

Examiners' Report

June 2018

GCE English Language and Literature
9ELO 01

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Introduction

9EL01 is a written examination of 2 hours 30 minutes duration. This component has an explicit focus on the concept of 'voice' and how spoken voices are formed, and written voices created, in literary, non-literary and digital texts. The component covers two set texts: an anthology of non-literary and digital texts, and a drama text selected by centres for study. The paper comprises two sections. Each section is equally weighted with a total of 25 marks available for each component.

Section A: Voices in 20th and 21st century Texts

This question assesses AO1, 2, 3 and 4. Candidates are presented with one comparative essay question on one unseen extract selected from 20th or 21st century sources and one text from the Pearson Anthology

The unseen extract is taken from a broad genre extending from the exemplars which have been studied in the Anthology. Centres are advised that the texts provided in the Anthology are examples of broader text types and that the unseen text is likely to represent this breadth. The unseen text will be linked in some way to the Anthology text with which it is partnered to afford the comparison that is central to the assessment at AO4.

Section B: Drama Texts

Candidates are presented with an extract drawn from the play they have studied. The questions set for Section B will use the extract provided as a starting point for analysis and as a springboard for linked discussion across the broader play.

Overview of assessment

- Written examination, lasting 2 hours 30 minutes.
- Open book – a clean copy of the prescribed drama text can be taken into the exam.
- Two sections – students answer the question in Section A and one question on their chosen drama text in Section B.
- Total of 50 marks available – 25 marks for Section A and 25 marks for Section B.
- Section A – Voices in 20th and 21st century Texts: one comparative essay question on one unseen extract selected from 20th or 21st century sources and one text from the anthology (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 assessed).
- Section B – Drama Texts: one extract-based essay question on the chosen drama text (AO1, AO2, AO3 assessed).

Question 1

Question 1 (Section A) of this paper was presented to the full cohort.

Candidates were presented with two texts which were linked, thematically, by the topic of social media. The first, drawn from the Pearson Anthology, was an extract from an article written by Charlie Brooker, the English satirist and broadcaster, in which he voices his rather negative opinions on the topic. The second (unseen) text was the opening thread of a blog by Jay Baer, President of 'Convince & Convert', an American social media consultancy that specialises in digital marketing. Given Baer's position and the underlying promotional function of the blog, his stance afforded clear points of comparison with the frequently negative and satirical tone of Brooker's article.

Candidates generally responded well to the question. The Jay Baer blog was accessible and the main contrasts to Brooker's article easy to define. It was possible to draw comparison on different levels from straightforward to sophisticated. Those that had studied the Brooker text in advance could make more targeted comparisons with the unseen blog as they were generally better able to comment on the satirical persona and style of Brooker. Many responses in the mid range of achievement were characterised by an imbalance in coverage of the (prepared) Anthology text and the unseen blog.

Organisation of the response proved to be a significant discriminator. Candidates that opted a 'feature spotting' approach to comparison of the two texts often produced mechanistic and superficial investigations as this approach rarely allows for analysis to arise out of an exploration of audience, purpose and meaning.

Successful responses explored a range of language features in both extracts. Exemplification was consistent and appropriate and the responses offered considered comment on the link between form and function. Terminology was fairly wide ranging and applied accurately at word, sentence and whole-text level. The better answers noticed the register shifts and used this to comment on the subtler aspects of voice as a result. Successful responses offered developed comment on the context of both extracts with consideration of the factors that influenced the production and reception of each.

Less successful responses picked upon some general language features although coverage of the extracts was sometimes uneven. The fact that the Baer text was unseen proved a discriminator in this respect. In mid-lower level answers, exemplification was inconsistent and application of attendant terminology frequently inaccurate. In these responses, candidates often confused basic labels such as verb/noun or adjective/adverb and there was tendency to label any question as 'rhetorical'. Perhaps the most common error in this respect was the labelling of the verb 'love' as an abstract noun. Less successful responses also frequently resorted to non-specific comment at sentence level such as 'short, snappy sentences'. Levels of specific analysis and links between form and function were limited and/or undeveloped. Most candidates commented on the literary devices employed though they couldn't always say what functions they served. In mid-lower level responses some of the argument/analysis was unconvincing. Many answers offered very general and obvious interpretation rather than specific analysis. Many made minimal links to function such as 'this feature makes it entertaining' or 'makes the reader read on'. Analysis tended to be non-specific with vague phrases such as 'incorrect grammar'. Many such responses also included bold claims about contextual factors, particularly the audience.

Often mnemonics or prepared templates hindered a candidate's ability to explore, particularly the unseen text, in greater detail as they were looking for devices to fit a checklist rather than exploring the text for its worth. More confident candidates were able to weave the aspects of form into

comments about their analysis of devices within the texts rather than making stand-alone points just concerning form or genre. Candidates should be encouraged to demonstrate a spread of terminology across each text focusing on structural elements of the pieces rather than simply individual word-level devices.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that was awarded a mark of 20, which places it at the very top of Level 4. It offers a discriminating and controlled investigation that fully meets the descriptors for this Level. Its placement at the border with Level 5 also indicates that, at times, it presents the critical evaluation of the highest Level.

The response opens with a clear indication that it will offer integrated comparison which uses audience and function as a framework for analysis.

