



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In English Language A (4EA1)

Paper 2R: Poetry and Prose Texts and
Imaginative Writing

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November 2020

Publications Code 4EA1_02R_2011_ER

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Paper 2R of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. This was the exceptional November series of the 'A' specification in International GCSE English Language 9-1, following the cancellation of the summer series in 2020.

The specification consists of three components: Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing - 60% (examination); Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (this examination) OR Unit 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (non-examination assessment). Candidates may also be entered for the optional Spoken Language Endorsement (non-examination assessment).

Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing is assessed through an examination lasting one hour and thirty minutes. The total number of marks available is 60. The reading and writing sections on this paper are loosely linked by the theme of the text from the Anthology which appears on the examination paper.

This focus of this component is:

Section A – Poetry and Prose Texts: study and analyse selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts.

Candidates should study the poetry and prose provided in Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* in preparation for responding to a given prose extract or poem in the examination.

The specification identifies that candidates:

'should be able to read substantial pieces of writing (extended texts) that make significant demands on them in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. Throughout the qualification, candidates should develop the skills of inference and analysis'.

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section A, and there will be one essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*, which will be made available in a booklet in the examination if it is a longer extract or will be in the Question Paper in the case of a poem.

Candidates will answer the question in this section and 30 marks are available. There are three bullet points to prompt the response and the third bullet always asks candidates to consider language and structure.

Section B – Imaginative Writing: explore and develop imaginative writing skills.

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section B. There are three writing tasks, to some extent linked by theme to the reading prose extract or poem. Candidates pick one question to respond to and the response is worth 30 marks. The format of the tasks remains the same for each series: Question 2 follows the format 'Write about a time when you, or someone you know...'; Question 3 follows the format 'Write a story with the title...' and Question 4 offers two images as a prompt for a response which is always 'Write a story that begins...' or 'Write a story that ends...'.

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

Section A: Reading

AO1:

- read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives

AO2:

- understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.

Section B: Writing

AO4:

- communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences

AO5:

- write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to the story from the Anthology in the examination, and that the majority had studied it before. Some candidates had been taught the context of and background to the story, such as issues around feminism and attitudes of society towards women and marriage at the time.

Throughout the qualification, overall candidates had been prepared well and all had, at different levels, developed the skills required to answer the questions.

It was also clear that candidates used what they had studied in their reading to feed into their imaginative writing, which inspired them. As the specification identifies, the main aims for our candidates in this paper are:

- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Candidates had, pleasingly, been given the opportunity to practise their writing techniques and planning and proofreading skills.

The responses of candidates had some positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that many candidates had understood the content of and ideas in the story
- evidence of coverage of the whole of the story
- the successful, integrated use of the bullet points within the question
- coverage of the assessment objectives required for this paper
- the range of vocabulary for AO5

- writing that showed creative ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Less successful responses:

- failed to reference the question, with candidates simply writing something about what happens in the story
- rigidly followed the bullet points in the question so that language and structure points were almost an 'add-on' at the end
- had an insecure grasp of language and structure with a lack of understanding of how language and structure were used, feature-spotting or confusion of terms
- had limited comment on language and structure and relied heavily on description of ideas or events for Question 1
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence or used over-long quotations
- lacked organisation in their writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

It was clear that candidates had been able to find at least some information which was relevant to the question (either directly or indirectly) and could comment on language and structural features. Imaginative writing was often interesting, engaging and enthusiastic and had a clear sense of purpose and audience in the voice and ideas used.

Question 1

AO1

The first two bullet points in the mark scheme relate to AO1 - read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives. The level of understanding of the text from the Anthology is assessed in the first bullet point, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives in the text in the second bullet point.

At the very basic level candidates tended to comment on what was being said about Mrs. Mallard in particular, for example her heart condition and her feelings about her husband. They were able to show some understanding of the opening and ending of the story, but the understanding and focus was uneven. There was often limited selection and interpretation of information and ideas: for example, responses at the lowest levels often did not move past the opening and the concluding sections. The least successful approach, as one examiner noted, was:

'the paragraph-by-paragraph approach, where candidates narrated the content of each paragraph and identified language features (accurately) within that paragraph. This resulted in the inclusion of a good deal of material that was irrelevant to the question and often prevented candidates finishing. In particular, this meant they did not have time to consider the ending of the story, which was indeed relevant'.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were at least able to identify some of the key ideas in the extract linked to marriage, although at this borderline grade there was often an imbalance where the focus was on identifying basic/valid ideas and information from the extract about marriage (for example, Mrs. Mallard loving her

husband but feeling trapped) rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels. For example, candidates at this borderline grade often had not considered more than broad ideas. There was a lack of 'drilling down' into the extract to examine the more nuanced ideas considered by candidates achieving higher marks. In some responses there was misunderstanding of the relationship within the marriage. A few candidates, beginning with Mrs. Mallard's youth and the idea of an 'arranged marriage', stated that Mr. Mallard had hated and abused his wife and that Mrs. Mallard had hated her husband in return, with no evidence to support these assertions.

Candidates at borderline Grade 7 were more direct in approach, as they were able to select the relevant ideas from the extract linked to the idea of marriage in a detailed but succinct manner. Candidates at this borderline tended to cover the full story, and offered detailed points including Mrs. Mallard's initial fear and inability to recognise her feeling of freedom, the mixed feelings she has about her husband, society's ideas of a woman's role in marriage as opposed to Mrs. Mallard's thoughts about a 'long procession of years that would belong to her absolutely'.

AO2

The third bullet point in the mark scheme relates to AO2 - understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. There needs to be understanding of the language and structure used in the text, and the level of skill is also a discriminator. *Explain* is a mid-level skill, *comment* a lower level skill and *explore/analyse* higher-level skills, which gives candidates opportunities to achieve across the range.

At the lowest levels candidates often made reference to language and structure as a brief add-on at the end of the answer. Candidates here often identified and named devices, but did not demonstrate the skill or understanding to discuss their use, and did not link these to the question. At this level responses were characterised by writing without any explanations – candidates here were good at finding both language and structure features, but not as confident at explaining them. The responses were much more at a descriptive level, with limited and underdeveloped evidence.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were commenting on both language and structure. At this borderline grade candidates were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. Candidates at Grade 4 borderline were able to pick out features from the story, but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features. The majority at the borderline grade were able to comment clearly on, for example, repetition (for example of 'free'), simile and metaphor (particularly of the 'storm of grief', 'open window', 'new spring life'), short sentences and exclamations. Some explanations at this borderline grade were non-specific and unrelated to the question: 'The writer uses language and structure to engage the reader'. Responses at this level looked at the ending and were able to identify that the reader is reminded of the heart condition mentioned at the beginning of the story (structure) and the doctors' conclusion that she had 'died of heart disease - of the joy that kills'. This was regarded as irony but at this level not explained.

Candidates at the Grade 7 borderline were commenting on both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. At this borderline grade candidates were exploring and analysing language and structure, with detailed and discriminating references. The majority at the borderline grade were able to explore less obvious features such as Mrs. Mallard's eventual acceptance of the 'monstrous joy' (oxymoron), linked with society's ideas of a woman's role in marriage, the suggestion of the 'elixir of life' used to suggest the freedom from marriage as being magical and transformative alongside the features of borderline Grade 4. The examples of language and structure used at this borderline grade were much more considered and selected than at borderline Grade 4, showing a perceptive understanding of the viewpoint of the writer and the effect of details selected on the readers. At this grade boundary the ending of the story was more closely considered than further down the levels, for example looking closely at the irony that Mrs. Mallard was the one who dies, not her husband. The most developed answers identified that in the end Mrs. Mallard achieved freedom from husband and marriage through death, but not her husband's, her own.

