

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each question of the critical reading question paper.

## Candidate 2

### Section 2 – Question 11

**Choose a poem which explores conflict or change or disappointment. By referring to appropriate techniques, explain how the poet explores conflict or change or disappointment and discuss how this enhances your appreciation of the poem as a whole.**

The candidate was awarded **12 out of 20 marks** for this essay.

The candidate has chosen to answer question 11 on 'Havisham' by Carol Ann Duffy. The introduction identifies the focus of the essay as 'conflict' and mentions Havisham's 'conflicted feelings towards her ex fiancé.' The essay then works through the poem, with a paragraph on each stanza, leading to a concluding paragraph.

The essay sits at the top of the 12-10 category, with relevant analysis of techniques, and some clear understanding of the character depicted in the poem. However, the line of thought is less developed as, despite the mention of Havisham's 'conflicted feelings' in the introduction, the idea of inner conflict is not fully addressed in the essay. There is generally adequate, rather than clear, textual evidence. For these reasons, the essay remains at the top end of 12-10, rather than edging into the 15-13 category.

The candidate stays focused on the idea of conflict throughout and structures each paragraph around the analysis of one or two appropriate quotations from each stanza in turn. This is an adequately structured line of thought: each stanza is featured, but only through analysis of a small number of specific quotations.

The essay's introduction identifies the poem as a dramatic monologue, briefly outlines the speaker's situation, and lists some techniques used in the poem.

The paragraph on stanza 1 focuses on "Beloved sweetheart bastard", with the analysis concentrating on "bastard" and the 'anger' she feels at the 'someone' 'who it is addressed to' and whom 'she has conflict with'. The internal conflict implied by the juxtaposition of "Beloved sweetheart" with "bastard" is not dealt with, as 'now all she feels is anger'. The analysis does in places edge towards clear, with comments on the impact of the short sentence and the plosive sounds, creating the impression that 'she is spitting it out because she is bitter and enraged'.

Analysis of stanzas 2 and 3 link the chosen quotations to the 'conflict she feels towards her ex fiance' and 'her anger towards her ex'. Stanza 2 focuses on the words "spinster" and "stink". The candidate comments on the positioning of "spinster" in a 'one word sentence' along with 'sibilence' which is a 'reminder of a snake'. The analysis of "I stink and remember" has elements of clear, for example 'she is rotting away in her own filth ... but also rotting away in the bad memories.'

The paragraph on stanza 3 focuses on the words "body" and "bite awake". The candidate comments on speaker having 'reduced him to just a body ... dehumanising him and demonising him' and on the idea of awakening 'to the harsh and bitter truth' after 'sexual pleasant dreams'. The use of present tense is mentioned as adding to the 'conflict as her anger ... has not yet abated, causing her to be violent.'

The candidate's discussion of stanza 4 is more nuanced, with an awareness that 'Havisham is experiencing conflicted emotions of love towards him and anger towards him'. The essay deals with the use of juxtaposition, enjambement and imagery in "Love's/hate behind a white veil"; this example is used to illustrate the speaker's inner conflict. The paragraph ends by showing how the poem's final line 'really ties in the theme of conflict ... as she has hit her final breaking point'. The candidate's adequate evaluative stance is evident here.

In the conclusion there is some awareness that the 'conflict she feels towards her ex' has led to the 'conflict she is going through'. The candidate ends by returning to the list of techniques mentioned at the start of the essay.

The essay sits at the top of the 12-10 mark range. Understanding of the character and comments on specific poetic techniques are at times clear. However, the straightforward analysis and evaluative stance with respect to the text and task keep the essay in the adequate category. It was awarded 12 marks.