



Examiners' Report

June 2023

Int GCSE English Language 4EA1 02

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Paper 2 of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. The paper 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 for 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.

The 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 extract 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 extract. 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 1 follows the format ‘Write about a time when you, or someone you know...’, Question 2 follows the format ‘Write a story with the title...’ and Question 3 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 poem from the Anthology in the examination, and that most had studied it before. Some candidates had been taught the context of and background to the poem.

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 poem
- the successful use of the bullet points within the question
- the references to context in response to the poem
- the range of vocabulary for AO5
- writing that showed creative ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Less successful responses:

- demonstrated a lack of awareness of the range of ideas in the poem
- failed to reference the question, with candidates simply writing all they knew about the poem
- followed a rigid structure in their responses, with a stanza by stanza approach
- 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
- lacked organisation of writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

It was clear that candidates had been able to understand the ideas in the poem and could comment on language and structural features. Their own writing was often enthusiastic and had a clear sense of purpose and audience in the voice and ideas used.

As Principal Examiner for this paper and Chief Examiner for the specification, it was a privilege to read such accomplished work and to see the engagement, interest and significant hard work in the responses candidates had completed.

Question 1

The majority of candidates appeared to be able to engage with the poem and focus their discussion on how sympathy was created. There was a good variety of responses across all levels, and regardless of level, the majority of responses largely followed the requirement of the mark scheme. As usual, some comments were unexpectedly insightful and unique. Points on structure were less securely made across the responses, with more instances of underdeveloped feature-spotting.

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.

Candidates had varying knowledge of the poem. Those who scored highest were able to comment on effects of specific phrases and language, and how they emphasised the tragedy of the boy's death, as well as the setting and reaction surrounding it. More basic responses tended to focus on the portrayal of the saw and physical harm it did, overlooking the human tragedy.

The least successful responses tended to either explain what was being said in the poem. They showed some understanding of some parts of the poem, but the understanding was uneven. There was often limited selection and interpretation of information and ideas: for example where candidates did not move past the accident. A significant number of responses were speculative and made assertions which were not really justified in the poem. For example, some suggested that the boy had laughed because he was not now going to have to work. Presumably because of the line, 'He must have given the hand', a number of candidates thought he might have deliberately maimed himself so that he 'could get off work'. A number assumed he was a 'little boy' and this created a lot of reactions of sympathy from candidates, despite this not being accurate. Obviously, there is some shock in the apparent coldness of the reaction of people at the end of the poem but that needs to be put into context and the reader response needs to be nuanced. A good number of candidates interpreted the reaction as being very evil and a few even accused the doctor of murdering the boy. Some invented scenarios (about cruel sisters and a boy wanting to play in the mountains) which had a bit more to do with their imagination than the poem.

In the mid-range of the mark scheme responses at least identified some of the key ideas in the poem, although at this level there was often an imbalance where the focus was on identifying basic/valid ideas and information from the poem rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels. For example, candidates at this mid-level often had not considered more than broad ideas. There was a lack of 'drilling down' into the poem to examine the more nuanced ideas considered by candidates achieving higher marks.

The most successful responses were more direct in approach, as they were able to select the relevant ideas from the poem in a detailed but succinct manner. These responses covered the full poem and offered detailed comment including foreshadowing and the contrast between setting and events in the poem creating a feeling of sympathy for the boy. Some of the best responses made very decent points about the backdrop of mountain range and sunset in Vermont and commented on the symbolic power of the "dark of ether". They also made much more than a cursory reference to the origin of the title.

Some interesting points in responses included:

- the fragility of life
- gender roles – sister cooking, boy chopping wood
- evokes nervousness / family had no sympathy so this exaggerates sympathy from the reader / unsettles the reader / evokes sympathy as the reader is powerless to do anything but is desperate to.

AO2

Candidates were more successful when they were able to name and discuss a range of language, structure and form devices from the extract. Candidates usually had plenty to say about the way the saw was presented and the rich variety of techniques used by Frost to make it seem threatening and vicious. Personification, powerful verbs, repetition, onomatopoeia, were often identified and their impact on the reader explored.

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. 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. Least successful responses became a little vague about the way particular structural features helped create sympathy for the boy. The effects of sentence structures were not often explained very clearly, for example. Sometimes the responses were very simple, sometimes vague. There were some ‘big leaps’ in interpretation of structure sometimes, for example ‘the fact there is a single stanza means the story is a fast-moving one’. In general, a lot of structural techniques were identified accurately but the explanations of their impact were under-developed.

