



**English (Advanced Higher):
Project-dissertation**

**Commentary on candidate
evidence**

Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for the coursework assessment component.

Candidate 1

The candidate was awarded **26 marks**.

Topic

The topic of this dissertation focusses on: 'How does Catholicism influence relationships in *Brideshead Revisited*?' This is a relevant topic which looks at an appropriate and challenging choice of single text at this level of study.

In the introduction, the candidate begins by outlining their approach quite precisely when they state that '*Catholicism dominates the book*' and that the '*most affectionate bonds within the book – Sebastian and Charles, Julia and Charles – are confronted and overshadowed by Catholicism.*'

Knowledge and understanding

In this dissertation, the candidate shows that they have a secure knowledge and understanding of the text as a whole and this demonstrates some insight into the issues explored. The candidate also carries out a relevant exploration of the novel which demonstrates a secure consideration of the implications of the task. They employ extensive textual evidence to support the demands of their task, demonstrating this with selections from across the breadth of the text.

On page 1, the candidate outlines the relationship Charles Ryder has with Sebastian Flyte whom '*he develops a love for*' and then how Charles later falls for '*Sebastian's sister Julia*'. They also go on to touch upon the '*the impractical love*' Charles has for Sebastian as they are '*living a life of hedonism and debauchery [...] doing as they please*'.

On page 2, it is observed that '*Sebastian lives the remaining days at Oxford in the shadows, under his mother's imposing eye,*' and that he '*finds respite from religion in his alcoholism*' and that as his '*alcoholism worsens [his] rapport with Charles suffers*'.

At the bottom page 2, the candidate notes that Sebastian and Charles's '*bond is eventually reduced to nothing more than a familiar tie*' and on page 3 that '*Catholicism has ruined any love [Charles] and Sebastian shared*'. The candidate then moves on to explain that Charles and Sebastian's '*friendship fragments and each character is left isolated and pained*' and continues to offer an understanding of both main characters in that Charles '*spends "ten dry years" alone and listless*' and that Sebastian flees '*abroad from his mother and the*

feeling of persecution from his religion' only to struggle 'for the rest of his days as a lowly under-porter, after begging himself entry into a monastery in Tunis'.

Comments are then made about Julia at the bottom of page 3 in that she *'finds herself in similar circumstance'* to Charles in that she also has an unsatisfying and *'unpassionate marriage'*, and then goes on to page 4 where it is observed that Charles and Julia *'are drawn together and share a great understanding of one another'* and *'a conquering love is formed between them'*.

The candidate then observes on page 5 that *'Charles and Julia have the most fulfilling relationship in Brideshead'* but that *'Julia struggles with emptiness in her human love – a consequence of her entanglement with Catholicism.'*

Finally, the candidate on page 5 looks at Lord Marchmain's return to Brideshead, and it is on page 6 where the candidate explains that Charles and Julia had had *'[a] love – strong and frank – undone by religion'* and would *'live isolated and loveless days, distant from happiness with another human.'*

Analysis

In terms of analysis, it is clear that the dissertation traces the interplay between characterisation, relationships and Catholicism and demonstrates a relevant analysis of a range of literary techniques which strengthens the line of the candidate's argument. Some examples are detailed below.

On page 1 this analysis begins with an overarching comment about the main characters where it states that *'[a] perfect love is offered by God, and the human love and happiness Charles, Julia and Sebastian find in each other is overshadowed and forfeited as a result'*; this is then broken down when individual characters and relationships are analysed, first at the bottom of page 1 when the candidate suggests that Sebastian's enjoyment of life only occurs when he *'is free, liberated from the shackles of religion and the pressures of Lady Marchmain'* and that his love of Charles *'lacks direction [and] lacks a future beyond a "romantic friendship"'* because of his Catholicism.

On page 2, Sebastian's alcoholism is described as *'an escapism from the pressure and humiliation targeted at his indulgent lifestyle'* where *'[m]erriment and autonomy are replaced by morose and listless confinement [and] it is now the only route to happiness for him.'*

On page 3, the candidate makes a further comment that Sebastian *becomes 'a lonely, loveless and empty shadow of his former self'* where his only *'solace and comfort are found in his dedication to the church, its community and its vows'* and at the bottom of page 3 and moving on to page 4, they comment on Julia's problematic marriage which leaves Julia *'unfulfilled and unhappy, longing for a greater love – a love that Charles later tries to offer her but a love she comes to believe [...] to be attainable only with God.'*

And on page 5, Cordelia's comment on Charles' and Julia's *"thwarted passion"* is analysed as highlighting *'the underdeveloped and restricted nature of their*

love which *'may be caring and heartfelt but it fails to flourish under the shadow of religion.'* Also, on page 5, the reference to Lord Marchmain's death is seen to engender *Julia's 'own reconciliation with God'* and on page 6, as Charles and Julia part, it is stated that *'[h]uman love is replaced with suffering for a perfect love of God'*.

