

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 6

‘Effective poetry emerges when a poet transforms his or her experience of the world into the universal experiences: love, loss, birth, death, regret . . .’

Discuss the effectiveness of a poet’s presentation of ‘universal experiences’ through the use of a range of poetic techniques. You should refer to three poems.

The candidate was awarded **8/20 marks** for this response.

The candidate has chosen to discuss three poems by Carol Ann Duffy: *Correspondents*; *Dear Norman* and *Warming Her Pearls* and in the introductory paragraph identifies the ‘different aspects’ of the ‘universal experience’ of love presented in the poems as the focus of the essay.

The three poems are treated in a serial fashion in the essay. The analysis of *Correspondents* begins in the second paragraph. The candidate offers a brief precis of the poem and then discusses the ‘metaphors and imagery, which Duffy skilfully uses to enrich the reader’s understanding of the experience of love’. The analysis of ‘we don’t have the language of bodies’ and ‘dark words’, whilst accurate, is rather limited given the significance of this motif in the poem as a whole. The candidate then refers to the use of contrast in the third paragraph and notes Duffy’s ‘descriptions of the narrator’s secret lust . . . are in stark contrast to the subdued and socially appropriate setting’ and offers textual evidence to support the point made. The paragraph’s concluding sentence offers a nod to the wording of the question, but the overall impression of this section of the essay is that it has demonstrated only limited analysis of Duffy’s use of literary techniques.

In the third paragraph the candidate moves on to discuss *Warming Her Pearls*. Analysis of the poet’s use of word choice (‘slow heat’; ‘persistent’; ‘naked’) is offered and in the paragraph which follows the candidate examines references to ‘heat’ in the poem but fails to deal with this in any real depth. This section of the essay ends with a slightly clumsy paragraph (‘In conclusion. . .’).

Dear Norman is the final poem to be examined. The candidate describes the poem as ‘rather strange’ and (unlike the other poems) one which ‘does not highlight the narrator’s love for an individual but rather the lack of it’. A somewhat simplistic comment is made: ‘In a similar way to “Correspondents” Duffy uses

imagery as a means of presenting the universal experience of love. . .’ but no attempt is made to compare and or/contrast its use in the two poems. Instead the candidate merely offers brief suggestions as to the connotations of ‘. . . there is no moon’; ‘he is equal with dolphins’ and ‘translucent on his palm a pearl appears’. The candidate then attempts to deal with structure but does not go beyond saying the final stanza is ‘very short and to the point’.

The candidate’s concluding paragraph refers back to the wording of the question and reiterates that Duffy examines love ‘from various different angles’ and that the poems are ‘not only reflections of her own experiences and feelings on this universal concept but the reflections of the reader’s emotions and experiences as well’.

Knowledge and understanding

The essay displays only limited knowledge and understanding of the texts — the treatment of each is thin. There is a limited approach to the question. Although a serial treatment of the texts is perfectly admissible, the candidate fails to offer any real comparison or contrast between them in the analysis.

Analysis

There is only limited analysis of literary techniques (mostly imagery and word choice).

Evaluation

There is only limited evaluation with respect to the texts.

Technical accuracy

The essay meets the minimum competence for technical accuracy. The essay is awarded 8 marks out of 20.