The responses in the mid-range of the mark scheme were at least commenting on both language and structure. At this level candidates were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. These responses showed the picking out of features in the text, but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features. The majority of candidates were able to comment clearly on, for example, repetition, personification, exclamations. Some explanations at this mid-level were non-specific: ‘The writer uses language and structure to engage the reader.’

The most successful responses reflected on both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. In the best responses candidates were exploring and analysing language and structure, with detailed and discriminating references. These responses explored less obvious features such as recognising the creation of tension in the ending and the reaction of the poet. The examples of language and structure used in the best responses were considered and selected, showing a perceptive understanding of the viewpoint of the poet and the effect of details selected on the readers.

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.

Some interesting candidate responses were:

- a number of candidates explored a religious connotation to ‘supper’, linked to the ‘last supper’ of Jesus and his disciples
- one response that argued that the visual shape of the poem on the page resembles a saw

- the contrast with the peaceful setting and the accident
- 'The fate of the boy is foreshadowed by the declarative sentence, "Call...said!"'
- 'the active verbs "made and dropped" shows the saw is in control not the boy foreshadowing the lurking death'
- the change from the detached narrator to the emotive, "Call...said!" and ambivalent tone of the narrator
- time references highlighted: day...done / call it a day / half an hour
- "Saw all" shows the boy's epiphany but also could be a dark play on words referencing the object which subjected him to pain
- pleasant domestic imagery – sister-apron-supper provides a sense of security – loving-nurturing leads the reader into a false sense of security
- 'Lack of name normally distances the reader from empathy but here it allows the reader to imagine our own siblings in that situation. We fill in the blanks, this allows a connection that no amount of description can provide.'
- "'But the hand!" This simple sentence contrasts with the previous hugely detailed description of the surrounding mountains, implying that the accident was so bad Frost cannot find the words to describe it.'
- "But the hand!" which is a sentence fragment, perhaps symbolising the boy will be incomplete after the accident + the vague imagery forces the audience to imagine the worst.'

1 How does the writer create sympathy for the boy in "Out, Out -"?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the saw and the boy's reaction to the accident are presented
- how the other people in the poem react to the accident
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30)

"The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard."
This shows the writer describes the saw as being a living thing.

The accident was not described in great detail. Instead, the writer describes the boy's reaction.

"Since they were not the one dead, turned to their affairs. This shows other people didn't seem to care about the boy or his accident.

The first part of the story describes working with the saw. The middle part describes the accident. The final part describes the boy's death.



This is a basic response in its brevity and coverage. There is basic understanding of the text, which does border on 'some understanding' in the reference to the reactions of others. The selection and interpretation of information is valid (although not linked to the question there is some link to the bullet points), but there is not much of it. There is a lack of any understanding of language and structure, although personification is implicitly identified, and structure is identified at the end. The first bullet point in the mark scheme is met in Level 1. This is the same for the second bullet point – there is little selection. There is identification of language and structure, but this lacks evidence of understanding. Two references are included, showing limited coverage.

The 'best-fit' for this response is at the top end of Level 1 with a mark of 5.

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(30)

The writer uses the quote "call it a day, I wish they might have said." This shows that the boy wants to get off work as he may be tired or hurt, we know this through the use of the word 'wish', this implies that he doesn't want to do any more work for the day. This will create sympathy for the boy because the ~~writer~~ reader will want him to get off work ~~due~~ because of the words used, as they create that affect.

The boy was scared as he didn't want to lose his hand, he was shouting "Don't let him, Sister!" this implies that he doesn't want to lose his hand, "But the hand was already gone." in the quote "don't let him

Sister!" the exclamation mark shows how scared he was and how much he didn't want to lose his hand.

The writer uses certain words and phrases to create more sympathy for the boy, because some words have a different meaning which ~~would~~ would affect the reader in a different way. Also, the ~~reader~~^{writer} is good at keeping his ~~audience~~ reader hooked as they want to know what happened next.

This text had me hooked the whole time as I wanted to know what happened next and if it was a positive or negative outcome. Also, due to the words used ~~as~~ I took my time reading it because every word had a different meaning and ~~made~~^{made} me feel a different way.

The phrase "doing a man's work, though ~~best~~ a child at heart." ~~shows~~ shows that even-though you may be a child

you can still do a mans job. On the other hand, this will create a sense of anger as the reader may not like how the boy is being treated, and may think that he is being forced to work, ~~at the~~ even though he is a child.

