

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 1

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **14 marks**.

Section A – The Phantom Horsewoman

Question: Write a detailed critical response to this poem.

Understanding

This critical analysis shows **broad understanding of the central concerns of the text provided**. Some comments are perceptive and insightful. The candidate never fully states what the poem is actually about, but offers a wide-ranging exploration of techniques. This is a **relevant and thoughtful approach to the question**; the candidate aims to cover an impressive range of techniques, even if not all attempts are successful. The response becomes progressively more convincing as the candidate's line of thought develops. There is extensive **use of textual evidence which is relevant to the demands of the question**.

Analysis

There is an increasingly productive attempt to cover a wide range of techniques. There is analysis on the "first person speaker", noting an "ambiguity surrounding exactly who the speaker is". The reference to the "talk of the town" is well observed, but the interpretation of the voice as an "omnipotent narrator" is inaccurate. The candidate notes that the poem's form is important, but unhelpfully refers to the numbering of the stanzas as "chapters", and is unsure how to use the terminology "octet, sestet" in light of the poem's form. The candidate also observes that there is a tight rhyme scheme, without being able to analyse or evaluate it successfully. The analysis of the alliteration is more successful: "the harsh 'c' sounds suggest an element of forcefulness, of intensity, suggesting the man is ill at ease". The candidate has chosen to deal with metre, and then makes the first of a few inaccurate references to "iambic pentameter". This is returned to, where it is analysed as the "trotting of the imaginary horse". The candidate has clearly noted that there is a noticeable and regular metre and manages to analyse it to an extent. There is also a reference to anaphora, assonance, sibilance, caesura and parenthesis. Much more helpful is the analysis of the ellipsis as a "turning away, breaking this moment of tranquillity". The candidate analyses the line "A phantom of his own figuring" well: "The end stop of this line gives it a finality, a determination, and shows the strength of the man to gaze and dream so powerfully. It does, also, however, set in writing the definite, solid fact that this image – as real and glimmering as it may seem – is imaginary, it is 'a phantom'!"

Overall, there is a **relevant analysis of a range of literary techniques and/or features of language which supports the approach adopted by the candidate.**

Evaluation

What this response is lacking is the big picture, and the evaluation is weaker than the analysis. There is, however, a **discernible and relevant evaluative stance with respect to the text provided and the question, and based on evidence discussed within the response** to an extent.

Overall, the response does not fully meet all the descriptors set out in the band range 15-13. It is therefore awarded a definitive mark of 14.