Evaluation

The candidate has a clearly identifiable evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task which is securely based on a wide variety of evidence presented within the dissertation. The following select references made by the candidate exemplify the candidate's evaluative stance:

On the page 1 of the dissertation, the candidate makes a general evaluative statement in the second paragraph where they state that: *'Love is lost and replaced by a lonely yearning for God'* and that *'Religious guilt taints the freedom, tenderness and happiness shared by Charles with Sebastian and his sister.'*

They also comment on page 2 that Sebastian's relationship with Charles becomes *'one of unrequited, parasitic dependence'* whilst Sebastian *'cannot pursue romantic love – it is condemned by both his social and religious environments – and ultimately has to instead strive for a love with God.'*

On page 3, also evaluating Sebastian's relationship with Charles, the candidate writes that Sebastian *'has sacrificed the great love and enjoyment he had with Charles, for a secluded life of suffering to be with God.'*

On page 4, Julia's marriage and relationship with Charles are commented upon when it is explained that *'Despite her beautiful love with Charles – the peace, pleasure and unity she enjoys – Julia talks of the burden of her Catholicism, even in the formative stages with Charles.'* On page 5, the evaluation is further developed when the candidate states that, ultimately, *'Julia has neglected religion all her life, as best as she could, but it adversely dominates and commands, at a time when she has found happiness.'*

In the concluding paragraphs on page 6, the candidate explains that *'the two prominent loves in the book are eclipsed by religion'* and that *'Waugh punishes [the] secular characters whilst their backs are turned to God: Charles loses love and livelihood, and suffers a decade of dull years.'*

The final lines of the dissertation bring the whole piece together by articulating that: *'These characters may have lost happiness, love, and satisfaction at the hands of religion, but they gain comfort and solace from this same source, in their darkest hours'* and that we *'have sympathy for Waugh's characters'* as *'they all give up human love in search of salvation with God and, while they find comfort, they face a lonely and loveless struggle.'*

It is worth noting that this candidate often integrates knowledge, understanding, textual reference, analytical comment, and evaluation together and this is a strength of this candidate's approach.

Expression

Throughout the dissertation the candidate employs a skilful use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology, to develop an argument with a sustained focus on the task.

Range

The candidate's work meets each of the standards described in each of the four areas of the 26-23 band range.

Mark

To assign the mark, the detailed marking instructions indicates that where the evidence fully meets the standard described, the highest available mark from that band range should be awarded, and therefore this dissertation is awarded 26 marks.

Candidate 2

The candidate was awarded **22 marks**.

Topic

Comparative analysis of psychological impacts resulting from life under totalitarian rule in 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

The texts are valid for this level and the task is suitable to both. The approach taken to the texts involves characters being analysed in relation to depictions of mental health and trauma. In this dissertation the candidate manages to retain a sense of analysing the characters as literary constructs and so avoids some of the pitfalls inherent in any discussion of 'psychological impacts'. In the course of the dissertation, the candidate considers the depiction of Winston Smith and Offred and some of the other significant features of these texts.

Knowledge and understanding

In the introductory section of the dissertation, the candidate recognises that both texts use the genre of dystopian writing for '*underlying political commentary*' and that the central characters '*suffer very different experiences*' and '*respond in different ways*' (p.1). The discussion of the texts that ensues displays a broad knowledge and understanding of the texts as a whole. This is evident in the discussion of Winston and the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (p.1) and the contrasting system of power and hierarchies in *The Handmaid's Tale* (p.2); the societal control exerted over Winston and Offred (p.2); the use of narrative technique (p.3); the portrayal of Winston as one disconnected from his emotions (p.3); the depiction of characters at '*the limits of mental endurance*' (p.4); sex as a theme in the texts (pp.5-6); and the use of colour as a symbol in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The candidate keeps to the set parameters of the task and topic throughout the dissertation. There is a relevant approach to the task which demonstrates a broad consideration of the implications of the task. The candidate compares and contrast the two texts throughout the dissertation, keeping the focus throughout on the effect on the characters of '*living under totalitarian rule*'. The candidate discusses the central characters' '*spiral from rebellion into compliance*' (p.2). They recognise that '*the core values of Gilead differ greatly to Airstrip One*' (p.2) due to the fact that '*Winston does not have the same value as Offred*' (p.2) but also that both must '*adapt to living in a state of constant fear*' (p.3). The candidate discusses the differing impact of physical and mental pain on page 4 and develops this on pages 5-6 by comparing and contrasting the effect of sexual relationships on both characters. The candidate also discusses how Winston finds '*a purpose in rebellion*' (p.6) whereas Offred '*resigns herself to the punishment resulting from her actions*' (p6).