In conclusion, the writer successfully makes the reader feel sympathy from the use of ~~phrases~~ short phrases and words with strong meanings. AS the text is small the reader will want to know more and what happened after, because we have been left on a cliff hanger.



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There is 'some understanding of the text' here and the response is 'valid, but not developed' – Level 2. The response attempts to interpret valid ideas from the poem about the boy wanting to get off work, being scared/not wanting to lose his hand and doing an adult's job even though a child. The reader's response and sympathy for the boy are considered. The selection and interpretation of information is valid, but not developed, and somewhat repetitive. There is identification of structure on the second page (exclamation point), but the comment on its use goes back to the same point of the boy being scared. The selection of references is valid, but not developed. The interpretations and comments are repetitive or paraphrase the quotations used. Paragraphs 3, 4 and 6 do not contain specific references to the poem.

The response stays at the lower end of the Level 2 with a mark of 8 as there is not enough comment to justify meeting all of the bullet points.

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- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30)

In the poem "Out, Out -" by Robert Frost, a young boy dies a tragic death after complications with a machine. Sympathy is shown throughout the

"Seemed to leap" the saw was personified made out be as if it had a mind of its own to possibly shield that the child wasn't at fault. It was just bad ~~luck~~ luck. This hooks the reader in and questions who is at blame.

About half way through the poem the boy's reactions are shown "The boy let out a rueful laugh" shows the reader that the young boy is petrified but ~~the~~ he hasn't exactly hit yet.

"Doing a mans work, though a child at heart" suggest the boy is too young to be working a job as dangerous as this. When the readers get a sense of how young the boy actually is, sympathy comes flooding in.

Towards the end the boy felt hopeless "he saw all spoiled" he knew because of this life would not be the same he wouldn't be able to work properly - he knew he would struggle. This adds both sympathy and empathy to the poems tone.

"Don't let him, sister!" shows how scared the young boy finally was as he calls out to his sister in hope to find help and comfort, the exclamation mark shows urgency and panic in the boys voice.

At the end of the poem language and structure is used "they listen at his heart. Little - less - nothing! -"

The list creates tension upon the readers it represents the heartbeat of the young boy slowly but gradually fading away - coming to a stop.

In conclusion sympathy is created by the tragic events of this young boy's unfair passing and the denial shown within the boy's thoughts and feelings.



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There is sound understanding of the text as a whole. The personification of the saw, the boy's reaction, the stress on it being a child, the idea of his life being spoiled, his desire for his sister to help and the use of listing. It is useful to compare this to S1B as this makes similar points, but we see some clear understanding and explanation of language and structure.

There is pattern in every paragraph of a point, backed up by a quotation from the text and then some explanation. An example of explanation would be the point on listing (at Level 2 it would say 'the list creates tension...' but this shows explanation for Level 3 with 'the list creates tension...it represents the heartbeat of the young boy slowly but gradually fading away'). To go to the top of the level, it would need to go from 'some explanation' to 'explanation'. There are points of clear explanation but sometimes does little more than comment which keeps it at the lower end of Level 3 with 14.

1 How does the writer create sympathy for the boy in "Out, Out -"?

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- how the other people in the poem react to the accident
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including brief quotations.

(30)

The writer uses metaphors, similes, contrast and imagery to create sympathy in "Out, Out".

The writer uses contrast to create a sense of tranquility and peace but also danger. The lines "The buzz saw snarled and rattled" and "Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it" show the contrast and create sympathy by showing the boy died doing something dangerous in such a calm and safe place.

The boy's reactions and emotions are used to create emotion. "The boy's first out cry was a rough laugh" showing the disbelief of the boy and the sympathy created by this is because the boy must be in so much pain he can't process what has happened. "Don't let him cut my hand off" again shows the boy not being able to process what has happened.

The writer also uses metaphors to create sympathy like when the saw "leaped out at the boys hand" we know the saw didn't actually jump at the boy but the boy was distracted for just a second when his sister "told them supper" and so the boy's hand slipped. This shows it wasn't the boys fault and helps create sympathy.

The narrators emotions and thoughts create sympathy because they show that the boy could have lived if his parents said "call it a day" showing the narrator possibly pleading for the parents to let the boy rest. This regret helps create sympathy for the boy and also a bit for the narrator because they show that things could have been different.