Some examples of what examiners noted are:

- 'One candidate looked at Mrs. Mallard's guilt at her feelings about her husband's death, not just because of the pressures of society but because of her own 'moral values', hence her 'monstrous joy'. The idea was developed and supported effectively and added an additional layer to previous comments on society's attitude to marriage.'
- 'some candidates linked in the attitude of society at the time to women in general and their situation in marriage in particular.'
- 'A popular quotation, not always dealt with effectively, was 'She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday that she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.' Most candidates explained the first sentence, sometimes including the irony that, as it turned out, Mrs. Mallard had a very short time to live, but faltered on the second sentence, sometimes ignoring it completely, even though it had been included in their quotation.'
- 'Some candidates were able to analyse the emotional and physical effect of this upon the protagonist, exploring in some detail the initial conflicting feelings that existed and their effect upon the reader. The most advanced answers looked at the institution of marriage itself and the roles/expectations that society upheld.'

The final bullet point in the mark scheme relates to selection and use of references from the text which has been studied for both AO1 and AO2. This is a very useful discriminator in this question. As previously mentioned, candidates were sometimes unable to consider references that supported different ideas and information (rather than many references which illustrated the same point) where candidates perhaps missed key elements that would have demonstrated apt, persuasive selection of information and ideas.

Example 1

According to the paragraph one, the paragraph one mainly telling about that ~~Mr. Mallard~~ Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble. And the paragraph is only one sentence. What is more, paragraph one uses the direct speech to telling us Mrs. Mallard had heart disease.

In the paragraph 2. The paragraph 2. mainly telling about Mrs. Mallard ~~know~~ ^{had} ~~heard~~ ~~was~~ be telling about that her husband ~~was~~ ^{was} on the list of 'killed'. What is more, 'It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentence' shows that her sister is very cared about her. In addition, 'in broken sentence' illustrates that her sister didn't know how to tell ~~her~~ Mrs. Mallard this message.

In the paragraph 3, sentence 'She did not hear the story as many woman have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significant' illustrates that Mrs. Mallard known this message in a kind way which Mrs. Mallard could accept it. What is more, 'she wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms' shows that Mrs. Mallard was very sad about her husband death. In addition, 'When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone.' shows that she is less care. And storm of grief uses the metaphor to show the sadness ~~is~~ of Mrs. Mallard. Furthermore, 'She would

have no one follow her' illustrates that Mrs. Mallard ~~was~~ is always by herself. It shows the independence of Mrs. Mallard.

In the paragraph 4. Sentence 'There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair.' is the description of the room. And 'Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.' Both of ~~the~~ sentences are ~~it~~ ~~show~~ show the memory of Mrs. Mallard about this room. Also, these sentence shows the bad mood of Mrs. Mallard.

In the paragraph 5. This ~~para~~ paragraph mainly telling about the environment surrounded the house. And the peace of the ~~outer~~ environment.

In the paragraph 6. Paragraph 6 is a single sentence. It also describe the scenery ~~area~~ through the window. It shows that Mrs. Mallard is claiming down gradually.

In the paragraph 7. the paragraph 7. mainly telling about that Mrs. Mallard ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~been~~ claimed down. What is more, sentence 'she sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams' shows that although Mrs. Mallard ~~claims~~ ^{claims} down. However, she is still in a bad mood. What is more 'as a child' uses simile, shows that she is very weak ~~and~~ ~~not~~ and there's nothing she can do.

Paragraph 8 mainly telling about that the description of the Mallard.

From paragraph 9 to paragraph 11, there's a mental shift about her husband death. Sentence '~~she~~ She said it over and over under her breath: 'free, free, free.' ' shows that she is out of the control of her husband. She is free and this is the first time she feels the freedom.

From paragraph 12 to paragraph 14, these paragraphs mainly tell about the thought of Mrs. Mallard about the future. Sentence 'There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself' in paragraph 14 shows that she ~~was~~ is glad to have a free life in coming years. ~~And~~ ~~for~~ What is more, 'A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination' shows that Mrs. Mallard thinks that her future in coming years is very bright.

In the paragraph 15, sentence 'And yet she had loved him - sometimes, often she had not' illustrates that ~~Mr. M~~ whether Mrs. Mallard doesn't know she loves her husband or not.

In the paragraph 16, sentence 'Free! Body and soul free!' she kept whispering' shows that the happiness of Mrs. Mallard.

In paragraph 17, 'Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission.' shows that her sister is very cared about Mrs. Mallard. She is afraid that Mrs. Mallard will do something stupid.

Paragraph 18 mainly tells about that Mrs. Mallard has ~~already~~ accepted the truth of her husband's death. And she is going to have a new life by herself.

~~In the paragraph~~ Paragraph 19 mainly tells about her thinking about her future life. What is more, 'It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long' shows that Mrs. Mallard already prepared for her ~~her~~ new life.

In paragraph 20, 'There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess ~~goddess~~ ^{golden} of victory' shows that

she is very ~~glad and~~ glad and happy. What is more 'like a ^{goddess} ~~goddess~~ of Victory' ~~also~~ uses simile, also shows the happiness of Mrs. Mallard. In paragraph 21, 'It was Brently Mallard who entered' shows that the information about Brently Mallard's ~~is~~ dead is wrong. And 'But Richards was too late' in paragraph 22. ~~It shows that~~ ^{It shows that} Mrs. Mallard had already prepared the new life without her husband. Now, her husband was back. Everything ^{back} ~~back~~ to the normal. In paragraph 23, ^P 'she had died of heart disease' shows that firmly Mrs. Mallard has died.

Examiner Comments:

There is definitely 'some understanding of the text' here, Level 2, and it is clear that the candidate knows what is happening in the story. The selection and interpretation of information/ideas/perspectives is valid, but there is very little focus on the directed question – which is about marriage. It is always stressed in this report that candidates should answer the question set, not tell us everything they have been taught about a text. Nonetheless, the candidate shows very methodical work, moving through the text paragraph by paragraph, and while the opening is fairly descriptive, it has the idea of Mrs. Mallard being sad about her husband's death at first. There is some sense of her independence, but the candidate appears to be slightly confused about her 'bad mood'. The response moves between description, 'And the peace of the environment', and some understanding/comment, for example she is weak, there is nothing she can do, her view of her husband's death changes, she feels free (showing some clear understanding here – Level 2/3), she thinks of the future and how it will be bright. Also covered is that Mrs. Mallard is confused about her feelings for her husband, which could be implicitly related to the question. There is understanding that her sister is worried about her, and some awareness of the impact of the end. The candidate has clearly been taught about the content and covers quite a lot of it, with description and comment.

There is some comment on and understanding of the language and structure used by writers to achieve effects, so this is Level 2. The comment on the metaphor 'storm of grief' to show sadness is valid, as is the simile of the child and the 'goddess of Victory', but the points on structure – the direct speech and 'one sentence' purely identify and go no further. The use of references is valid, but occasionally these are very long.

On balance, all of Level 2 is met. The candidate meets the first bullet point in Level 2/3, but does not move into Level 3 due to the lack of the selection of information relevant to the question. The second bullet is met in Level 2. The third bullet, AO2, is met in Level 2. The language points have potential to move higher into explanation, but there is just not enough to convince us this is secure. The final bullet point is met in Level 2 –

references are valid, but not developed, and are over-long in places. Although there are areas where the response is descriptive, the candidate achieves the top of Level 2, mark of 12, for the range of text covered and their understanding of the text.

Example 2

'Story of an hour' is a poem written by Kate Chopin. The poem ~~revolt~~ is based on a lady named called as Mrs Mallard. ~~for thi~~

The poem starts with the short sentence ~~paragrap~~ ~~to~~ paragraph "knowing that Mrs Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble... husband's death." along these lines, the readers get the sense that Mrs Mallard is a weak lady as perceived by the society. they are worried that she will be badly affected by the news of her husband's death, hence the careful language choice 'gently' is used so that they ~~don't~~ don't make her extremely broken after hearing upon the news.

the readers believe that she is suffering at hearing the loss of her husband and is supported by "she wept at once, ... she would have no one follow her." the paragraph end on a short simple sentence which helps in building suspense within the story and also makes the readers sympathy Mrs Mallard.

the past tense verb 'sank' suggest the readers that she is in shock. however, in the ~~5th~~ fifth and ~~6th~~ sixth stanza, the readers get a sense of 'positiveness' which is in contrast to the previous paragraphs. It seems as though she is finding a new form of joy she has never experienced before. the readers reach the turning point of the story when the writer repeatedly shouts "free, free, free!" the use of punctuation such as '!' ~~suggest~~ ^{reveal} that she has a completely different reaction than what the society perceives her to be. ~~the word~~ she is finally free from being trapped in her marriage and seems extremely excited now that her husband has left the world. she resides by a new sense of joy which is further emphasized by the ~~word~~ adjectives

'Monstrous' in line 39.

