

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/01
Portfolio

Key messages

- Teachers should refer to the 0408 Syllabus and Coursework Training Handbook during the planning stages of the course.
- Tasks for all assignments must be worded to enable candidates to fulfil the requirements of the band descriptors.
- Written assignments should include marginal annotation by the teacher which comments on strengths and weaknesses of candidate performance and should be clearly linked to the marking criteria.
- Marks changed during internal moderation should be clearly labelled on candidate work to facilitate the correct transfer of marks to the front cover: any changes should be supported by brief comments justifying the change.
- Rigorous clerical check of the transcription of marks to the Individual Record Card, the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and Mark Sheets are needed.

General comments

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

The Critical Response

For candidates to be able to meet the assessment criteria in their writing, effective tasks must be set. Examples of appropriately challenging tasks for both the critical and empathic tasks can be found in the 0408 *Coursework Handbook*.

Successful responses demonstrated clear critical engagement with the selected text in response to a well-structured task. These responses analysed the ways writers achieve effects and were supported by well-selected and concise textual references. There was some perceptive analysis of the ways writers created effects. Candidates at this level were able to grasp complex, abstract ideas *and* analyse exactly how they were conveyed through the text. This meant that in poetry analysis candidates were able to move from the focused and concrete to the wider, abstract concerns and back again with ease. In prose, successful candidates saw how the themes and wider concerns of the text were presented through the specifics of character and plot.

Weaker responses resulted from less structured tasks where candidates tended to narrate the text rather than to explore specific themes or characters. Frequently tasks were not written on assignments or did not explicitly address the Assessment Objectives e.g. 'Romeo character study'. These responses frequently used lengthy quotations with no analysis of the text or made unsubstantiated assertions. Information regarding biographical, social, historical and cultural context of writers and their times, should only be rewarded if they are relevant to the task and supported by apt textual detail.

The Empathic Response

To be successful, empathic responses should focus on a specific character and moment in the text, offering an engagingly authentic 'voice' for the chosen character. The best responses were firmly rooted in the text whilst less successful responses did not focus on a precise moment and showed little understanding of the character or moment in question. The use of direct quotation in empathic writing is to be discouraged as this does not allow the candidate to capture a character's voice. Teachers are reminded that the full title of the assignment, identifying the character and precise moment, should be written at the start of responses.

The Recorded Conversation

It is pleasing to see that there were very few prepared talks by candidates this session and the objective of a 'recorded conversation' adhered to.

The most successful oral responses focused on the ways the writer *presents* a character, idea or theme and engaged fully with their chosen character or theme. These responses were detailed with specific and much well-selected textual references to support their ideas. Well thought out questions from the teacher help candidates to explore fully their chosen topic and there were some lively and insightful ideas discussed.

Weaker responses tend to become narrative, retelling the plot or part a character plays without exploring how the writer *presents* them: this approach does not allow candidates to meet the criteria for high reward in the band descriptors. Candidates who were allowed to give a prepared talk were unable to achieve high reward.

Centres are reminded that this is the last year where the Recorded Conversation forms part of the 0408 syllabus. Please refer to the 0408 syllabus for 2022 for full details of the changes to the syllabus requirements.

Teacher annotation

Moderators reported an increase in the number of samples where there was no or little evidence of marking on responses. Teachers are reminded that all assignments should show evidence of having been marked to assist the moderation process. Focused ticking of salient points, supported by brief reference to the band descriptors in marginal annotation, and a detailed summative comment, are a prerequisite for all written assignments. These annotations allow external Moderators to see the rationale for the final mark awarded. It is also important that any marks changed during the internal moderation process be justified with an additional comment, explaining the reason for the change.

Administration

Rigorous clerical checks should be carried out by the centre to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged by any transcription errors made by the person entering marks on individual record cards, coursework assessment summary forms and mark sheets. To facilitate final checking by the Moderator, candidates should be listed in the same order as the MS1s and not in class groups. Care should be taken over the presentation of the portfolios. The Individual Record Card should be fastened securely (e.g. by a treasury tag or staple) to the written assignments (and not placed in plastic wallets or cardboard folders) to ensure ease of access. Assignments should be organised in the order presented on the Individual Record Card. November 2021 will be the final series for the Recorded Conversation to be presented as a part of the syllabus. It would be helpful for final oral recordings to be sent by USB pen, rather than CDs be sent which are subject to damage or breakage during postage.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/21
Unseen

Key messages

- As candidates address areas suggested in the bullet points, those who can link comments to their exploration of the question are likely to be more successful overall. Those who methodically work their way through the bullet points alone without reference to the question tend to offer a more general appreciation of the text, forgetting about the key word(s) in the question itself.
- Candidates who integrate comments on form and structure into their discussion are generally more successful when they link their remarks to the ways in which these elements add to points made in response to the question.
- There is no automatic reward for identifying specific features, such as simile, metaphor, juxtaposition, etc. Comments on these features work best when they are used to explore the ways in which the writer is using these techniques for a particular effect.
- References from the text, embedded within a sentence, suggest a greater focus on the quotation as an illustration of effects created. Those who copy out lengthy quotations followed by ‘This shows ...’ tend to lose sight of exactly how the reference demonstrates their point. Particularly unsuccessful are quotations with the ‘middle’ part missing, replaced by ellipsis; candidates should directly quote the language they are commenting on.

General comments

In general, engagement with the materials was enthusiastic. Many responses demonstrated a breadth and depth of understanding. In both components, a substantial majority of candidates chose the poem in **Question 1** over the prose passage in **Question 2**.

Some responses could have benefitted by covering the material more completely, particularly in the prose passage. In some cases, only part of a passage was explored and, though this can be sufficiently detailed to achieve good marks, taking time to plan full answers lends scope for even greater rewards.

Where any misreading or wayward misinterpretation of the poems was in evidence, it appeared to be the result of a rushed reading. It is always worth stressing that time spent on a careful reading can pay dividends. It can be very useful to briefly summarise the content of a poem, or passage, before moving on to closer exploration of language. This demonstrates a level of competent understanding of the material, upon which to build comment relating to the key words in the question. Sometimes when candidates try to focus only on the techniques used, they are likely to overlook or misread what is being communicated in the text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

‘The Moment’

How does the poet vividly convey to you the ideas about the relationship between humans and nature?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- what the poet feels about owning a home or land
- the words and images the poet uses to describe nature
- the impact the final stanza has on you (from ‘No, they whisper...’).

This option was chosen more frequently than **Question 2**. Candidates generally engaged well with the emotional impact of the poem, seeing the pride, satisfaction, and arrogance in the first stanza, followed by the reactions of Nature in the second and third stanzas. The response to the first stanza determined how the other two stanzas were analysed, with candidates mostly seeing the response of Nature as a deserved reprimand and engaging in some very productive discussion of contemporary issues (such as global warming and deforestation). That said, there were several responses in which candidates' focus slipped wholly from the poem into consideration of these issues and their ecological consequences: loss of animal habitats and extinctions.