Similes are used to help create sympathy like when "as if to keep the life from spilling" is said it is actually referring to the boy bleeding in severe amounts and shows the boy seely trying to stop the bleeding to save his life but it isn't working helping us feel sympathy.

The title "Out, Out" also creates sympathy as it is a reference to Macbeth's candle speech after his wife has died where he

explains all life will end at some point but it creates sympathy for the boy's death because he was so young.

The writer uses short sentences to create sympathy when he writes "No one believed" and "No more to build on there" to show the disbelief of the family that their boy had died and ~~creating~~ reminding us of how young he was and he still lived with his parents and sister.

In conclusion the writer uses a number of language devices to successfully create sympathy for the boy and make the reader feel sympathetic towards the boy.



This response was placed in Level 3, close to the top of the level with a mark of 17.

It shows a sound understanding of the text. There is a sustained focus on the subject of sympathy for the boy. The selection of references is appropriate. It maintains a level of clear explanation of the chosen text and on a number of occasions threatens to move up to 'exploration' but cannot quite rise to it. Perhaps it might drill down into the language more; perhaps each point would benefit from an extra sentence. An example might be the explanation of 'rueful'; nicely picked up and explained but calling out for a deeper examination.

There certainly are creditable explanations: the boy's reaction to the accident, disbelief as he struggles to process what has happened; in paragraph 5 the reference to the narrator is well-judged; in paragraph 7 there is a neat reference to the title of the poem.

For AO2 there is definite clear understanding and explanation of language and structure and how these are used by the writer to achieve effects. This does border on being 'thorough', for example on the penultimate page. The selection of references is appropriate and relevant to the points being made, but not detailed which would be required for Level 4. A mark of 17 at the top end of Level 3 is awarded.

1 How does the writer create sympathy for the boy in "Out, Out -"?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the saw and the boy's reaction to the accident are presented
- how the other people in the poem react to the accident
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including **brief** quotations.

(30)

Firstly, the title of the poem is a reference to Shakespeare's Macbeth and the line, "Out, out ~~was~~ brief candle", symbolising how the boy's life was as easily eliminated ~~was~~ ^{as} a ~~brief~~ ^{measly} candle. This represents the boy's fragility, thus invoking sympathy from the reader as it is basic human nature to feel pity for someone meek and vulnerable. Moreover, the structure of the poem is one long stanza depicting an array of events in a whirlwind. This amalgamation of messy events incites sympathy because it is all so sudden and ~~was~~ unexpected and the reader can almost relate to the boy's shock as they too were surprised by such a dramatic turn of events.

Furthermore, the saw is depicted as a predator, the phrase 'sharped and rattled' personify the saw and therefore turn it into a dangerous threat, lying in wait, ~~was~~ preying on the young boy. Once again, this returns the reader to the feeling of sympathy, guided by pity for the helpless. In addition, the phrase 'sharped and rattled, sharped and rattled' is repeated to further the sense of impending doom ^{for} the oblivious boy. Finally, the animalistic nature of the saw is portrayed through the personifying line, 'leaped out at the boy's hand', thus reinforcing its predatory comparison and

therefore its symbolism of the stronger attacking the weaker.

Additionally, the boys petrified and horrified reaction also create a sense of sympathy for him from the reader. The line, 'The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,' evokes sympathy due to the oxymoron of 'rueful laugh' as it proposes the concept of his youthful exuberance being juxtaposed with an untimely death.

Moreover, 'haul in a peep' as a reaction to the ~~gutter~~ saw, suggests desperation and a desire to be saved, both of which obviously creates sympathy. Similarly, "haul as if to keep / The life from spilling" continues to perpetuate this sympathetic atmosphere and fore as this young boy is faced with a desire to keep living, a desire which he shouldn't have, as a young boy ^{life} should be a constant and never in peril. This infantilisation of the boy is continued in order to magnify his youth ~~to~~ to attract more sympathy from the reader.

An example of this is, "though a child at heart", needless to say, representing his youth and therefore undeservance of a premature ~~death~~ demise.

Moreover, the apathy and callous reaction of other people causes the reader to almost try to make up for their lack of sympathy by giving more of their own. This apathetic response is represented in the final line, "And they, since they / Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs." Such a heartless response encourages the reader to feel immense sympathy for the boy who ~~was~~ was just as quickly died, ~~was~~ was forgotten.

In conclusion, the writer uses the predatory nature of the scus, the youth, innocence and helplessness of the boy, and the apathetic response of others to invoke immense sympathy.



The response meets the first bullet point in Level 4 as the candidate definitely shows sustained understanding of the text and question.

