

May 2015 subject reports

Literature and Performance

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 12	13 – 26	27 – 43	44 – 56	57 – 69	70 – 82	83 – 100

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 7	8 – 15	16 – 22	23 – 26	27 – 31	32 – 35	36 – 40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As always, a wide variety of source material has been used as the starting point for performance.

Some schools are using very successful texts from a variety of genres; these texts, above all, lend themselves to theatrical performance. Some successful texts this year included: works by Calvino, Walter de la Mare and Heaney's *Beowulf*; short stories by Angela Carter, Grimms' fairy tales, poetry by Carol Ann Duffy. Texts also often can and should reflect the background and interests of students. Schools using challenging texts (such as *The Master and Margherita*) are to be applauded.

Less successful texts included those that are narrative heavy. Some of these are indeed texts of great literary merit (such as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy) but they do not lend themselves necessarily to transformation into performance of this style. Other texts (such as

Wilt) are also of doubtful merit in terms of literature and therefore do not lend themselves well to analysis of the literary techniques used by the author, which in turn means it is difficult to produce successful orals or do the analysis that leads to original performance. Non-fiction texts provided a highly unusual choice that was not entirely successful this time, but should not be discounted in future.

The problem that arises from highly narrative texts is that students then often get caught in the trap of trying to tell the entire novel in their performance, which is impossible and simply weakens the performance.

A note on poetry as a stimulus: a mixture of several poems was less successful, and weaker schools sometimes recited the poetry rather than transforming it.

The length of pieces is sometimes problematic. The Guide states that each candidate should perform for 5 minutes. This can, of course, include times within the performance when they are working collaboratively with other students (in fact ensemble work should be encouraged) but it should be possible for the teacher (original marker) and the moderator to see sufficient personal skills from each student. Equally problematic were overly long pieces which lost focus and dramatic tension.

There is definitely a problem with the oral part of this component in that some schools are allowing students to read their oral, which is not the purpose of the task and explicitly excluded in the Guide.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

As teachers and examiners we should continue to strive to make this central linking of the two disciplines work; in many ways this component and this task represent the essence of the course.

This criterion often shows commitment from the candidates. There was interesting work and some skilled staging with those groups who had enough control over their material to find laughter amid the general gloom of the textual choice. It is always good to see students engaging in irony since this argues for a more complex relationship to the material. By the same token, any form of humorous performance is good to see; there is a tendency towards the heavily dramatic which, when successful, is a delight; when less so, it strays quickly into melodrama.

In general the acting is getting better, particularly where students are taking risks and doing something different. This feature is especially evident when pieces show conviction and genuine engagement from candidates.

Weaker schools have a tendency in two directions: firstly, they may be far too tied to the narrative of the original and are not prepared to take risks in terms of interpretation. Secondly, the performances lack (or appear to lack) genuine, thoughtful preparation and so feel like skits, often giving the appearance of being performed ad lib with far too little awareness of physicality.

Criterion B

Moderators have largely to rely on the honesty of teachers here although sometimes performance, oral and notes do point towards less commitment than a teacher has rewarded. For instance, learning words is hardly a sign of anything but the most basic commitment.

Criterion C

Candidates generally perform well on this criterion, although they are often marked strictly by teachers. Orals are occasionally less successful in terms of structure.

Criterion D

Candidates should pay attention to the value of this criterion and address what it evaluates. Often, they lack the correct vocabulary to discuss the issues here adequately. Also, this can become a narrative, blow-by-blow discussion of process rather than a reflection on personal performance. Candidates should avoid 'we' here and concentrate on themselves unless discussing an ensemble part of the piece.

Criterion E

Performance in this criterion is by far the weakest. Candidates do not sufficiently address the actual literature itself. They need to be strongly aware of the specific features of the text itself (and this begins with detailed analysis), and they need to understand literary *and* theatrical terminology. Morals are not literary features!

Examples need to be provided from both the literature and the final performance piece. Once this has been covered carefully, the rationale is much easier to discuss successfully.