Only a few responses made something of the title, attempting to consider the significance of 'The Moment' and what it might stand for. While some saw the poet's view of 'The Moment' of realising ownership as being the inevitable 'hubristic' human's eye-view of the world and their place in it, some regarded the poet as presenting the 'moment' as being the point from which Nature gives its own viewpoint, since the natural world is given a perspective and a voice. Either emphasis provided ample scope to evaluate the poet's use of language. Many picked up on the use of the word, 'own', in *I own this*, as signifying dominance over the landscape, which is further emphasised by the sequence of listed nouns of increasing size (*room/house, half-acre, square mile, island, country*), which one candidate described as 'sounding like someone gobbling something up'. This was paralleled by the *climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming*, of the final stanza, cited as a powerful technique for painting an image of the way in which human beings 'always have to do more and get more'. Many discussed the poet's presentation of humankind's sense of having the right to work hard, travel the globe, settle down, and feel vindication in possessing a piece of land, a home.

Most candidates pointed out the forcefulness of describing trees as personified by the way they *unloose/their soft arms*, which are soft as a mother's nurturing arms are soft. The trees withdraw their care; they are 'disappointed in us'. Candidates who had discussed the use of the words *I own this*, contrasted that tone with the way in which the trees pull away from their embrace of humanity, which seems to create the image of humanity's loss, perhaps making humanity appear suddenly more like a victim than a victor.

Some candidates struggled with the imagery of birds having 'a language', with some arguing that language is a cornerstone of civilisation, and civilised life is threatened if 'man works against nature'. Many left out reference to *the cliffs fissure and collapse*; those who included it regarded it as either a sign that the whole natural order was being overturned, or as showing the way in which Nature crumbled beneath the homes that people have made, bringing destruction. Many referenced the simile of *the air moves back from you like a wave/and you can not breathe* as a very vivid way of conveying the seriousness of human behaviour, since we are all reliant on Nature to provide us with clean air to breathe: 'without it we will suffocate'.

Many candidates lingered over *whisper* as used to describe Nature's voice. It contrasts with the human voice in the first stanza and in the *proclaiming* two lines below. This contrast suggests 'that men and nature are at war with each other', with humans as the aggressors planting flags of ownership, where Nature speaks of belonging, and of humans being dependent upon Nature rather than Nature being dependent upon people. There was some very good analysis of the last two lines of this second stanza, particularly where candidates considered that air and water are natural and unstoppable elements.

The strongest answers were able to explore language and imagery in detail. Some good responses discussed the significance of the poet using the word *voyage* in stanza one, and the way that it emphasised the *many years of hard work* with implications of a long and arduous distance travelled. Many commented on the way in which the final stanza pointedly contradicted the first from the outset: *I own this – You own nothing*.

Most of the stronger responses recognised the structure of the poem and wrote about the shifts in tone and perspective in each stanza, the best underlining the significance of the 1st/2nd person plural in stanza 1, the 2nd person in stanza 2 and what some found 'sinister' about the last stanza beginning with the 3rd person *they whisper*. Some candidates commented on the use of short sentences in the final stanza, as opposed to the long flow of the enjambment of the one long sentence that moves from the beginning, through the first and second stanzas. It was argued that this creates a plain but effectively abrupt tone of definite assertiveness from Nature that is reinforced by the repeated 2nd person pronoun. The reprimand is firm, even angry, but whispered, and therefore oddly gentle, 'like that of a parent to an unruly child'.

Question 2

'Dorotea's family moving home'

How does the writer vividly convey Dorotea's thoughts and feelings?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- Dorotea's reaction to the news that they are moving
- the descriptions of her parents
- the contrast between her life before the move and the way she sees her future.

Many candidates seemed to relate to Dorotea and her way of trying 'to be invisible' or 'anonymous', walking *with her head down* trying to *blend in, look down, be nobody*. Several candidates speculated on the reasons behind this behaviour, arguing that Dorotea must have 'low self-esteem', that she must feel 'embarrassed' to be the janitor's daughter; that being a janitor's daughter meant that the family were of a low socio-economic class which made her want to 'disappear' in front of her schoolmates. While this could be argued to fall into the realms of interpretation, some weaker responses went further in weaving complicated back-stories for the character which were inventive. A general observation would be that candidates could be more alert to the point beyond which interpretation of a text strays too far into unsubstantiated speculation.

Stronger candidates noted that the maps that Dorotea tacks onto her bedroom walls demonstrate that she has long dreamt of all the other possible places in the world where she might ultimately escape to get away from her present life in Ohio, and the way in which the use of staccato phrasing transmits a lot of information about Dorotea in the first paragraph without using a great many words.

Reactions to the way Dorotea responds to her father's plan to move them to Maine were divided between those who felt she *holds her breath, counts to twenty* because she was fearful and nervous, and those who felt this rather demonstrated her excitement at the prospect of a 'fresh start'. One candidate pointed out that Dorotea's father, especially as an immigrant, is responding to the American Dream, 'characterised by taking whatever chances you can get'. Some were confused by there being no inverted commas for the father's speech, but the majority took this in their stride.

Some candidates pointed out the way in which Dorotea's question, *Shipbuilding?* shows that she is suspicious, perhaps even cynical, about her father's plan, when she knows that he has never *owned, rented or mentioned any kind of boat*. Stronger candidates picked up on the way that a single word can be used to indicate a character's reactions. Here, it almost makes it seem as if Dorotea is the more adult, the one more likely to point out flaws in the idea, yet she has to remain silent because she is the child. Several candidates argued that the way in which she wonders to herself about her father's use of the word *us* indicated that she feels grieved that she has not been consulted, and that perhaps it implies that her mother has not been consulted either. One candidate pointed out that the use of the word, *watches*, in *Dorotea watches the door shut behind him*, acts to slow the pace of the scene, as we watch her watching and thinking about how unlikely it all is, which adds to the sense that she is completely sceptical and 'seems to be more knowing, anticipating possible disaster'.

Only one candidate commented on the use throughout of the present tense narration, and the way that it makes everything seem immediate, 'as if it's happening as you watch it, in a very cinematic way'.