~~words~~ adjectives such as 'fixed', 'gray' and 'dead' are used to describe her husband's dead corpse. finally, Mrs Mallard believes she can find a way to achieve her dreams and happiness ~~without feeling trapped~~ of her own without feeling ~~to~~ held back or trapped and this ~~is~~ can be seen in the lines " But she saw beyond the bitter moment... absolutely. ~~the story ends~~ paragraph ^{once again} ends ~~with~~ on a short, compound sentence " And she opened... in welcome" which highlights her happiness and new found joy.

In the 14th paragraph, the readers understand why Mrs Mallard is so happy upon finding out her husband is dead. this is due to the reason because her husband, controlled every aspect of her life. she had no freedom to do anything she wanted on her own which made her ~~up~~ ~~unhappy~~ feel trapped and unhappy. eventhough, ~~the~~ It may come out as 'cruel' of Mrs Mallard to celebrate upon her husband's death news, ~~It is quite understandable why she~~ she still wants to express her freedom and

power now that he is gone. This is supported by the lines "A kind intention... illumination."

once again repetition of 'free!' has been made use of along the lines "free! body... free!" which emphasizes her excitement on her new found freedom. The people started to think ^{she feels} she was going crazy ^{due to the} sorrow and burden upon hearing the news which is supported by the line 'you will make yourself ill'. In the lines "Her fancy... ahead of her" which makes the readers realize that she had been feeling trapped for a long time.

~~the time~~ the readers reach the final plot of the story in the ~~few last~~ ^{last few} paragraphs as we get to know that Richard is actually alive and returns to see his wife. However she dies ^{out of shock} upon seeing her husband alive ~~as due~~ ^{as} ~~to shock she feels~~ as she realizes ^{that} all the all the freedom she was ^{so excited} ~~hoping for~~ was for nothing. The line "She breathed a quick Pray... long" is in direct comparison to the line "when the doctors... of the joy that kills" which further supports the explanation given about.

Examiner Comments:

Other than saying 'poem', there is sound understanding of the text and implicit link to the question. The response shows a sense of Mrs. Mallard as a weak person, how society thinks she will be badly affected by her husband's death, how we feel pity for her as she weeps and how she is in shock. Her changing feelings are explained, as is the contrast to how society sees she should feel (again, implicit link to the question). The ideas selected of her feeling free from being trapped in her marriage, the sense of joy she feels, the sense of control she felt from her husband, are relevant and explained. The ending is referenced although with slight confusion (Richard).

For AO2 there is explanation of language techniques, for example 'careful language choice 'gently''. Short sentences are explained as being used to build suspense, the verb use 'sank' is explained, as is the contrast in the text between earlier and how she later feels, repetition of 'free, free, free!', exclamation mark. The references to adjectives are not quite as securely explained – the example of 'monstrous' to show joy is not clearly linked. Adjectives used to describe 'corpse' are commented on rather than explained. Structure is explained in terms of its use to highlight happiness and joy.

Overall there is sound understanding of the text (Level 3), appropriate and relevant selection (Level 3), clear understanding and explanation overall of language and structure (some comment which is more Level 2) and appropriate references (although these are not always fully clear and it is not always evident that they apply to the points being made). The response is prevented from going to the top of Level 3 by some points of language and structure which are comment rather than explanation, and references which are not as clear as they could be – the use of ellipsis in the examples makes it difficult to see the connection between them and the points being made. A mark of 16 is achieved.

Example 3

To begin with, Chopin makes use of a semantic field of ~~speed~~ hastiness, "sudden", "wild", "at once". These terms evoke a sense of immediacy in the text and represent how swiftly the Mrs Mallard got married to Mr. Mallard - A decision she regrets as mentioned later on in the text.

Secondly, the writer ~~make~~ employs positive lexicals with positive connotations such as "open", "new", "spring", "delicious", "fluttering". The use of these lexicals reinforce an optimistic tone. This tone plays a pivotal role in reflecting the true nature of their love. Hence Chopin explicates the lack of love in their marriage.

Further, "The delicious breath of rain" is not the feeling one experiences in a moment of shell-shock. ~~As a result~~, so, this metaphor ~~creates~~ portrays

a very peaceful and serene surrounding. This is ironic as ~~the~~ this setting is brought up amidst her husband's supposed demise. It therefore is the writer's method of exposing the true, saddening, love-less nature of their marriage.

Moreover, ^{Mrs.} Mallard notices "patches of blue sky showing ... through the clouds". This visual imagery symbolises a beacon of hope emerging through a period of darkness similar to how cloudy skies clear up to give out sunny, beautiful blue skies. This beacon of hope represents her thought process and denotes her internal ~~ecstasy~~ ecstasy. Chopin in turn accentuates brings forward the ~~two~~ double-sided and hopeless aspect of this marriage.

To add to this she feels as though she is "powerless", which is expressed through the use of the simile "as powerless as her two white slender hands". The ~~same~~ simile with the derogatory term "powerless" signifies the lack of balance and equality in their relationship. The author henceforth sheds light on the unequal and unfair ~~as~~ aspects of the marriage.

Like wise, "Mrs. Mallard repetitively exclaims, "free! free! free!". This repetition ~~also~~ hints at a sense of relief and gives the audience the idea that she has been longing for this day. Further it,

spotlights the oppression and how shackled down she feels in this conventional marriage. The fact that ~~this~~ the lexical ~~phrase~~ "free" is repeated later on in the passage highlights the degree to which she felt controlled and dominated. It ~~also~~ ~~elicits~~ Mrs. Mallard's unhappiness and anger towards this ~~of~~ inequality. ~~Therefore~~ Chopin draws more attention to the single-sidedness and unreciprocal nature of this marriage.

More to this, Chopin ~~also~~ gives responsibility to a short sentence ~~with~~ in order to ~~denote~~ denote Mrs. Mallard's true feelings of love towards Henry.

"Often she had not". This along with the hyphenated phrase "- sometimes" serves to ~~evolve~~ expose her epiphany in realising that it doesn't matter hence her exclamatory remark, "What did it matter?"

This yet again ~~also~~ elucidates the lack of love in this marriage.

In addition ^{Mrs.} ~~the~~ Mallard "arose at length" and "like a goddess of Victory" arrived down. This simile explores her internal thoughts and feelings of happiness, triumph and victoriousness in finally getting "free of her husband". It brings out the prevalent, toxic hatred evident in the marriage.

The text ~~also~~ ends in a short sentence paragraph with an oxymoron

"of the joy that kill". This accentuates her shock and how swiftly her hopes and dreams were crushed. This and the abrupt ending of her life and the passage illustrate the fakeness of the marriage.

The writer effectively presents their marriage.

Examiner Comments:

This response opens confidently with language, and although the link to the speed of marriage is perhaps debatable it shows focus on the question. The lexical connotations showing optimistic tone is explained, but the link to showing 'lack of love in their marriage' is not very clear. This is perhaps the idea that the setting contrasts with the feelings? This point is not clearly connected. The idea of visual imagery symbolising beacon of hope is explored, but, again, the link to marriage could be made more clearly (it is implicit, but we wonder what the candidate means by 'double-sided').

The point about feeling powerless is relevant and explored with some details (derogatory, lack of balance, lack of equality, showing unequal and unfair aspects of marriage). Repetition hinting at relief, showing shackles and oppression, the degree to which she felt controlled and dominated is definitely thorough and exploring – the response becomes more confident here. The responsibility given to a short sentence is interesting and shows some exploration. The exploration of the simile is perhaps extreme, but it is interesting, and the oxymoron of the ending is confidently handled.

