



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 4

Cambridge IGCSE™ / IGCSE (9–1) Literature in English 0475 / 0992

For examination from 2023



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Contents

Introduction.....	4
Question 1.....	6
Example Candidate Response – high.....	6
Example Candidate Response – middle.....	11
Example Candidate Response – low.....	15
Question 2.....	19
Example Candidate Response – high.....	19
Example Candidate Response – middle.....	25
Example Candidate Response – low.....	29

Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9–1) Literature in English, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2023 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates.

Please refer to the June 2023 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

June 2023 Question Paper 42

June 2023 Mark Scheme 42

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- or low level response for each question. In the left-hand column are the candidate responses, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>1</p> <p>The poem "Urban" tells the story of a man who migrated from the countryside to the city. He conveys his longing for the countryside and his old life throughout the poem. His feelings are expressed effectively through metaphors and emotive language.</p> <p>The poem does have a consistent rhyme scheme but consists of enjambment occasionally, which perhaps symbolises that even though his life is organised, with a particular fixed rhythm, his mind is at an unrest, longing for nature and peace. Another interpretation is that he dislikes this live.</p>	<p>1 The candidate writes an introduction based on the rubric but shows clear overall knowledge of the content and emotions of the whole poem. There is a clear focus on the state of mind of the character – answering the question – and the poet's purpose.</p> <p>2 This comment shows critical understanding of the poet's choice of form commenting on the effects of rhyme.</p>

Answers are by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level. Discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.

Examiner comments are alongside the answers. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams so you can help your learners to refine their exam technique.

How the candidate could improve their answer

- For higher marks, we should expect clearer critical understanding of how the poet dramatises the life of the man through use of the present tense and exploration of the man's life and dreams.
- There might have been a stronger contrast between dreams and reality, especially in the first and third stanzas, and more exploration of the ambiguities of the poem such as why the man only 'claims' he loves the river or why the city provokes burning passion, despite its 'clamour'

This section explains how the candidate could have improved each answer. This helps you to interpret the standards of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine their exam technique.

Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Most candidates understood that the poem, by Nissim Ezekiel, was about urban life and the emotions of a reluctant migrant. They were helped by the rubric that preceded the stem question, as well as the bullet points and title of the poem.
- Candidates are advised to spend plenty of time reading the text and the guidance given in order to plan their response.
- It was quite a common mistake to read the poem as abstract aspects of mood, tone and imagery, but needed more s

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

Question 1

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

1 The poem "Urban" tells the story of a man who migrated from the countryside to the city. He conveys his longing for the countryside and his old life throughout the poem. ¹ His feelings are expressed effectively through metaphors and emotive language.

The poem does have a consistent rhyme scheme but consists of enjambment occasionally, which perhaps symbolises that even though his life is organised, with a particular fixed rhythm, his mind is at an unrest, longing for nature and peace. ² Another interpretation is that he dislikes this structured life, and would much rather live in life in the countryside where he is able to live with more freedom. ³

The first stanza of the poem conveys the man's thoughts ~~and dreams~~ about his past ~~life~~ and feelings about the city. The very first line expresses his feelings being far from home. "The hills" represent his home back in the countryside, and by saying the hills are "always far away", the poet conveys a sense of emptiness as his home and the life he wants is not within reach. ⁴ "Always" suggests permanence, creating a feeling of despair.

⁵ The poet then describes the life he has now, where he "knows the broken roads", and moves "in circles tracked within his head". The word "knows" indicates that he is familiar with the city roads, as all he does is moving "in circles".

¹ The candidate writes an introduction based on the rubric but shows clear overall knowledge of the content and emotions of the whole poem. There is a clear focus on the state of mind of the character – answering the question – and the poet's purpose.

² This comment shows critical understanding of the poet's choice of form commenting on the effects of rhyme, enjambment and rhythm relating them to the state of mind of the man.

³ The candidate now advances an overall interpretation based on both the structure and tone of the poem. This develops a personal response.

⁴ This comment elegantly conveys understanding of the first stanza and bullet point supported by well-integrated reference to details and interpretation of what the imagery of the man's thoughts and dreams suggests.

⁵ The present tense might suggest the 'life he has now' but line 4 indicates that the first stanza is actually a dream. This was a common confusion.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

suggesting lack of progress and goal, as well as boredom. The phrase "trapped within his head" indicates that ^{his mind} is stuck, and he is spiralling in a never-ending pattern. The poet moving in circles can be both literal and metaphorical – a fixed routine and being stuck mentally. Either way, it can be seen that he was not adjusting well to the city life.

Furthermore, the poet describes that the "river which he claims he loves is dry". The "river" here can be interpreted as his will and passion for life. He expresses that ^{as his passion is "dry"} he is no longer inspired to live his life. The phrase "he claims he loves" suggests that he was once filled with love and hope for life, but that faith is now gone. It is further emphasized through the phrase "before he wakes up and has his say", as it indicates not being passionate about life wasn't his choice, as it was all pre-decided before he "has his say". Not to mention that this phrase emphasizes the severity of his emotions as he expresses that he is drained of life even "before he wakes up". This hyperbole makes the readers worry and sympathize with him.

The second stanza expresses the poet's disconnection with the natural world, and once again conveys to the readers his longing for the countryside and how miserable his current life is. ~~The phrase "he never sees the skies"~~ The poet lists the things he cannot see or feel in the city. "never sees the skies", "nor feels the shadows of the

6 Nevertheless, there is sensitivity to ways in which the circular thinking of the speaker can be read literally or metaphorically.

7 This part of the poem is elusive and examiners accepted a variety of interpretations.

8 Here, the candidate continues to develop their personal and critical interpretation supported by appropriate textual reference.

