs in Salem at this point in the play.' Most candidates understood that the villagers are scared/fearful/afraid. However, to score the full three marks, a cogent comment is needed.
- 15.9 The 'director' question is asked every year! Candidates need to be prepared for this question. They need to discuss body language and tone and explain why the character would act like that and say the lines in the chosen tone. It is clear that most candidates are not prepared for this question. Since they have trouble placing the extract in context, it is impossible for them to motivate the character's delivery of the chosen lines. Candidates should be motivated to picture the scene in their minds, because sometimes their stage directions are physically impossible.
- 15.10 This question has been asked numerous times in the past. In spite of that most candidates could not master this question. They failed to discuss critically the extent to which Danforth's 'role in the handling of the trials is integral to the outcome of the play. When a question requires a critical discussion, candidates have to evaluate and assess both sides of the topic OR they have to examine the topic, giving reasons for and against. Candidates did not understand how to discuss a statement critically.

The following is a table from Mind the Gap *Life of Pi* to assist with enabling learners to understand question words.

Question words

Here are examples of question types as prescribed by CAPS for English HL

Question type	What you need to do
Literal: Questions about information that is clearly given in the text or extract from the text.	
Name characters/places/things ...	Write the specific names of characters, places, etc.
State the facts/reasons/ideas ...	Write down the information without any discussion or comments.
Give two reasons for/why ...	Write two reasons (this means the same as 'state').
Identify the character/reasons/theme ...	Write down the character's name, state the reasons, write down the theme
Describe the place/character/what happens when ...	Write down the main characteristics of something, for example: What does a place look/feel/smell like? Is a particular character kind/rude/aggressive? Write down the sequence of events ...
What does character x do when ...?	Write what happened – what the character did.
Why does character x do ...?	Given reasons for the character's action according to your knowledge of the plot.
Who is/does...?	Write the name of the character.
To whom does xx refer ...?	Write the name of the relevant character/person.
Reorganisation: Questions that need you to bring together different pieces of information in an organised way.	
Summarise the main points/ideas ...	Write the main points, keeping mark allocation in mind.
Group the common elements ...	Combine the things which share the same features.
Give an outline of	Write the main points, keeping mark allocation in mind.
Place the extract in context...	Explain how the events of the extract fit into the sequence of events of the text as a whole.
Inference: Questions that need you to interpret (make meaning of) the text using information that may not be clearly stated. This process involves thinking about what happened in different parts of the text; looking for clues that tell you more about a character, theme or symbol; and using your own knowledge to help you understand the text.	

Explain how this idea links with the theme x ...	Identify the links to the theme.
Compare the attitudes/actions of character x with character y ...	Point out the similarities and differences.
Do you agree that the...represents the contrast between...	Point out the differences and come to a conclusion which shows your agreement or lack thereof. Note that most questions like this expect you to agree, so be careful if you choose to disagree. Your position of agreement/disagreement needs detailed textual reference and substantiation.
What do the words ... suggest/reveal about...?	State what you think the meaning is, based on your understanding of the text.
How does character x react when...? Describe how something affected character x ... State how you know that character x is	Write down the character's reaction/what the character did/felt.

...	
What did character x mean by the expression ...?	Explain why the character used those particular words. Make sure that you refer to specific words.
Explain the cause/effect of ...	Write the reason(s) for ... /Give the repercussions of ...
How does the line/metaphor/simile/figurative language/image/literary device affect your understanding ...?	Explain what the line/metaphor/simile/figurative language/image/literary device suggests and clarifies your understanding of the text. For similes and metaphors, discuss the comparison and how it adds meaning to the text.
What, do you think, would be the outcome/effect/etc. of an action/situation ...?	Explain what the consequences of the action/situation would be.
Account for ...	Give the reason behind an action/event.
What does the word/line suggest / imply...?	Explain what the word/line tells you and discuss the clues hinted at by the word/line...
Evaluation: Questions that require you to make a judgement based on your knowledge and understanding of the text and your own experience. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a valid reason for your opinion based on specific information given in the text.	
Discuss your view/a character's feelings/a theme ...	Consider all the information and reach a conclusion.
Do you think that ...	Give your views/opinion on the given topic.
Do you agree with/that ...	State whether or not you agree with something/someone in the text. You need to base your opinion on specific information given in the text.
In your opinion, what ...	Your viewpoint needs to be based on specific information given in the text.
Give your views on ...	Your opinion needs to be based on specific information given in the text.
In light of the poem/novel/drama as a whole, critically discuss ...	Evaluate and assess both sides of the topic. / Investigate or examine by argument or debate, giving reasons for and against.

In your view, is ... justified?	Give reasons, based on the text, why you/a character/the writer adopt(s) a particular standpoint.
Comment on ...	To discuss or speak about ...providing evidence from the text to support your opinion.
Critically comment ...	To discuss, speak about and form an opinion about...providing evidence from the text to support your discussion.
Appreciation: Questions that ask about your emotional response to plot, characters and style. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a valid reason for your opinion based on specific information given in the text.	
How would you feel if you were character x when ...?	Imagine that you are character x and describe your emotions based on your understanding of evidence from the text.
Discuss your response to ...	Give your reaction to something and give reasons for your reaction based on evidence from the text.
Do you feel sorry for...? / Do you identify with...?	State whether you empathise with the character's emotions/situation. Are you able to have compassion for ...? Provide reasons for whether you have compassion or not.
Discuss the writer's use of style, diction and figurative language, dialogue ...	To answer this type of question, ask yourself: Does the style help me to feel/imagine what is happening/what a character is feeling? Why/why not? Give reasons for your answer.
Comment on the appropriateness/effectiveness of a figure of speech/literary device...	State why the figure of speech/literary device has impact and give reasons for your opinion. If you state that the figure of speech/literary device lacks impact, you will need to give evidence. All reasons must be clearly explained and based on evidence from the text.