

Higher level (HL) essay

Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation

How well does the student demonstrate an understanding of the text and draw reasoned conclusions from implications in it?

How well are ideas supported by references to the text?

Marks	Description of level
1	The response demonstrates little understanding of the literal meaning of the text. References to the text are infrequent or are rarely appropriate.
2	The response demonstrates some understanding of the literal meaning of the text. References to the text are at times appropriate.
3	The response demonstrates an understanding of the literal meaning. There is a satisfactory interpretation of some implications of the text. References to the text are generally relevant and mostly support the candidate's ideas.
4	The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the literal meaning. There is a convincing interpretation of many implications of the text. References to the text are relevant and support the candidate's ideas.
5	The response demonstrates a thorough and perceptive understanding of the literal meaning. There is a convincing and insightful interpretation of larger implications and subtleties of the text. References to the text are well chosen and effectively support the candidate's ideas.

Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation

To what extent does the student analyse and evaluate how textual features and/or writer's choices shape meaning?

Marks	Description of level
1	The response is descriptive and/or demonstrates little relevant analysis of textual features and/or writer's choices.
2	The response contains some appropriate analysis of textual features and/or writer's choices, but is reliant on description.
3	The response demonstrates a generally appropriate analysis of textual features and/or writer's choices, with occasional insights.
4	The response demonstrates an appropriate and at times insightful analysis of textual features and/or writer's choices. There is a good evaluation of how such features and/or choices shape meaning.
5	The response demonstrates an insightful and convincing analysis of textual features and/or writer's choices. There is a very good evaluation of how such features and/or choices shape meaning.

Criterion C: Focus and organisation

How well organised, coherent and focused is the presentation of ideas?

Marks	Description of level
1	Little organisation is apparent. No discernible focus is apparent.
2	Some organisation is apparent. There is little focus.
3	The analysis is adequately organised in a generally coherent manner. There is some focus.
4	The analysis is well organised and mostly coherent. The analysis is adequately focused.
5	The analysis is effectively organised and coherent. The analysis is well focused.

Criterion D: Language

How clear, varied and accurate is the language?

How appropriate is the choice of register, style and terminology? ('Register' refers, in this context, to the student's use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and terminology appropriate to the commentary.)

Marks	Description of level
1	Language is rarely clear and appropriate; there are many errors in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction and little sense of register and style.
2	Language is sometimes clear and carefully chosen; grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction are fairly accurate, although errors and inconsistencies are apparent; the register and style are to some extent appropriate to the task.
3	Language is clear and carefully chosen with an adequate degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction despite some lapses; register and style are mostly appropriate to the task.
4	Language is clear and carefully chosen, with a good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are consistently appropriate to the task.
5	Language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are effective and appropriate to the task.