Both the Jay Baer piece and the Charlie Brooker article have the purpose of discussing their views on social media, however these views are entirely opposed. In Text A, Baer's use of the lexical field of social communal lexis, such as "Family, friends, colleagues," and ~~the~~ his use of specific proper nouns like "co-author Amber Naslund" all ~~help~~ aid in making the piece more inclusive, emphasising the 'social' aspect of social media. This, married with his use of direct address, ~~makes~~ suggests his goal is to make the reader feel connected to this circle of people, mimicking the effect of social media itself.



The investigation begins with the unseen blog which promises a balanced coverage of both texts and potential for placement in the higher bands of achievement. This approach continues throughout.

There is insightful comment of the relationship between writer and audience from the outset with clear links between form and function. Given the fact that the blog is unseen, the grasp of tone and purpose is laudible as are comments re-social media and interaction with audience being 'mimicked' by Baer.



Try to comment on the relationship that is constructed between writer/speaker and audience. This will reflect not only the purpose but also the voice/persona of the author.

Contrast this with the Charlie Brooker article that instead aims to make its audience feel like part of the problem. The purpose of this piece is to entertain the audience and give them explanation for his absence. This is seen in the opening sentence: "Eagle-eyed ~~viewers~~ readers may have spotted I haven't been writing this column for a while." His use of the metaphor "Eagle-eyed" creates a ~~serious~~ sarcastic tone, snidely congratulating his regular readership for noticing his absence. The unspecific time phrase "a while" adds a level of whistfulness, ~~to his voice~~, ~~and~~ developing a nonchalant ~~attitude~~ voice that offsets the terse tone created by the bluntness of the simple sentence in the opening.



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Examiner Comments

Exploration of the metaphor enables some significant comment on tone and the relationship between reader and writer. Analysis is integrated to support assertion here.



Tailor your frameworks of analysis to the content and tone of the texts before you. It is unwise to attempt to match comment for comment/feature for feature when comparing texts.

Baer's piece fundamentally is promoting social media and a tech-savvy lifestyle, aimed at an audience who prioritise these material comforts.



There is an assured sense of audience which, here, is integrated into comments on tone, content and interaction between reader and writer.

This nature is expressed by Brooker's hyperbolic ~~the~~ language developing an ~~the~~ hysterical almost hysterical voice: "...they'll be 86 outraged columns, 95 ~~depressing~~ despairing blogs, half a million cry tweets...". The triadic structure of the listing here creates a crescendo to the final comment on the "meme", emphasising the absurdity of internet ~~and~~ culture in an entertaining way. The pre-modified nouns fall under the lexical field of 'technology', a

Lexical field that is also present in the Baer piece, but the negative ~~prefixes~~ adjective prefixes turn these elements into a problem instead of a solution.



There is consistent awareness of the concept of 'voice' and its construction/presentation. Analysis is accurate and integrated and frameworks and terminology are applied in good range. The links between form and function characterise a higher level response. The reference to the impact of Brooker's use of adjective affords subtle and insightful comparison.



Always remember to comment on the 'voice' of the writer/speaker and how (and why) it is constructed.

This

insisting ~~being~~ creates a level of power in the piece that Baer holds over his audience throughout. It is extremely present here: "Social media is word-of-mouth ~~one~~ steroids, and our ability to praise or punish brands... is satisfying." The "steroids" metaphor connotes extreme masculinity and physical strength over "brands", ~~the~~ the inclusive pronoun "our", in contrast with the previous frequent use of personal pronouns like

"I" and "my" and "me", gives the reader that power and, by extension, that 'satisfaction'.

This is completely different to Brooker's article, who puts emphasis on the lack of power social media has ~~gave~~ given people. This is seen in the layout of the mode of the piece, the headline "Too much talk for the planet: why I'm reducing my ~~own~~ word emissions" being lifted directly from the article. It sets the desperate tone of the piece, the nouns "planet" and "emissions" falling into the article's lexical field of pollution ("pumping", "carbon dioxide", "toxic"), describing social media as a human-caused catastrophe.



Investigation of metaphor is insightful. The candidate integrates analytical comment through the concept of power, linked to the advertising central to the context and audience of the blog. The approach is mirrored and tailored with fluidity to the Brooker text. The use of power as a point of comparison with Brooker's article shows a degree of sophistication and a precision in terms of reading and selection of evidence that is the high point of the response as a whole. This demonstrates Level 5 skill and resulted in the placement of the script at the very top of Level 4.

The following script was awarded a mark of 11 which places it at the bottom of Level 3. Responses with this mark are likely to meet all descriptors for the 'General Understanding' that characterise Level 2 with some characteristics of the 'Clear Understanding' at Level 3. The placement above the border into Level 3 indicates that there was sufficient evidence at Level 3 to make this decision although insufficient consistency move towards the middle of the Level.

There is a rather mechanistic/forced approach to comparison and an over-reliance on a limited range of features and terms (specifically pronouns). Interestingly there appears greater confidence in the handling of the unseen text, which is unusual for this component.

1 Compare the ways in which the writers create a sense of voice as they reflect on the influence of social media on their lives.

In your answer you must consider linguistic and literary features, drawing upon your knowledge of genre conventions and context.