The candidate deploys relevant textual evidence to support the demands of the task which demonstrates selection from across the breadth of the texts. There is

appropriate use of quotation from both texts throughout the dissertation and direct quotation of material from a secondary source.

Analysis

The candidate provides relevant analysis of a range of techniques and these are used to support the line of argument. The candidate offers analysis of characterisation, setting, narrative technique, the significance of the sexual act and the use of colour symbolism.

On page 1 O'Brien's statement "*We control life... at all... levels*" is used to support a comment on the totalitarian goals of the Party. Winston's world is one of '*absolute control*' (p.1) whereas the setting of *The Handmaid's Tale* is a society of '*not total control but rather conditional control based on gender*' (p.1).

The candidate discusses the '*hierarchies in households*' in Gilead and makes an insightful point about Offred's '*loss of individuality*' but '*paradoxical level of importance . . . due to her childbearing abilities*' (p.2).

On page 2 the candidate analyses Winston and Offred's behaviour '*living in constant fear and coping with the trauma they experience*'.

Narrative technique is dealt with on page 3 with a discussion of Atwood's use of flashback to '*establish context*' and '*suggest(s) instability*'. The candidate notes how the '*jarring, unnatural jumps . . . within the narrative is the battle between Offred and her suppressed memories*' (p.3).

Page 3 also sees further discussion on characterisation through Winston's disassociation from humanity and Offred's use of the pronoun, '*One*' to distance herself from her situation. This is developed with a mention of Winston's '*turning point*' where '*his feelings control his thoughts*' on page 4 and the simile of water showing Offred's '*physical feelings... overpower(ing) her emotional suppression*' on page 5. The candidate argues that in Orwell's novel, '*. . . the influence of sex on rebellion differs greatly to *The Handmaid's Tale*, as sex does not replace the concept of rebelling for freedom but fuels it instead.*'

The penultimate section on pages 6 -7 deals with the symbolic use of colour in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and valid points are made about the significance of the bluebells, the Golden Country, Julia's eyes and the association of Julia with colour in the novel.

Evaluation

The candidate offers direct comparison of the two texts consistently throughout the dissertation. There is discussion of '*Offred's complex balance of self-worth*' (p.2) and Winston's alienation (p.3) linked directly to the respective societies of these characters.

'*The reader's use of hindsight*' is referenced on page 4 as a way to separate mental and physical impacts and the candidate is able to trace how both

characters become more reckless in their rebellion before the climax of each novel.

Effective use is made of secondary reading in the paragraph on colour (p.6) to justify why they are focusing on that particular symbol. It is clear that the candidate has adopted a relevant evaluative stance and that this is based on the evidence they have presented. The summing up of the candidate's evidence in the concluding paragraph on page 7 is an effective restatement of the points made.

Expression

Despite what might be regarded as the occasionally awkward turn of phrase (*'the overruling of physical feelings over mental suffering'* and Orwell's writing being *'reminiscent of cling film over Winston's emotions'* on page 3), the candidate is consistently accurate in their use of structure, style and language. They use appropriate terminology to develop an argument focused on the task.

Range

The dissertation can be placed in 22-19 mark range.

Mark

This dissertation fully meets the criteria for the range 22-19 and is therefore awarded the highest mark of 22.

Candidate 3

The candidate was awarded **18 marks**.

Topic

This candidate is choosing to write their dissertation on three short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and their task is: 'A critical comparison of Poe's exploration of madness in 'The Tell-tale Heart', 'The Black Cat' and 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. Both the choice of texts and focus of the topic are valid for this level of study and the candidate has also stated in their task that this will be a 'critical comparison' so the comparative nature of the dissertation will be a part of what we will look at.

The candidate states they will look at several linguistic features in order to construct their 'exploration of madness' and in the opening paragraph on page 1, the candidate initially identifies the unreliable first-person narrator, setting, characterisation and symbolism as the main techniques Poe uses to explore the theme of madness, yet they also touch upon the use of motif, foreshadowing, and pathetic fallacy as the dissertation progresses.

