

Candidate 12

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

The candidate was awarded **18 marks**.

Section D – Buried Child

Question. Discuss in detail the dramatic techniques Shepard uses in this extract to portray the complexities of family life in the interactions between Dodge, Halie, and Tilden.

Understanding

The candidate has a 'secure understanding of the central concerns of the text provided' in that they come to an immediate understanding that the 'mother is always there for everyone ...making sure everyone else is doing okay' and that the family may well be in 'denial' about some unspecified issue. They also note that most conversations end up in some sort of 'conflict' and that isolation lies at the heart of much of the extract. The candidate notes that Dodge is 'pessimistic' and that he may be 'drinking away his pain in his son dying'. They note that Halie is 'angry and frustrated', is isolated in her own right, and that Tilden is a victim of the 'unloving nature' of his father. There is reference to 'isolation and neglect' in particular being a part of his life in the family household. Finally, the candidate notes it is the death of Ansel which may lie at the heart of the discord in all the relationships in the household. The candidate clearly makes a 'relevant exploration' which demonstrates secure 'consideration of the implications of the question' in that the relationships between all three characters are explored in terms of their issues and complexities. The candidate employs an 'extensive use of textual evidence' which clearly supports the 'demands of the question' throughout the response. All of these positive aspects of understanding place this response within the 18-16 mark range.

Analysis

The candidate delivers a 'relevant analysis of a task-appropriate range of literary techniques ...which strengthens the approach adopted by the candidate'. They look at characterisation, conflict, symbolism, staging, stage directions, repetition, monologue, and they are aware of the extract as a piece of drama when they note that Halie is not present on stage and that Halie, at the end of the extract, 'begins to address the audience'. Throughout the response the candidate analyses a range of apposite textual references: they analyse Dodge's discussions on the weather by interestingly stating that this could be some sort of 'stress reaction' to the death of his son; they explain that the constant repetition shows that 'people aren't listening closely enough, aren't interested, are in their own world, aren't paying attention' and this in itself could be 'a symbol of how isolated each character feels'; the candidate discusses how the conflict between Halie, Dodge and Tilden 'could be a sign of their frustration as they are dealing with the loss of their son/brother'; the 'long silence' is seen to be indicative of Halie's upset at comments made in the horseracing dialogue. Halie's frustration and anger is also analysed. The symbolism of the corn is analysed as being

indicative of the fact that Tilden's 'mother and father never believe him or believe in him'. The candidate notes with some insight that Halie's monologue shows the complexity of the family dynamics when she reveals 'little important details about the family members' and that as she 'sort of begins to address the audience as if she is speaking to someone not in the house', this could further suggest her own isolation. There is an undoubted range of analysis which is relevant and which strengthens the response, but there are moments where there the analysis is not as clear, for example the discussion on religion and Dodge taking his pill: 'Religion can often be a link to society and societal pressures as often religion and society go hand in hand. Therefore, she may be indicating that the pill is really ideal in religion or societies [sic] eyes, but, they will turn a blind eye.' This is perhaps less clear, but holistically the analysis is seen as relevant and it strengthens the approach adopted by the candidate and this aspect of the response is placed within the 18-16 mark range.

Evaluation

The candidate's evaluation is 'clearly identifiable' in that they see the overarching discord between all three characters and link it directly to the death of the younger favoured son. This stance is securely based on 'evidence discussed within the response' and this places the evaluation also within the 18-16 band range.

As this response fully meets the standard described within the 18-16 mark range it is awarded 18 marks.

Mark: 18