

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 4

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **16 marks**.

Q6. Compare and contrast three poetic treatments of the theme of loss.

This candidate takes a serial approach to structure in this response. In the introduction the candidate sets out how they understand 'loss' and how each Heaney poem selected deals with the loss of a different family member.

Knowledge and Understanding

The Strand... This candidate shows a **broad knowledge and understanding of the text** and has selected evidence which is **relevant** to the idea of "loss" as indicated in the question. Some quotations are set in context, but some are not. The candidate conveys a secure understanding of the imagined version of the cousin's death.

The Harvest Bow. The candidate demonstrates a **secure knowledge and understanding** of this poem and links its content directly to the task: loss. They identify that it is an elegy and that the bow is used as a symbol, its purpose and impact. The reading of this poem is thoughtful.

The Clearances. Knowledge and understanding of this poem is the weakest of the three selected. Perhaps time constraints have hindered this last part of the essay. The candidate selects textual reference judiciously and makes links to the idea of loss. Some points made are questionable, but in keeping with the candidate's reading of these texts. We could describe the candidate's knowledge and understanding as **broad** rather than **secure**, however, it is a relevant exploration with regards to the question.

Analysis

Strand: Meaning is explored with reference to technique, like the "placement of 'you'", "word play", "cliché". Analysis strengthens the line of argument.

Harvest Bow. The candidate recognises that the "bow" is used as a symbol and does analyse the switch in tenses and the impact of rhythm. In paragraph nine, their analysis of the important image, "like a drawn snare," is not as effective. On the whole, however, analysis strengthens the line of argument.

The Clearances: Analysis is relevant. There are references to tone, imagery, structure, symbolism. The final quotation, "silence beyond silence listened for," is taken out of context and misses the key metaphor.

This candidate demonstrates **relevant analysis** of a range of literary techniques, which strengthens the line of argument. All chosen quotation is linked to the task.

Evaluation

Strand: The candidate demonstrates that they have engaged with the text, describing it as “beautiful,” and thereafter describing Heaney’s craftsmanship as “skilful” and “graceful.” How they draw together ideas and link them to the question is consistent and clearly identifiable.

The Harvest Bow: Evaluative stance is **clearly identifiable** and is thoughtful. This candidate has chosen evidence which links to the question and makes evaluative comments based on the evidence selected. The candidate makes links between the poems.

The Clearances: Evaluative comments and comparisons made between texts are arguably less secure. In paragraph ten, for example, “This emotive depiction is contrasting to SAL and THB, as Heaney shys away from revealing a lot of intimate interactions between him and other family members but exposes these interactions when writing about his mother.”

The candidate adopts an evaluative stance and is secure in the way in which they evaluate technique and ideas. Sometimes evaluative comment is less secure, but is still **discernible**.

Technical Accuracy

This candidate meets minimum competence for technical accuracy.

Holistically, this candidate’s work just meets the standard required to achieve the 18-16 range and is awarded a mark of 16. Knowledge and understanding of *The Harvest Bow* is secure, as is the analysis and evaluation. Knowledge and understanding of *The Strand* and *Clearances* is broad, but relevant, as is the analysis and evaluation.

Mark: 16