

# Commentary on candidate evidence

## Candidate 9

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

The candidate was awarded **27 marks**.

**Topic:** *“A comparative study of the theme of the process and development of religion, belief and worship in Small Gods by Sir Terry Pratchett and American Gods by Neil Gaiman”*

### Task

This is an interesting choice of topic with a specific and clear focus. It is illustrative of how candidates can opt to analyse engaging texts by popular authors and produce good quality work.

### Knowledge and Understanding

The candidate displays a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the texts. After the epigraph, there is a brief summary of how “both central characters come into contact with the divine”. This is followed by a statement identifying the commonality between the texts: “both texts see man’s requirement for belief as a simple fact of our nature”. The candidate then elaborates on the points made and this is typical of the candidate’s approach throughout the remainder of the dissertation, which demonstrates sustained insight into the implications of the task. This is evident in many places: Gaiman’s idea of religion as “simply a human construct”; the power of symbols; Pratchett’s belief “that all that matters is having faith”; the “dwindling and corruption of belief”; the observation that “corruption, warping and the death of religion are prominent in both novels” and the echoes in the texts of “current radicalism in the Middle East” and “the Nazis of WWII”. There is judicious selection of evidence to support the demands of the task.

### Analysis

The candidate offers relevant analysis of a task appropriate range of literary techniques. These include detailed comments on the authors’ use of symbolism; Pratchett’s references “to family – particularly paternity” and setting.

### Evaluation

Throughout the dissertation there is a clear sense of the candidate’s genuine connection with the topic and texts. This results in a committed, clear stance. The candidate’s sense of admiration for “these fine authors” is clearly conveyed through the analysis offered and is supported by perceptive comments.

Expression

There is some evidence of skilful and considered use of structure, style and language in this dissertation. The candidate switches from one text to the other throughout and keeps the “comparative study” to the fore. There are some minor lapses in style (“A picture is worth a thousand words after all”). There is appropriate use of critical/analytical terminology which develops a sustained and precise focus on the task.

There is just enough evidence to place this dissertation in the 30-27 range.

Mark: 27