9 The candidate sees the relationship between the stanzas and the bullet points. They appreciate the man's very different feelings about the city. Textual support and reference to the poet's methods follow.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

night", "welcomes neither sun nor rain". The negative conjunctive used such as "nor" and "neither", as well as the word "never", all convey a sense of discontent with ^{and being} separated from nature's beauty. Followed by ^{the} things he no longer sees or feels, the poet describes the sacredness and wonder of them — he describes the skies at dawn to be "born again", and the "shadows of the night" to "recline their fingers on his eyes". Both phrases suggests his intimacy with nature and therefore the pain to live away from it. In addition, the poet personifies nature in both phrases, indicating the nature is human to him, nature is his friend and he needs nature. The phrase "recline their fingers on his eyes" especially portrays this, as "recline" suggests of relaxation, indicating that the poet trusts nature. Not to mention he was referring to the "shadows of the night", as shadows are dark and can be frightening. However, he is not fearful of the shadows, instead, he allows them to "recline" on his eyes — which suggests his eyes are shut, which FURTHER highlights his intimacy and trust toward nature.

Stanza

The last ~~stanza~~ expresses the poet's dreams for his past life. The poet says he "dreams of morning walks, alone". The verb "dreams" suggests longing and conveys how much he misses the countryside. However, when a person "dreams", it is often related to things that are unrealistic or cannot be achieved. Therefore, perhaps the

10 This is sensitive comment on the use of negation and its emotive effect.

11 This shows sensitive comment on personification and how it shows the man's past intimacy with nature. The candidate goes on to explore the paradox of welcoming the dark 'shadows of the night'. Some stronger candidates went on to link this imagery to the unsettling elements of the man's dreams in the first stanza.

12 A further Level 7 skill is the integration of much well-selected reference to the text within the candidate's argument, which is demonstrated here.

13 This comment on the final stanza extends the commentary on the man's dreams but misses out the first line of the stanza ('The city like a passion burns') which should have focused the reader's attention on contrasts between the country and the city he lives in now.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

poet has no chance of returning to the life he knew, which makes us readers share his sorrow and feel sorry for him ¹⁴ Moreover, the things he "dreams" of are extremely simple – "morning walks" and "floating on a wave of sand". This on one hand conveys the simplicity and easiness of country life ¹⁵ but also realize what the poet misses – such simple things, are somehow not achievable in the chaos of the city as consequences of over-urbanization, ~~one~~ ~~again~~ provokes sympathy within the readers.

And lastly, the poet describes that at the end his mind still has to turn away from the simple nature he longs for – "beach and tree and stone", ~~and~~ and to the "kindred clamour" around him. The ~~polysyndetic~~ polysyndetic list ¹⁶ "beach and tree and stone" is a last reminder of the sheer amount of good things nature offers, and the phrase "kindred clamour" suggests that the city also offers a similar kind of noise, in the sense ~~that~~ that both countryside and the city are filled with sound. But while the sound of nature is soothing and nice, the sound of city is a "clamour" ¹⁷ meaning it is ~~excessively~~ excessively loud, and reflecting back to the poet's confused mind.

The entire poem is written in third person, which is extremely intriguing as the poet is ~~writing~~ ~~about~~ writing about himself. This can be interpreted that he ¹⁸ does not recognize the city him as

himself, but rather as a distant shadow ¹⁹ of him, as it was not what his heart truly desired ²⁰

¹⁴ This extends the candidate's earlier argument about the man's lack of choice and shows a relevant personal response, although it might have had more support from the text.

¹⁵ The candidate is better at illustrating the simplicity and 'easiness' of the man's dreams of his past life in the country than his complex feelings about the city.

¹⁶ There is detailed analysis of language and effects here.

¹⁷ However, there might have been more exploration of the cacophonous alliteration and curious ambiguity of 'kindred' here.

¹⁸ There is some confusion of poet and speaker here: poems are not necessarily autobiographical, even when the poet does write in the first person.

¹⁹ Nevertheless, there is understanding of the poem's nostalgic mood and sensitivity to its imagery especially in response to dreams and shadows.

²⁰ This is a strong script with many features of a high-level response. There is clear understanding of the text, developed response to the writer's effects, plenty of well-chosen textual support for a clear, detailed and developed argument. All Level 6 criteria are comfortably met. There are elements of Level 7, especially in the sensitive and detailed response to the second stanza, which many candidates found difficult.

**Total mark awarded =
20 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- For higher marks, we should expect clearer critical understanding of how the poet dramatises the life of the man through use of the present tense and exploration of the man's life and dreams.
- There might have been a stronger contrast between dreams and reality, especially in the first and third stanzas, and more exploration of the ambiguities of the poem such as why the man only 'claims' he loves the river, or why the city provokes burning passion, despite its 'clamour'.
- More exploration of the disturbed 'traffic' of his mind, the contrast of what is 'far away' and what is 'close', why those noises are still 'kindred' to him, and why the man moves away from his dreams back to reality at the end might have been expected in a Level 8 response. Critical understanding means sensitive and detailed examination of the poet's methods, including rhymes and sound effects, to interpret the poet's purpose in depicting the migrant in this way.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

1 In this poem the poet makes the reader feel a sense of nostalgia, isolation and sadness. This is wonderfully created with the themes of nature, city, dreams and remembrance. The poem consists of three stanzas each containing six lines displaying the smooth and rather poignant migration of the reader. Additionally, the poem has a fixed rhyme scheme throughout the whole poem consisting of a A, B, C, A, B, C rhyme scheme, flowing throughout the whole poem to show the repetition and ~~disconnection~~ ^{of dreams} disconnection of the man.

In stanza one ~~starts~~ ^{starts} the poem with a statement "The hills are always far away," which is used to create a setting for the dream. Using the word "always" conveys a feeling of remembrance and how the man remembers nature. Additionally, "always" could suggest how ~~the~~ following the man's migration the once omni-present distant hills are always far away and not in the city. In the second line of the stanza the poet begins the line with "He knows the broken roads, and moves", using the third person pronoun to begin this line ^{using the} conveys the effect that the man is looking ~~at~~ into his dream and his past life watching, what he once had but doesn't anymore. Furthermore ^{the} poet brilliantly displays ~~the~~ imagery of

1 These comments show an informed overview of themes and structure, although they are rather general, and it is of course the man who has migrated, not the reader.

2 It is not necessary to list the rhyme scheme and more important to comment on its effect, but, assisted by the bullet points, the point about repetitive patterns of dream and disconnection is valid.

