

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 6

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **18 marks**.

Section D – The Hard Problem

Question: Discuss some of the ways in which Stoppard creates tension among the various characters presented in this scene.

Understanding

The candidate shows a **secure understanding of the central concerns of the text provided**. The focus on the question is present straight from the beginning (the very first sentence offers an analysis of the tension provided in the opening stage directions), and there is a relentless drive to answer the question throughout. The approach of this response is chronological, which works well given their aim is to establish how tension is built. It is therefore a **relevant exploration which demonstrates secure consideration of the implication of the question**. Throughout, there is a **use of textual evidence which clearly supports the demands of the question**.

Analysis

This response contains a lot of analysis: it starts by analysing the “tight and restrictive” setting and the silence on stage. Dialogue is discussed throughout; “short and sharp ... questioning dialogue”; “stuck up and demeaning ... leading to competitive friction ... sizes the other up” etc. The candidate also discusses the use of Julia as a character who introduces “uncomfortable topics” to help us see Hilary’s back story. The analysis of Ursula is less successful, but there is a reference to the “close, awkward” stage directions which “heighten the tension”. Thereafter the candidate is more successful: “Hilary is both reminded of the troubles in her past and the problems she must face in the future”. The candidate also notes that “Hilary is never given a minute alone.” “The stage directions are key in increasing the tension ...” Overall, there is a **relevant analysis of a task-appropriate range of literary techniques which strengthens the approach adopted by the candidate**.

Evaluation

There is reference to audience and the play is treated as a play right from the start. The candidate evaluates the effectiveness of the dialogue, in terms of characters, but also tone and content, eg when summing it up as an “academic class divide”. The candidate shows how “this debate and competitive atmosphere rises to a climax when Hilary pulls out her trump card”. There is often a **clearly**

identifiable evaluative stance with respect to the text provided and the question, and securely based on evidence discussed within the response.

Overall, the response fully meets the descriptors set out in the band range 18-16, and is therefore awarded a mark of 18.