All the reasons for performance decisions should lie in the original literature, which needs to be well explained. For instance, allocating characters because you have 'three girls and a boy' is not a literary decision. A direct link is meant to be drawn between the author's decisions when writing a text and the candidates' decisions in performance; candidates need to discern and develop the link. Also, the grounds for choice are in the style of the text and hence its chosen medium in theatre: realism, expressionism, theatre of cruelty , etc.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Read the Guide and be sure that both teacher and students are fully aware of what each criterion requires.

Expose students to theatre wherever possible, and theatre not film. If actual access is an issue, there is a lot of theatrical work available free to view on the internet. The more students are exposed to performance the more options they will have.

Teachers should provide some guidance in the choice of text and get students to consider the viability of transforming the text into something an audience, perhaps even one unfamiliar with

the text, can discern as meaningful. In some cases the performances were largely inscrutable without first or subsequently hearing the oral presentation. Audience comprehension needs serious consideration.

Schools need to be aware of the space in which they are performing and filming, making the most of location and if there is no obvious space in a school that is conducive physically, make the effort to find an interesting space, and, more seriously, interesting uses for it. Be aware that any distractions on the film will draw the attention of the moderator and will lessen tension in the performance. Try to at least contain space, have a definite staging area and create the possibility for the ever useful (and symbolically important) black out and other simple lighting effects. Remembering, however, that the focus of the assessment is on performance not staging.

Further comments

Examiners continue to have problems with CDs and DVDs that do not work at all (performances or orals that cannot be read by any computer or other device) or that are of a poor quality. Memory sticks, flash/thumb drives are far more effective.

Schools need to pay serious attention to the quality of the audio and video recording. Sample performances should be audited before being sent. If the moderator cannot clearly hear and/or see what is being offered for performance, then moderation cannot succeed. The first order of business is clear identification (visually and aurally) of each candidate; this should occur at the beginning of the performance.

Most forms have been clearly and correctly completed but there are still a significant number of forms that are not. It is important that the teacher read the labels of each section with care. Often the box used to identify students in a piece has not been used helpfully. The other boxes, if filled in correctly, can assist the examiner by explaining how marks are achieved, but should not be used to describe the process.

Standard level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 17	18 - 20

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Forms were generally filled in appropriately. There was some evidence that candidates within centers had shared notes or sources, phrases from which cropped up in several candidates work. It is important that all candidates and centers are meticulous about citing sources and

avoiding inadvertent plagiarism. The word limit for this unit is 2000 words; candidates usually managed to meet this in the work, predictably weaker candidates found this more difficult. As is permitted, some candidates included pictures of their performance to illustrate their work. Sometimes this was helpful in conveying detail that would take considerable word length to convey. One center included a précis description of the adapted performance, but this should be in the body of the coursework itself. A few centers included a range of appendices – annotated scripts, rehearsal analysis, and evidence of practitioner application – whilst these may be beneficial to the pupils in the teaching process, they are unnecessary and cannot be considered as part of the allowed 2000 words for coursework.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of material submitted, including 8 different Shakespearean texts and 2 texts from Tennessee Williams. Other texts included *The Crucible*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Phaedra's Love*, *44.8 Psychosis*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Waiting for Godot*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Philadelphia Here I Come*, *The Three Sisters*, *Fences*, and *The Playboy of the Western World*. All of the plays were felt to be potentially suitable in terms of how they might meet the criteria, but it was evident that in some texts, or in the approach to their teaching, some candidates found it easier than others to address all criteria. A verbally enriched text offers clearer opportunities under Criterion A than a more spare and minimal play, a Becket or Williams play share fulsome stage directions as a common trait and this can mean that the candidate simply translates stage direction into stage action. It could be argued that this represents a diminishment of the task. This kind of text is problematic for this reason and teachers should be aware of this.