3 Commentary on the declarative opening statement and the effect of 'away' is more developed and detailed.

4 An interesting personal response begins to develop, with clear understanding of how the man has become distanced from his past life, whether willingly or not.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

5

~~The~~ nature, the use of a medial caesura after "broken roads" creates an effect that the line is broken, forcing the reader to take a pause before carrying on the ~~rest~~ road or sentence. The penultimate line of the stanza says "The river which he claims he loves" again beginning with the anaphoric "The" the poet has reserved use for when describing ~~the~~ nature. ^{creating a sense of slipping into the dream.} Additionally, ~~the~~ the poet's use of iambic pentameter in "he claims he loves" creates the feeling of insecurity and forgetfulness further strengthened by the use of "claims" as it conveys a sense of false hood. ⁶ Leaving the readers with a feeling of sadness as it seems the ~~the~~ man is forgetting what he truly yearns for.

5 This comment shows understanding of how poetry works, and the effect of rhythm on reading and interpretation.

6 Close reading yields understanding of the deeper implications of the man's feelings.

7

In stanza two the poet begins to describe the man's disconnection and dissociation of the natural world. Through a rather ominous and disheartening atmosphere leaving the readers with ~~the~~ the feeling of sadness. The man describes the skies at dawn to be "which, silently, are born again" displaying his disconnection with the natural world as the "silently" is separated from the line by ~~the~~ two medial caesuras forcing the readers to breathe before continuing. Giving emphasis to the word "silently" shows how the skies revolve around him ~~the~~ without disturbing or

7 Again, there is understanding of the effects of rhythm, but a stronger script might have explored literal meaning more strongly and picked up the contrast between the man's dreams before dawn, and what dawn is actually like in the city.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

notifying him. Additionally, the poet describes the night to be "recline their fingers on his eyes" the personification of the night conveys a sense of laziness and relaxation as the word "recline" is typically used to describe being laid back. However, the ~~poet~~ poets use of recline in this context suggest the skies are lazy and not worth noting compared to ~~the~~ the skies of his past life. Therefore, forcing him to disconnect and shut his eyes to the natural world.

In stanza three the poet begins again with the anaphoric "The" in "The city like a passion burns." this time used to highlight the city rather than nature, showing the migration and change of location. personifying the city to be a "passion that burns" conveys that the city is destroying itself and with that destroying everything inside along with it. Giving the readers a ~~the~~ feeling of sadness. The poet then goes to say "He dreams of morning walks, alone." The use of morning in this context creates a double meaning as "mourning" and morning sound the same, additionally, can be used in the same context. The poet gives way to this double meaning as in the first stanza ~~we~~ have already ^{the readers} already

8 The comment on the personification of the shadows of the night also shows better understanding of the technique than its meaning in context, suggesting that the candidate is focussing on individual images instead of the whole phrase. Laziness is not the mood invoked here.

9 The candidate misuses the term 'anaphora': many mid-level candidates try too hard to identify rhetorical features. They would do better to focus on the meaning of words and images.

10 The idea of the city destroying itself is perhaps closer to the meaning of the text but needs more support from other aspects of the third stanza.

11 This comment on a possible pun is less convincing but is further developed with direct reference to other elegiac aspects of the poem.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

be introduced to remembrance and essentially mourning a place forgotten and far away and mourning the "broken roads" and "circles tracked". However, on the context of "morning walk" the use of a medial caesura and terminal caesura separating "alone" ~~gives the~~ ~~poet~~ creates a rather ironic feeling as the man feels isolated in a city surrounded by many, whereas in the nature no longer subordinated by the urbanisation the man is left in solitude and feeling contented.

Overall, throughout this poem the ~~poet~~ poet excellently conveys the feelings of isolation, sadness and nostalgia, through the repetitive structure and fixed rhyme scheme. Alongside that the use of language, enjambements and caesuras the poet fully allows for the feelings of the man to be encapsulated by the reader, emphasizing ~~the~~ ^{his} imagery and feelings.

12 Similarly, an interesting comment is made on how the man's isolation is conveyed, but this could have been supported by more exploration of how the city is portrayed in contrast to the man's dreams. This was the approach to the third stanza suggested by the bullet points.

13 Concluding comment is accurate but rather general and shows the more complex ambiguities of the second and third stanzas have not been unpacked.

14 This response shows overall understanding of the mood and tone of the poem and appreciation of some of its deeper implications, such as the man's discontent and yearning for his past life. There is a developed interpretation and some developed response to the effects of the poet's language and rhythm.

**Total mark awarded =
17 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- All of the Level 5 criteria are met, and the response to poetic effects is sufficiently developed and illustrated to push the answer into Level 6. However, a clearer understanding of the poem as a whole, and of the individual phrases and images in each stanza, would be expected for a higher mark.
- The introduction and conclusion were both lengthy and rather general when a more forensic exploration of the text, stanza by stanza and phrase by phrase, guided by the bullet points, would have yielded a clearer interpretation.
- A close reading of this kind would have explored in detail some of the more difficult images, such as 'his mind its traffic turns' or 'kindred clamour', especially in stanzas two and three.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

1	<p>Plan</p> <p>Intro- Rhyming scheme repetitive</p> <p>P₁ - Some one died (death) (sady)</p> <p>P₂ - Ghost can't feel or see anything</p> <p>P₃ - Alone someone has died he's moved away from it</p> <p>Conc - sad death change city</p>
	<p>Answer</p> <p>This poem about the city has a ry rhyming scheme to suggest how repetitive of life in the city is compared to the countryside. This may be lifestyle or people around you. 1</p> <p>At the start of the poem the writer makes you feel that some sort of death has occurred for when the writer writes "The river that he claims he loves is dry, and all the winds lie dead." This could mean that someone he loved has just died with it suggesting he has gone crazy when it says "In circles tracked within your head" which could me also mean he's rethinking memories about his loved one and that he knows he for won't be able to get them back however is feeling very sad towards this death. This makes the reader feel worried and sad for the man as he has may have lost a loved one which is one of the worse things that could happen to someone. 2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>

1 The initial comment on rhyme scheme is plausible but very general and does not show focus on this particular poem or show overall understanding of its meaning.

2 The candidate finds textual support for their interpretation. However, the poem is not about a literal death, and the candidate is confusing metaphor and meaning. It is clearly the winds that lie dead, and there is no reference to 'someone he loved'. The candidate does not take into account that the man is yet to wake from what is actually a dream.