Dorotea's rush to look up Harpswell in her atlas, the description that personifies it as *a tiny green finger pointing at blue*, and her attempt to picture Maine, with *petal-blue water packed with fish* all point to her being more excited than nervous at the idea of moving. Most candidates found it very powerful that she imagines herself anew, as *Nueva Dorotea, a barefoot girl with a coconut necklace*, which most felt was a very positive prospect, though some were concerned that she might be setting herself up for a terrible disappointment. Some noted that her imagined new persona seemed exotic, as if she were going to a tropical island, and a few candidates compared Dorotea to Dorothy in 'The Wizard of Oz', being 'blown away to a mysterious faraway land'. Some commented on the renewed use of short phrases - *New house, new town, new life* - which 'might be the author trying to write how she thinks'. Generally, candidates speculated that Dorotea's thoughts about her parents led them to believe that she was not close to either of them, especially not to her mother. Many noted that she seems to be set apart from both, even when they are in the car together, as if she is observing them all the time, 'as if she does not trust them or what they might do'. Some candidates were perturbed by the description of her mother as having *lips curled above her chin like two rain-drowned earthworms*, seeing this as the way you might 'describe a monster'. The fact that her mother is described as never having been *all for anything* makes her sound like a 'cheerless character'. Some candidates linked Dorotea's apparently being quite distanced from her parents to the way she is described as 'friendless and alone', as she *tells nobody and nobody asks* her about her leaving town. She seems to think that her father is nervous about the new future they are moving into, as he

drives *empty-eyed, knuckles white on the wheel*, and her mother is *tensed as if bound in a hundred iron bands*. Most were able to cite the use here of simile and metaphor and the way that these descriptions increase the feeling of tension in the car.

Dorotea seems to be heading for a better life, where the sun is personified as flinging *a trail of spangles to her* in welcome. She *feels certain there will be porpoises*. Many candidates contrasted this with the girl we see at the beginning, in *a brown cardigan...cheap sneakers, never lipstick*. A number of candidates noted the contrast in colours that is presented. The new life is associated with blue and green as opposed to the brown 'nondescript' life of the janitor's daughter.

Few responses included much comment on the final paragraph other than the first sentence in which Dorotea is looking at her mother to see her reaction to the ocean. Those who attempted to go further remarked that it demonstrated how the mother had a difficult experience of coming to the United States, 'which must have shaped her whole character'.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/22
Unseen

Key messages

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1

'Imitations'

Explore how the poet strikingly portrays relationships between fathers and sons.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the way the poet describes his son

- the way the poet describes his feelings
- the impact the final stanza has on you (from 'And I stare...').

This question was a popular choice and all candidates engaged strongly with the scene presented in the poem: a Father's reflections on his relationship with a teenage son provoking him into thoughts about his relationship with his own father. Many candidates were able to engage well with familiar ideas about a Father's pride in his child and conflicts between parents and adolescent children.

Many responses worked through the poem chronologically, addressing the different focus of each stanza: the first setting the scene, the second on the Father's observations of his son, and the third on the Father's reminiscence of his own parent. Stronger responses commented on the effects of the opening sentence: its three phrases punctuated with commas creating a slow pace and allowing the reader to picture the scene. Many candidates were uncertain in their interpretation of *The other side of the glass*, thinking that the poet is indicating that Father and Son are standing one on each side of the glass (rather than giving the view of the garden beyond the glass). This misunderstanding led some candidates astray and demonstrates the importance of careful reading.

Many responses noted that the scene outside, with its contrast of wintry snow and the *surprised April* of springtime, echoes the contrast between the older and the younger man sitting inside. Most candidates explored the description of the son as *an approximate man*, with stronger responses arguing that this supports the Father's view of his sixteen-year-old son as being 'an apprentice adult'. This was generally linked to the tripling of the metaphoric images in *He is my chameleon, my soft diamond, my deciduous evergreen*. The son being like a *soft diamond* was generally well-explored as an oxymoron, indicating that the son held dual qualities of apparent exterior toughness and inner vulnerability. Since diamonds are precious stones, the reference to the stone here expresses just how much the father values his son. Some linked the oxymoron of 'softness' to the way that the son is still malleable.

The phrase, *deciduous evergreen* was often ignored, suggesting that its inferences were less well understood. Stronger responses argued that the father-son relationship was 'evergreen' whilst the son would 'shed, various versions of himself' as he grew older.

Weaker responses were less able to completely link in the reference to the chameleon, other than repeating the definition of the gloss. Some suggested that the poet might be referring to the way in which the Father feels his son brings colour into his life. Stronger responses argued that the chameleon is both the same as, and different to, its surroundings, in the way that the son is both different to and similar to his Father, observing that the son is still changing shape and his metaphoric 'colours' as he continues to mature.

Many candidates referred to the imagery in the second stanza - of the Father observing his son as he listens to music - as indicative of the Father reflecting that he is 'drifting apart' from his son, not being sure of the music he's listening to or what he's thinking about, and observed how this is typical of parents and teenage children. Many responses missed commenting on the image of the *bending window*, but one candidate suggested 'The image is rather like a snow-globe of their relationship with the snow falling around the house'.

One strong response discussed the emphasis on eyes in the poem: 'The poet juxtaposes *'And I stare'* and *'eyes half closed'*. The contrast displays the care that the father has for his son. The son having his eyes half closed and the father staring could convey how the father always looks out for his carefree son. Or the idea of eyes could suggest the blind love that they have for each other'.

Stronger responses commented on the connotations of the weather beyond the window. These described the sudden gusting of what might be blossom or more snow (*despite a sky half blue*), with suggestions that this draws emphasis to the contrast between the Father and son, between the 'blue-sky optimism of youth' and the 'melancholy or wintry thoughts of the Father'. It was often suggested that the poet was using pathetic fallacy to point towards the cyclical or seasonal idea of the Father-son relationship from one generation to another.

Many candidates struggled productively with some of the images presented in the final stanza, as the poet's thought moves on to a 'flashback', like 'a prayer' or 'vision', in which the Father's mind is cast back to when he was the same age as the son and standing with his own father looking out through the glass. Some candidates thought that the Father's feeling of being *elsewhere* must refer to his death, along with speculations that he then dreamed of being reunited with his own Father in Heaven. Most candidates appeared to struggle with *his high breath, my low breath*, seeing this as a reference to the quality or strength

of a younger person's breathing, as contrasted to the slower breathing of an older person. They were, however, able to link this idea to the Father regretting that his son might grow even further apart from him, as they both age.

The majority of responses regarded the imagery of the two butterflies that appear to hold onto each other as a hopeful sign that Father and son would always enjoy a powerful bonding. Many wrote of the positive symbolism of butterflies.

There were very few responses which made mention of the poem's title, 'Imitations', and how it related to the Father's view of his relationship to his own son, and, looking backward, to the relationship he had with his father. Those who did explore this were able to make valuable points about the poet pointing towards a cycle of life, in which 'sons become fathers, on and on into the future', and how their view in both directions can take a 'melancholic' or 'bittersweet' tone. Stronger responses were able to begin to explore the kind of 'imitation' being suggested; how to 'imitate' can differ from to 'duplicate,' and how nature can appear to imitate, 'echo', or 'repeat', linking this to the cycle in nature's seasons and in human reproduction or genes.