If a teacher with a candidature of over 20 candidates has all the candidates study the same text there is almost bound to be a lot of duplication. It is not the role of the examiner to comment on how classes are taught but it is certainly easier to reach viable assessments of candidates if 45 are not studying and attempting to dramatize a selection of about 7 passages from the same text! It was evident in addressing criterion A, for instance, that candidates found the richly metaphoric Shakespearean language and highly descriptive and symbolic language of Tennessee Williams easy to access and analyze. In addressing Criterion B, candidates often responded well to Shakespearean texts which gave them scope to be 'imaginative' in their realization, and often re-contextualization, of extracts in an interesting way. They seemed better able to demonstrate creative and conceptual linking, connecting language analysis to dramatic decisions, both performance and design, to create a holistic view of how the extract might be realized. Often in an attempt to be creative and imaginative candidates chose to apply (or misapply) a practitioner to the text or creatively adapt in such a way that called into question its appropriateness and effectiveness. Candidates need to read the rubric governing the assessment task carefully; this is not a transformation exercise. Care should be taken to avoid redundant listing of facts to no apparent purpose. The historical context for a play by Synge is far too complicated to be adequately covered in two sentences and such a commentary is rarely relevant to specific requirements of the task.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A was the weakest. A number of candidates gave no quotes or literary references to support interpretation. Some better candidates gave insight into characters, but with little support, leaving the examiner to infer literary analysis. Many candidates used quotation to locate a moment in the text or to describe how they acted that moment but the essay was too often a list of moments rather than a cohesive response to the task. The better candidates honed in on aspects of language, analyzing what they revealed about character and how they gave rise to a dramatic impulse and/or a performance choice. Only a few centers saw candidates grasp this as well as identifying specific literary features and how these informed the “page to stage” process. Effective examples included how: ellipsis led to a pregnant pause for dramatic irony; repeated use of exclamation revealed a character’s unstable mental state which was echoed in erratic movement; extended metaphor of snake-like imagery led to an archetypal performance; symbolism in the language was echoed by expressionistic action; and how pathetic fallacy in stage directions informed design. Other features included simile, onomatopoeia, repetition, listing, oxymoron, juxtaposition, colloquial language, the vernacular, contraction, informal language or slang. Some effectively honed in on the connotations of specific words. When discussing rhythm and meter (particularly Shakespearean iambic pentameter) some pupils were able to note its use with cogent analysis of what it revealed about character, but for many the discussion was at times tenuous and too often confused and uncertain.

In addressing Criterion B, pupils generally fared much better and there were very different approaches. The vast majority of candidates could offer quite detailed description of how they acted given lines, offering a range of performance indicators including use of space, posture, stance, gait, movement, mime, gesture, facial expression, voice (pitch, pace, volume, emphasis, pause). At this micro level, most pupils were able to state the effect of these decisions, albeit often in a rather vague manner. Fewer were able to relate how these decisions met their overall aims for the audience – be they stylistic, aesthetic or thematic. Overall the weakest candidates expended far too many words on narrative; describing only in general terms how they acted a role. Seemingly disconnected descriptions of set, costume or other design elements were offered in an arbitrary fashion. The tendency to focus solely on their own performance is understandable but where other actors are relevant (analysis of dialogue work for example) and where wider design and production aspects offer ways into their character dramatization they should be specifically referenced. The best candidates established, with a clear rationale, their dramatic intentions for the audience of the extract/s a whole; identified the style of performance; gave clear statements of intention for their character and their interaction with other characters; detailed how they would deliver this with a range of performance indicators linked to a precise consideration of design and its effects; and were able to evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions in respect of meeting their intended aims. As a general rule, candidates avoided identifying the style of performance they were going for although few departed from a naturalistic approach even if the text offered itself to less conventional readings. This was a limitation and tended to make the work of the examiner quite repetitious at times.

Criterion C was addressed well by most candidates who wrote in a generally accurate way. There is scope for candidates to improve their subject specific vocabulary. There was almost always a clear use of paragraphs. Candidates could structure their work better to address the