3 The candidate instead attempts to construct their own narrative about the character's madness and grief, which is not securely grounded in the actual words and meaning of the text. Nevertheless, there is some response to the images which circle 'within his head'.

4 The candidate constructs a personal response to what they think the poem is about, although this ignores its title and overt subject matter.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

In the middle of the poem the writer makes you feel as if the man isn't there and he is a ghost when it says "At dawn he never sees the skies" and "his landscape has no depth or height." ⁵ The first point suggests that the man isn't there anymore so can't connect with the beauty of the sky at dawn or that he is reliving his worse trauma. The second point suggest that he is ~~not~~ dead and that his landscape is nothingness as he can't see anything but it could ~~also mean~~ mean he doesn't ~~want~~ want to see anything as the fragility of tragedy of his loss is too much so ~~he~~ doesn't want to see anything. This makes the reader sad for the man as he may of had to relive ~~At the end of the poem the writer makes you~~ his worse nightmare and although it could be presented as he is dead it still makes us feel guilt towards the man as he may have lost something of great value to him. ⁶

At the end of the poem the writer makes you feel as if someone has died when ~~the~~ the writer writes "He dreams of morning walks, alone," this suggests that the man is comforting himself in his dreams ~~although~~ although when it says "alone" this may suggest that there used to be someone he would go on walks with and that that person is gone and he dreams of himself on these walks & just by himself as if he wish he was there but has left them and started a new life just in the city. This makes the readers feel happy for the man as he could be dreaming of happy memories of himself in the past but is now stuck somewhere he doesn't want to be. ~~It also shows that his~~ ⁷

⁸

⁵ There is a spooky element to the way the man experiences the silence of the city and the poet's references to the shadows of the night but there is no suggestion that he is actually a ghost.

⁶ There is some understanding, as it is true that the character has 'lost something of great value to him' but the speculative nature of this candidate's interpretation is especially evident in the lack of textual reference to support it.

⁷ The candidate is right to draw attention to the fact that the man dreams of himself being 'alone' but again is constructing a narrative of their own with only a little textual reference.

⁸ In very broad terms, the candidate does understand that the man is 'stuck somewhere he does not want to be' and wishes he were in the past. However, these are very general comments.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

man's life hasn't been easy and he wishes he was back in the past instead of in the city.

In conclusion, this man's life hasn't been easy as he ~~is~~ lost something or someone along the way and wishes he was back living in the past with that thing. This poem also suggests the change that city life has compared to the countryside as it is louder and very repetitive being shown with the rhyming scheme.

9 There is some contrast between city and country, but again these are general comments, not supported by comment on specific words and images in the text.

**Total mark awarded =
11 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- This response showed the dangers of reading poems as narratives with ‘hidden meanings’. Instead of reading the words and images of the text closely and exploring what they meant, this candidate just chose a few phrases, out of their context, and constructed a story of their own. That narrative suggests that even the surface meaning of the poem is not fully understood, but as there is some comment on the form of the poem and its images and mood, there is enough understanding for a Level 4 mark, although there are also elements of Level 3. The candidate does find some textual detail to support their reading.
- This candidate could have improved their answer by more use of the bullet points, which provide a way of organising and focusing the response to the stem question. In the case of this poem, they guided candidates through the meaning of each stanza, and gave some guidance about techniques, suggesting candidates look at contrasts between past and present, dreams and reality and country and city. The poem’s title is also a clear indication of its subject matter.

Common mistakes and guidance

- Most candidates understood that the poem, by Nissim Ezekiel, was about urban life and the emotions of a reluctant migrant. They were helped by the rubric that preceded the stem question, as well as the bullet points and title of the poem.
- Candidates are advised to spend plenty of time reading the text and the guidance given in order to plan their response.
- It was quite a common mistake to read the poem as about some kind of death or personal loss: this did fit some aspects of mood, tone and imagery, but needed more supporting detail, which the poem does not provide.
- Stronger candidates usually make good use of the bullet points, plan their responses after having divided the poem into sections, and are careful to ensure the meaning of sentences and phrases, instead of taking individual images out of context. Studying poetry also requires good knowledge of grammar. The structure of the poem also contrasts dreams, waking and the day ahead. Attention to time sequence, tenses and physical description can help understanding of a poem.
- In this poem, it was important to work out that the poet is speaking about a representative ‘man’: he is not presenting his own personal experiences. That is also true when a poet uses the first person: it is often appropriate to draw a distinction between the poet and the ‘speaker’. Candidates are therefore advised not to treat poems as stories or autobiography.
- Candidates should not simply hunt for images and poetic techniques without considering their context in the text. Focus should be on the meaning of each individual stanza or unit of sense, building up to an overall interpretation in the conclusion of the essay.
- Strong candidates can often give an overview of the poem’s mood or tone in their first paragraph, as well as showing clear understanding of its subject matter.
- However, the strength of an answer emerges when the conclusion shows greater sophistication of thought than the introduction, which is based on what has been revealed by a close reading of the text.

Further guidance, including some extracts from strong responses, is given in the Principal Examiners’ Report to Teachers.

Question 2

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

Q2

Through this extract, Sumner braves the harsh and hostile of the Arctic environment, attempting to jump across a large gap between ice floes and return to his ship. The moment is incredibly dramatic due to the anticipation built before the jump, the unsuccessful outcome of his takeoff, and the agonising attempts to escape death in the moments that follow. Sumner endures and fights, using every last drop of his strength, but is ultimately unsuccessful as he dramatically falls into the depths of the 'dark water'.

The writing makes the moments before and during the jump incredibly dramatic through the anticipatory build up to the action and the painful reality of Sumner's attempt, all while battling against the ferocious elements. Sumner's jump is so graphically described that we can easily visualise and feel the emotions running through him in the moment. When Sumner first arrives at the gap, he 'stops a moment'. This forces the reader to stop as well as we feel his calculations running through his head. ~~He first to~~ ~~ponder~~ ~~as~~ ~~simple~~ ~~and~~ ~~that~~. Then, he 'takes a step backwards and readies himself to make the short leap'. The combination of present tense and intense description of Sumner's preparation builds anticipation for this moment as the reader hopes for his success. While Sumner 'readies himself', we do too. 'Leap' indicates the energy and strength required in the jump to follow, making it feel dramatic and broad with the long vowel sound in 'leap'. The snow 'whips against his face', providing opposition as force is exerted on him in the opposite direction, ~~providing~~ building the reader's anticipation and demonstrating the force of this obstacle. 'Whip' connotes a whip, which is an aggressive object that induces immense pain, implying that the snow is incredibly painful. This stacks the odds against the protagonist of this extract, further increasing our desire and nervousness for him to make it safely across. The jump itself is described in succession, making it feel as if it is occurring alongside us in real time, a feeling that is exacerbated by the present

1 Strong introductory overview with reader response to the stages of the narrative. Even better if there had been explicit reference to the writing and writing style in the first paragraph.

