

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 8

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

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

Section D – The Hard Problem

Question: Discuss some of the ways in which Stoppard creates tension among the various characters presented in this scene.

Understanding

The candidate's approach to this response – as defined in their introductory paragraph – is to look at stage directions, structure (which is, more accurately, *sentence* structure), and word choice to show how Stoppard conveys tension. In terms of the central concerns touched upon in this response, the candidate primarily focuses upon the early tension between Amal and Hilary and the fact that Amal is superior and intimidates Hilary. The candidate then skims over the scene where Julia mentions Hilary's past, and also the scenes involving Leo and Jerry at the end of the extract.

There is a limited understanding of the central concerns of the extract due to the limited understanding of the tension displayed throughout the extract, and as such the approach to the question is limited. Also, in terms of the range of techniques being looked at and the nature of the techniques being looked at, the response can be seen to be limited.

The textual support is limited in that only two brief quotations are used to look at stage directions ("size him up" and "uneasy"); two for sentence 'structure' with Amal and Hilary ("My degree is in maths [...] We already published a paper which I've got my name on." & "wow"); one for [sentence structure for the Julia/Hilary scene ("Hilary: I had the baby."/Julia: Oh I wasn't asking ...!"]); one for [sentence] structure Amal/Leo ("Are you kidding? – A brain doesn't come close!"); and two for word choice ("sideshow" and "mysticism").

Analysis

The analysis of the quotations highlighted previously is not taken far. For example, the comments on stage directions explain that they create a "tone of rivalry", "mild hostility", and "discomfort"; on sentence structure, the long list of Amal's achievements goes to show Amal's "boastfulness", that Amal "feels himself to be above Hilary" / "superior", and shows his "pride"; with Julia's mention of Hilary's baby the candidate explains that this shows the topic was "a touchy subject"; with Amal's challenge to Leo, the candidate states that "he completely disagrees with Leo"; and finally the word choice of "sideshow"

suggesting “Amal doesn’t feel Hilary is as equipped for the job” and “mysticism” suggesting Amal “believes [Hilary’s] ideas to be a fairytale”.

Overall, these analytical comments can be said to be limited throughout, and places the analysis within the 9-6 band range.

Evaluation

This evaluative response is defined as limited in that it does not go beyond the simple statements that there is “clear tension” which “helps build a tone of rivalry”, “degree of competitiveness” and as such, this response falls into the 9-6 band range.

The evidence provided fully meets the requirements for band range 9-6 so is awarded with the highest mark in the band range 9 marks.