criteria. Establishing intentions based on literary analysis as a justification for characterization at the start of the essay was helpful as was pertinent contextual information, though equally redundant contextual information (repeated over 40 essays) was a test for the examiner. It was also helpful when centers who had creatively adapted texts in some way outlined this at the start. In a similar manner it is always important that candidates ensure that the character they are acting is nominated in the opening paragraph of the essay. Some of the better candidates used the conclusion as an opportunity to relate decisions back to their over-arching intentions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Some candidates recounted the rehearsal strategy they used in preparing their performance, (such as Stanislavski's emotion memory), at times losing considerable word count in demonstrating their knowledge of a technique or practitioner. This is not a good idea since it is almost invariably a way of moving away from the task. Occasionally a candidate was able to focus briefly on a particular rehearsal strategy making a clear and specific link to how this helped them realize a particular moment in their extract more effectively, but if this connection is not made, it would be best to avoid a digress on the rehearsal process. Some candidates elected to apply a practitioner to their text (such as Brecht or even Artaud). If it is felt that it is creatively appropriate to do this, a brief justification on why this is so with reference to both Brecht and the text studied is helpful. But becoming unduly distracted by this practitioner and giving lots of detail about their methods or background is detrimental both to the structure of the essay and rarely addresses the task. What is more important is the candidate's application of this practitioner at given moments in the text, convincing the examiner of the appropriateness of this application. The link between literary analysis and the resultant dramatic decisions taken by the candidate is the essence of this assessment task and anything that diffuses this relationship is usually detrimental to the overall response. To this end, when selecting texts for candidates, it would be helpful if centers could choose texts that lend themselves to clear identification of literary features, and that equally lend themselves to dramatically interesting interpretation.

Further comments

It was evident that some in some centers pupils had studied the whole text, prepared and performed a substantial extract of it in an ambitious way. Candidates with this level of commitment and engagement generally had more say, in more detail in their coursework. Their writing reflected their passion and their convictions and they were adept at exploring the relationship between the style of the passage/speech and their own performance. They had critiqued their performance, thought about their audience and their relationship to that audience both spatially and emotionally. Conversely, it was evident when candidates had skimmed or not really studied the whole play, and when candidates had done extract performances with de-contextualized views of characters that betrayed a shallow understanding of the play. Whilst centers need to be encouraged to get pupils to do adventurous work that shows imagination, as this does resonate well in the coursework and gives opportunity for maximum marks; centers need to be careful in encouraging dramatic ideas that are simply bizarre for the

sake of being different or clever. Re-invention or adaptation of texts requires a thorough knowledge of the text itself; and it may be that it is hard to do justice to both in the 2000 limit. Perhaps centers need greater clarity on the delineation between doing a series of linked extracts in an adventurous way; and creatively adapting the text to form an essentially new text, the latter is not advisable because it is not the assessment task.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 1	2 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 13	14 – 16	17 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates.

Candidates found it difficult to respond in a balanced way to the questions. The tendency to focus on one genre to the detriment of another was pronounced in some cases, arguably reflecting the way they had been taught or the articular preference of the teacher delivering the course. The training of teachers is a paramount concern.

2. The lack of common sense demonstrated by candidates when presenting their design and staging ideas was often a feature of the work. Candidates need to think carefully about what is practical and what is not. The theatre is not a cinema and rabbits do not respond to stage directions, nor do pythons. It is not easy to create whirlwinds on stage and forest fires can be complicated too. Generally apocalyptic solutions to the problem of despair (Q3) involved some gruesome proposals for staging centered on violence: torture and suicide being the popular variations on the theme with a liberal use of strobe lighting. This is not a computer game.

3. Terminology needs to be precise. Literary analysis which contextualises the novel stylistically should connect directly to staging and performance choices, not be an end in itself and candidates should appreciate that their precise theatrical terminology is designed to orientate the examiner. The vague approach many candidates take to the business of directing is matched only by their reluctance to disclose key information to the examiner. namely: the staging space, the preferred staging style, the intentions for the audience, their own position in relation to the action...

4. Pre-selection of scenes so that the examination becomes an exercise in reconciling two incongruities (the prepared answer) to (the actual question), is not recommended. Such attempts are so excruciating that they are almost always transparent and rarely convincing. It is disappointing that candidates refuse the opportunity to be original in the vain assumption that second-hand pre-arranged responses will do the trick.

5. The candidates often began with the best of intentions by addressing the question but too often either the complicated nature of their response or their failure to connect cause to effect resulted in their losing the thread of their argument. Q1 was particularly challenging in this respect.