2 More explicit reference to the writer's craft here and illustration of what makes the moment dramatic. There is focused comment on the effect of the writing.

3 Insightful focus on the effects of writer's choice of tense and descriptive detail.

4 Critical understanding of the struggle between man and nature supported by brief, well-integrated quotation and succinct comment on effects.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

tense. By using present tense, it feels as if anything could happen and Summer's future is undecided, hence creating a dramatic moment where the reader is eager to see what unfolds. The meticulous, almost mechanical description of the jump – 'he takes a short step [...] he bends his knee' – allows the reader to visualise the moment and his every movement in incredible detail. The ultimate failure of his jump and feeling are displayed through the final sentence of the ~~last~~ first paragraph. It is a long ~~comp~~ complex sentence made up of ~~12~~ seven clauses, reflecting the complex and chaotic nature of Summer's reaction. 'Clown-like and ludicrous' indicates a comical spin to Summer's body language, which contrasts heavily with the severity of the situation, as if his failure to successfully jump is a joke within itself. Ludicrous means unbelievable and outlandish, indicating the unexpected nature of his movement, making it even more dramatic. Clown-like connotes a circus, hence implying a feeling of dark and bitter comedy within Summer's fall. 'Arms spinning' conjures an image of a frantic windmill fighting against the unconquerable wind; the frantic flailing nature of Summer's body language indicates both his fear and desire to survive, as well as the helplessness of his situation.

Summer's repeated efforts to try to save himself create an incredibly dramatic scene as he is unrelenting, or is his failure to get up on the ice. Through verbs such as 'thrashes', 'heave', and 'strains', the writing conveys the struggle of his action, and the immense difficulty he is encountering while trying to save himself. 'Thrashes' indicates wild and inefficient movement, ~~conveying the panicked~~ connoting panic and a feeling of powerlessness. One would thrash against something more powerful in an attempt to live; Summer is not in control, which is incredibly dramatic. Summer fights to get onto the ice relentlessly, each sentence filled with sluggish and weighed-down language to

5 Top-level evaluative engagement with the writer's choice of present tense narrative and the reader's response.

6 The candidate now explores a particular effect in considerable detail and with insightful analysis.

7 Sophisticated evaluation of word choices in simile: far more impressive than simple identification of literary techniques.

8 There is flair and individuality in the candidate's own analogy here, showing personal engagement.

9 Concise synthesis of verbal detail (verb choices) and comment on their effect.

10 This shows what is meant by a developed comment on language, deftly linked to the question.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

demonstrate the enormity of his struggle. He tries to 'heave himself out of the water, but can't'. 'Heave' conveys he is heaving up something heavy, implying his body is completely drenched in freezing cold water. The 'ferocious breach' of the coldness actively fight to bring him down in this intense uphill battle. Ferocity is associated with power and intensity, indicating the strength of Sumner's natural opponent. Every movement he makes is a struggle in his battle to save himself as he 'crouches' and 'ticks' and 'groans'. ~~After~~ ^{During} his second attempt, he 'dangles in motionless agony', which is an incredibly dramatic reprieve from all the constant movement the moment has been immediately preceded by. 'Dangles' convey the helplessness and looseness of his power. Objects that dangle are often in an uncertain position, they could easily fall any moment. The ~~the~~ thing on which they dangle is often thin and weak, and in Sumner's case, that 'thing' is his arms. 'Motionless' prolongs the 'agony', the unbearable pain, as he has reached the roof of his strength and can push no further. Lack of motion is incredibly dramatic as Sumner teeters on the edge of failure or success; he is 'neither fully in, nor out'.

By his third attempt, nothing has changed. Sumner continues to struggle while exerting ungodly effort'. He is 'gaping and groaning', which are sounds that indicate pain and suffering, conveying the agony in which he is in. The repeated 'g' consonant is harsh, reflecting his situation, while the 'ah' in gasping forces air outwards in a gasp-like sound much like a sigh, which is quite appropriate in this situation. Although his third attempt seems no different from the others, there is a moment of hope. As he 'gains and extra inch or two' in which he believes for a brief moment that the balance is shifting in his favour', our hope ~~was~~ ^{are} raised in this emotional rollercoaster. The prospect of his survival becomes a real possibility, yet the brevity of this feeling is clear. ~~Thus~~ the suggestion that Sumner 'believes' in his potential success indicates it is not certain. Despite his belief, his

11 Further examples at a similar level.

12 More poised and sophisticated commentary based around sensitive analysis of well-selected words and developing an interpretation of Sumner's battle against the elements.

13 Insight into details, including sound effects: there can be poetic effects in prose narrative writing.

14 This is a subtle point and begins to appreciate that, although we share Sumner's perspective, the writing undermines his authority.

14

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

faith, anything could go wrong. And it does. His jaw painfully 'slams down hard' onto the 'sharp angle' of the ice in a sharp move away from the hope fostered within us only moments before. 'Hard' shocks us out of our hopeful trance and feels incredibly quick and unstoppable. The moments in the text for his of the paragraph are immediate and in succession or Sumner's downfall immediately becomes clear. Finally, he 'slumps' into 'the dark water and away.' The ferocious battle for survival that has been filled with nail-biting struggle and incredible detail has ended on a somber note. The emotional rollercoaster is over in the blink of an eye or Sumner's fate shifts from positive to negative in only one line. Sumner's repeated attempts to save himself and the prolonged and painful process that ultimately ends in his alluded death are incredibly dramatic.