(25)

Text A is a blog by the President of Convince & Convert, an American social media consultancy, Jay Baer. The main audience of the text would be businesses interested in expanding their venture through digital marketing. Baer is able to create a phatic tone in order to achieve the ~~prop~~ purpose of the text which is to persuade ~~o~~ onlookers to use his business. Therefore Baer wants to make himself a relatable figure progressing into a likeable figure.



The response opens with a relatively clear reflection on the audience and overriding persuasive purpose of the blog. There is no specific exemplification to support assertion as yet.

Brooke uses colloquial language to express his frustration towards social media; "the sheer amount of jabber" and "a vast cloud of blah". These metaphors make clear to the reader due to colloquial phrases such as "blah" and "jabber" that Brooker is an older gentleman which creates the allusion that he shares an older audience who can relate to his frustrations.



Exploration of the metaphors employed by Brooker are slightly less successful. Identification of the colloquial nature of the lexis employed is valid but the overriding comparison to global warming and pollution is missed. This is surprising given that the article is drawn from the published anthology and therefore available for study prior to the examination. Comments about the age of the author and his readership miss out on the overall tone of the piece and show general understanding at best.



Avoid general comments about audience. Base your comments on the evidence before you.

Text A also relies on the inclusion of personal pronouns such as "I" which is a genre convention of a blog, but also the pronoun "we". The use of the pronoun "we" suggests unity and automatically makes the potential client of Convince & Convert feel valued, as well as their opinion also being valued. Text A also includes an emotive metaphor: "I realize the gift you give me everyday - the gift of your attention". Due to the use of the pronouns and the repetition of the noun "gift" the reader again is made to feel valued.



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Examiner Comments

There is some sense of the interaction between Baer and his readership, but the focus on pronoun is overused - repeated here and earlier in the response. Comments on the metaphor have validity however, in terms of the dynamic between writer and audience but these are not as well developed as they might be,

In Text A the headline is a simple and short sentence, "Why I'm a Social Media Addict", the use of the personal pronoun "I'm" abbreviated from "I am" indicates that this is going to be a narrative text by the author themselves, another example of a genre convention of a blog. Conversely Text B also has a heading, "Too much talk for one planet: why I'm reducing my word emissions" the punctuation (":") of the colon suggests that this article has two subjects. Also the appearance of "I'm", a personal pronoun, again indicating a narrative tone, a genre convention of an article.



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Examiner Comments

As the response progresses the frameworks chosen for comparing the texts become somewhat rigid/restrictive. Here, for example, the focus on the presentation and the punctuation of headings and subheading is valid enough from a graphological standpoint but the exploration comes at the expense of focus on the language - other than the use of pronoun- and the rather formulaic definition of function. Key aspects of content, such as use of metaphors of Baer: 'Addict' or Brooker: 'word emissions' are overlooked, thus restricting the potential for reward.



Try to link comments on any evidence you provide with its function and impact of the reader.

The following excerpts are taken from a script that demonstrates 'General Understanding' and was awarded a mark of 7 which places it in Level 2. There is a general understanding of the audience and purpose of each text and some attempt to draw comparisons between them but these links are very straightforward and sometimes strained.

Some features are identified and terms are applied - but in a very limited range. Links between form and function tend to be generic/descriptive. Exemplification is not consistent.

There is little integrated comparison, rather each text is explored separately with tenuous links from the second to the first text in the latter half of the response.

The graphology with headings used as different points to a list make it clear for the audience to differentiate each reason he loves social media. Each argument to ~~present~~ indirectly persuade the audience that social media is great, is written in short paragraphs. This is because adverts are usually straight to the point in order to keep the reader interested and encourage them to continue reading.



Comments on the presentation of Baer's blog are very generalised and tend to be descriptive. There is no exemplification and therefore no specific analysis of the language from which presentational features, such as subheadings, are comprised. Links between form and function are essentially restricted to the formulaic - and not helpful - observation 'encourage them to continue reading'



Always provide evidence drawn from the text to support your comments. This will enable you to explore language choices.

A vary in sentence structures ^{creates} ~~shows~~ his voice. Most sentences are complex which is what the audience would expect from a writer. However, the lack of interrogatives reflects his personality — he doesn't care ~~for~~ about the opinions of others. This is also shown where he says "people get into arguments with 'any woman who dares write anything'". This is opposed to his own confidence and bravery on the internet. ~~There is only one~~ Rhetorical questions are only used to display his thinking aloud.



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Examiner Comments

There is very little consideration of language at sentence level and the attempt to link the texts via the final interrogative of the Baer text and the lack of this sentence type in the Brooker article is very forced and not particularly useful. The reading of Brooker is very superficial with a lack of understanding of tone and the effect of his language choices. This is characteristic of a (low) Level 2 response.



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Examiner Tip

Avoid commenting on what is NOT in the text.

Whereas text A promoted the use of social media, text B does the opposite. Brooker says he ~~was~~ ~~is~~ "is going to reduce (my) carbon emissions". This metapho ~~reiterates~~ ~~his~~ reiterates his ~~dislike~~ dislike to social media "I don't "get" most forms of communication".



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Examiner Comments

There is an attempt to use metaphor as a point of comparison between the texts. The candidate recognises Brooker's extended metaphor but does not offer any real interpretation of its meaning or link to pollution other than as evidence of Brooker's dislike of the medium.

