

Introduction

The materials in this document have been prepared to exemplify the marking of candidate work in the Advanced Higher English Literary Study question paper. The questions are based on an early version of the specimen question paper which is no longer available on our website.

The work of seven candidates has been marked and explanations of how marks have been awarded have been provided. These are presented in the form of an extended commentary on each essay.

Some essays have been typed by candidates. Responses have not been corrected or edited in any way.

Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each question of this course assessment component.

Candidate 3

Discuss some of the ways by which poetry explores aspects of change. In your answer you should refer to three poems.

The candidate was awarded **10/20 marks** for this response.

The candidate's introduction addresses the question and how Heaney uses nature to explore the idea of change. The candidate chooses appropriate texts with which to answer the question effectively and outlines shared themes and style. It appears to be a relevant approach to the question.

The response has been structured appropriately using a horizontal approach. The candidate has split the poems into three parts in order to draw close comparisons between the beginning, middle and end of the poems. They begin by analysing how Heaney, in DOAN, creates a sense of the 'childlike enthusiasm' through the use of the poetic voice and use appropriate evidence to substantiate these ideas. They analyse sound devices and oxymoron before moving to a solid evaluative stance. As the candidate moves on to discuss The Barn they list two quotations. The candidate does analyse the impact of using 'statements of fact', the impact of word-choice as a foreshadowing device and is able to make a connection between The Barn and DOAN. As they move on to Personal Helicon, they are able to discuss the central concerns and the link between 'helicon' and the wells in the poem. The candidate draws all their ideas together in a concluding evaluative statement. It is basic, but focused on the question and the evidence explored.

The candidate moves on to look at the process of change, of becoming more 'self-conscious' and aware of 'consequences', which is a fair point to make. Their discussion of DOAN is focused; they use appropriate evidence and analyse the meaning and the impact of literary techniques. They discuss 'anthropomorphism', allude to the creation of atmosphere, and discuss the impact of sound devices and word choice. As the candidate moves on to discuss The Barn it marks a change in the quality of the response. They convey an understanding of the central ideas and use appropriate evidence in the discussion, but the analysis is weaker. This links to Personal Helicon, where we can see how the candidate attempts to wrench the meaning of '...a rat slapped across my reflection' in order to make a clear connection between the poems. This is much weaker and shows a lack of confidence in their knowledge and understanding of this poem.

In the final section of this candidate's response, there is a focus on looking at the evidence that 'change' has taken place. The candidate races through the analysis of DOAN and The Barn, omitting the deconstruction of the important metaphor, 'I was chaff'. They offer, instead, quite basic, assertive evaluation. They also miss close analysis of the ending of Personal Helicon, and the evaluation is quite basic. As they move to a wider evaluative stance, where they compare the ideas within the final sections of the poems, they make broad generalisations about 'overcoming fear', which are inaccurate. These generalisations do not move beyond the superficial. We can also see this in the conclusion. This essay begins in a promising way, but the end is weaker. We take, however, a holistic approach to assessment.

Knowledge and understanding

This candidate shows knowledge and understanding of these texts and takes a relevant approach to the question. They are mostly able to use appropriate textual evidence to address the demands of the question.

Analysis

The candidate is able to analyse a range of literary techniques and features of language, but this is not consistent within the response, and is limited in some respects in the latter half of the essay.

Evaluation

There is an evaluative stance, but it becomes fairly superficial and repetitive as the response develops.

Technical accuracy

This candidate meets the minimum competency for technical accuracy.

The candidate just meets the standard described to achieve 10 marks out of 20.