The environment throughout this extract is incredibly hostile, proving a strong opponent to Sumner wherever it can, creating an incredibly dramatic battle between the two, which Sumner loses. The environment is harsh from the start, the snow 'whip against his face' is 'the air all around' whipping is painful and harsh, reflecting the feeling of the snow against his face, and the all-encompassing feeling conigned by 'all around' make Sumner seem overwhelmed and overpowered. During Sumner's first attempt to save himself, 'the water is up to his neck and the snow is falling more heavily.' The environment is unforgiving and only accumulates over time. 'More heavily' indicates that the snow was already falling heavily and is only worsening an incredibly hostile prospect. The feeling of having water up to one's neck is overwhelming, all limbs are trapped beneath the heavy water and are constrained. As Sumner fights to get up, his surroundings are unforgiving and cruel. They disregard him. The ice 'creak[s]' and 'yawn[s]' which connotes tiredness and lack of interest. The environment is diminutive and overwhelming.

15 The candidate's own critical writing shows personal engagement with the drama of the moment.

16 The candidate impressively combines commentary on the individual moment in the text with an overview of the direction and purpose of the writing, as the 'nail-biting struggle' is fully understood.

17 Clear understanding of the nature of that struggle.

18 Sumner battles an 'unforgiving' environment: there is forensic exploration of how it is personified even though the technical term is not used.

19 Instead, appropriate details are incorporated into analysis of their effect, and the candidate shows understanding of imagery by incorporating it into their own writing.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

again it is all 'around him', engulfing him. The possibility of him even being 'crushed between [the ice floes]' or 'lose[ing] consciousness and drown[ing]' are both terrible and painful outcomes. Any wrong move could kill him or seriously injure him, ~~conveying how hostile the environment is.~~ He cannot afford to make any mistakes while surrounded by such harsh unforgiving things. Ultimately, it is Sumner's environment that kills him and intensifies his potential success. While he believes for 'a brief moment' that the environment could possibly be acting 'in his favour', it ~~does~~ the opposite. The ice floe 'jolt[s] sideways', propelling him into the watery depths. Solting is sharp and quick and unexpected; the environment is far from accommodating. The 'sharp angle' of the ice makes the environment feel incredibly hostile. Sharpness is normally associated with knives, and can cut and cause damage. The writing conveys the environment's hostility via its unforgiving nature against Sumner's struggle as it overpowers and overwhelms him, leading to a dramatic death.

Through meticulous successive description of the jumps and the moments leading up to, as well as Sumner's relentless and painful struggle against an incredibly hostile environment, ~~the~~ a very dramatic situation is created. It is filled with high and low and intense anticipation as we watch Sumner fight for survival, a battle which he ultimately loses. The ending is brief and poetic; Sumner has a final moment of rest as he looks at the 'white' sky before descending to death. Whiteness is normally associated with peace and tranquility 'base' ~~or~~ ~~with~~.

20 The candidate reiterates the point here and gives an apt illustration from the final moments of the passage to show that its climax is critically understood.

21 There is strong overview of the drama of the whole passage.

22 The candidate summarises their overall argument very articulately.

23 This is a further important point which might have received more extended analysis in the appropriate place.

24 This is a highly detailed and convincing response which evaluates the dramatic effects of language with analytical flair. It pays critical attention to meaning and impact on the reader. It is well-sustained, if a little repetitive at times, and shows individuality and insight. It clearly meets the Level 8 criteria.

**Total mark awarded =
24 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- Not many candidates would be able to improve on this answer.
- It is a good example of how a very strong response does not need to make ostentatious use of literary terms, use abstruse critical vocabulary or import any extraneous knowledge, but simply show sustained personal and evaluative engagement with language and meaning in a close reading of the text.
- Nevertheless, it is not correct that Sumner dies at the end of the passage, as writers will very rarely kill their principal characters, having chosen to engage so closely with their interior monologue.
- There is some repetition, when it would have been better to explore one or two other aspects of the passage, such as the call for Cavendish (suggesting the reason why Sumner is so alone in his battle with the elements) and the poetic qualities of the final paragraph, which perhaps hints at some kind of redemption.
- A response at the top of Level 8 might have been expected to engage more explicitly with the writer's purpose, and the genre as well as the style of the writing, to show a critical purchase on the nature and perspective of the prose narrative.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

2 The writer makes this situation dramatic through the language used in describing the whole situation which Sumner is in. He creates drama by describing Sumner's efforts and by also referring to the environment he is in. **1**

Firstly, the writer makes the moment dramatic through the description of the moments when Sumner is taking action to overcome the obstacle he has encountered. The phrase 'Sumner stops a moment' immediately introduces the idea that something has popped up which may cause Sumner problems. The short phrase signifies an abrupt halt in Sumner's walking which reinforces this idea. **2** This brings tension to the extract. Furthermore the jump itself which Sumner does is written about in a way which makes the jump moment dramatic. When the writer writes that Sumner takes a 'short step then a bigger, quicker one' he implies that Sumner's actions are quickly done in a fast and urgent manner. **3** This sudden introduction of action makes the extract dramatic because it suggests that the Sumner undertook the jump with a sense of urgency and lack of care which brings ~~worry~~ ^{terror} in the worry into the reader's mind. **4** However, the worry was first instilled in the reader's mind when the writer writes that Sumner will have to take off using his 'bad leg'. The reference to the weaker leg ~~causes~~ causes the reader to doubt if Sumner is going to succeed in the jump. **5** This raises the tension further. More drama is put into the

1 The candidate addresses the question and gives an overview of Sumner's situation and the environment he is in.

2 Supporting evidence is quoted with some response to the effects of the short sentence.

3 It is not clear how the language achieves this.

4 The candidate develops a personal response but the writing does not really suggest a 'lack of care' about Sumner's approach: indeed there is almost too much pre-determination.