Generally, candidates missed the opportunity to comment on the poem's structure and form. Many noted instances of enjambment, and the use of commas, where they might have more fruitfully discussed the poet's choice of an unsystematic rhyme scheme. Where candidates tried to include comments on the poem's structure, they generally struggled to make the connection between structure and meaning: 'Throughout this section the narrator has used enjambment to create a smooth flow to the poem which further helps the reader to truly understand the narrator's relationship with his son'.

All candidates made some thorough evaluation of the poem with evident enthusiasm and were obviously engaged with the description of the Father – Son relationship.

Question 2

'Nineteenth century passageway in Paris'

How does the writer vividly convey the atmosphere of the passageway?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the description of the passageway and shops
- the descriptions of the people
- the way the evening is described in the final paragraph (from 'In the evening, the arcade...').

This text is replete with descriptive language, which gave a great deal of scope for candidates to explore imagery and atmosphere. Some expressed interest in the passage as a picture of life in 19th century Paris for the poorer part of that fashionable society.

Addressing the first bullet point, many candidates described how the narrowness of the dark passageway creates an atmosphere that is, at best, uninviting or, at worst, 'claustrophobic'. The *yellowish, worn stones* indicate that the alley has not been maintained well and is 'not very clean'; possibly even unsafe, since worn stones could cause someone to trip. The odour and the dirt on the glass were also cited as indicators that this is a place that is unappealing and unclean. The personification of the shops which *exhale the damp air of cellars* was noted, along with the shops being *flattened, grey with dust, full of darkness, gloomy holes*. The *greenish reflections* cast by the *little panes of the shop windows* drew some to suggest that this description has a Gothic style, presenting the passageway as a 'sinister', 'eerie' or 'haunting' place 'of foreboding'.

The people are *weird figures*, oddly suspicious of anyone who pauses to try and look into their establishments. One response explored how the woman selling costume jewellery, which is generally cheap, *delicately* places it in a deceptively opulent setting - *a bed of blue velvet at the bottom of a mahogany box* - which might suggest she is trying to make customers believe the wares are worth more than they are.

It was noted that the passageway is described as a place where those passing through it do not want to linger. There are a variety of people passing through, but they *march briskly straight ahead*, and the sound of their hurrying footsteps *rings out all day long*. Many observed that the author emphasises that *No one speaks, no one stops*, with a repeating style that reinforces the imagery of a place where people feel they just want to move on through as quickly and as anonymously as possible. The people are all *speeding*

past...with downcast eyes without any thought to the shops or their wares. It was noted that there is an oddity in shopkeepers who are suspicious of anyone who stops to look in through their windows.

The description of the arcade in the evening is dominated by the heavy lanterns which lend the area some illumination; most candidates commented that, even with the lanterns, there are *only patches of yellowish light...pale circles of luminescence...that shimmer and appear to vanish from time to time*, which means that the passageway remains *in meagre illumination*. The fact that the author has described it as a possible *hiding place for cutthroats* that might be hiding in the *great shadows* increases the atmosphere of tension and 'malevolence'. The shops are *holes with dinghy windows*. The shopkeepers 'seem unconcerned that no one really wants to buy anything'.

The most ambitious and thoughtful writing was seen in commentary on the final bullet point, where many candidates wrote perceptively about the imagery of light and dark. There were also some interesting and perceptive thoughts about the evening portrayal of the woman selling costume jewellery. Some recognised the trickery in the way the synthetic light could make cheap jewellery seem to be of high value by appearing to cover it *with glimmering stars*. Some candidates thought the image of the old woman with her hands wrapped in her shawl at the end of the text showed hope and warmth, where some recognised that the old woman must sit there in the cold and dark, through poverty.

The strongest responses explored the narrative voice in the text, the use of second person, present tense *if you follow it...you find the Passage...you can see...* in the manner of a guided tour, as if 'the writer is taking us through the place'. Some identified the significance of the narrator's authoritative voice giving warnings about not lingering in the alleyway and especially at night. One candidate referred to the 'mapping' nature of the description, and how it was almost like a 'movie' where 'the camera pans and zooms in on the detail in places'.

Some weaker responses focused largely on the first bullet point, which left them little time to comment fully on the whole text. The weakest responses were those where commentary lapsed into simpler paraphrase and large sections of the passage were copied out in quotation. Most were able to work their way through a chronological evaluation of the description with clear links to the ways in which the author conveys atmosphere.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/23
Unseen

Key messages

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- the words and images the poet uses to describe nature
- the impact the final stanza has on you (from 'No, they whisper...').

This option was chosen more frequently than **Question 2**. Candidates generally engaged well with the emotional impact of the poem, seeing the pride, satisfaction, and arrogance in the first stanza, followed by the reactions of Nature in the second and third stanzas. The response to the first stanza determined how the other two stanzas were analysed, with candidates mostly seeing the response of Nature as a deserved reprimand and engaging in some very productive discussion of contemporary issues (such as global warming and deforestation). That said, there were several responses in which candidates' focus slipped wholly from the poem into consideration of these issues and their ecological consequences: loss of animal habitats and extinctions.

Only a few responses made something of the title, attempting to consider the significance of 'The Moment' and what it might stand for. While some saw the poet's view of 'The Moment' of realising ownership as being the inevitable 'hubristic' human's eye-view of the world and their place in it, some regarded the poet as presenting the 'moment' as being the point from which Nature gives its own viewpoint, since the natural world is given a perspective and a voice. Either emphasis provided ample scope to evaluate the poet's use of language. Many picked up on the use of the word, 'own', in *I own this*, as signifying dominance over the landscape, which is further emphasised by the sequence of listed nouns of increasing size (*room/house, half-acre, square mile, island, country*), which one candidate described as 'sounding like someone gobbling something up'. This was paralleled by the *climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming*, of the final stanza, cited as a powerful technique for painting an image of the way in which human beings 'always have to do more and get more'. Many discussed the poet's presentation of humankind's sense of having the right to work hard, travel the globe, settle down, and feel vindication in possessing a piece of land, a home.

Most candidates pointed out the forcefulness of describing trees as personified by the way they *unloose/their soft arms*, which are soft as a mother's nurturing arms are soft. The trees withdraw their care; they are 'disappointed in us'. Candidates who had discussed the use of the words *I own this*, contrasted that tone with the way in which the trees pull away from their embrace of humanity, which seems to create the image of humanity's loss, perhaps making humanity appear suddenly more like a victim than a victor.