Knowledge and understanding

The candidate has an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the key elements/central concerns over all three texts as illustrated by the following general observations:

- ◆ First, the '*terrifying effects that madness can have on people [...] as the mental state of all the narrators in his stories seem to progressively worsen*' on page 1
- ◆ the '*mental decay*' of the narrator on page 3
- ◆ the building of the narrator's paranoia and lack of motive in 'The Tell-tale Heart' and the '*external influence*' of alcohol in 'The Black Cat' on pages 4 and 5
- ◆ the '*effect that the actual House has on the narrator*' and his mental health in 'The Fall of the House of Usher' on pages 5 and 6
- ◆ the '*helplessness of the narrator*' of 'The Black Cat' on page 6
- ◆ the differing representations of madness on page 8
- ◆ the importance of symbolism in exploring madness in the stories on page 9

Furthermore, the candidate demonstrates that they have a relevant approach to the task and – importantly, as they define a comparative approach within their task – makes a genuine attempt throughout to be comparative in dealing with their chosen texts. For example:

- ◆ At the bottom of page 3, the candidate comments that '*In both texts ['The Black Cat' and 'The Tell-tale Heart'] the narrator's rushed denial of madness results in the reader now questioning further events in the stories*'

- ◆ On page 4, they state that *'This could suggest that for the narrator in 'The Tell-tale Heart', his mad behaviour could be pre-existing and is not the result of external influences such as alcohol as in 'The Black Cat''*
- ◆ On page 5, they state that *'In 'The Fall of the House of Usher', the mental condition of the narrator initially seems normal, differing from both of the other texts'*
- ◆ On page 7, *'Despite the significance of setting in: 'The Fall of the House of Usher', there is a distinct lack of this technique in both 'The Black Cat' and 'The Tell-tale Heart''*
- ◆ On page 9, *'In 'The Black Cat', "eye" symbolism is used in a similar way to that of 'The Tell-tale Heart' but with a different resulting effect.'*

There are a number of textual references for each story, and they are relevant to the task and support the demands of the task, but there are some limitations in terms of the breadth of selection from across the stories.

Analysis

The candidate initially comments upon the use of the unreliable narrator on page 2, with comments which are applied to all three stories. The candidate notes that the use of the first-person narrative in Poe's three tales *'creates a feeling of claustrophobia in the reader as they are trapped in the narrator's mind and its incumbent madness with no release or reprieve.'* They then go on to add to this by asserting that the reader is drawn *'directly into the story'* and it creates *'a sense of intimacy between them'*. They continue to comment upon the fact that the narrative structure *'creates a storytelling atmosphere as if they are personally being told the story by the narrator himself'* and that due to the fact that *'the effects of madness on the narrator are clear to observe'* then it makes the reader *'question the clarity of the narrator's thought processes making them unreliable in the telling.'* These are relevant general comments on this particular literary feature which is used in all three stories.

The candidate then moves onto a more text-specific analysis of each story. The analyses of the three stories are interwoven throughout the dissertation, but it is possibly clearer to look at the analysis of each individual story to discern the level of analysis achieved by the candidate.

With reference to 'The Black Cat', the candidate makes a range of relevant analytical comments.

On pages 2 and 3, the candidate states that *'as soon as the story begins' Poe 'establishes the 'motif of denial' [...] to highlight the narrator's unreliability'* and that *'as the actions of the narrator become more obscene, his denials become less and less believable.'*

On page 5 the candidate explains that although *'alcohol [...] may not be the central reasoning for his abominable actions later in the story, it does seem to act as a catalyst for his continuing breakdown.'*

On page 6, the candidate then goes on to comment on the *'shift in [the narrator's] thoughts and feelings'* by explaining that it *'presents the awareness that the narrator shows regarding his decaying mental condition'* and that *'By doing so, Poe is highlighting the helplessness of the narrator, unable to prevent his own mental deterioration despite being aware of it.'*

On page 9, the candidate makes a relevant analytical comment on the *"eye" symbolism* in the story by stating that the cat Pluto *'has his eye cut out by the narrator'* and that this has *'significance as it is the first display of his demented violence.'*

Similarly, in 'The Tell-tale Heart', the candidate makes a range of relevant analytical comments to support their approach to the 'exploration of madness'.