The candidate makes a wide selection of quotations, accompanied by detailed explorations. Thorough understanding is shown of both language and structure, with specific references used to develop the candidate's points. This candidate writes very well, so it is important to see through the sophisticated language used and focus on the points being made.

The conclusion shows a more developed bringing together of their own ideas, rather than a summary that we might see in Level 3. There are slight hints of perception but overall, not enough to warrant Level 5.

1 How does the writer create sympathy for the boy in "Out, Out—"?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how the saw and the boy's reaction to the accident are presented
- how the other people in the poem react to the accident
- the use of language and structure.

You should support your answer with close reference to the poem, including brief quotations.

(30)

In the poem *Out, Out* Frost describes the tragic story of a young boy at work who fatally loses his life, yet the pragmatic society around him overlooks the traumatic event.

Robert Frost uses the innocence of the boy to evoke commiseration from the reader. This is expressed where Frost uses caesura to accentuate the boy's youth: "Doing a man's work, though a child at heart". The contrast of 'man' and 'child' reinforces the cruel nature of the child labour and ~~that~~^{this} makes the reader feel immense sympathy for the boy. Additionally, the pleading tone of the boy as he exclaims "Don't let him cut my hand off [.] Don't let him, sister!" utilises anaphora to raise emotions of consternation for the boy as he seems

excessively frightened. Furthermore, the harsh and unethical act of ^{the work of the boy} ~~child labour~~ is further emphasised where Frost writes "the half hour that a boy counts so much when saved from work." using both enjambement and an end-stopped line. The verb 'saved' depicts the boy's resentment to his work which clarifies the forced labour he goes through, stimulating pity from the reader. Moreover, the chaotic and heart-felt event is foreshadowed while emphasising the boy's inconsequential ^{persona} ~~nature~~ when it says: "Call it a day, I wish they might have said". The caesura adds a dramatic pause which gives the reader an ~~an~~ overwhelming sense of angst for the oblivious young boy.

Frost uses the detached nature of the surrounding workers to create a dismal atmosphere. This is exemplified through Frost's use of a ~~that~~ "euphemism " and that ended it." The end-stopped ^{symbolises the boy's death and} line ~~does not portray~~ the severity of the event which causes

The reader is felt shocked and distressed. Furthermore, the concept of a pragmatic society is built through the enjambement "since they were not the one dead, turned to their affairs." The caesura slows down the pace of the poem to leave the reader with a sombre ever-present sense of pity for the boy who has been overlooked. Additionally, the unnerving lack of sentimental feelings towards the boy builds an ominous atmosphere in the poem which is signified by the caesura "No more to build on there." The short sentence conveys to the reader the lack of sympathy the boy ~~got~~ received which evokes a dejected feeling from the reader. Once again a euphemism has been utilised to veil the cruel reality of the boy's death, "half as if to keep the life from spilling". The enjambement creates a dark and frightening tone which stimulates a feeling of ~~scary~~ horror and trepidation from the reader.

The personification of the saw ~~creates~~ resembles its menacing nature and further raises sympathy from the reader. Firstly, the sibilance and repetition when "the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled" introduces an evil and raucous nature of the saw to make the reader anxious. Additionally, the saw is personified when it "leaped out the boy's hand,". The caesura adds a dramatic pause before the horrific event occurs and the personification of the saw shifts the blame off of the boy and as if it were the saw's fault. This makes the boy seem naive and innocent. Moreover, Frost uses the exclamation "But the hand!" to increase the pace of the poem and in turn, make the reader feel emotions of stress and worry for the boy. Yet again, the introductory line to the poem illustrates the saw's negative intentions. Through the sibilance the "saw snarled". The ~~an~~ aggressive verb 'snarled' makes the reader immediately

wary and cautious of the weapon.

In conclusion, Robert Frost creates sympathy for the boy by ^{creating} ~~making~~ him ~~as an~~ exceedingly youthful and innocent character which shifts all blame off of him. The un sentimental attitude of the ^{other} characters also creates pity through their ~~dismissive~~ dismissal of the situation.



This response begins with a clear overview of the poem and it is immediately evident that this is a candidate who understands the poem.