Some candidates struggled with the imagery of birds having 'a language', with some arguing that language is a cornerstone of civilisation, and civilised life is threatened if 'man works against nature'. Many left out reference to *the cliffs fissure and collapse*; those who included it regarded it as either a sign that the whole natural order was being overturned, or as showing the way in which Nature crumbled beneath the homes that people have made, bringing destruction. Many referenced the simile of *the air moves back from you like a wave/and you can not breathe* as a very vivid way of conveying the seriousness of human behaviour, since we are all reliant on Nature to provide us with clean air to breathe: 'without it we will suffocate'.

Many candidates lingered over *whisper* as used to describe Nature's voice. It contrasts with the human voice in the first stanza and in the *proclaiming* two lines below. This contrast suggests 'that men and nature are at war with each other', with humans as the aggressors planting flags of ownership, where Nature speaks of belonging, and of humans being dependent upon Nature rather than Nature being dependent upon people. There was some very good analysis of the last two lines of this second stanza, particularly where candidates considered that air and water are natural and unstoppable elements.

The strongest answers were able to explore language and imagery in detail. Some good responses discussed the significance of the poet using the word *voyage* in stanza one, and the way that it emphasised the *many years of hard work* with implications of a long and arduous distance travelled. Many commented on the way in which the final stanza pointedly contradicted the first from the outset: *I own this – You own nothing*.

Most of the stronger responses recognised the structure of the poem and wrote about the shifts in tone and perspective in each stanza, the best underlining the significance of the 1st/2nd person plural in stanza 1, the 2nd person in stanza 2 and what some found 'sinister' about the last stanza beginning with the 3rd person *they whisper*. Some candidates commented on the use of short sentences in the final stanza, as opposed to the long flow of the enjambment of the one long sentence that moves from the beginning, through the first and second stanzas. It was argued that this creates a plain but effectively abrupt tone of definite assertiveness from Nature that is reinforced by the repeated 2nd person pronoun. The reprimand is firm, even angry, but whispered, and therefore oddly gentle, 'like that of a parent to an unruly child'.

Question 2

'Dorotea's family moving home'

How does the writer vividly convey Dorotea's thoughts and feelings?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- Dorotea's reaction to the news that they are moving
- the descriptions of her parents
- the contrast between her life before the move and the way she sees her future.

Many candidates seemed to relate to Dorotea and her way of trying 'to be invisible' or 'anonymous', walking *with her head down* trying to *blend in, look down, be nobody*. Several candidates speculated on the reasons behind this behaviour, arguing that Dorotea must have 'low self-esteem', that she must feel 'embarrassed' to be the janitor's daughter; that being a janitor's daughter meant that the family were of a low socio-economic class which made her want to 'disappear' in front of her schoolmates. While this could be argued to fall into the realms of interpretation, some weaker responses went further in weaving complicated back-stories for the character which were inventive. A general observation would be that candidates could be more alert to the point beyond which interpretation of a text strays too far into unsubstantiated speculation.

Stronger candidates noted that the maps that Dorotea tacks onto her bedroom walls demonstrate that she has long dreamt of all the other possible places in the world where she might ultimately escape to get away from her present life in Ohio, and the way in which the use of staccato phrasing transmits a lot of information about Dorotea in the first paragraph without using a great many words.

Reactions to the way Dorotea responds to her father's plan to move them to Maine were divided between those who felt she *holds her breath, counts to twenty* because she was fearful and nervous, and those who felt this rather demonstrated her excitement at the prospect of a 'fresh start'. One candidate pointed out that Dorotea's father, especially as an immigrant, is responding to the American Dream, 'characterised by taking whatever chances you can get'. Some were confused by there being no inverted commas for the father's speech, but the majority took this in their stride.

Some candidates pointed out the way in which Dorotea's question, *Shipbuilding?* shows that she is suspicious, perhaps even cynical, about her father's plan, when she knows that he has never *owned, rented or mentioned any kind of boat*. Stronger candidates picked up on the way that a single word can be used to indicate a character's reactions. Here, it almost makes it seem as if Dorotea is the more adult, the one more likely to point out flaws in the idea, yet she has to remain silent because she is the child. Several candidates argued that the way in which she wonders to herself about her father's use of the word *us* indicated that she feels grieved that she has not been consulted, and that perhaps it implies that her mother has not been consulted either. One candidate pointed out that the use of the word, *watches*, in *Dorotea watches the door shut behind him*, acts to slow the pace of the scene, as we watch her watching and thinking about how unlikely it all is, which adds to the sense that she is completely sceptical and 'seems to be more knowing, anticipating possible disaster'.

Only one candidate commented on the use throughout of the present tense narration, and the way that it makes everything seem immediate, 'as if it's happening as you watch it, in a very cinematic way'.

Dorotea's rush to look up Harpswell in her atlas, the description that personifies it as *a tiny green finger pointing at blue*, and her attempt to picture Maine, with *petal-blue water packed with fish* all point to her being more excited than nervous at the idea of moving. Most candidates found it very powerful that she imagines herself anew, as *Nueva Dorotea, a barefoot girl with a coconut necklace*, which most felt was a very positive prospect, though some were concerned that she might be setting herself up for a terrible disappointment. Some noted that her imagined new persona seemed exotic, as if she were going to a tropical island, and a few candidates compared Dorotea to Dorothy in 'The Wizard of Oz', being 'blown away to a mysterious faraway land'. Some commented on the renewed use of short phrases - *New house, new town, new life* - which 'might be the author trying to write how she thinks,'

Generally, candidates speculated that Dorotea's thoughts about her parents led them to believe that she was not close to either of them, especially not to her mother. Many noted that she seems to be set apart from both, even when they are in the car together, as if she is observing them all the time, 'as if she does not trust them or what they might do'. Some candidates were perturbed by the description of her mother as having *lips curled above her chin like two rain-drowned earthworms*, seeing this as the way you might 'describe a monster'. The fact that her mother is described as never having been *all for anything* makes her sound like a 'cheerless character'. Some candidates linked Dorotea's apparently being quite distanced from her parents to the way she is described as 'friendless and alone', as she *tells nobody and nobody asks* her about her leaving town. She seems to think that her father is nervous about the new future they are moving into, as he

drives *empty-eyed, knuckles white on the wheel*, and her mother is *tensed as if bound in a hundred iron bands*. Most were able to cite the use here of simile and metaphor and the way that these descriptions increase the feeling of tension in the car.

Dorotea seems to be heading for a better life, where the sun is personified as flinging *a trail of spangles to her* in welcome. She *feels certain there will be porpoises*. Many candidates contrasted this with the girl we see at the beginning, in *a brown cardigan...cheap sneakers, never lipstick*. A number of candidates noted the contrast in colours that is presented. The new life is associated with blue and green as opposed to the brown 'nondescript' life of the janitor's daughter.