This is a mixed response that gets better as it 'gets into its stride'. There is definitely sound understanding (Level 3), and it is quite sustained (Level 4) – in some places it could just be more connected to the question. There is a feeling that there could be some perception, but sometimes this is not clarified enough. The selection and interpretation of information and ideas is appropriate and quite detailed. It supports the points being made (sometimes more is made of the link to marriage than is obvious). For AO2 there is definite thorough understanding and exploration of language and structure and how these are used by writers to achieve effects. In some cases, the points made explain to us the potential for exploration – the examiner is sometimes left with the feeling there should be more. The selection of references is detailed and appropriate and, in most cases, fully supports the points being made (although these could be debated for some points). A mark of 23 in Level 4 is achieved. The eloquent and confident style of this response perhaps could be seen as a positive, but this is not rewarded in this particular question, but could help in the response to the Writing section.

Example 4

In "The Story of an Hour", the author uses figurative language and language techniques to present Mrs. Mallard's thoughts and feelings about her husband and marriage. The first is the use of metaphor in the first line, "Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble." Heart trouble is a metaphor for the unhappy marriage she had with her husband. When you're in an unhappy marriage, often you will feel sad or heartless or even heartbreak. Here, the author uses heart trouble to represent and hint of an unhappy marriage. Next is the use of personification in line 23, "when a sob came up into her throat and shook her." In this line, ~~the sob is pe~~ the author is trying to emphasize about how Mrs. Mallard was unable to control her emotions. When hearing the news that your loved one (husband) just passed away when you just saw them earlier and they were fine, I'm pretty sure every would react the same way. In shock and have a hard time to collect and compose themselves. After personification, simile is also used in line 23,

"as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams." This simile shows how Mrs. Mallard didn't know how to react to the news of her husband passing. The only way she knew how to cope is by crying all her emotions out and hoping she would wake up and discover that it was all just a dream. Next is the use of dash in line 50, "And yet she had loved him—sometimes." The dash here represents Mrs. Mallard's thoughts. She paused and realized that in her marriage, there were times when she didn't love her husband and their marriage wasn't all smooth sailing. This evidence could be backed up from the short sentence in line 50 as well, "Often she had not." This short sentence says it all. Mrs. Mallard was not happy and in love with her husband sometimes. Short sentence represents her realization and final say. Last is the use of direct speech, and punctuation (exclamation mark) in line 53, "'Free! Body and soul free!'" Direct speech is used to show how relieved and happy Mrs. Mallard was when she realized that she was free from her marriage. While the exclamation mark is used to represent how Mrs. Mallard couldn't contain her excitement for the next new chapter in her life as a single woman. Last is how this line represents and describes that marriage can affect your physical, emotional, and mental health in a negative way as it can take a toll on you as it is draining, tiring, and stressful.

To represent Mrs. Mallard's thoughts and feelings about her future, the author also uses figurative language and language technique.

The first most used figurative language is symbolism. The first symbolism can be seen in the 13th line, "there stood, facing the open window". Open window represents the new life and opportunities Mrs. Mallard can now do as she no longer has a husband. The time for her to do all the things she wanted and the new adventure she can go through.

Next is the symbolism in line 19, "new spring life" and line 20, "patches of blue sky." Both of these lines represent the bright, clear, and sunny day that awaits for her. The next symbolism is in line 21, "the other in the west facing her window." It is no coincident that the author uses the word "west" to represent the end of her marriage life as the sun sets in the west and that it symbolizes the end of the day (in this case chapter). The last symbolism can be found in line 64, "Richard stood waiting for them at the bottom." This represents how Mrs. Mallard is above men as she is the winner during her battle with the unhappy marriage and how being a widowed woman and independent gives her self power and empowerment. After symbolism direct speech, repetition, and punctuation is used in line 36, "Free, free, free!". All three language device is used to represent the moment where Mrs. Mallard realize that she can finally experience freedom and is still in disbelief. She couldn't believe it. Next is the use of repetition, "there would be no" in lines 45 & 46. The word "there would be no" is repeated to create a sense of independence that Mrs. Mallard is now living for herself and only for herself. No one to take care of, no one to rely on, and no one to hold her back from living the life she

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In front of her house. Feeling overwhelmed and shocked, it triggered a heart attack causing her to die. While metaphorically, it could be representing her unhappy marriage. How seeing her husband triggered all the sufferings she had to endure and go through in her marriage and it was just too much to handle. Last is the use of irony in the last line, line 7d, "of the joy that kills." The first irony is how Mrs. Mallard die from joy and happiness from seeing her husband again (what her sister and husband believed.) The second irony is how Mrs. Mallard die because her joy of being single and all the adventure that await her is short lived and she passed away because her heart and herself couldn't take the marriage anymore.

As for the structure, there was a plot twist. Line 6f is where the plot twist happen, "It was Brently Mallard." Plot twist can be used by the author to add a dramatic twist or an unexpected element for its readers. No one saw it coming, that Mrs. Mallard's husband was actually alive and it added a touch to the story.

Examiner Comments:

In comparison to the previous example, this answer is not as fluent or confidently expressed. It is structured using the bullet points in the question, which is, of course, a helpful approach, although could become repetitive when language and structure are usually covered in the sections on the first two bullet points of the question and then again in the section on the third.

The response moves straight into the idea of heart trouble as a metaphor for Mrs. Mallard's feelings in her marriage, how it represents and hints at an unhappy marriage, and the candidate explores this point. Personification is explored, being unable to control emotions, hard to compose yourself, and simile is explored (there is a repeated structure of 'Next is...' but that does not detract from the quality of the points being made). The response makes interesting points on the use of a dash and short sentence and there is thoughtful exploration of this. The use of direct speech is not so confidently explored, but the point about exclamation is clear in terms of how this links to excitement and the impact of an unhappy marriage.

There is consistent and sustained focus on the question. The candidate moves to her future and here symbolism is analysed and shows some perceptive thought – the

freedom, the brightness that reflects her future, the sun setting in the west showing a sense of ending, the sense of her being 'above men' (arguable but interesting idea). There is some analysis of direct speech, repetition, punctuation in 'free, free, free!', 'there would be no' and the candidate expresses the impact of this well – 'No one to take care of, no one to rely on, and no one to hold her back'. Irony is well-chosen as an example, as she is anything but ill, and 'elixir' being linked to a magical transformation is interesting. The idea that a lot can happen in an hour shows understanding of the speed of events – something not a lot of candidates pick up on. The use of simile, 'goddess of Victory' is analysed as she 'won the battle against her unhappy marriage'.

The deliberate section on language and structure is an interesting approach. There is a danger of repeating points already made, but this candidate makes very apt and persuasive additional points with discriminating evidence (Louise used rather than Mrs. – it's arguably not correct, as it's unlikely her sister would call her 'Mrs. Mallard' but is an interesting point). The ending 'metaphor' is analysed well, as is the irony. The 'plot twist' ending is perhaps more explanation and is maybe not needed, but there is more than enough evidence in the answer already.

This response meets the first bullet point in Level 4/5. The candidate definitely shows sustained understanding of the text and it is perceptive in parts. The selection and interpretation of ideas and information is apt and persuasive (Level 5). For AO2 there is a mixture of a few parts of thorough exploration but there is also some perceptive analysis of language and structure (Level 4/5). The selection of references is discriminating and apt (Level 5). 'Best-fit' places this securely at the top end of Level 5 with 28 marks.

Examiner Comments:

Writing

At the lowest grade boundary candidates tended to offer a basic response. They always had straightforward use of tone, style and register, with audience and purpose not always clear. At this level candidates tended to express but not always connect ideas and information, with limited use of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There were few responses that only achieved Level 1 and where they did this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

At the Grade 4 borderline candidates tended to at least have straightforward and at best appropriate use of tone, style and register, selecting material and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to connect, but not always develop, ideas and information, with some structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There was a tendency in the majority of responses marked at this borderline grade to set out a stronger description in the start of the extract and then focus more on plot towards the end where planning had let the candidates down. In some cases, the writing lacked development to move higher into the mark scheme for AO4. At this borderline grade the use of vocabulary and syntax tended to be appropriate but repetitive and at times limited to vague simile/metaphor,

use of short sentences, questions and exclamations for effect. The level of AO6 at this borderline was appropriate but overall formulaic, where it appeared that candidates had been advised to include plenty of adjectives or similes in their writing and felt the need to include them at all times.

