

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 7

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

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

Q11. Discuss the thematic significance of social status in any two novels.

Knowledge and Understanding

While this essay demonstrates knowledge and understanding of both texts and, in particular, how “the story of Pip” is used to explore the thematic significance of social status, the candidate’s choice of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* has led to a limited approach to the question. The essay takes a broadly narrative approach to Pip’s development and knowledge and understanding is supported by appropriate textual evidence: “I wish my boots weren’t so thick nor my hands so coarse”. Scrooge is dealt with “in contrast to Pip” but the assertion that “Scrooge is obsessed with social status” rather than money is another sign of the limited approach to the question evident in the essay.

There is further evidence of knowledge and understanding of the texts as the essay is developed: the effect of Joe on Pip; the effect of Tiny Tim on Scrooge; Pip’s relationships with Biddy and Estella; Scrooge’s loss of Belle; Magwitch as the catalyst of “Pip’s change in heart”; the change in Scrooge caused by Tiny Tim. The essay ends with a series of statements which sum up the line of argument taken: “Both Scrooge and Pip take journeys to realise the cruelty of their ways. They are shown the extent of their social class delusions . . .”; “. . . obsession with social order is used to highlight the pitfalls of society”; “They are able to realise the true meaning of life is happiness, not power or social class.” Textual evidence is used to address the demands of the question.

Analysis

The essay offers limited analysis of literary techniques. There is discussion of the presentation of the central characters and the use of selected minor characters from each text. The changes in Pip’s character are referred to and supported with textual evidence e.g. “. . . he begins to become ashamed at the man he once looked up to: ‘If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money’. Here Pip is characterised as cruel as he disregards Joe merely because of his social class.” Attempts to offer similar analysis of Scrooge are less successful in terms of relevance to the question: “It becomes more clear to Scrooge that money does not equal happiness”.

Evaluation

Although there is a clear evaluative stance in evidence with respect to *Great Expectations*, the essay struggles to make *A Christmas Carol* fit this question and so shows evidence of only a limited evaluation with respect to the texts.

Technical Accuracy

This essay demonstrates minimum competence for technical accuracy.

A mark of 9 is awarded.