

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 7

‘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 **6/20 marks** for this response.

The candidate begins by stating that Yeats ‘is a perfect example of an author that has transformed his experiences of the world into several poems’. The poems to be discussed in the essay are *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*; *No Second Troy* and *The Song of Wandering Aengus*. The errors in the candidate’s writing of the titles are indicative of the errors in language (and style) which are evident elsewhere in this essay. The candidate then offers a serial treatment of the three poems. The analysis of *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* includes discussion of word choice (‘arise’) and Yeats’ ‘mimicking the style of the romantic poets’. The candidate quotes the closing lines of the poem but this merely serves to repeat the point already made in the previous paragraph. The discussion of the poem concludes with reference to rhyme but the claim that the chosen rhyme scheme ‘gives a slightly balletic feel to the poem’ is not explained or developed in any way.

The candidate then abruptly shifts the focus of the essay to *The Song of Wandering Aengus* and suggests the influence of Maud Gonne and Yeats’ interest in the occult as formative influences on the poem. The candidate deals with the symbolism of the hazel wood and the metaphor ‘a fire was in my head’ but the language employed in this section is sometimes too informal (‘no prizes for Guessing who’; ‘showcases’; ‘feisty’). There is discussion of the significance of ‘a glimmering girl with apple blossom in her hair’, the way rhyme gives ‘the feel of an Irish ballad’ and Yeats’ alterations to his source material. Any analysis offered, however, is very limited (‘The use of word choice here . . .’). This section of the essay finishes by pointing out the ambiguity in ‘take her hands’.

The final section of the essay deals with *No Second Troy*. Tone, juxtaposition, contrast and word choice are all referred to but, again, analysis of the effects of these is very limited. There is an attempt to discuss the simile ‘With beauty like a tightened bow’ but this lacks clarity and is clumsily linked to ‘after the events of the Easter rising when the black and tans were sent over with *carte blanche*’. The

candidate completes the discussion of the poem with comments on the final two lines.

The concluding paragraph of the essay refers to Yeats' writing style 'becoming more effective due to his life experiences'. The final sentence is weak.

Knowledge and understanding

There is very little attempt to answer the question.

Analysis

There is limited analysis of literary techniques.

Evaluation

The question demands that the candidate should 'Discuss the effectiveness of a poet's presentation of "universal experiences" . . .' but there is very little evidence of evaluation (even implicitly) in the essay.

Technical accuracy

There are significant errors (at SCQF level 7) in style and language. The essay is awarded 6 marks out of 20.