There is definitely perceptive understanding of the text, for example, on the first page the idea of the contrast between the 'man' and the 'child', reinforcing the cruel nature of child labour, which then moves on to discuss the pleading tone in 'Don't let him cut my hand off...'. On the second page the candidate again uses the idea of forced labour, but this adds little to this ongoing point. The point here about resentment is not fully explored and is not completely convincing. The third page returns to well exemplified analysis, with comments about the impact of both the caesura and the enjambment. Perceptive understanding is shown in comments such as 'the unnerving lack of sentimental feelings ... builds an ominous atmosphere'. The candidate maintains a focus on the question and exemplifies the points made. Towards the end of the fourth page there are some points, for example the point about the exclamatory 'But the hand', that are less developed. The concluding paragraph appears a little rushed.

The selection and interpretation of information and ideas is apt and the candidate is mostly persuasive when clarifying the points made. This is particularly evident and convincing when the candidate discusses the reactions of the boy.

For AO2, the candidate shows mostly perceptive understanding and analysis of language and structure. There are perceptive comments about how the poet achieves effects, including tone, foreshadowing, anaphora, caesura, and enjambment. This is seen in the discussion of how the poet creates sympathy.

The selection of references is discriminating and they clarify the points being made.

A mark of 28, securely in Level 5, reflects the evidence offered in this response.

Question 2

Examiners noted that the theme of family provoked some strong writing but with a predominantly negative bias. Stories of neglect, abandonment and bereavement far outweighed more optimistic fare such as unity and celebration (though some were present). This question tended towards the most narrative of the three writing questions and there were a lot of responses that followed the same formula of the prodigal parent with a frequency of maternal abandonment (in stark contrast to prevailing real world statistics) presumably as the saddest scenario candidates could imagine. One examiner noted 'I am not sure why there were not more positive responses but I suspect TV melodrama has a hand in it.'

Some responses were very clear about the story including a relative or friend right from the start, or waited until the very end where it was a surprise or climax of the story to meet or reference them. This led to a good variety of responses and a rich mixture of true and fictional accounts. Especially with the (probably) true accounts, some candidates felt a responsibility to mention each detail of a trip/holiday (such as time in an airport, in a coach, in a plane, choosing what to wear). Practice in opening stories effectively may have benefited a fair number of candidates.

The least successful responses were dry, factual accounts where one thing happens after another and there is little emotional weight or intrigue. Yet there were plenty of successful responses where characters were projected in a concise way, setting was described originally and there was a powerful emotional impact (which also avoided sentimentality). The more insightful responses were more figurative and therefore in a better position to develop a more engaging tone.

The best responses were emotive and structured in a way to cause the reader to feel connection to the protagonist and their meeting with family members.

Wednesday 23rd January was the day. The first day I met her. My mother. It was my 16th birthday, you probably wondering why after 16 years I'm only meeting her ~~again~~. ~~the~~ Truth is . . . She left me when I was a baby, I know brutal right. But it was for my own good or so I was told, I grew up with my grandparents. But after 16 years she turns up at the front door.

I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a cloudy day, grey skies as if it was about to rain any moment. I took the day off ~~as~~ school as it was my birthday, me and my grandma were baking my birthday cake. It was tradition, we do it every year, it wasn't having a party or anything. I don't have many ~~from~~ friends. Anyways as I put the cake into the oven there's when when the doorbell rang.

My grandmother looked at me with a smile in the corner of her mouth as if she knew who it was. She knew who was behind that door. I walked to door as if I was walking into the unknown, I didn't know

What to expect. I open the door, I see a woman
~~what to expect~~ with long blonde hair like rapunzel,
green eyes with a hint of hazel just like me. She
was quite short and had quite a welcoming
presence. I will never forget the smell of lavender as
I caught a whiff as her hair blew in the wind.

I didn't recognise her at first but then it came to
me. Grandmother showed me pictures of my mother
as little girl. When I was younger and I must say she
aged quite well. I froze I didn't know what to say
or do luckily my grandmother came and just wrapped
her arms around me and whispered she's sorry.



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Examiner Comments

This shows clear attempts to engage the reader and to evoke a sense of this woman she did not know. There is a clear sense of purpose and the candidate understands that they need to engage with the audience. The form and register are appropriate and the tone is generally appropriate. At times, the tone feels a little straightforward and the candidate struggles to maintain their conversational tone – this keeps the response firmly in Level 3. The lack of control in places stops it being successful and effective.

For AO5 the response is securely in Level 3 but it lacks the cohesive and deliberate use of structural and grammatical features of Level 4. Paragraphing and sentence structure generally accurate, with some slips in control. Varied vocabulary is used, for example *brutal*, *hazel*, *presence*. Ideas are connected and developed with paragraphing aiding clarity.