Few responses included much comment on the final paragraph other than the first sentence in which Dorotea is looking at her mother to see her reaction to the ocean. Those who attempted to go further remarked that it demonstrated how the mother had a difficult experience of coming to the United States, 'which must have shaped her whole character'.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/31
Set Text

Key messages

Successful responses:

- show a detailed knowledge of texts
- address the key words of the question explicitly
- substantiate their views with apt textual reference
- explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- rely on narrative or straightforward explanation rather than answer the question
- lack effective development of ideas
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely log or explain writers' techniques.

General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied. There were only a few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. The two most common problems arose from a lack of focus on the question set and a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points in **Section B** essay questions.

The strongest answers showed an extensive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Many candidates did take advantage of the opportunities afforded by having the extracts and poem printed in **Section A** to explore the detail of texts. The most successful responses to the **Section B** general essay questions demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text. Some candidates were able to recall and use with flair much direct quotation, which enabled them to explore in detail the ways in which writers achieve their effects. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation. Some responses lacked a close focus on the text and question, preferring instead to focus on extraneous background information.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish: these answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'strikingly', 'dramatic', 'powerful', 'vividly', 'sad'. The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by a writer's use of form, structure and language. There were, however, many responses that made only a cursory reference, and sometimes no reference at all, to these key words in questions. In some responses, candidates commented on words and logged a writer's use of devices but without relating their points to the question; this led to fragmented, under-developed writing.

In less successful responses, candidates sometimes embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. It was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the focus of the question. Candidates should be informed that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward; they should select relevant material from their knowledge to address the specific demands of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

More successful responses highlighted Shinji's lack of social skills: 'making such an effort' and 'sounded like a policeman'. Key points raised were that this moment was memorable since it records the first real meeting of Shinji and Hatsue, providing them with an opportunity to talk. Most responses commented on their obvious mutual attraction and their growing ease of communication. The most successful responses explored the innocence of Shinji's reaction to Hatsue's physical appearance and the growing sexual awareness, and attraction, it signified. Less successful responses tended to work through the extract with a few quotations supporting a generally narrative response.

Question 2

Most candidates worked through the extract, but only the most successful responses focused effectively on what it reveals of the two women. These responses contrasted Yerma's yearning for a child and Maria's fear and confusion. Yerma's considerable knowledge though never having a child was noted, as was her desperation to know how Maria became pregnant so soon after marriage. Few candidates understood Maria's comparison of the foetus' movements to a fluttering bird held in the hand. Many responses needed to analyse more closely the ways in which Lorca achieves his dramatic effects rather than just working through the extract offering straightforward explanations.

Question 3

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 4

The most successful responses were able to focus closely on both question and extract, often beginning with a brief introduction to contextualise the extract's relationship to the play as whole. Comparisons were drawn between Oedipus at the great doors at the start of the play, in all his splendour, and his pitiful appearance here with his eyes gouged out. Other comparisons were drawn between him and Tiresias, both blind and led by young boys. It was considered powerful, too, to see Oedipus maintaining his word that the murderer should be exiled. 'I am agony' and the extended metaphor of the captain of a ship were often explored. Less successful responses narrated the ending without addressing the key words of the question.

Question 5

A common interpretation was that this poem is about the oppressed lives of women who work all day, slaves to husbands and housework, for whom an evening of storytelling was the only thing to look forward to in their miserable lives. Many understood that the storyteller was dirty and slovenly and her cooking awful. Only the strongest responses understood that the storyteller was magical, to be looked forward to as they worked away, and even knowing the stories and endings, her talent was such, that she has them waiting in anticipation for the endings. It is important that interpretations of poems are grounded in, and supported by, the detail of the text.

Question 6

There were many excellent responses to this question and extract, with critical understanding of the tension and drama created by the boy in his stealing of the watermelon. There were some thorough responses, focused on the dramatic nature of the escapade and the way Deal builds the tension. In the strongest responses, considerable attention was given to the close analysis of language, structure and narrative viewpoint. Less successful responses worked through the extract, adopting narrative and explanatory approaches.

Section B

Question 7

Fewer answered this general essay question than the extract question on *The Sound of Waves*. Candidates tended to write a character profile missing the key word – the 'impact' of Chiyoko contribution to the novel.

Her gossip, jealousy and low self-confidence, thinking herself ugly, were generally noted, though only a very few explored the difficulties she and Yasuo created for Shinji and Hatsue's relationship.

Question 8

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 10

The dramatic irony was often well explored, and Oedipus's determination against all advice to stop the search was noted. The more successful responses traced his need to know of his past from the time he promises Thebes to find the murderer of Laius and to save the city, to his sending of Creon to the Oracle, and his questioning of Tiresias and ultimately both Jocasta and the shepherd. His epiphany at the mention of the crossroads and Jocasta's action 'Turned sharply' was noted in many responses. Less successful responses tended to narrate the plot, lacking focus on the key words 'growing awareness'. There was much reference to hubris and hamartia, though not always tailored to address the specific demands of the question.

Question 11

There were some perceptive responses which explored the difficulty in moving forward with life after loss, some seeing them as a warning about dwelling in the past. The most successful responses considered how the writers' methods created the tone and mood of loss and longing, referencing imagery such as the desert and autumn, repetition/refrain, sound patterning and structure. They appreciated the intimacy of voice and face in bringing lost ones alive to the speakers. Less successful responses were unclear as to the identity of the loved ones, whether they had died, or were able to provide an overview of the poem without either explicit references to techniques or supporting evidence.

Question 12

There were some insightful responses where candidates engaged fully with the text and task – the best showed an impressive recall of relevant textual detail, which supported their close and perceptive analysis. The nightmare preceding the journey was explored in detail, and other key aspects of this story of a young girl's transition from childhood to adulthood. These successful responses analysed closely the ways in which the writer achieves her effects in conveying 'powerful emotions'. Less successful responses narrated what they could recall of the story's plot, lacking sufficient textual detail to explore how powerful emotions are conveyed.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/32
Set Text

Key messages

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- address the key words of the question explicitly
- substantiate their views with apt textual reference
- explore closely the ways in which writers achieve their effects.

Less successful responses:

- have an insecure or limited knowledge of texts
- rely on narrative or straightforward explanation rather than answer the question
- lack effective development of ideas
- make assertions which are not substantiated
- merely log or explain writers' techniques.

General comments

There was much evidence that candidates had enjoyed the texts they had studied. There were only a few rubric infringements, and the majority of candidates divided their time well across their two answers for the paper. The two most common problems arose from a lack of focus on the question set and a lack of detailed, specific reference to support points in **Section B** essay questions.