6. Candidates found it difficult to think outside of obvious categories which led to a general sense that responses were more limited than they needed to be. In the stage worlds presented euphoria was invariably accompanied by bright lights, despair by darkness and there seemed no place at all for more nuanced responses. A focus on staging and design and a neglect of acting might explain this. Clichéd responses are the product of superficial assumptions and shallow thinking, many candidates were better than their responses allowed them to be, safe options should not be regarded as good practice. This is a creative task and the absence of original thought is a serious matter. Teachers and students need to take risks. They have the licence to imagine and only the responsibility to convey their imaginings in a coherent and plausible manner need give them pause.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared.

Candidates usually know the plot of the novels they have read and studied. They see how character and action function together, they understand motive. They appreciate themes and settings.

All of the above should be helpful to the assessment task. Candidates have an awareness of character on stage, (often on film but re-fitted for stage often ineffectually), costume is a design element they enjoy writing about, their understanding of lighting and sound is as sporadic as their use of it. They appear too often to believe that actors act only with their face. They have little appreciation of more nuanced aspects of performance: re-action, posture, silence, attention. Between these two clusters of genre understanding lie the questions they are given to respond to. It is therefore not surprising that the assessment task is addressed in an uneven and occasionally enlightening manner. How sustained these responses are is another matter. Few candidates manage to sustain the balancing act and those who do are markedly passionate and original in their approach to the matter. They have read the novel in a careful way that is conducive to what they will be required to "do" with it. They will have seen theatre before, indeed they may well have seen a lot of theatre, and they will have thought about it in relation to their text. For them the text will be a literary form which reflects styles of writing that they have a vivid engagement with. They will have thought seriously how these styles might be reflected by a staging that transfers their effects into another genre. The contemplation of this exercise will be an exciting experience, their imagination will be stimulated by the text and its performance.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions.

Q1: Many candidates chose this question and were successful in bringing their character on stage but less successful in demonstrating how that entry might alter the established stage world causing intrigue or surprise. The entry was often accompanied by all kinds of stage managed "effects" but rarely by anything as practical and simple and effective as acting. The neglect of acting was a grave issue indeed in much of the work, not only in Q1 but the focus on the entering character might certainly have focused more minds than it did on how the character acted and affected a change in the actions (acting) of those already on stage. Words like "intrigue" and "surprise" mean something but few candidates established this before proceeding.

Q2: The focus on the speech encouraged a level of specificity in the responses that was gainsaid a little by many candidates defining speech freely enough to include dialogue. Understandable and not in itself an error. The responses varied, once again a focus on speech (or dialogue) would argue for a concern for voice, the neglect of voice merely bears out the grave neglect of acting. It seems candidates are determined to write about sound and lighting of which they know little, in place of acting of which (having done at least a little through the course) they should know more. Novels with set pieces like "The Great Gatsby", "The Wasp Factory" "The Colour Purple" or "Of Mice and Men" were popular texts in this context, though if more was written about how Shug Avery spoke and less about how she looked, this examiner might have been more reconciled to the work.

Q3: The preferred way of dealing with this question was to treat either with despair or euphoria rather than both as the second part of the questions offered licence to do. The candidates who focused on despairing or euphoric trajectories for specific characters (Wilson in the concluding scenes in 'Gatsby) often wrote well and convincingly with plenty of textual references and some original staging ideas.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates.

1. Designate your staging space and the rationale for its use in the first paragraph.
2. Contextualize the chosen passage in time and space but also stylistically.
3. Ensure that literary analysis is clearly linked to staging and performance choices
4. Be simple and practical in staging, do not try to design or direct for a too many actors, look for ways of avoiding complications.
4. Always use embedded quotation from the text since this orientates the examiner and helps you to keep orientated within your argument.
5. Continually "work" the question: refer to it throughout the response, argue from it, even argue with it but do not avoid it.
6. Do not overdo the pre-planning, it is a natural response to any assessment task to try and anticipate it but be aware of the pitfalls of doing this to a point where you cannot think about the novel in any other way. Remember the questions will certainly not conform to exactly what you expect.
7. Teachers should refresh their own practice by avoiding repeating the same texts year on year. "Tracks", "The Colour Purple", "The Wasp Factory" are becoming repetitive and there is evidence that the work of previous candidates is used to supply exemplar material for the next generation. This is entirely reasonable but becomes questionable if the core text is the same. There was evidence that core descriptive terms had been learned by all candidates as there were repeated similarities in the way texts were described. Terms like "bildungsroman" appeared in the first paragraph of a succession of candidates all using the same text as their core. That this terminology was exactly the same as the previous year was disappointing.
8. Dare to be different, examiners do not appreciate programmed responses, they will reward original thought, after all this task is supposed to be based on this.
9. Avoid splitting texts into categories, once simple staging decisions have been made and design motifs established it is the acting that can provide the ambiguity and nuance that made the original texts so interesting.
10. The role of the narrator has to be thought out in the staged version. Narrative style, or point of view is a key feature rarely mentioned or taken into account by the candidates when staging.
11. Be careful of superimposing the specific design on the general. A blue wash followed by a

