

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 3

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

The candidate was awarded **30 marks**.

Topic: *“Reading well: a critical analysis of the theme of seeing clearly in Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice and Emma, with particular reference to narrative voice, characterisation and structure”*

Task

Despite the perhaps slightly odd wording of the theme (explained throughout “folly and blindness ... self-knowledge ... moral clarity”) the candidate gives a very clear indication of what they intend to do. This is achieved through a clear task, the complexity of which is explained and deepened in the very first paragraph; texts of obvious literary merit at Advanced Higher level; and specifying narrative voice, characterisation and structure.

Knowledge and Understanding

The candidate shows **comprehensive knowledge and understanding** of both texts; the candidate gives a finely judged introduction to both novels and unpacks the task: “readers ... experience the same faulty vision as the protagonists; blind to the narrative complexity and colluding in Elizabeth’s and Emma’s blindness, we too must develop greater moral clarity by the end of the novels”. **Sustained insights** into the theme of seeing clearly pervade the dissertation. References to both texts are **clearly focused** on the task; the selection is finely judged and skilfully embedded throughout.

Analysis

The candidate offers a **relevant analysis of range of techniques** (especially good on “the shifting ironic narrative voice”, giving three different examples of “Elizabeth’s subjective viewpoint”, “ironic authorial” to “direct authorial judgement”); “... yet the reader, so immersed in Emma’s mind, is seduced into seeing things as she does” and there is a constant reference to topic. Characterisation “seems to offer clues to misjudgements”. The candidate first discusses Elizabeth (who, the candidate argues, is presented as intelligent and likeable by the author, which leads to us both liking and believing her). The analysis of characterisation then moves on to Emma: “her interior or moral landscapes are pointedly not commented on and once again, readers of Jane Austen must realise the folly in believing first impressions”. The candidate chooses another example where the lack of authorial comment adds to the effect of the characterisation (Emma) and comments on the dramatisation of another character (Mr Knightley) in order to elucidate the reader’s response.

The candidate comments on the “structural pattern of realisation and resolution”; structure is dealt with implicitly (and very successfully) throughout; the candidate develops the argument of the reader discovering differing layers of reading

throughout the dissertation, and the structure of the novels is integral to this process.

Thereafter the candidate moves back to characterisation of Elizabeth; her overconfidence in her own opinions is what leads her to misinterpret things; we as reader trust her and are therefore misled ourselves.

On the final page, skilful reference **strengthens the line of argument** in a summing up: Elizabeth realises she's been "blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd" and "pride and prejudice is replaced by clarity, followed by the reader's realisation that all the clues were there, but just missed."

Evaluation

There is a **clearly discernible, committed stance, skilfully based on extensive textual reference**, throughout. The evaluation of the characterisation of Elizabeth, *her* prejudice and the reader's prejudice is very elegantly summed up by textual reference to the text: "How humiliating is this discovery?" Sometimes the evaluation takes the form of a genuine and direct outburst: "The moment of realisation is an extraordinary passage: "Emma's eyes were instantly withdrawn ..." The authorial voice reports her eyes were "withdrawn" as Emma is finally looking inward to her own heart, no longer blind to the truth it hides".

Expression

This is a very articulate candidate. There is a **skilful and considered structuring** of the argument which presents the unpeeling of layers of realisation for the reader in the reading of both novels. The argumentation is **sustained**, precise and cohesive. Imagery of being blind and seeing is subtly used throughout, which reinforces the topic as well as analysis and evaluation. "The deeper satisfaction for the reader lies in the *process* of reading" which is exactly the same with this dissertation (despite its length: just over minimum).

Range: 30-27

Mark: 30