Baer uses the metaphor of social media being "word-of-mouth on steroids" to reinforce the idea that social media has "no right answers" and ~~is~~ can be for gossip and spreading the word. This may appeal to people who enjoy having conversations with others but might be too busy to meet up with each other.



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Examiner Comments

Exploration of Baer's use of metaphor is very straightforward. There are hints of understanding in terms of how the image might be received but these are undeveloped.

Question 2

'All My Sons' proved a popular choice for centres this series and responses presented across the full range of achievement. Most demonstrated a good understanding of the play and the pivotal moment this scene represents – the best linking this key moment contextually to Greek tragedy and its influence on the overall structure of the play

Exploration of the extract in successful responses offered focus on George and his changed attitude to the Keller family. Those that moved quickly on from the extract into their broader consideration of the play lost a valuable resource on which they could frame/develop their overall response.

The most successful were those that started from an understanding of George as a device and Miller's use of this character as a catalyst for the tragic resolution of the play. These often recognised the symbolic function of George's role as a lawyer and the donning of his father's hat.

There was much to explore in the extract in terms of dramatic device and convention as well as the dialogue itself. The best could offer considered comment on the unspoken dramatic conventions/conflicts contained within the extract such as the rising tension between George and Chris, emphasised by stage direction and positioning or the tension caused through the expectation of Kate's entrance and how, and why, this was conveyed to the audience. The dialogue itself provided a rich source of comment through the changing dynamic between Chris and George and the shifts afforded by Kate and Annie. Successful answers offered close comment on the construction of the voices contained in the extract, linking form to function and applying terms with accuracy and in good range.

Less successful responses tended to the descriptive, presenting narrative summaries as opposed to considering Miller's dramatic intentions. Many moved into generalised discussions on morality with limited reference to the extract or the specifics of the question.

Many responses dealt with the contextual implications of the play which were well linked to this particular extract. Again, the difference between stronger and weaker candidates was the ability to embed these contextual ideas to authorial decisions rather than simply describing issues of war at the time. Those that considered the text as a performance piece, considering dramatic conventions and techniques were rewarded against the contextual AO.

The following excerpts are taken from a reasonably successful response that was awarded a mark of 17. This places it at the lower end of Level 4.

There is clear understanding and sometimes comment and investigation is discriminating. What anchors the response at the low mark within the Level are the occasional lapses in expression and application of terminology. Some links between form and function also lack development.

Arthur Miller's modern domestic tragedy *All My Sons*, set in 1947, follows the unities of time (in a twenty-four hour time period) and place (in a single location) of a classical Greek tragedy. Based loosely on a true story of a young woman who informed on her father after the war, the play has a very strong sense of realism. During this time there was a rise in idealist and socialist attitudes as a result of people's experiences during the war and perspectives changed dramatically. George Deever is clearly a character that was part of this movement and has a strong ambition to restore justice due to the fact that "George is a lawyer" (page 39) after ~~studying~~ he studied in the hospital. ~~at~~



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Examiner Comments

The opening paragraph does offer contextual comment George in the closing sentences. It also picks up on George's professional status, which is relevant to the task.



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Examiner Tip

Link contextual comment to the specifics of the task.

In George's monologue at the beginning of the extract, he continuously repeats himself - a carefully constructed feature of spontaneous speech that makes it feel more authentic ("you believed it", "I believed everything", "from his mouth", "believe it from his mouth".) This creates a persuasive tone and clearly expresses George's disapproval of the actions of Joe Keller and points out his *hamartia* (as the tragic hero) of failing to accept responsibility and his complete lack of relatedness.



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Examiner Comments

The reference to George's speech as the extract opens as a 'monologue' is inaccurate. There is worthy exploration of spoken language features and a sense that these are crafted by Miller for dramatic effect. However, there could have been fuller exploration of the meaning of the repeated utterances here in relation to the task ie the visit to his father and the effect that this encounter and the face to face discussion has on George's attitude.

In the extract, it is clear that there is high level of tension as the conversation has descended into stichomythia ("George: He knows, Annie. He knows!", "Chris.: The voice of God!") The use of exclamatory sentences further exaggerate

the tension and suggests to the actor how to deliver the line. The use of paralinguistic features through italics in the word 'knows' adds to the highly emotive confrontation.



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Examiner Comments

Application of the term 'stichomythia' reinforces understanding of the influence of Greek theatre and verse on Miller's work. There is also recognition of the dialogue as a dramatic construct. There are slight lapses in expression however.

George's statement "(With deep feeling for her) you... you haven't changed at all, you know that Kate?" has a false start (indicative of spontaneous speech) and hints that he expected everyone to have changed as drastically as he has and his perspective on the Keller family moral seems to be changing/reverting. The tag question is rhetorical and indicates a fondness that is exaggerated by the paralinguistic features in the stage directions.



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Examiner Comments

There is a clear sense of stage and attendant convention here. Exploration of spoken language features show insight into the effect that Kate has on George and maintains good focus on the central issues of the task



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Examiner Tip

Remember to explore the methods used by the writer to craft dialogue that appears authentic and which meets his/her dramatic agenda.