On page 3, the candidate comments on the use of the rhetorical question which *'creates a direct link from narrator to reader, seeming to demand reasoning to justify the accusation of madness that he feels is being pointed at him.'* In another comment the candidate continues with the observation that *'The narrator's poor vindication for his actions proves they are not of sound mind and their mental state continues to become more fragile.'*

On page 4, the candidate moves on to more specific analytical comment in that *'the emphasis on both "day" and "night" further suggests the extent of his suffering and the word choice of "haunted" has connotations of the supernatural dread that is tormenting him.'*

On page 5, the candidate continues with the relevant analytical comment that it is *'through Poe's use of the exclamatory that the denial of the narrator is stressed – he is blaming another man's physical flaw, a blind eye, for his violent and irrational actions.'*

On pages 8 and 9, the candidate looks at the symbolism of the eye which indicates a *'lack of visual clarity and reliability that the narrator has when trying to look at and understand the world'*, and then the symbolism of the watch at the top of page 9 which *'symbolises the approach of death'* across his stories in general, but in 'The Tell-tale Heart' it goes to *'highlight the narrator's control over the time he takes to commit the murder.'*

Finally, in 'The Fall of the House of Usher', the analytical comments focus primarily on aspects of setting.

On pages 5 and 6, the candidate comments that Poe *'creates a connection between the narrator's mental state and the house by displaying the vexing and depressing effect that the house has on the narrator's feelings and thoughts'* and that the *'feeling of dread and melancholy is accentuated through Poe's gloomy word choice.'*

The candidate then looks at some examples of word choice on page 6 which suggest that *'Roderick's anxiety and paranoia [continue] to grow as the story progresses'* then comments on the symbolism of *'the House itself, which reflects*

the fear Roderick has through the atmospheric gloom and feelings of perpetual death that haunt those that visit' and that the 'House is a symbol of the family of Usher's disintegration.'

On page 7, the candidate initially comments on Poe's use of pathetic fallacy which is a *'symbolic interpretation of the narrator's mood'* and that the *'bleak ambience [...] also begins to reflect the feeling of a pressure, a burden that the narrator begins to describe as he approaches the house for the first time'*. The candidate finishes off their analysis of this story by focussing upon the *'motif of decay'* which highlights *'the effect that the house is having on the narrator's mind'*.

Over all three stories, we can see that there is a relevant analysis of a range of literary techniques as appropriate to the task.

Evaluation

In this dissertation there is a discernible evaluative stance with respect to the texts and the task based on evidence presented within the dissertation. The candidate makes several evaluative statements throughout the dissertation.

On page 2, the candidate comments generally on Poe in that he presents *'his narrator's behaviour and thoughts as a sort of rebellion against the established human order and civilisation.'*

On page 3, they state that in *'The Black Cat'* *'the tale progresses into a twisted and unmotivated hatred, highlighting the narrator's mental deterioration.'*

On page 4, the candidate comments on both *'The Black Cat'* and *'The Tell-tale Heart'* by explaining that *'By providing an alternative insight into other causes of madness, Poe could be suggesting that there are many different ways it can come about and that madness can be interpreted in different ways depending on the person.'*

On page 6, the candidate comments on the importance of setting in *'The Fall of the House of Usher'* by offering an evaluation that: *'Poe is trying to suggest that inner mental turmoil can be seen in the disrepair of the environment that people live in and by the way in which people live.'*

On page 8, evaluating the use of symbolism in *'The Tell-tale Heart'*, the candidate writes that *'society's interpretation of madness is subjective, and is not very sympathetic and understanding of the victim.'*

In the final paragraph of the dissertation on page 10, the candidate evaluates the wider point of the dissertation by stating that *'Poe uses madness as a way of adding a realistic fear factor to his horror works, as people may be afraid that they too will succumb to the horrors of insanity.'*

Expression

The final aspect of the dissertation to be assessed is the expression, and in this dissertation it can be seen that candidate makes consistently accurate use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/ analytical terminology, to develop an argument relevant to the task.

Range

As can be discerned through the commentary, this dissertation sits within the 18-15 band range in terms of Knowledge and Understanding, Analysis, Evaluation, and Expression.

Mark

Once again, with reference to the detailed marking instructions: as the evidence fully meets the standard for each aspect in the 18-15 band range, the highest available mark from that band range is awarded and so this dissertation is awarded 18 marks.

Candidate 4

The candidate was awarded **14 marks**.

Topic

An exploration of how Thomas Hardy uses characterisation, symbolism and key events in 'Far from the Madding Crowd' and 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' to convey his condemnation of the treatment of women in the Victorian era.