Betty, James and Inez are best friends.

They are all meeting up ^{at a party.} ~~to have dinner~~

Drama is ahead.

Meet Betty, a 16 Year old girl. Chestnut hair cascades in gentle waves, accentuating her allure. Eyes akin to emerald gems, emit an enchanting vibrancy, bewitching all who gaze into their depths. A Sequin Smile blesses her face, inviting others deep into her profound innerworld.

Meet Inez, also a 16 year old girl but so so different to Betty. A Crown of fiery ginger hair ~~escapes~~ falls into voluptuous curls. Deep, earthy brown eyes resemble the depths of ancient woods; if you stare ^{standing there} hard enough you can see her, ^{guarding} her soul. Lips like delicate petals of a blossoming rose. Cloaked in vintage threads, she becomes a window into bygone decades: each seam whispering a tale of the forgotten.

~~Her~~ Headphones grace her ears; she walks through life accompanied by the melodies of yesteryears. ~~Her most prominent feature, her freckles.~~ Lastly, her most prominent feature, her freckles. Freckles cover her face, creating a celestial map of stardust sprinkled upon a porcelain canvas.

Now let's meet James, a 17 year old boy who doesn't know anything. Dark hair covers his eyes, acting as a curtain to his soul. ~~Deep~~ Deep pools of darkness for eyes ~~representing~~ resembling the inky void of the midnight sky. ~~James~~ James is a paradoxical dance of shadows and light, he longs for a connection but will cut people out like tags on his clothing. However, he has a sense of humour which opens a window to the sunshine in his soul. Clothed in dark t-shirts and baggy Levis he ~~or~~ creates a rebellious and non-conforming aura. Like a wayward poet, he longs to be heard and understood but finds he leaves a trail of unintentional casualties in his wake.

Okay now you've met the characters, lets get to the juicy part. The Drama. Well, I think you will need a bit of context first (I know, im sorry, but I promise the red, hot drama is on its way). Are you ready for some cliqué teenage drama?

James and Betty started to date before the summer. James went on holiday to a tropical paradise, where he met August. ~~James~~ He cheats on Betty with August, since Inez and James are twins Inez was also on the holiday and saw this happen. ~~to~~ Long story short, Inez told Betty and Betty is throwing a party but she hasn't invited James.

Now you are all caught up lets flash-forward to Betty's party.

Fairy light coat her house inside and out. It sticks out like a sore thumb next to ~~the~~ the other dull brick houses. Her house so crammed of people you would think she's Taylor Swift.

James arrives. Betty spots him through the window and rushes out to the porch, like a predator hunting its next meal. Betty yells, over the blasting music, "What are you doing. No-one invited you". James responds, "I need to talk to you" Rolling her eyes she says "Go on then" "You heard the rumours from Inez. You can't believe a word she ~~said~~ says, most times, but this time it was true."

Tears roll down Betty's face

"I was thinking of you when she pulled up like a figment of my worst intensions. I ~~saw~~ Slept next to her but I dreamt of you all summer long. I'm only 17, I don't know anything but I know I ~~really~~ want you and no one else"

"You shouldn't have had to cheat to realise that, James".

Inez comes out and comforts Betty.

That night, James walked home on broken cobbelstones, knowing he had really done it this time.



This response merits a secure place in Level 4 for both AO4 and AO5.

In AO5 it certainly meets bullet points one and two of Level 4: it communicates successfully and fulfils its purpose. In the first part of the script the use of form, tone and register is impressive; towards the end it is less impressive, which accounts for the response not quite making the top mark in the level.

The response begins sharply, the reader being drawn in by the promise of 'Drama ahead'. This is followed by three paragraphs, each one devoted to some detailed description of three of the characters in the anticipated drama. The descriptions go deeper than the unashamedly rich physical portrayals; they offer intriguing glimpses into the souls of the characters. In particular, there is some effective story-telling as James is pictured as 'leaving a trail of unintentional casualties in his wake'; something we might recall as the story ends.

In paragraph 5 there is a nice tongue-in-cheek, direct address to the reader. Latterly, however, the quality is not as sustained.

In AO4, the response meets all the bullet points, some more securely than others. Its structure and management of ideas are clear and developed, particularly in the first part. The description of the characters offers some well-selected vocabulary and some memorable phrases: eyes resembling 'the depths of ancient woods'; 'a window into bygone decades'; 'like a wayward poet'.