Question 3

'A Streetcar Named Desire' was the most popular text studied by centres this summer. The question was specific in its focus on how Williams uses Belle Reve to show Stanley's attitude to property. The extract afforded much scope for investigation and the best answers really explored the skill with which Williams crafts the dialogue, the tensions between Stanley and Stella (which are more than just a simple conflict between male and female attitudes to property) or the details of Stanley's idiolect countering his attempt to appear educated with regards to his understanding of the Napoleonic Code. The best also used the vital dramatic contextual significance of movement and physicality in, for example, his handling of Blanche's possessions in this scene.

Well prepared candidates were able to range across the play. There were some excellent responses which picked out other moments in the play when Belle Reve was significant in the conflict between characters. A significant number explored issues of gender as property, possession, control or dependence. Others offered the Poker night as an example of Stanley's attitude to space and to possessions. Some very successful answers explored the ways in which Williams uses the apartment itself to create tension as Stanley resists Blanche's invasion of his territory and attempts to eject her from it.

The best analysed language with some insight and precision applying frameworks and terms in good range. These also considered the staging of the scene and drew interesting conclusions about actions and delivery that conceded fully to the dramatic form.

Less successful were those that deviated quickly from the extract thereby denying themselves the many opportunities it provided. As with other questions in Section B, there were significant numbers that moved quickly into what appeared a different and 'rehearsed' agenda which seemed to be based on a different question – in some instances from an earlier series - thereby not addressing the specifics of the task. Less successful responses tended to describe rather than analyse and offered little sense that the characters were dramatic constructs. Again, contextual ideas had been extensively taught to candidates but centres should be cautious with the notion of placing too much emphasis on biographical context at the expense of contextual implications of form and genre.

The following excerpts are drawn from a successful response that was awarded a mark of 21, which places it just into the highest band of achievement (Level 5). It is discriminating and controlled throughout and some of the analysis- especially of the dialogue presented in the extract, is both critical and evaluative (and characteristic of a Level 5 response). There is slight divergence at times towards a more general discussion of class and conflict - had this aspect been shaped more specifically to the issue of 'property' the response might well have scored even more highly.

The conversation quickly descends into a back-and-forth format, with Stanley dominating the conversation and interrupting Stella when she tries to counteract his points. His language and tone gradually become more brash and impolite throughout the conversation, moving from a polite, ^{semi}formal request to 'have a few more details on the subject' to the multiple exclamations, rhetorical questions and uncensored taboo language (eg 'hell') which portray Stanley's growing rage and impatience within the conversation. While Stella's focus is on Blanche, even going so far as to use the onomatopoeic imperative command 'sshh! she'll

hear you!' in an attempt to spare her sister the worry of having to hear Stanley's anger, Stanley's attention is purely fixed on what he believes is the 'mystery' of Belle Reve, looking for any tiny pieces of information which might prove Blanche's dishonesty about Belle Reve being 'lost'.



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Examiner Comments

Exploration of Williams' development of the dynamic between Stanley and Stella is very effective and linked to task through comparing attitudes to Belle Reve and to Blanche. Terms are applied in good range and with accuracy, with a consistent sense of authorial/dramatic crafting.

While investigating Blanche's belongings, it is ~~also~~ again evident that Stanley's views of money and property are skewed. He refers to Blanche's clothes with lavish adjectives (a 'solid-gold' dress, which would be impossible to wear, and a 'diamond crown' which Stella immediately identifies as being inexpensive costume jewellery) and seems certain about his appraisals despite Stella's contradictions. The thought of finally having some wealth, a luxury he has probably never had before, is apparent to be so exciting a possibility that he becomes frantic trying to make it a reality.



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Examiner Comments

There are some perceptive comments about Stanley's attitude to Blanche's belongings and his inability to assess the real value of her property. This is supported effectively by discriminating selection and analysis of evidence/language.

Stanley, growing up as a working-class Polish man, has a completely different attitude regarding Belle Reve, and property in general. From the very beginning of the play, when we are introduced to him, Williams's use of adjectives clearly connotes his lower, working-class status - Stanley and Mitch are described as '[wearing] blue denim work clothes', which references 'blue' and 'white collar' occupations. ~~the~~ White-collar (wearing a suit and tie) roles, such as accountancy and law, were reserved for the educated middle- and upper-class in the 40s and 50s, when the play was written, while blue-collar manual work was undertaken by working-class men like Stanley. His accent and sociollect are also indicative of his social class - fillers such as 'now' and 'here' are described (both by Williams as a playwright and by Stanley as a character) are evident of someone 'unrefined' - in other words, working class.



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Examiner Comments

There is a sound grasp of context - both historical and social. Much of this is reasonably well integrated. At times however, as here, the discussion on social class becomes rather generalised (although it is used later to evidence a valid contextual perspective on property) and does not target the specifics of the task with the precision evident elsewhere in the response.



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Examiner Tip

Try to tailor your comments on context to the specifics of the question.