In the best responses, candidates tended to at least have successful and at best touches of subtle use of tone, style and register, managing ideas and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to manage, but not always manipulate, ideas and information, with a range of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. Responses at this level had some creative ideas, humour and withholding information to the end as a technique. The Grade 7 boundary tended to have some selective vocabulary used for specific effect rather than just to demonstrate knowledge of particular multi-syllabic words.

The assessment objectives for these tasks effectively discriminated the quality of responses. Advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short extract in the time available – they need to have a clear organisation and direction in mind, and to perhaps not ‘over-season’ the pieces with vocabulary and syntax.

The main areas that discriminated these responses were:

- whether candidates could meet both parts of the first part of bullet one in the mark scheme for AO5 – for example they often expressed ideas to achieve in Level 2, but these ideas lacked the order for the second part of that bullet. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them
- the success of tone, style and register in AO4
- the spelling of basic vocabulary in AO5
- the accuracy of punctuation and use of varied punctuation in AO5
- the use of a range of sentence structures for AO5.

Sentence structure was clearly an area centres had focused on: varying the way sentences begin; more use of subordinate clauses to begin complex sentences; effective use of one-word sentences and one-sentence paragraphs to demonstrate conscious crafting. Some candidates attempted to use ambitious vocabulary while some seemed to steer away from ambitious vocabulary in order to maintain accuracy. A key message to centres is to focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task. This was a common weakness running through all but the very best answers. The more ‘pedestrian’ answers showed a lack of organisation and often demonstrated a lack of planning and direction.

Be ambitious in the structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original. It was clear that there was some excellent description.

In terms of register it was clear that the majority of the candidates knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were a few that produced responses more like an essay. In this series some responses to Question 3 were more transactional than imaginative. Examiners noted that some candidates need to manage their time better, as even some responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the

end. Examiners felt that candidates would benefit from planning beforehand so that their stories have cohesion.

Some comments from examiners include:

- 'There was some wonderful vocabulary, sometimes with the sense of it being 'paraded', but nevertheless ambitious. Many answers were able to punctuate with accuracy and there was often evidence of candidates writing for effect by varying sentence structures.'
- 'Other issues included lack of organisation, for example no paragraphs, problems with punctuation (often minimal) and poor spelling. Subject/verb agreement, verbs in general and change in tense part way through meant difficulties arose.'
- 'The best answers felt crafted both in terms of the vocabulary selected and the wide range of punctuation used. Varying sentence type and length was also a feature of the higher-level responses.'

Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, made an important decision.

Examiners noted that this question was most popular and responses were the most successful overall, with one saying 'There were some very well-paced and engaging examples'. There were a wide range of responses being offered which allowed the full range of marks to be applied, since most candidates had made an important decision, or one they regarded as important. Sometimes the decision was made by parents or other family members. Many of the answers considered choices made in examinations or choices about courses to be taken in further education, either at home or abroad. One looked at their decision about which texts from the Anthology to study for the International GCSE English Language examination (the correct decision being, of course, all of them!).

Candidates wrote quite effectively about their future choices in terms of subjects and careers. Engineering seemed to be the subject favoured by parents, with one candidate introducing some humour with an 'engineering uncle' who tried to ensure all the family became engineers in his firm. 'Science versus Commerce' led to some interesting discussion of the possibilities in both. In some instances, parents took the decision for the student, causing considerable unhappiness. Many parents were unhappy with their child's decisions to choose sport, for example 'Engineering versus Cricket'. There was much soul-searching as to whether to 'go abroad to study and leave the safety of home' or stay in a safe 'harbour'. Candidates felt comfortable writing about school situations, however straightforward, such as confessing about breaking a window, when the other 'children went away very quickly', leaving the culprit to choose between keeping quiet and 'the importance of honesty'. Family situations and relationships provided a basis for difficult decisions including when parents got divorced and the child had to choose between staying with one parent in one country or another in a different country. One child had to make a difficult medical decision, which was whether to agree to have their father's cancerous tongue removed, the refusal leading to his death and the child's

guilt. Some candidates drew from their experiences of their schooling and how this had been affected by the global pandemic.

Example 1

~~My Future World~~

2. This is about the ~~about~~ story when me and my friend ~~have~~ made a important ~~decisions~~ / about decision about our life, ~~In 2019~~ / ~~we have~~ / ~~planned~~ we have planned after completing our "O" levels we will move on to Malaysia, Now recently we stay in oman we both are planning of studying together for ~~medical~~ chemical engineering - in Malaysia. as ~~I heard~~ ~~there are~~ / ~~very~~ we heard there most of the peoples go for studying. ~~so~~ ~~settling~~ ~~their~~ ~~life~~ so, we both have planned of settling our life in Malaysia after our "O" levels. We both planned of roaming in different countries ~~after~~ after we get a good job. ^{also} I love the country canada, canada is ~~very~~ beautiful country. In canada its ~~is~~ too cold every year. There are snow falls most of the times, so if possible we'll go canada too. In life we make so many of our own desicions, ~~it~~ ~~is not always~~ we aren't right all the time.

~~My Future World~~

Examiner Comments:

This response achieves marks of 6+3 (9 in total). In this response there is evidence of some Level 2 achievement. It is more than basic in Level 1, and more than 'limited' in terms of clarity but is struggling with form. The response does communicate in a broadly appropriate way. There is some grasp of the purpose (decisions), but really only at the start and the direction is lost towards the end. The sense of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader is not obvious (imaginative writing). The response definitely shows straightforward use of form, tone and register. For AO4 it

meets the first bullet point in Level 2, the second in Level 1/2, and the third in Level 2. A mark at the higher end of Level 2 is appropriate here, but it does not border on Level 3.

For AO5 there is some expression of ideas and some basic order (Level 1/2). It is arguable that it uses paragraphs and a range of structural and grammatical features (Level 1/2). The candidate does use some correctly spelt vocabulary (Level 2), for example *friend*, *planning*, *completing*, *recently*, and there is some quite varied vocabulary spelt correctly, for example *chemical*, *roaming*. This variation is not evidenced enough to feel that this is nearing Level 3 for that part of bullet point 2 of the mark scheme. The candidate uses punctuation with some control (inverted commas, apostrophe). For this part of this bullet Level 2 is met, but the sentence structures are repetitive and lack control, so this part is met in Level 1. This is therefore 'best-fit' at a mark of 3, just into Level 2.

Example 2

I was fighting at the World Karate Championship 2017 in 2017 and was very thrilled about winning the championship twice in a row. I was filled with an adrenalin rush inside me & all the moves I have practiced while training with my Sensei Yeng, who had taught me that Karate was not about fighting, but it was about defending yourself and defending others.

I was ready for the tournament to start but suddenly some of my bad opponent came inside my locker room trying to scare me before the tournament starts, but I was very very brave and strong to fight them even with all the injuries I got while training at the woods.

The only thing that I was missing was my belt. I didn't have a black belt, but when I went out of the locker room, my Sensei Yeng came and gave me a belt. I felt more brave and strong after wearing the belt and it boosted my confidence.

During my first match, I was a little nervous as this was my first time in a Championship level tournament. When the match started, I became a little scared with a few moves and also went out of box, which ~~gave~~ made me loose chances of winning. I did this twice but on my third time, I did my move and got a point for that. After winning three points, I won the fight.

When I went to the second match, I did not fear of anything that was happening to me but I worried about what would happen to my ~~oppon~~ opponent. And again I won the fight by three points. This eventually made me very fearless and gave me more boost in my confidence. But I forgot that my parents and my younger sister was also there during my match in the audience.

After winning five matches, I was qualified for the semi-finals and at that moments, things started to get a little harsh. One of my bad opponents has kicked my right right leg and made it very bruised. I was not able to define how much pain.

I had felt at that moment. When I went back in my locker room, the medic had said that I had played enough for that day and all I had needed was some rest. ~~Didn't~~

"You don't need to go back in the ring" said Mr. Yeng.

"No! I want to, because I don't want to be scared when I go out of the tournament" I said aggressively.