The strongest answers showed an extensive knowledge of the text, with candidates skilfully incorporating concise quotations and/or indirect textual references to support their ideas. Many candidates did take advantage of the opportunities afforded by having the extracts and poem printed in **Section A** to explore the detail of texts. The most successful responses to the **Section B** general essay questions demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text. Some candidates were able to recall and use with flair much direct quotation, which enabled them to explore in detail the ways in which writers achieve their effects. In less successful responses, the absence of textual support led to writing that was overly dependent on assertion and explanation. Some responses lacked a close focus on the text and question, preferring instead to focus on extraneous background information.

The most successful responses tailored their material to the key words in the question from start to finish: these answers engaged directly with those words in questions designed to elicit personal responses to the writing, words such as 'strikingly', 'dramatic', 'powerful', 'vividly', 'sad'. The most convincing and perceptive responses sustained a critical engagement with the effects achieved by a writer's use of form, structure and language. There were, however, many responses that made only a cursory reference, and sometimes no reference, to these key words in questions. In some responses, candidates commented on words and logged a writer's use of devices but without relating their points to the question; this led to fragmented, under-developed writing.

In less successful responses, candidates sometimes embarked on a pre-learned list of points about characters or themes with little regard to the question. It was common to see paragraphs begin with 'Another theme is...', regardless of the focus of the question. Candidates should be informed that detailed knowledge on its own cannot achieve the highest reward; they should select relevant material from their knowledge to address the specific demands of the question set.

Comments on specific questions

The paper had a small candidature this session. The comments below are on the questions which candidates answered.

Section A

Question 1

There were many excellent responses engaging fully with the extract and question, with particular focus on the key word 'striking'. The most successful responses introduced the response with a little of the context of this formidable character and the obstacle he would be to the young couple's relationship. They explored the extract, carefully analysing the ways in which Mishima presented Terukichi's appearance and behaviour. His physique, determination and strength as well as his stubbornness, arrogance and violent reaction to the gossips, were all well documented. The extended metaphor of his feline qualities, a lion and king of the island, and the exploration of the language as he approached the youths ('without warning') were generally understood. Weaker responses tended to paraphrase or to quote without exploring the detail of the references.

Question 2

Most responses were able to comment on the significance of the moment but only the strongest responses addressed how Lorca made it 'dramatic'. Many responses relied on a narrative summary of the moment whereas stronger responses were able to address both key terms, 'dramatic' and 'significant', throughout their response. Most candidates recognised the significance of Victor as Yerma's only chance of having a child; arguing they were restrained by Catholic views on marriage as well as the social stigma around affairs. There was much that was dramatic in this final meeting between Yerma and Victor, including the sisters lurking in the shadows, and the arrival of Juan, but few responses explored these details. Successful candidates appreciated how the silhouette of the second sister-in-law created a dramatic impact on stage and on how the melancholic sound of the horns added to this.

Question 3

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 4

The repetition of the theme of sight and blindness, and Oedipus's inability to see the truth until he was blind, contrasted with Tiresias who was blind but could see, was a feature of many responses. Only the most successful responses engaged with the 'conflict' between these two characters and the ways in which it was dramatically conveyed, analysing the effectiveness of this moment as drama. These responses explored closely Oedipus's provocation of Tiresias as he tries to prevent the truth being aired and also the dramatic force of Oedipus's insults and offensive language. Less successful responses failed to engage with the dramatic impact of the extract; these responses needed to probe more closely the 'conflict' between Oedipus and Tiresias, instead of simply presenting an explanatory commentary on the extract. In less effective responses, candidates began by stating the general themes of the play rather than by engaging directly with the extract and question.

Question 5

There was some successful analysis of the poem, and most responses were able to address the question to some degree. The most successful commented on the impact of combining a formal 'report' with the sonnet form, and also recognised that the use of the pronoun 'You' at the very beginning of the poem was an effective way of getting the attention of the reader as well as relating to Wordsworth. Most were able to engage with the poet's use of language, with the strongest responses commenting on the combined impact of his use of enjambement and the phonetic impact of words such as 'dump' and 'sunk'. There was in the strongest responses some effective analysis of the line 'Poetry and piety have begun to fail', with some sensitive exploration of the loss of culture.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to comment to some degree on the imagery of Mrs Croft's 'snowy hair arranged like a small sack' but they often were unable to go beyond a paraphrase of this. Successful candidates were able to show an appreciation of how her fierceness was reflected in her speech: 'she commanded'; her behaviour in 'gripping' the sheet of paper; the brusqueness of her question 'You checked the lock?' Few commented on how her initial 'intoning' about the American Flag on the moon becomes a 'bellow', where she suddenly becomes alive. Few commented on her odd insistence that the narrator repeat the word 'splendid' and how he is both 'baffled' and 'insulted' by her request.

Section B

Question 7

There were some thorough responses to the relationship with some well-selected references that had been memorised to support a close analysis of the ways in which the developing relationship is conveyed. The key to the most successful responses was not just working through their relationship, from their first meeting, but in also focusing on how it 'developed' and the factors contributing to this. The innocence and purity of their relationship and developing feelings, closely linked to the themes of nature, island versus city life, the pernicious effect of gossip and other obstacles facing them were all generally explored well. Shinji's courageous behaviour during the storm, demonstrating his 'get up and go', raised him to heroic proportions, with many candidates delighted that the two characters would be able to marry. Less successful responses either provided an overview or narrative account of the relationship with limited textual support. Some responses digressed to comment extensively on Japanese culture and how Mishima wanted their relationship to symbolize what was happening to Japan. A desire to catalogue themes, such as nature, led to a similar loss of focus on Shinji and Hatsue.

Question 8

Successful responses moved beyond a description of women's lives and considered the development of conflict in the play around the lives of women. They commented on the ghost-like appearance of Juan's sisters and how they watched Yerma, keeping her a prisoner. They considered the impact of names, such as 'Yerma' meaning 'barren', or how other women were only referred to by their role, for example 'washerwoman', indicating their lowly status in Spanish society. Imagery, such as that of water to represent fertility, and stage lighting to represent the gradual darkening of Yerma's life, showed the devastating impact of society's expectations and of her marriage on Yerma. Less successful responses became dominated by social and historical context, moving away from the dramatic nature of the text and the ways in which the lives of women were strikingly portrayed. They provided a limited perspective, finding it hard to move beyond Yerma to other characters, such as the Washerwomen, Pagan Woman, Maria and Juan's sisters.

