

# Commentary on candidate evidence

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

## Candidate 1

The candidate was awarded **18 out of 20 marks** for this section of the question paper.

### **Question 37: Look at lines 1-5. Analyse how the poet's use of language creates an effective opening to the poem.**

The candidate was awarded **2 marks**.

The first point on “Not a red rose or a satin heart” suggesting the immediate subversion of expectations is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point is an acceptable comment on “It is a moon wrapped in brown paper”, linked to romance and suggesting that ‘meaningful ...gifts do not need to be fancifully embellished’. It was awarded **1 mark**.

### **Question 38: Look at lines 6-17. By referring to at least two examples, analyse how the poet's use of language conveys the challenges of romantic love.**

The candidate was awarded **3 marks**.

The first point on “It will blind you with tears” suggesting romantic relationships can cause ‘hurt & pain’ is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point on “a wobbling photo of grief” suggesting relationships can bring ‘heartbreak & loss’ is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The third point on “possessive and faithful” suggesting love can be ‘controlling’ is an acceptable comment (linked to the idea of challenges). It was awarded **1 mark**.

0 marks were awarded to the final point on “fierce kiss will stay on your lips” as the comment about memory is not focused on challenges.

**Question 39: Look at lines 18-23. By referring to at least two examples, analyse how the poet’s use of language highlights the speaker’s attitude to romantic relationships.**

The candidate was awarded **4 marks**.

The first point on “platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring” suggesting that relationships can be ‘restricting’ and bring about a loss of independence is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point is a more detailed comment on “lethal” suggesting that relationships can be ‘dangerous and harmful’ causing ‘pain and trauma’ and the ‘death of individuality’. It was awarded **2 marks**.

The next point on the ‘menacing tone’ of “cling to your knife” suggesting the long-lasting effects of ‘trauma and suffering’ is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

NB At this point, the candidate has gained full marks, however, there is a further point on “if you like” suggesting that ‘marriage is not an essential part of romantic relationships.’ This is an acceptable comment which would be worth 1 mark.

**Question 40: By referring to this poem and to at least one other poem by Duffy, discuss how the poet uses symbolism and/or imagery to explore central concerns.**

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

## Commonality

The candidate identifies areas of commonality by referring to *Valentine* and *In Mrs Tilscher's Class*.

The first point on *Valentine* is an acceptable comment on the symbolic use of an onion to explore the 'complexity of romantic relationships'. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point on the use of imagery of 'the sky darkening' and the 'storm' *In Mrs Tilscher's Class* to explore the difficulties of the 'transition between childhood and adulthood' is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

## Extract

The first point on "like the careful undressing of love" linked to the layers of an onion suggesting 'physical intimacy and affection' is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point on "its scent will cling to your fingers" linked to the smell of an onion suggesting the impact of a toxic relationship will 'stay with you for a long time' is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

## Elsewhere

### *In Mrs Tilscher's Class*

The first point on "heavy, sexy sky" suggesting this image is used to explore the 'weight' and 'burden' of 'sexual awakening' is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The second point on the pathetic fallacy of the "sky split open into a thunderstorm" to explore the 'darker and more unpredictable' aspects of adolescence is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

### *The Way My Mother Speaks*

The point on “browsing for the right sky” suggesting this image is used to explore the speaker’s ‘new sense of freedom’ and attempt to ‘discover her place in the world’ is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

The next point is an acceptable comment on “too blue swapped for cool grey” suggesting the contrasting imagery is used to highlight the ‘joy of childhood’ and the ‘more difficult adult life’. It was awarded **1 mark**.

### *Originally*

The first point on “shedding its skin like a snake” suggesting the image is used to explore the speaker’s loss of her ‘sense of self identity’ is an acceptable comment. It was awarded **1 mark**.

0 marks were awarded to the next point on “Big boys eating worms” as it is not used as imagery in the poem.