5 Nevertheless, the candidate does find supporting evidence for their viewpoint.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

situation when the writer writes that summer 'gitches forwards', ~~down like and ludicrous~~ and falls to make the jump. The description of the failure as 'down-like and ludicrous' emphasises that summer has not succeeded and immediately causes the reader to worry about him more. The fact that summer falls into the 'black and icy water's' implies that he is in danger which brings more drama to the situation. **6**

Drama is also brought to the situation when the writer describes the events which occur as the summer tries to save himself. ~~When the summer is said to have fallen with~~ ~~through himself upwards and things are out:~~ 'The use of the ~~verbs~~ ~~these~~ powerful verbs 'thrust' and 'fling' imply that summer is putting a lot of force and effort into them. **7** This suggests how desperate he is as he is trying to save himself. Furthermore as the writer writes that as summer 'strains to pull himself up'... he ~~crashes~~ 'crashes backwards'. The verb 'strains' implies an action in which he is using all his strength. However the phrase 'crashes backwards' implies ~~that imp~~ ~~reinforces~~ that portrays him as helpless and suggests that his best efforts are in vain. ~~the~~ **8** ~~verb 'crash~~ Additionally the verb 'crashes' makes the fall seem great and crushes the reader's hope for summer, which makes the scene more

9 dramatic. The writer gives the reader hope for summer when he writes that summer manages to get his 'chin... neck, and ...

6 Quotations are well-chosen and illustrate understanding of the narrative but they are not followed by analysis of the choice of words.

7 This sentence shows some response to language, but without analysis of why these verbs are 'powerful'.

8 There is secure understanding here, some thoroughness in the use of quotation and some response to language, although this strand is not developed.

9 Engages with the reader's response and the key word in the stem question.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

upper chest ... above the floor edge'. This phrase brings excitement to the reader as it causes them to believe that Sumner may finally succeed with his efforts. However this idea is ruined when he writes that Sumner's 'elbow slips away [and] he ~~stomps~~ ... he stumps backwards into the water and away.' The writer juxtaposes hope with failure soon after as a way to play on the reader's emotions. This quick and sudden shift of tone makes the situation even more dramatic. ¹⁰

Lastly, a lot of the drama in this extract is brought through the description of the environment. The ~~ice~~ environment seems to be against Sumner throughout the situation. ¹¹ Before Sumner jumps the writer writes that the snow 'whips ... his face and chest'. The snow is personified in this quote and the use of the violent verb 'whips' implies that the snow is ~~has~~ extremely harsh. The mention of the harsh snow in this quote gives the reader the idea that the jump will be difficult for Sumner. Furthermore, the environment is portrayed to be even more against Sumner as he tries to save himself from the water. ~~The~~ ^{when} The writer refers to the cold as a 'ferocious drench of coldness [which] knocks ... the breath out of his body.' ~~too~~ The adjective 'ferocious' makes the cold menacing and the ^{noun} ~~word~~ 'drench' implies that the cold is extremely overwhelming. ¹² The fact that the cold 'knocks' Sumner's breath out of his body

¹⁰ These comments on structure – 'juxtaposes hope with failure' – show some critical sophistication, making this a reasonably developed personal response. This is not supported by word-level analysis.

¹¹ The candidate shows good overall understanding, assisted by the third bullet point.

¹² Good use of evidence but limited analysis of verbal techniques and use of imagery.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

13 reinforces the terrible effect which it has on him. Additionally, the fact that he could cause Sumner's 'belly and groin' to 'shrub' the rest of his body suggests that it brings him great anguish and pain. This makes it more difficult for Sumner to save himself, which makes the situation more dramatic. The 'slipping' ice also eventually causes Sumner to fall back and ultimately causes him to fall to his death, which portrays it as against him and makes the situation even more dramatic. 14

In conclusion, the writer makes this situation dramatic through the language used to portray Sumner's struggles when jumping and trying to save himself from the water and through the way in which the environment is made to seem hostile. 15

13 There could have been more reference to 'knocks' as an indication of a fight with an antagonist.

14 There is understanding but little engagement with the details of the last part of the passage.

15 Overall, this is a reasonably developed response to the task, with some thoroughness of reference and some response to language. It is clearly in Level 5 but not close to the next Level up.

Total mark awarded = 15 out of 25

How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate made good use of quotation but needed to follow those quotations with more analysis of language, such as 'clown-like and ludicrous'. Commentary on the choice of words should be linked to their effect on the reader, and to the stem question.
- The candidate used the bullet points to shape their answer but would have needed to address the whole of the passage in more detail for higher award: there is no comment on Cavendish, on Sumner's isolation, or how his final downfall is portrayed.
- There were missed opportunities to comment in much more detail on the choices of descriptive words and phrases to convey Sumner's thoughts and actions.
- Clearer understanding would have included appreciation of how we see events through Sumner's perspective and more consideration of his state of mind as well as the narrative situation.
- The candidate had a good appreciation of structure, but needed to attend more to language and imagery, and to the writer's use of the present tense.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

2	<p>The writer uses vivid imagery with themes of pain and agony to fully depict the situation of the hunter's jump. The writer also highlights the efforts of Sumner but at the end those efforts are not fruitful and he draws. 1</p>
	<p>Sumner is confident that he will make it even though the writer has put emphasis on the 'distance between the gap. It is 'a yardwide gap. Although there is emphasis on the gap, the writer describes it as a 'short leap'. Even though the distance is not a lot, one small mistake could cause him his life. 2 Sumner has experience which shows that this is not the first time he has to leap between a gap. Sumner also feels confident since he has learned how to make use of his bad leg and land safely. Although, things do not go as planned, since he had not taken the snow into consideration. This causes his leg to slip and he is unable to keep his balance. His Due to the imagery of the jump, this is made a dramatic situation. 3 He then falls into the water.</p>
4	<p>Furthermore, the writer also uses auditory imagery to portray the struggle of the poor hunters, which makes this a dramatic situation. The writer uses metaphors such as 'knocked all the breath from his body' to depict the struggle and need for help. The weather is harsh and it numbs Sumner. The cold water causes him to 'gasp for breath' since his body feels weak and is 'throbbing'. Sumner tries to hold on to anything to save himself. He tries to hold the ice edge but the ice is too slippery. His hands are feeling weak. He holds onto the ice again but</p>

1 This is a promising start as it references language as well as the narrative situation, although it is not clear that the candidate really knows what 'vivid imagery' means.

2 The situation is understood with a little reference to its implications, but the candidate's style is assertive, not analytical.

3 There is no quotation in the second half of this paragraph, or any example of 'imagery of the jump'; although the candidate uses the language of analysis, this is essentially response to the surface narrative.