Sensei Yeng had agreed with me because he knew that I can do something better with an injured leg but most importantly he had trusted me. I had a really short time to make the most important decision of my life and I also didn't want to make my family down.

So, Sensei Yeng did his traditional Chinese treatment and it helped me to get back up. Otherwise, my opponent would have won the championship by default, which would be unfair. So I went back in the ring and showed the best performance I could.

With that injured right leg, I was still able to do many other moves I have learned and I won the championship and happily went home with victory.

But ~~the~~ this match has taught me something. If you really want, anything is possible. possible to do in the real world for your own betterment and future.

Examiner Comments:

This is a secure example of Level 3 achievement. The response communicates clearly the idea of the competition and the feelings the writer has, and their decision to continue in light of injury. The events of the competition are quite simply organised and quite straightforward in tone, but are clear: the opponent comes in, there is a missing belt, the narrator competes in a first match, wins, then competes in a second match. The build-up of 'But I forgot' suggests something will come of this, but it is not very clearly explored (perhaps in not wanting to let family down?). Events move clearly to the semi-finals, the injury, the decision, the lesson learnt. For AO4 the response meets Level 3 securely. It communicates clearly, with a clear sense of purpose and understanding of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader. There is appropriate use of form, tone and register. It is secure enough to sit on the border, but not successful enough to move into Level 4. A mark of 11 at the top of Level 3 is appropriate here.

For AO5 the candidate connects appropriate information and ideas and there is development in the narrator's feelings about the events. Structural and grammatical features and paragraphing make the meaning clear. There is use of varied vocabulary which could be argued as 'selective', for example *adrenalin*, *defending*, *tournament*, *opponent*, and spelling is accurate overall. There are some lapses in tense, and the candidate uses some accurate and varied punctuation (speech marks, exclamation mark), adapting sentence structures as appropriate. For AO5 the candidate meets Level 3 fully (despite some lapses in tense control) and borders Level 4 with some quite wide, selective vocabulary and a brief attempt to show deliberate changes in sentence structure for effect. A mark at the top of Level 3 is awarded, 7 marks.

Example 3

I ~~wake~~ was forced awake by the dreadful wails of ^{a couple} mockingbirds whose perfectly shaped silhouettes stood amidst the backdrop ~~area~~ of the mighty sun prevailing from the unknown over the dark mountains. Yet all I could see was a ~~perf~~ picturesque landscape ruined by the tyrannical presence of a tree. I grew up playing around that tree. All my grade-school drawings were of ~~accastous~~ ^a events ^{that} occurred in the vicinity of that tree. Yet now, I despise its very presence.

Life hasn't been vibrant since my mother bid farewell to God's Green Earth. Everything seems colourless and pointless. ~~I no longer~~ Her ~~morning~~ wake-up sirens are no longer audible to my ~~fur~~ ears. I'm numb everywhere, I have been for half a dozen months. There isn't a day that goes by where I don't think of her. Everything is different. Everything changed in the blink of an eye. It's crazy to think you can lose the glue that holds your life together in literally a millisecond. Had ~~she~~ she paused to tie her shoelace ~~or~~ check her mirror, or even to clean out her spectacles, she'd ^{have} still been here with me today. Eagerly waiting back home until she hears my footsteps approaching the door, only for her to dash to the main entrance and greet me to the scrumptious ~~an~~ aroma of freshly

baked condiments. Now that can no longer happen. If only I knew it was ~~the~~ my final interaction with her, things would ^{have} been so much more different. But I didn't. And for the rest of my life, I will live with a piece of my soul, a piece fragment of who I am, missing.

Her passing a ~~dem~~ expedition to the wondrous land of the unknown took an immense toll on each of us. Especially my old man. ~~He'd~~ They'd been alongside one another since he was 12. They had eternal love. They were each other's best mates, they were soulmates. But he lost his favourite person for three-fourth of his life in the time it takes for your eyelids to meet. He lost his best friend, he lost his everything. He isn't a complete man without her.

He'd been distracted ever since the accident. He said to me, "It feels like I'm getting repeatedly stabbed for eternity". He began getting fired left and right and is now unemployed. We no longer could afford the luxuries we once ~~could~~ ^{could}. We ~~were~~ barely afford the shoe-box of a house we rented now. I ~~hadn't~~ seen his lips spread across his frowning face in what felt like forever. It ~~destroys~~ ^{demolishes} your confidence when the man you once thought could never have a bad day now never seems to have a good one. He went from the most magnanimous and ecstatic person I knew, to the least.

After waking up I walked two strides across the room and freshened up to an ice cold shower. Only to come out and walk across our unheated floors to find an empty ~~to~~ rugged old bottle of expensive alcohol. I was just about done with this worn-out ~~the~~ torn-up apartment. But my ~~dad~~ ~~is~~ loving father was walking on a tight rope ~~with~~, on small push and he'd get engulfed by the sea of permanent depression and insanity. How ~~off~~ hastily he changed was ~~here~~ frankly quite menacing.

My father was unstable and it was evident. For the past couple months, I attempted to gulp down expired, unhealthy and out-right disgusting noodles. I hadn't ~~tested~~ ^{experienced} the stupefying and ~~just~~ honestly hypnotising taste of pasta in forever. Life was like an unexpected shower on a ~~sun~~ sunny day. I was enormously and dangerously close to absolutely losing my mind. Everything was a mess.

On this ~~peet~~ ^{unus peculiarly pleasant} ~~common~~ day, my father greeted ~~to~~ me to a very fancy car. It was so out of the blue and I just couldn't seem to point my finger out to what the ~~spee~~ auspicious occasion was. "Let's go to the ice-cream shop that you love", he said to my brother and I. In nearly no time, Ber and I were ~~fit~~ well-dressed and already racing to the car. ~~They~~ Things seemed strange, yet ~~my~~ ^{our} curiosity and excitement

outweighed our vigilance .

We sang as one and shared stories of our memories with mother on the way. For the first time in 6 months, not a single tear was shed. ~~and~~ I gazed out into the distance and enjoyed the gratifying sceneries and the true beauty of mother's nature. I looked out the window as I imagined the soft tender lips of my mother on my forehead. ~~And~~ And for a brief moment, I felt warm and protected .

We finally arrived and I joyously ordered ~~by~~ my usual . I, very calmly enjoyed my ~~of~~ ice cream ~~as~~ while I attempted to take in this perplexing experience . ~~My~~ My father looked intently into my eyes and whispered, " I love you my son " . My heart overflowed with ~~the~~ sensation of ecstasy at the feeling of love and affection from another soul .

~~As we return~~ When returning, I ~~yet~~ continued my quest to absorb the aura and positivity of this absolutely mind-blowingly ~~relaxing~~ relieving journey . Yet ~~my~~ my quest was disturbed by feelings of bemusement as ~~my~~ we drove right past our house and parked in the lawn of what looked like an opulent, newly constructed breath-taker of a mansion. I tried and tried and tried to ~~persuade myself~~ remain adamant . But soul was crushed and my heart out of place when I heard, " Is this him? Oh, it's so lovely to meet you . You look even more handsome

in person". In a shell-shocked trance-like state, I steadily paced myself into the house with strides no longer than an arm's width.

It was already decided and happening. I could only watch as it happened. My life had been turned upside down and I am broken.

~~A day later~~

"I'm sorry my children, but it was my fault that mother died. I was intoxicated that night. I can no longer live my life with her death on my conscience. I'm Please forgive for when you read this, I am no more. I love you Devm. I love you Bev", a letter that came a couple days later followed by a police inspector.

~~Under my breath~~

"In the bleak midwinter...", I whispered under my breath, whimpering for now I no longer have the two most important people in my life by my side. ~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~that~~ ^{important} Two decisions that proved to be vital for my soul. The ~~to~~ alcohol he consumed that day, and his suicide. Everything is different now. I hate my life ...

Examiner Comments:

This response has a very descriptive and engaging opening. The candidate is really striving for effect and to create a sense of setting. Suspense and sadness are effectively built about the death of the narrator's mother. The story communicates successfully overall and creates a poignant and heart-breaking tale (although there is some arguably 'heavy-handed' description and some confusion about the ending, but we assume the children have been adopted).

