

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 5

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **10 marks**.

Section C – *H is for Hawk*

Question: Discuss the effectiveness of the ways in which Macdonald conveys the significance of this personal experience.

You may wish to consider:

- **structure**
- **contrast**
- **the exploration of what the writer terms “derealisation” (line 41)**

Understanding

The lack of recognition of the significance of the death of the writer’s father in this textual analysis means that it displays only **limited understanding of the central concerns of the text provided**. The candidate, however, does make an attempt at a **relevant approach to the question** with references to contrast and the exploration of “derealisation”.

The candidate deals with the writer’s description of their surroundings and then moves on to recognise that he [sic] is bored with his job. There is understanding that the extract illustrates a turning point in the writer’s life and this is followed with recognition of the writer’s sense of being “totally disconnected”. The candidate shows understanding of the use of the extended metaphor (Alice in Wonderland) and its link to the suggestion of the writer’s sense of “falling past them, not fully invested”. The candidate recognises the idea that the writer’s “adventure is also about to begin”. Some understanding of the presentation of the concept of “derealisation” is evident and how “this moment of ‘derealisation’ has given him the strength to change his situation”. The candidate shows some understanding of the significance of training the hawk to the writer but this is dealt with very perfunctorily.

Analysis

There is **analysis of a range of literary techniques** in this response. The negative imagery of “ditch ... dull ... unpolished ill” is identified as a contrast to the “very glamorous and even regal word choice” used to describe the office building. The candidate comments on the writer’s use of a list of “regular items” and the expression “blank façade” to highlight that “his job ignites no passion in him”. The candidate analyses the symbolic nature of the angels and how their uniform faces suggest that “everyone is forced to be the same”. Comment on the

angels' swords is less apposite. The candidate deals with the effectiveness of the use of short sentences and the extended metaphor. There is no overt analysis of the presentation of the hawk or the writer's relationship with it. There is brief comment on the significance of the "tears running from my eyes" and the symbol of "the striplight".

Evaluation

The candidate offers **an evaluative stance with respect to the text provided** but also **demonstrates some weakness in relevance** because of the failure to engage with the significance of the death of the father and the paucity of comment on the hawk.

This is, in some ways, a flawed response. However, given the candidate's analysis of their selected elements of the text, this response (holistically) just meets the standard described in the 12-10 range and is awarded 10 marks.