4 Although there is quotation here, and reference to 'auditory imagery', there is no analysis of the effect of the choice of words.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

slips away again. His pain and agony is depicted by him spitting and harrumphing. He is alone and no one is able to bear him **5** and help him. Even the rope is not strong enough to pull him out. He tries not to lose hope; he keeps struggling. His struggle is evident when the writer says, "he must pull himself up by his own power." He tries his best not to give up and for the third time moves himself upwards. He gains hope when his 'upper chest rises above the fire's edge. But the ice fails him again ~~and~~ causing his elbow to slip and him falling. The water gives up hope, he no longer tries again and accepts his fate since he's 'helpless'. He ~~stop~~ 'slumps' into the water and drowns. The reader is touched by this and feels; sorrow for Summer's **6** situation. The reader feels sorry for Summer and him being drowned.

Summer is portrayed as a strong man whose life has been snatched away from him. Summer did not die a peaceful death, instead he struggled. He did not give up until the very last moment but life was not in favour of him. It is ~~unclear~~ unclear as to whether he dies at the end or not but him ~~slumps~~ going into the dark water and away is a clear indication that he has drowned. ~~The writer~~ His friends had also left him and he is not heard. He was not able to **7** live his life until the end and due to a 'shorter leap' his life has been cut short which is very upsetting.

5 This is description with supporting textual detail but does not show response to the language.

6 There are the beginnings of personal response, supported by appropriate quotation but the candidate paraphrases the narrative and does not explore how the writer's choices of language make it dramatic.

7 Nevertheless, these comments go beyond surface meaning and explore what is implied.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

<p>8</p>	<p>With The writer conveys the harshness of the slippery ice and cold water which cause Summer pain and agony. The writer highlights the slippery ice way too many times which is a clear indication that it is the main cause of Summer's drowning. The weather is cold and has "knocked all the breath from his body" He keeps gasping for air. It does not help him that the water is extremely cold and reaches his neck. His body is numb causing his strength to be taken away. The snow is thick and heavily falls. The harshness of the environment causes Summer to drown and the emphasis on the slippery ice. It shows how not even the weather was in his favour which causes the reader to feel sympathetic towards him. The snow and cold depict the struggles a person faces in their life. 9 A person could face the struggles and succeed but some would fail like Summer unable to succeed. It shows that the world does not wait for anyone and is not any less lenient. His friends were not there for him depicting how nobody is really there for anyone during hardships. Everyone gets through the struggles by themselves. 10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Summer's death causes the readers to realize that without struggle life is not complete. Summer struggles to keep himself alive but he does not give up. Everyone should fight through their hardships which is depicted by him holding onto the ice for strength and courage. 12</p>
	<p>With The writer uses imagery and dramatic language to create this moment. The struggle and harshness of the ^{the environment} is also portrayed. The writer shows to be careful and take all factors such as the snow into consideration.</p>

8 The third bullet point guides the candidate to begin analysing the writing.

9 This paragraph presents a supported reader response but the allegorical interpretation attempted is at odds with the realism of the writing.

10 The candidate appears to misunderstand personal response as a requirement to draw general moralising conclusions.

11 These conclusions are not relevant to text or task.

12 This response is lengthy and supported with textual detail; there is a little engagement, in the earlier parts of the essay, with the writing, and there is clear understanding of the surface narrative, and some implications. All the Level 4 descriptors are met, but there are only the beginnings of analysis and focused personal response. Much of the response is illustrated narrative focused more on the situation than the writing.

**Total mark awarded =
13 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- Although the candidate references the language of the passage, there is limited evidence of analysis. Quotations are aptly chosen at times but need to be followed by analysis of the choice of words and the effect of those words on the reader.
- Quotation and comment should be consistently interwoven throughout the response.
- Much of the commentary is on the situation rather than on the writing or its effect on the reader.
- The candidate should focus on the writing as an extract from a novel and consider how the writer engages and sustains the reader's interest.
- The candidate should also recognise that the passage is narrated from the perspective of the character Sumner, although the writer uses the third person. Sumner's inner thoughts and feelings are focalised here. How does the reader respond to his actions and state of mind?
- The drama of the passage comes from Sumner's battle with the elements (no one else is there), and highlighting imagery (similes, metaphors and personification) and describing its effects brings this out.
- Allegorical or moralising interpretations ('hidden meanings') rarely work in narrative prose: the clear focus of the question is on the writing and how the situation is dramatised. This should also be the focus of the candidate's conclusion.

Common mistakes and guidance

- Most candidates understood that the passage, from the novel *The North Water* by Ian McGuire, is narrated from the perspective of Sumner and many considered the effect of the writer's use of the present tense.
- Nevertheless, some confused this with omniscient narrative, and many thought that Sumner had died. The drama of the writing comes from its immediacy and personal perspective. It is always better to focus on the writing rather than the situation described.
- Many candidates wrote in a lot more detail about the first paragraph than the last. Planning and timing are crucial for strong responses to prose questions. Commentary should be selective, not exhaustive, and based on clear overall understanding of the meaning and structure of the passage as a whole. It helps to read the passage carefully twice, annotate figurative language and its effect and think about the question and the overall effect of the writing, before beginning.
- Stronger candidates usually make good use of the bullet points, plan their responses after having divided the passage into sections, and are careful to relate the meaning of individual images to their context in the whole passage.
- Prose analysis has its own language: as well as exploring imagery and sound effects, as in verse, candidates should consider narrative perspective, changes of focus and use of climax or cliffhanger.
- Attention to the key adjective or adverb in the question (in this case 'dramatic') is helpful, as strong candidates realised that some of the language and techniques of drama could be applied to this text.
- Patterns and sequences are very important as are extended metaphors, especially, in this passage, the idea of a personal struggle between the solitary man and his unforgiving environment.
- A good plan and understanding of the whole text normally leads to a purposeful first paragraph, addressing the question, detailed exploration of techniques and their effect, a well-balanced consideration of different sections of the text and reflection on the effectiveness of the way the passage closes.
- A critical personal response considers how language, overall structure and the writer's techniques have guided the emotions of the reader. It does not draw general, moralising conclusions or need to look outside the passage itself.

Further guidance, including some extracts from strong responses, is given in the Principal Examiners' Report to Teachers.

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