There is a secure realisation of purpose and the expectations and requirements of the intended reader. While sometimes heavy-handed, there is effective use of form, tone and register. There is some perception and subtlety in the feelings created. A mark of 17 reflects that there is sometimes a lack of subtlety in the description used (for example 'absolutely mind-blowingly relieving journey'), but that there is much to credit here.

For AO5 vocabulary is ambitious and strategically used, for example *silhouettes*, *picturesque*, *tyrannical*, *magnanimous*, *auspicious*, *opulent*, although some words are chosen that are not quite as successful as they could be (for example *vigilance*, *adamant*). There are some spelling errors, but often in ambitious vocabulary choices. The candidate does punctuate writing with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision, using a range of sentence structures accurately and selectively to achieve particular effect, for example some short sentences and some direct speech. A mark of 11 credits the ambition here and the quality of the language used, but also reflects that there are some lapses in accuracy.

Question 3: Write a story with the title 'A Future World'.

This was the second most popular question, but a number of issues caused problems. The most obvious was the fact that many candidates did not follow the instruction to 'write a story' and based their answers on discussion of present problems exacerbated somewhat in the future, such as climate change, environmental issues, the present pandemic or the possibility of war. In some cases, one of these ideas was used to link with an element of fiction, but this often proved an uneasy combination. The candidate who began 'In the future that is different from the modern' went on to list changes that had taken place. Candidates must meet the rubric for a question otherwise they cannot be rewarded for the achievement of purpose, and in some cases, audience. While transactional writing that uses some elements of creativity can be successful, a transactional approach in a story is highly unlikely to be successful.

However, many answers did produce stories based on the future, with a range of ideas, both positive and negative, with many dystopian futures evident. For example, school being cancelled in the future so playing the piano instead was the option or having an accident and waking up in a different world. Future worlds had popular details such as flying cars, robots to do all the work, spaceships and time machines. One examiner wrote:

'Time travel produced some effective moments, as when the cost was one second of the traveller's life, to be taken whenever...unfortunately, it was taken just as his parachute was supposed to open! 'Breakfast on earth, afternoon tea on the moon' was a promising start. One spaceship contained the 'last one hundred seeds of carrots and potatoes.'

Another comment noted:

'My favourite began 'Not Utopia, Dystopia' and continued 'The harsh living conditions forced children to throw away their youth and come to terms with death.'

Example 1

'A Future world'

As of now we are currently in the 21st century, which is known as best ~~the~~ advanced century in human kind. ~~21st~~ In 21st century it has evolved a lot with technologies.

The evolution of technology made us human's life more easier. We are the ones with many benefits getting from the technology

if we think about the current ~~world~~ situation of the world, where the whole humanatarians are struggling to survive due to an virus outbreak SAR COVID-19, which has become a global pandemic since the outbreak.

Many people have lost their lives. This virus is vulnerable to the elderly people, which caused more deaths to appear than usual. As the advancement of the technology.

We have now thermal cameras, digital thermometer, etc. which helps us to read the temperature of a ~~part~~ living being.

Due to the advancement of the technology these devices are getting more ~~et~~ evolved and it is helping us in many ways. If keep evolving the technologies it would be more easier for us humans to live.

~~There~~ There are many advantages and ~~dis~~ disadvantages of ~~a~~ the technologies getting evolved

Many factories which ~~is~~ manufacture products in huge quantities require more ~~the~~ manpower & whereas if we ~~can~~ use ~~the~~ robots instead of human it would be much easier and less expensive compared to a human.

But this is ~~an~~ also a disadvantage as the humans will be replaced with robots or machineries. There will be less employment. There will less people working which will lead to people ~~can~~ earning less.

It will be difficult for them to survive without doing any work. ~~The~~ ~~Just~~ Many of the factories in 2020 has replaced ~~to~~ 60% of manpower with robots or machineries.

~~If~~ ~~is~~ ~~this~~ ~~keeps~~ ~~on~~ ~~g~~ As the population is increasing rapidly. The less employment will make it ~~more~~ ~~or~~ impossible to survive. As there will be less number of employment. Then there will be ~~less~~ no income which will lead to starvation.

If we want to avoid these disaster ~~we~~ have and want better future of the world. we should stop ~~the~~ unemployment.

Examiner Comments:

This response has been included as there are a few responses this series that have taken a more transactional approach. The candidate has started out with another question then changes, which has impacted on time. Writing transactionally in imaginative writing can be considered rubric infringement, but we mark positively.

The focus is on the 21st century here, the evolution of technology, and there is address to the reader 'we are currently', 'made us humans'. The candidate moves to benefits of technology at the bottom of the first page, but this is not connected to the idea over the page which moves to COVID-19. The response describes the situation, 'As the advancement of the technology' (not clear how this is related to COVID-19 until they mention measuring temperature, but we need to make that connection). The idea of 'More easier for us humans to live' due to technology is not clearly expressed and lacking in detail. There is straightforward tone – 'There are many advantages and disadvantages of the technologies getting evolved'. There are some ideas included: technology replacing humans, leading to cost saving, but then it moves to unemployment, people earning less, will make it 'impossible to survive', 'lead to starvation'. These ideas do not flow from each other and it is difficult to see their connection. The response ends with a plea that we should stop unemployment, but it is not clear how this relates to technology or COVID-19.

'Best-fit' is required here considering the task not following what is required. It is more than basic and limited in clarity overall, but some ideas do lack clarity. It could be argued to be broadly appropriate. There is not a great deal of awareness of purpose, other than what might happen in the future. The audience is addressed. The form, tone and register are straightforward. Given the limitations, a mark in the middle of Level 2 is appropriate, 5.

For AO5 there is some lack of control and the third bullet point is definitely only met in Level 1: 'Uses punctuation with basic control, creating undeveloped, often repetitive, sentence structures'. However, credit is given for spelling of some varied vocabulary, for example *vulnerable, manufacture, quantities*, so the mark just moves into Level 2 with 3.

Example 2

I was fighting at the World Karate Championship ~~2017~~ in 2017 and ~~was~~ and was very thrilled about winning the championship twice in a row. I was filled with an adrenalin rush inside me of all the moves I have practiced and while training with my Sensei Yeng, who had taught me that Karate was not about fighting, but it was about defending yourself and defending others.

I was ready for the tournament to start but suddenly some of my bad opponent came inside my locker room trying to scare me before the tournament starts, but I was very very brave and strong to fight them even with all the injuries I got while training at the woods.

The only thing that I was missing was my belt. I didn't have a black belt, but when I went out of the locker room, my Sensei Yeng came and gave me a belt. I felt more brave and strong after wearing the belt and it boosted my confidence.

During my first match, I was a little nervous as this was my first time in a Championship level tournament. When the match started, I became a little scared with a few moves and also went out of box, which gave me loose chances of winning. I did this twice but on my third time, I did my move and got a point for that. After winning three points, I won the fight.

When I went to the second match, I did not fear of anything that was happening to me but I worried about what would happen to my ~~oppon~~ opponent. And again I won the fight by three points. This eventually made me very fearless and gave me more boost in my confidence. But I forgot that my parents and my younger sister was also there during my match in the audience.

After winning five matches, I was qualified for the semi-finals and at that moments, things started to get a little harsh. One of my bad opponents has kicked my right right leg and made it very bruised. I was not able to define how much pain.

I had felt at that moment. When I went back in my locker room, the medic have said that I had played enough for that day and all I had needed was some rest. ~~And~~

"You don't need to go back in the ring" said Mr. Yeng.

"No! I want to, because I don't want to be scared when I go out of the tournament" I said aggressively.

Sensei Yeng had agreed with me because he knew that I can do something better with an injured leg but most importantly he had trusted me. I had a really short time to make the most important decision of my life and I also didn't want to make my family down.

So, Sensei Yeng did his traditional Chinese treatment and it helped me to get back up. Otherwise, my ~~oppon~~ opponent would have won the championship by default, which would be unfair. So I went back in the ring and showed the best performance I could.

With that injured right leg, I was still able to do many other moves I have learned and I won the championship and happily went home with victory.