The topic chosen by the candidate is an appropriate one. The chosen texts offer a suitable level of challenge at this level and the candidate clearly states three areas of particular focus.

Knowledge and understanding

There is knowledge and understanding of the key elements and/or central concerns and/or significant details of the texts with some insecurities in this dissertation. In the main, the candidate offers an appropriate approach to the task albeit with some weakness in relevance.

We see this knowledge and understanding in the introduction on page 2 with the candidate establishing a link between Hardy and his characters followed by a statement about the three aspects of the novels to be examined. The rather assertive tone which can be seen throughout the dissertation is evident in this introductory section in some of its rather sweeping generalisations.

The candidate makes reference to key elements/central concerns throughout the dissertation. Knowledge and understanding of a range of characters is offered. Tess, Bathsheba, Fanny, Troy and Alec are all considered in the first six pages of the dissertation. Tess is identified as unconventional and contrasted with Bathsheba. The candidate refers to the innocence of Tess, and Hardy's description of her as '*a pure woman*' on page 3 and offers this as supporting evidence for Hardy's condemnation of the treatment of women because '*she wasn't at fault for what happened*'. Other characters are dealt with in turn. Angel's role in exemplifying '*the double standards that existed*' (p.6) allows the candidate to say that this '*also displays how women were treated differently from men*' (p.6).

Knowledge and understanding is also displayed in the examination of key events in the novels.

Finally, the candidate looks at symbolism and the connotations of the portrayal of Angel, Alec and Gabriel. There is reference to the irony of Angel being '*actually a major aspect of Tess's downfall*'; Alec '*popping up out of nowhere as if haunting her*'; and the connotations of Gabriel Oak's name. The candidate notes that the nature '*around Tess can often be used to describe how she is feeling*' (p.8) and that in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, '*the countryside is not always peaceful with no conflict*'.

There is, however, also some weakness in the relevance of what is considered. One example of this can be seen in the reference the candidate makes to Izz

Huett's comments about Tess (p.5), which does not support the candidate's line of argument in an effective way.

Overall, there is some textual evidence to support the demands of the task although this is often superficial in its deployment.

Analysis

The dissertation demonstrates some attempt to analyse literary techniques although there is some weakness in the depth of the analysis. The analysis of characterisation does not go beyond brief and rather obvious statements of character traits supported by quotation and reference to the text. Here we can see some examples of this:

- ◆ *'She also has a narcissistic nature, as she thinks she is too good for some men. We are shown this with Gabriel Oak: 'He wasn't quite good enough for me.'* (pp 3-4)
- ◆ *'Alec is also very deceitful as he acts very warm and kind towards Tess, only to then take advantage of her when she is sleeping and very vulnerable.'* (p.5)

The key events under consideration also receive a similarly cursory treatment. Here are two typical examples:

- ◆ *'When Alec takes advantage of Tess in the woods it is foggy, so the reader cannot 'see' what is happening. This leaves it more to the reader's interpretation, and a scene like this would not have been well perceived at that time as it was a very sensitive topic and still to this day.'* (p.6)
- ◆ *'During her walk, she is alone with crutches made from nothing but wood. She is also pregnant and starving . . . this scene shows she is the true victim of the novel.'* (p.6)

There is some appropriate analysis of symbolism: the angelic connotations of Angel and Gabriel (pp 7 and 8); Alec with *'fire behind him'* (p.8); the parallels between Tess and Hardy's use of setting (p.8); and *'the use of nature in 'Far from the Madding Crowd'* as already mentioned.

Evaluation

Throughout the body of the dissertation the candidate offers an implied evaluative stance with respect to the texts and task and there is at least one explicit evaluative comment.

Expression

There is some weakness in the use of style and language. Typical examples can be seen here:

- ◆ *' . . . she never lay emphasis on the face that Angel chose her'* (p.2)
- ◆ *' . . . he is already riding off into the sunset with another woman'* (p.6)

Although there is some attempt to use appropriate critical/analytical terminology, these weaknesses affect the strength of the candidate's argument.

Range

Although there is quite a lot of reference to key elements/central concerns and significant details of the two novels and evidence of an appropriate approach to the task, the areas of relative weakness in evaluation, analysis and expression lead to the dissertation being placed in the 14-11 mark range. This is a good example of how a holistic assessment judgement has to be made.

Mark

Since this dissertation fully meets all the descriptors of the 14-11 range, it is awarded the highest mark in this range: 14.