Stanley's focus on Stella and himself being 'swindled' goes a lot further than just feeling betrayed by what he assumes to be Blanche's lies. By quoting the Napoleonic code ('what belongs to the wife belongs to the husband') he expresses his understanding that if Blanche has sold Belle Reve, he is entitled to half of the profits due to being married to Stella. This links back to Stanley's working-class status - growing up without money, the possibility that some may come his way is ~~also~~ an exciting thought, thus he gets overzealous in trying to prove his case. While Blanche and Stella grew up seeing money as a readily-available commodity, Stanley's working-class upbringing means that his attitude towards material wealth is as a luxury, and therefore means it should be regarded as such.



In this section comments on class are targetted to the task and are therefore wholly relevant. There is subtle interpretation of the reasons behind the attitudes to Belle Reve and, on the part of Stanley, to the Napoleonic Code. The resulting contrast is insightful.

Question 4

Although relatively few centres study this text, there were some very successful responses to the question on 'Elmina's Kitchen'.

All candidates appeared well-schooled in the context of the play and its setting in Hackney's so-called 'Murder Mile'. The question, with its focus on the generations represented in the play, also afforded much opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the historical and social factors affecting London's black communities over time; the best able to reflect with some insight on the 'Windrush' generation and draw clear links and comparisons with subsequent generations and their attitudes, actions and language. Some drew on primary data based on interviews with the playwright and used this to great effect when reflecting on Kwei-Armah's personal story to illuminate his attitudes to his own family and how these influenced both the content and the language of his play. Some, less successful responses became sidetracked into a broad biographical discussion which lacked the tight focus on the task that characterises a higher level answer.

Successful answers kept a clear eye on the question and drew evidence judiciously from the extract and the wider text to support comments on generations and change. They used the characters as representative of different generations and integrated their knowledge of context - both in terms of social/cultural/historical factors and dramatic form and convention to develop and support their assertions. The best looked at the construction of voice and offered comment on characteristics such as the integration of patois and shifts between the vernacular and Standard English to develop the contrast further. Some were able to offer careful consideration of the concept of black masculinity.

Question 5

The given extract presented a changing dynamic between Dysart and Alan. Using the rules of the 'turn-taking' game, Alan subjects Dysart to a level of personal scrutiny which mimics that which he has experienced as Dysart's patient, in effect reversing their roles. This affords much opportunity to comment on Alan as a device used by Shaffer to challenge the belief of Dysart (here) and other characters across the play as a whole.

Successful responses explored the extract analytically. They differentiated the voices from which it is comprised by exploring the factors, contextual and dramatic, that shaped them. These applied literary and linguistic frameworks and terms accurately and in good range to comment both the changing dynamic between doctor and patient and how – and why – this happens. The very best were able to comment on how Shaffer has assimilated the language and techniques of Dysart into that of Alan to cement the role reversal and the effect this has on Dysart both personally and professionally. The most successful were able integrate contextual detail - psychiatric and dramatic - into their discussion.

The question encourages an exploration of the effect that Alan has on the beliefs held by other characters in the play. There are several opportunities for this, such as Dora's religiosity or Frank's attitude towards parenting. The best ranged across the play with some confidence and sustained appropriate focus on the task across both elements of the question.

Less successful were those that did not make the most of the extract and the opportunities it afforded in terms of analysis and focus. Many slipped into generalised comment about character (Dora being the most common) with limited development of the influence Alan had upon her beliefs and an equally limited sense of character a construct. Others failed to link contextual material - mainly psychiatric, religious or gender based - to the task.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that was placed at the border between Level 2 and Level 3. The mark of 10 anchors it into the lower level and indicates that it meets the descriptors for 'general understanding' fully and, on (rare) occasions, is 'clear and relevant'. There are also times when understanding is masked by issues with expression.

It is a relatively brief response that does not consistently focus on Alan as a device to challenge the beliefs of other characters in the play, rather it describes the beliefs they hold and explains the possible reasons behind this. Exploration of the extract is not as detailed as it could be and analysis of method is patchy. Terms are applied in restricted range, mostly at word level.

Contextual comment, although valid, is rather generalised or poorly integrated into the body of the response.

Alan enquires on Dysart and Margret's relationship 'did you use to tie her hands when she did you in the chair?' the elliptical phrasing and interrogative tone reflects the childish nature of Alan. This, in contrast with ~~the~~ the ~~animational sexual semantic field~~ animalistic sexual nature presented by the ~~verb~~ verb 'bite' alludes to Alan's experience, and his inexperience. Alan here ~~exercises~~ exercises his ~~physical~~ ~~and~~ knowledge when it comes to implying passion and physicality, however, such is juxtaposed by the childish idiom of 'did you use to',



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Examiner Comments

There is some promise to the opening section in terms of its focus on the language of Alan. There is also relative security with terms (the reference to elliptical phrasing is questionable). Links of form to function are not as secure, however.

'I had

run the biological facts. But I also had run what I believed' here Shapiro de-familiarises the idea of sex, replacing sex with a more ~~strict~~ ~~para~~ Dora creates a semantic field of boredom ~~and~~ and replaces the passion of sex with education and religion, ~~replaces~~ with the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ 'biological' and 'facts'. Here audiences are able to view the beliefs of parenting within Dora, as she portrays her own beliefs and Alan with little regard to him as an individual.



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Examiner Comments

The response moves quickly on from the extract into consideration of Dora (by far the most popular choice for candidates this year as second character for consideration). This results in a slight loss on focus on the specifics of the task. There is a worthy attempt at analysis but this is not wholly convincing due to undeveloped links between form and function.