But ~~the~~ this match has taught me something. If you really want, anything is possible. Possible to do in the real world for your own betterment and future.

Examiner Comments:

The response starts out with an engaging opening but loses direction and pace a little towards the end (the candidate spends too long building up the scene at the beginning). It is appropriate in creating a sense of the future world (the isolation, danger, the struggle to survive), and, in that sense, it does communicate quite successfully (Level 3/4). The capture of Leah is handled in quite an effective way in terms of tone, but after that the pace of events is not quite as successful as there seems to be a rush to the ending. There is quite a secure realisation of purpose and the expectations/requirements of the intended reader (sci-fi, post-apocalyptic world). The form, tone and register are appropriate and sometimes effective, but this is sometimes impacted upon in effectiveness by the quality of AO5 (varying verb tenses, for example). It is mixed, but 'best-fit' is the middle of Level 4 and achieves 13 marks. It does not border on Level 5.

For AO5 the response does manage ideas (it comes back to the suicidal man, for example) and uses structural and grammatical features for effect (Level 4). Sentence structures are managed for deliberate effect - short sentences for example (Level 4). There is a range of punctuation for clarity, and some wide, selective vocabulary with accurate spelling, for example *Armageddon*, *post-apocalyptic*, *armoured* (this could be considered quite extensive, but this is more so at the start than the end). There are some issues with verb tenses which impacts on quality of expression, so a mark of 10 at the top of Level 4 is appropriate.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that starts 'I laughed out loud'.

This question was attempted by a very small number of candidates. All candidates started their responses using the given sentence, with many using the images supplied to inspire them. There was a wide range of responses throughout the levels with a

number using flashback as a way to alter the mood. It was interesting to see how the same initial words were adapted by candidates and the direction they took. The majority of candidates used a linear approach while a few used a circular framework. There were some responses that began with the statement and then wrote an account of an incident or event that had no cause for laughter, such as the account of the death of a kitten called Harold, which produced regular 'floods of tears'. One candidate wrote about climbing an ice hill with a friend, who died, another went to school and watched the moon, while another was set in school, where the writer could not remember a formula in the mathematics examination. He hesitated between honesty and a good grade and then the others in the class laughed when he was caught cheating.

Example 1

The story tells ~~about~~ the series of emotions that Louise Mallard endures after hearing the message of the death of her husband.

Mrs. Mallard has a 'fair, calm face' but the lines on her face 'bespoke repression' due to the fact that she is unhappy in her marriage life. Moreover, there is ~~even~~ a certain 'strength' on her face which represents she always fights against the unhappiness.

~~When~~ We can see the process of the emotion change ^{of Mrs. Mallard} caused by Mrs. Mallard's husband's 'death'. As soon as she hears the message, she 'wept at once' with 'sudden, wild abandonments' and immerses herself into 'the storm of grief', a use of metaphor emphasizing the sorrow. However, her reaction is so different from other women's reactions like 'a paralyzed

Inability' so that it is indicated that Mrs. Mallard's reaction is overdramatic. Then, the tremendous grief brings her 'physical exhaustion' and she 'sank' into her armchair. ~~then~~ A few moments later, she suddenly gets a feeling of 'suspension' which is caused by an 'intelligent thought' although it is not a clear idea. Next, she becomes fearful because she does not know what is the meaning of that 'subtle and elusive' feeling and she does not think there should be such a strange feeling after crying for her husband's death. Gradually, ~~she~~ ~~the~~ tension and excitement increase as she is getting closer to finding out the meaning of the sense so that her bosom 'rose and fell tumultuously'. She also attempts to 'beat it back' but that does not work. Hence, she alters to accept the sense passively by relaxing 'abandoned herself' and immediately, the reference of direct speech with repetition illustrates she realizes she will own a future of freedom: "free, free, free!" At the same time, she gets a 'monstrous joy' which is a use of oxymoron, demonstrating the conflict of the emotion but emphasizing the extent of joy. Finally, she has a vicarious feeling just like the simile indicates, 'like a goddess of Victory', showing her change and joy due to the future full of light. Nevertheless, the story ends with an irony — Mrs. Mallard's death is ~~is~~ caused by shock and disappointment rather than 'joy'.

The relationship between Mrs. Mallard and her husband is

relatively complex. Mrs. Mallard knows 'she would weep again' and she would feel sad about her husband's death. And, 'yet she had loved him' despite 'sometimes'. However, the love ~~of~~ will never become more significant than her freedom which is conveyed by short sentences creating tension, 'Often she had not.' 'What did it matter!' Furthermore, she feels trapped in her marriage since her thought goes like 'There would be no one to live for during those coming years' and things about 'a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature'. At last, just after one hour, her husband ^{so} breaks her fascinating dream of being free and leads to her death.

The descriptions of setting plays an essential part as well. Just after the grief, the environment is shown by sensory descriptions including sight like 'trees that were all a quiver with the new spring life', smell like 'delicious breath' and ^{the} sound like 'sparrows were twittering'. Moreover, 'delicious breath' is a reference to pathetic fallacy which demonstrates Mrs. Mallard's happiness ~~of~~ due to the freedom. All the ^{positive} depictions display the vibrancy of life, which foreshadow the rebirth of Mrs. Mallard and become a motive of her self-assertion. Additionally, the depictions of 'patches of blue sky' and 'clouds that had met and piled one above the other' build up a sense of peace and quietness, revealing the calm and peaceful mind of Mrs. Mallard towards her future life of freedom.

Examiner Comments:

The story crafted here is comparable to the third example for Question 2. There is an engaging opening that draws the reader in, although some issues with expression

impact on the effectiveness. The sense of someone living with cancer is effectively crafted, as are the views of others (again, the expression impacts on the success of how these are presented). The sense of the narrator as a successful painter is effectively created, although some confusion in 'it is worth for me to use my life to seek for them, even exchange with my life' impacts on the success of the feeling being created.

The crafting is more evident and more confident in the final section while the narrator is painting the sunset, and the description is successful and effective: the natural world transferring energy to the narrator, the change in the clouds, the stars coming out and the sun setting. For AO4 all of Level 4 is met, and the candidate just moves into Level 5. In comparison to Example 3 for Question 2, the expression does impact more on the success of the piece and although it just moves into Level 5 with some subtle and quite sophisticated ideas, it does not quite go further because of the expression. It attempts to communicate in a perceptive and subtle way and achieves the same mark as Example 3 for Question 2, 17, just for slightly different reasons.

In AO5 the candidate just moves into Level 5 again. They are really trying to manipulate complex ideas and they do utilise a range of structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion. In contrast to Example 3 for Question 2, there is not the range of extensive vocabulary used strategically, but there is evidence of wide and selective vocabulary such as *Breathlessness*, *feverishly*, *submerged*, with occasional spelling errors. The candidate punctuates writing with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision and uses a range (dashes, speech marks, exclamation mark), and they use a range of sentence structures accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects. This, again, achieves the same mark for AO5 as Example 3 for Question 2, 11, but for different reasons. While the vocabulary is not as extensive, the sentence structures are effective and used selectively, but the effectiveness is sometimes impacted upon by lapses in control.

Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure you have studied the poetry and prose texts in the Anthology fully and use the examination time to remind yourself of the text, not re-read it.
- When a longer extract or story is used, consider what the key points to pick up on are, linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make you are covering pertinent points from the whole story from beginning to end in order to meet AO1 in the higher levels.
- Read the question carefully and make sure you are answering **this** question, not telling the examiner what you know about the text you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case the presentation of marriage.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure you are offering ideas about how language and structure are used. Many of you were able to give examples, but sometimes you did not offer points about how the examples were used.
- For AO2 try to cover points on both language and structure, commenting on the different techniques that have been used by the writer and how they link to the overall topic of the question, in this case the presentation of marriage.
- When you are writing, always think about your reader, what information and ideas you want to develop and how you want the reader to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects.
- Think carefully about how you will begin to write so that it is engaging for your reader from the very start.
- As you begin to write, know where you will end. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar
- In writing, focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task.
- Be ambitious in your structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original. We are often incredibly impressed with your creativity and ability to write in such an imaginative way in the time given.