Question 9

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 10

Perceptive responses to this question appreciated what makes the ending dramatically powerful as an experience for an audience to witness on stage. They appreciated the impact of moments on realization on Oedipus and Jocasta and what extremities this drove them to. Many responses chose to structure their answers using Oedipus as the main focus of attention, contrasting the way Sophocles presents him at the beginning and end of the play, often exploring how and why he changes. Most commented on the dramatic irony of Oedipus's determination to find the murderer of Laius and the way in which initially he appeared to be the ideal king. They focused on the light and dark imagery and the fact that he was metaphorically blind to the truth and at the end he is literally blind. In some answers, however, this predominated to the exclusion of Jocasta, Creon or Tiresias and was referenced in a matter-of-fact way, with limited awareness of the horror of this and Jocasta's suicide. Although often lengthy, these less effective responses were not as insightful in terms of focusing on 'powerful'. Many used the terminology of Greek tragedy though only the best had a genuine sense of what makes the ending of the play tragic. Less successful responses leaned heavily on the extract from **Section A (Question 4)** and earlier sections of the play, often only directly referring to the ending in their final paragraph.

Question 11

Effective responses focused directly on the 'vivid' nature of the portrayal of the children including direct textual references which allowed them to explore the writer's methods. The majority understood the subtext - that the children were being exploited. The references which were most frequently cited in exploring attitudes to children were 'the children at the loom of another world' and 'they watch their flickering knots like television', comparing them with western children who have the leisure time to watch television. Frequent reference was made to the religious function of the carpets which the children were weaving with a range of interpretations of 'the children were hard at work in the school of days', successful responses understanding how they lacked access to education, which trapped them as weavers. Less successful responses took a narrative approach to the poem. Some were unable to include any direct textual references; this made their discussion of 'vivid' very difficult. These candidates struggled to identify the narrative perspective and thought that the children were weaving the carpets for enjoyment (their equivalent of western television) and so were unaware of the child labour aspect of the poem.

Question 12

There were only a few responses to this question, with the most successful directly focusing on how the wife's loneliness and isolation came from the changing nature of her marriage. These responses understood that both husband and wife had not appreciated the challenges that would come through the move to Egypt and, in particular, her difficulty with integrating into the culture. Many referenced her daughter being her 'treasure' and her 'trap', with the best exploring the language and implications this had for the wife. The imagery of the sandpiper being a bird that moves from country to country and the symbolism of the beach was used to explore the portrayal of the wife's experience of married life. Less successful responses tended to be very short and lacked pertinent textual references needed to support and develop their ideas. They often took a rather narrative approach or gave a general overview of the woman's situation. Whilst they could see that she was sad, these responses did not talk much about the marriage itself or consider how and why it had changed from being passionate and happy to empty and lonely. Few made any reference at all to the husband or what the story reveals of his experience of married life.

WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 0408/33
Set Text

Key messages

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

More successful responses highlighted Shinji's lack of social skills: 'making such an effort' and 'sounded like a policeman'. Key points raised were that this moment was memorable since it records the first real meeting of Shinji and Hatsue, providing them with an opportunity to talk. Most responses commented on their obvious mutual attraction and their growing ease of communication. The most successful responses explored the innocence of Shinji's reaction to Hatsue's physical appearance and the growing sexual awareness, and attraction, it signified. Less successful responses tended to work through the extract with a few quotations supporting a generally narrative response.

Question 2

Most candidates worked through the extract, but only the most successful responses focused effectively on what it reveals of the two women. These responses contrasted Yerma's yearning for a child and Maria's fear and confusion. Yerma's considerable knowledge though never having a child was noted, as was her desperation to know how Maria became pregnant so soon after marriage. Few candidates understood Maria's comparison of the foetus' movements to a fluttering bird held in the hand. Many responses needed to analyse more closely the ways in which Lorca achieves his dramatic effects rather than just working through the extract offering straightforward explanations.

Question 3

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 4

The most successful responses were able to focus closely on both question and extract, often beginning with a brief introduction to contextualise the extract's relationship to the play as whole. Comparisons were drawn between Oedipus at the great doors at the start of the play, in all his splendour, and his pitiful appearance here with his eyes gouged out. Other comparisons were drawn between him and Tiresias, both blind and led by young boys. It was considered powerful, too, to see Oedipus maintaining his word that the murderer should be exiled. 'I am agony' and the extended metaphor of the captain of a ship were often explored. Less successful responses narrated the ending without addressing the key words of the question.

Question 5

A common interpretation was that this poem is about the oppressed lives of women who work all day, slaves to husbands and housework, for whom an evening of storytelling was the only thing to look forward to in their miserable lives. Many understood that the storyteller was dirty and slovenly and her cooking awful. Only the strongest responses understood that the storyteller was magical, to be looked forward to as they worked away, and even knowing the stories and endings, her talent was such, that she has them waiting in anticipation for the endings. It is important that interpretations of poems are grounded in, and supported by, the detail of the text.

Question 6

There were many excellent responses to this question and extract, with critical understanding of the tension and drama created by the boy in his stealing of the watermelon. There were some thorough responses, focused on the dramatic nature of the escapade and the way Deal builds the tension. In the strongest responses, considerable attention was given to the close analysis of language, structure and narrative viewpoint. Less successful responses worked through the extract, adopting narrative and explanatory approaches.

Section B

Question 7

Fewer answered this general essay question than the extract question on *The Sound of Waves*. Candidates tended to write a character profile missing the key word – the 'impact' of Chiyoko contribution to the novel.

Her gossip, jealousy and low self-confidence, thinking herself ugly, were generally noted, though only a very few explored the difficulties she and Yasuo created for Shinji and Hatsue's relationship.

Question 8

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 9

There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.

Question 10

The dramatic irony was often well explored, and Oedipus's determination against all advice to stop the search was noted. The more successful responses traced his need to know of his past from the time he promises Thebes to find the murderer of Laius and to save the city, to his sending of Creon to the Oracle, and his questioning of Tiresias and ultimately both Jocasta and the shepherd. His epiphany at the mention of the crossroads and Jocasta's action 'Turned sharply' was noted in many responses. Less successful responses tended to narrate the plot, lacking focus on the key words 'growing awareness'. There was much reference to hubris and hamartia, though not always tailored to address the specific demands of the question.

Question 11

There were some perceptive responses which explored the difficulty in moving forward with life after loss, some seeing them as a warning about dwelling in the past. The most successful responses considered how the writers' methods created the tone and mood of loss and longing, referencing imagery such as the desert and autumn, repetition/refrain, sound patterning and structure. They appreciated the intimacy of voice and face in bringing lost ones alive to the speakers. Less successful responses were unclear as to the identity of the loved ones, whether they had died, or were able to provide an overview of the poem without either explicit references to techniques or supporting evidence.

Question 12

There were some insightful responses where candidates engaged fully with the text and task – the best showed an impressive recall of relevant textual detail, which supported their close and perceptive analysis. The nightmare preceding the journey was explored in detail, and other key aspects of this story of a young girl's transition from childhood to adulthood. These successful responses analysed closely the ways in which the writer achieves her effects in conveying 'powerful emotions'. Less successful responses narrated what they could recall of the story's plot, lacking sufficient textual detail to explore how powerful emotions are conveyed.