red spotlight is absurd. Too often there is little care given to the consistency of staging effects.

12. This a Language A course: language, words, their meaning and their sound and the actor's voice which enunciates them was almost entirely missing from the responses. The task begins and ends with language.

13. Audience is factored in but only on the assumption that if it is sitting around the stage it will be more intensely involved or if it is directly addressed it will be responsive and so on. This is not good enough. The lazy thinking in relation to how the proposal for staging will work with the audience can be quickly corrected by more frequent visits to the theatre for the students and a scheme of work which demands that they critically question the purpose of theatre.

Further comments

No short stories please. One centre used "Dubliners" by James Joyce and supplemented this oversight by choosing the shortest stories. This is an exercise which uses the novel as the core text.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 14	15 – 17	18 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There are a number of aspects where candidates performed quite satisfactorily, and even impressively in providing evidence of their study and appreciation of poetry. Choices for schools ranged widely, most frequently with the study of poets who originally write in English, but also providing some broader study as with Neruda and Dante. Older poetry as written by Donne, Wordsworth and Hopkins was complemented by the study of such poets as Carol Ann Duffy, Nikki Giovanni, Mary Oliver, Naomi Shahib Nye, Gwendolyn Brooks, Billy Collins and Charles Bukowski.

The suitability of the works was not always matched, however, by the best approaches to delivering critical coverage of them. Often the discussion in relation to the questions tended to be more in the direction of paraphrase and/or explication rather than close inspection of the particular stylistic choices made by the poets and how they were incorporated to convey the special angles and aesthetic aspects of the poems. Although the students often made clear that they understood the meaning the poets intended to convey and their particular approach to such matters as pessimism or hope or certitude, they were less inclined or able to show the connection between matters of content and those of form.

Another weakness noted by examiners, given that the poetry studied ranged over several centuries, was the failure to provide context and a sense of the terms that designate movements in literary history. 'Metaphysical' or 'Romantic' or 'Harlem Renaissance' are labels that are relevant to the particularities of some of the poetry offered in responses, but making connections between these terms and the actual poetry need to be included when the designations are invoked, rather than simply alluded to. On the other hand, making the lives and connections between Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes the leading focus of the discussion of their poems can work to cloud and sideline attention to the uniqueness of each poet's work.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A. Knowledge and understanding of the texts

As above, it is clear that the poets included in the course had been studied in ways that are required and often the responses to questions indicated that work had been done to examine them comparatively. Such practice is empowering to candidates when they undertake the paper, as they are then ready to choose particular poems and outline a response in the time allotted.

Understanding is the more challenging demand in this criterion and it is in this criterion that the best candidates achieve higher marks when they can convey an approach that goes beyond the descriptive. These candidates cited details that indicate not only that they know the poems well enough to select pertinent details, but have arrived at a personal grasp of the particularities of meaning. There were some excellent close analyses of work by such poets as Donne, Duffy, Owen and Wordsworth; with some of the other poets, candidates did not go much beyond providing some descriptive material about how the poets treated a comparable subject.

One common failing in conveying the materials relevant to this criterion was the tendency of students either to speculate about why the writer has chosen an approach or to make tenuous estimates of how the reader is affected by such choices; neither of these is truly helpful in delivering evidence of knowledge or understanding of what is actually there in the poem.