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Examiner Tip

Explore the extract as fully as you can. It has been selected because it offers you opportunities to answer the question.

Britain was very much still reserved when it came to taboo subjects such as sex; this could be seen from the release of British sex comedies, where sex was a topic only referred ~~to~~ ^{to} through comedy and embarrassment, so this was the only way the British were able to refer to sex comfortably when referring to sex. ~~Alan's~~ Dysart's reply to Alan's ~~question~~ sexually explicit question reveals Dysart's similar reservations 'I said that's enough now' Dysart's short declarative reveals his censored nature and shows audiences his only when making this statement.



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Examiner Comments

Contextual comment is not integrated with any fluidity into the body of the response. Although there is an attempt to link this to Dysart and his response to Alan's challenge/profanity these links are questionable given the professional role of Dysart and the nature of his questioning of Alan as his patient.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure that any points you make on context are linked both to the task and to the evidence you provide. Avoid simply reproducing lengthy paragraphs without making these links.

Question 6

Relatively few centres studied 'The History Boys' this year but responses covered the full range of achievement.

The extract provided much opportunity to explore Bennett's use of character and dramatic technique (here the specific use of flash-forward), to comment on the academic and personal goals that Posner and Irwin once held and to compare them to the realities revealed by their future selves and the men they have become.

The best placed the extract in its historical and social context and made informed deductions on Bennett's use of time and character to comment on Thatcher and changes to the education system and the position of Oxbridge as the 'gold standard' of education through the projection. The very best understood the link afforded by Rievaulx and Irwin's earlier lessons on Henry VIII and the circularity of the metaphorical return as the extract comes to a close. These explored the language from which the dialogue was constructed analytically, this is a key discriminator for this question as many candidates still adopt an essentially literary approach which denies them access to the higher levels of achievement. They also noted the subtlety of Bennett's stagecraft through presentation of character and use of dramatic device. Many considered the initial anonymity of Posner and his reference to a counsellor to reflect failure and/or disillusionment. Others explored the persistent questioning about the Dakin/Irwin relationship and what this reveals about Posner, Irwin and the media. Many, of course, commented on Irwin's confinement to a wheelchair, the best placing this in opposition to his earlier lessons on self-presentation. Many homed in on the adjective 'meretricious' and the voice of Hector it echoes.

Less successful responses were essentially narrative/descriptive. They offered limited acknowledgment of the text as a play or of the characters as dramatic constructs. Analysis of method was thin and often inaccurate and links between form and function undeveloped. Many misread the tone/register of voice and therefore the attitudes they both challenge and represent. Others paid scant attention to the extract and moved quickly into another agenda that failed to link to the question.

Question 7

Relatively few centres chose to study 'Top Girls' this year. Responses did cover a reasonable range of achievement all the same.

In the extract, Mrs Kidd represents an older set of cultural values through which women were expected to remain in the domestic realm and support their husbands' career aspirations. As such, she is used by Churchill as a challenge to Marlene, and the feminist claim she represents, that women should be on equal footing with men in the workplace. The voices of Mrs Kidd and Marlene are shaped by their personal and professional experiences and the best responses were able to use these as a basis for comment on their construction and integrated these contextual factors. The voices contrast significantly and there was scope for the best to analyse their construction in developing this contrast and also to trace the shifts in dynamic and tone that reveal the growing conflict between them.

References to Thatcher generated some interesting comment but focus on the task sometimes varied. Again, the difference between stronger and weaker candidates was the ability to embed these contextual ideas to authorial decisions rather than simply describing issues of gender and/or politics at the time. Those that considered the text as a performance piece, considering dramatic conventions and techniques were rewarded against the contextual AO.

Candidates were encouraged to explore attitudes to gender in the workplace in other parts of the play. Opportunities to do this include: Churchill's depiction of Marlene, Nell, and Win as professionally successful women; the opposition between Joyce and Marlene and the different life choices they represent. A significant minority of less successful answers did not move beyond the extract while others diverted swiftly from the extract into what appeared to be a prepared or practiced response that often had a tenuous link to the question set.

Question 8

In the extract presented, Owen embarks on his professional role as a translator between the British officers and the community of Baile Beag. He also facilitates the relationship between Yolland and Maire, effectively sealing the fate of them both.

Successful responses explored the methods – dramatic and linguistic – used by Friel to construct the voices, and the dynamic between them. Most were able to range across the play in relation to Owen's changing attitudes and how these affected his role as translator. Those that maintained a focus on the issue of tension between the Irish and English communities were rewarded while those that simply looked at tension between characters were self-penalising to a certain extent.

Responses to 'Translations' covered a fully range of achievement but only the very best were able to fully analyse the language choices used by Friel when developing such contrasting attitudes and characters. Those that offered analytical comment on, for example, the complex and official nature of Lancey's voice against the over-simplification of Owen's translation, Hugh's response to the proceedings and how these are constructed or the contrast developed in the voices of Yolland and Lancey were able to make meaningful deductions about context, stage and delivery and were rewarded accordingly. Those that linked these aspects of voice to the idea of language and power were characteristic of a high-level response.

