

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 4

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **8 marks**.

Genre: Creative – reflective Title: Those Old Yellow Bricks
--

The title and epigraph connect this piece to childhood and the desire to run away to somewhere “over the rainbow”, where the escaper will be appreciated for who they are. The candidate then opens digressively – an account of his Grandpa’s fascination with Harry Houdini. A specific escape is described in slightly flawed expression – continuous tense discontinued, “binds” rather than bindings. However, the candidate then introduces a reflective comment of a different quality “... a sort of physical asceticism he must have respected...” His Grandpa’s life is described effectively, using repetition of “leaving his...”. The candidate often uses antithesis in this part of the essay: “... no easy tasks (sic), but the rewards...”. This weighing up of options is a focus throughout.

The italicised sections present an unusual stance for a reflective piece – looking forward in order to look back. These sections sit awkwardly on top of the more conventional reflective piece and give the impression that they may have been added to the essay in the course of development, rather than being integrated into the line of reflection. Expression is awkward: “cluttered with cigarette residue...”

The candidate goes on to discuss the impact of “the traumatic” nature of teenage life, mainly through the glamorisation of the digitised world. The paragraph ends on a better note with an effective summation “We run...”. We might wonder where this candidate thinks home is, with “...swarms of people buzzing in and out...”.

The candidate uses a number of well-worn figures: repetition, listing and sequencing to create his idea of the past struggles of his family. Antithesis is featured on a couple of occasions. There is reflection present, which reveals some thoughtfulness. The next italicised section is an account of his contemporary experience: “gallivanting mass of my friends...” but the section ends with an image of the reflective young writer “... staring out to sea...” which attempts to unite the two reflective perspectives.

The essay develops the idea of the consequences of leaving on friendships and family, using the slightly odd perspective of judgements made about the potential future of the writer. The candidate thereafter broadens their view to take in

“Human nature” and the nature nurture dichotomy - which makes it sound a lot more highfaluting than the candidate’s achievement, “... *what if I simply couldn’t fit in anywhere else?*” However, that may be a truer expression of his thinking than appears elsewhere, (using) at various points a discernible tone which reveals an identifiable and appropriate authorial voice.

The candidate introduces the idea of a crossroad and reflects on the choice in front of him, and the impact it will have on others: an unspecified “They”. The stigma which is identified is, thoughtfully, identified as coming from the candidate – perhaps the most insightful thought of the essay. However, the choice of “stigma” is an imprecise use of language.

The candidate’s conclusion attempts to develop the image of the yellow brick road into the future, creating an elegiac tone of farewell to his past. There is a lack of sophistication in the expression and handling of this conclusion. The introduction of the quotation from Lao Tzu typifies the candidate’s desire to set an appropriate tone for reflection, but encapsulates the earnest but rather predictable nature of the achievement here.

Content

Treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings which reveal some thoughtfulness and insight.

Structure

Shaping and sequencing with limited impact.

Tone/mood

Discernible at various points, revealing an identifiable and appropriate authorial voice.

Expression

A consistently accurate use of style, technique and language with some originality.

Because of reservation about sequencing, the work is not fully realised and therefore is placed in the middle of the range 9-7.

Mark: 8