B. Response to the Question

Questions 1 and 6 proved, not unexpectedly, to be the most popular choices. A more general observation that applied to both of these questions is that students need to be careful that they are precise about their intended treatment of abstractions such as 'pessimism' or 'certitude,' or such stylistic features as 'pace.' Often it is helpful for essays if a definition for terms is advanced early in the discussion. In Question 6, many candidates were quite precise about their 'subject,' but 'patriarchal and hypocritical elements of Victorian society' or 'the abundant materialism of the modern world' tended to lead students into a task larger than the frame of the paper allowed.

In some cases, students only addressed the central term of the question, not taking account of the particular angle as in Question 2 which asked how metaphor makes a subject 'come alive' or how ambiguity in Question 3 enables readers to reach personal conclusions. Both Questions 4 and 5 were least often chosen, and there were not too many convincing analyses of pace.

Almost all questions either ask explicitly or imply a demand that candidates address the 'way' in which materials are presented; in many cases it was not possible to highly reward candidates in this criterion because the demands are threefold, requiring address of the aforementioned 'implications,' some individual response, and details to support assertions.

C. Appreciation of literary features

Diversity of performance in this criterion was considerable, with the least successful answers almost entirely neglecting attention to this aspect of poems. Moving on from responses where some naming of literary features appeared, the best work in this criterion went on to deliver some informed close analysis. These responses included not only the particular techniques employed by the poets but also how these connected either to the larger construction and meaning of the poem or to the special demands of the question, and in the best instances, both of these.

Metaphor, simile and personification were popular choices, with juxtaposition correctly used at times. Sound effects in poems were also noted, though, understandably, connecting alliteration, rhyme and rhythm to meaningful comments about effect was challenging for many. Tone and structure are, of course, crucial literary features and a fair number of candidates were at least able to identify such features, with the minority going on to treat their effects.

D. Presentation

Notable in this feature was the brevity of treatment that seemed to recur in the work from certain centres, which is recognizable from the choice of poets. In 90 minutes one expects to see some probing and depth, some attempt at linking the two poets, and deliberate address of the question.

In terms of organizing the answer, there were two approaches, the most common offering first, the discussion of the first poem or poems by one writer and then the second. This method was adapted by some candidates, treating a particular feature or stylistic approach by one writer and then the second, and repeating this pattern. Both methods were proven workable, although occasionally the students in the second approach encountered difficulty in providing coherence to the essay.

Introductions and conclusion were offered in almost every essay, although these were also used, in some cases, as opportunities to engage in lengthy generalities rather than devoting time to close analysis. In some centres, it appeared that the skill of embedding direct evidence from the poems had not been sufficiently practiced.

E. Formal Use of Language

The range of usage and correctness in this feature of the criteria was considerable as well, though the standard was generally acceptable with appropriate diction, grammar, register and spelling. Some of the lower marks seem to be the effect of haste or carelessness, but in other cases students struggled to express themselves at an appropriate standard for IB work.

One recurrent error in punctuation was the common failure to indicate the titles of poems or collections in conventional ways. Candidates need to know that this is not attended to if the correct punctuation is only used in the opening paragraph and ignored thereafter.

Poets' names and the titles of poems were at times not spelled correctly; this becomes a particularly noticeable feature as it recurs significantly in an essay.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

1. It is a good idea to give candidates plenty of practice with the particular nature of the questions. Rather than a plethora of complete 'practice' essays, shorter exercises such as outlines, introductions, comparative charts, writing about just one poet in relation to the question can help prepare students for the examination.
2. Ensure over the teaching of the course that candidates see clearly the difference between such basic approaches as paraphrase, re-description and re-narration and the demand for interpretation of meaning and analysis of style. These matters can be highlighted in other components of the course as well as in the study of poetry; they are crucial to strong performances in this paper.
3. Try to lead students to relate to poetry not just as meaning to be extracted, views to be reduced to the 'big idea' or the moral message, but as an art form to be enjoyed and valued for its ability to transcend simple reductions. Even though the Paper 2 exercise demands that they scrutinize the layers of meaning found in their study, exercises from other components of the course can surely be used to remind them that poetry is 'speech framed for the contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest over and above its interest of meaning.' (Gerard Manley Hopkins)