Successful answers investigated the extract analytically and in detail. They applied frameworks and terminology to appropriately selected evidence and offered comments that sustained focus on the task whilst developing clear links between form and function. Also successful were those that treated the text as a dramatic work through consideration of stage directions and issues of performance and delivery. Contextual factors in successful responses were linked directly to the task rather than incorporating tranches of learned social or political data.

A significant minority of less successful responses did not investigate the extract itself in any detail, moving swiftly into a general discussion of the role of Owen. The potential to reward these beyond the low-mid levels of achievement was very restricted. Others offered only minimal specific analysis, with terms in limited range and accuracy.

The question encourages an exploration of the role of Owen as 'go-between' across the play. Examples include his Anglicisation of Irish place names and the growing tension this generates, his developing relationship with Yolland, rising tension with Manus over his continued mistranslations, his ultimate reversion to Irish at the end of the play.

The following excerpts are drawn from a Level 3 response which was awarded a mark of 13. The placement in the middle of the band indicates that it demonstrates the 'clear and relevant' application that characterises the descriptors at Level 3 and that it moves beyond the general and descriptive approach at Level 2. There is much unrealised potential here, and the candidate clearly understands the play and maintains a degree of focus on the question. It offers some valid interpretation and, sometimes, deduction but lack of consistent exemplification restricts potential for analysis and the reward that attends it. When analysis is offered, it is generally apt.

In this extract, Lancey proceeds to inform the members of the hedge school that the English plans for Ireland, yet Owen fails to fully translate the English into Irish. Owen purposely misses piece of information out when relaying Lancey's speech to everyone else, in order to avoid potential conflict between the ~~the~~ English and the Irish characters such as Manus, ~~and~~ Hugh, Bridget and Doalty who are stronger against the English imposing on Ireland in 1830's Ireland would have something to say regarding the topic matter.



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Examiner Comments

There is a clear, if relatively straightforward, understanding of Owen's role here and across the wider play. Comments regarding his approach to the translation of Lancey's address to the community - and the reasons behind them - are valid. Specific reference to Doalty and Bridget is also worthy. However, there is no exemplification here and therefore no opportunity to analyse Friel's language choices and their effect/function.



Always offer evidence drawn directly from the text to support your assertions. Then analyse the language from which this evidence is comprised to comment on language choice and its function/effect.

Characters were aware that Owen wasn't fully translating Lancey's speech due to the indefinite difference in speech length. This is indicated when Lancey queries "is that all?" and Owen responds with a reassuring smile."



There is some attempt to link form to function but this is patchy and undeveloped. The candidate understands the play and Friel's use of language to shape character/dynamic or develop plot. Reference to stage direction also evidences an understanding of the text as a performance piece.

Maire expresses an interest towards what Yolland has to say about the subject matter, yet due to the language barrier and lack of communication between the two there is a failed adjacent pair exchanged here; "sorry - sorry?"

the use of a failed adjacent pair highlights the barrier between language and culture between Ireland and England



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Examiner Comments

The potential is also demonstrated through the exploration of the role of Owen as translator facilitating the fatal relationship between Maire and Yolland. This section is the most successful element of the response. Comments are both clear and relevant, integrate some apt spoken word analysis and incorporate some valid contextual comment. Had this approach been applied, the response may well have moved beyond Level 3.

Paper Summary

In summary, responses to Section B covered the full range of achievement across all questions this summer.

Successful answers explored the given extract in detail and with focus on the task. They exemplified consistently to support their comments/assertions and applied an analytical lens to the evidence they provided, thereby linking form to function. Analytical frameworks were applied at word, sentence and whole-text level. They selected contextual information judiciously to link to the specifics of the task and the best integrated this information fluidly into the body of their response.

High level answers never lost sight of the text, its characters and plot, as dramatic constructs. These paired exploration of dialogue and dynamic with the dramatic conventions of a performance piece such as staging, delivery and movement. They also used what they had learned about the features of spoken language to explore the construction of voice, thereby regarding characters and the words they spoke as devices.

Successful responses ranged with facility across the broader play, selecting material that linked to task and which enabled analysis of method and effect through judicious exemplification.

Less successful were answers that offered limited focus on the question. This year there was a noticeable increase in responses that moved quickly into what seemed like a pre-prepared investigation of a theme/issue that afforded only limited links to the actual question set. A significant minority appeared to be reworking questions from earlier series to an agenda that simply did not fit. Mid to low level achievement was also marked by inconsistent exemplification, restricted/insecure analysis and little sense of the generic and dramatic conventions that shape a play. In many of these responses, contextual information was simply bolted on with limited evidence of selecting/shaping this information to task.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

- Aim for a balanced coverage of the anthology and the unseen text
- Always provide evidence from the data to support your comments
- Explore the language from which this evidence is comprised to comment on the writer's/speaker's craft
- Avoid a checklist of features as the framework for comparison
- Explore aspects 'voice' and how this is constructed and presented

Section B

- Explore and analyse the extract as fully as you can. It has been chosen with the focus of the question in mind
- Exemplify consistently and analyse the language from which this evidence is comprised
- Always consider the play as a performance text and explore the dramatic devices and conventions it applies

- Make sure that your exploration of the broader play maintains its focus on the question
- Try to integrate contextual comment into the body of your response and only include details that are relevant to the task

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