Punctuation is clear and (in general) spelling correct. Towards the end, there is a sense of the candidate rushing to finish and this results in some lack of control in the writing. This serves to prevent the response from reaching the very top of the level.

Question 3

Examiners felt that this was the strongest of the three questions in terms of responses, with candidates able to engage well with the positive and negative connotations of the image. On the metaphorical side there were a number of deaths, though often with uplifting final moments reflecting the beauty of sunset imagery. Other responses involved spending lovely days with friends, lovers and parents (here being an almost universally positive force). The emphasis on a sunset elicited a lot of romantic responses (either successful or failed romances), which provided the candidates with an excellent opportunity to construct some well-thought-out responses with a lot of sensory imagery.

One examiner noted:

'The strongest writing I have seen leant towards pastoral descriptions and scenic beauty with thematic implication of an ending day as opposed to the more heavy handed metaphors or simply stories.'

Lots of candidates chose to explore 'The Sunset Experience' in a very literal and linear way. Many ended their narratives with 'the sunset experience' as it was meant to be the most important aspect of the story. There were lots of fairly common adjectives to describe a sunset and often candidates felt nostalgic. Some candidates went a bit dark, and started with a very positive beginning, with a tragic (ironic?) attempt at an ending.

Most successful were the powerful examples of sunsets experienced by people in solitary, romantic and communal situations. Descriptions were not always original and vivid, of course, but a lot of good attempts were made. The idea of a 'symbolic sunset' also led to some successful pieces, a fitting climax to an emotional account.

Less successful were where candidates just added an obligatory sunset at the end of a story which was not really integrated.

The Sunset Experience

The evening air was hot out at sea. Winds just strong enough to keep my boat moving. The massive sail catching the wind like a bucket of water. My fishing reel begins to click like an old clock. I swiftly scaled across the boat to reel in the fighting fish as it opposes my every move the line cuts through the crystal blue water like a hot knife in butter. While the fish steadily approaches the surface I begin to see its shiny skin sparkling like diamonds dancing in the sun. The ~~evening~~^{night} is approaching as the day is disappearing. The sun has begun moving down. As the sun's intensity lowers I ~~to~~ start to get cold.

I hook up my rod back into place and I go into my boat with the fantastic fresh fish. The sound of waves gently slapping the bow of the boat has become silence to me now. My silence is soon interrupted by the noise of butter sizzling, snapping and popping in the pan. I add in my carefully filled

fish to the pan until it's a beautiful golden brown color before placing it into a baguette along side some lettuce and sauce. It's noticeably darker now, so I switch off and tidy up the cooker.

I grab myself my cigarette and ~~an~~ a soft fluffy blanket before a ice cold beer from the fridge. My hands were completely full as I walked to the bow of my boat and lay down on the netting. I wrapped up warm with my blankets, peeked back the top of my beer "Pshshshe" as all the gas escapes. I put my freshly plated up meal on my lap and feel the plates not temperature comfort my cold legs.

I take a big breath in, look up at the sky and prepare myself for the ultimate sunset experience. The night was clear, not a cloud in sight only a big orange ~~ball~~ ball melting into the sea. as it slowly started to set it lit up the sky a gorgeous fiery orange. I could ~~hear~~ ^{hear} the ~~boats~~ wild winds whipping past all my boats ropes hanging down. I could hear the gases bubbles bursting against my beers can. I tasted my fish that was swimming around under my boat just less than half an hour ago. It smells delicious as steam rushes off the fish I can smell the citrus hints of lemon ~~meat~~ mixed in with

Fishes white flakey meat that was only just coated in red wine. The sun continued to disappear slowly as if it was melting into the sea and polluting the surroundings with its blindingly beautiful color.

As the last tip of the sun had gone the stars began to come out lighting up the night sky like thousands of aliens shining torches down on you from space. I tell myself that this is the best sunset experience I will ever have but I have told myself this the last three nights in a row! With a belly full of beer and fish and a smile that went from ear to ear I prayed and thanked god for I am able to experience -the beauty of nature first hand all the time.

I set my plate and can aside of me and lay there all muscles relaxed without a single worry in the world. I stare up at the night sky as I slowly drift off to sleep.

My eyes slightly open enough to see I had woken up right under a group of sea gulls. They circle above me more elegant than doves as I sit up reluctantly. I am immediately met with the most breath takingly gorgeous sun rise. The clouds were pink and red while

the sea was still cystle blue. I stood up out of my DIY den from last night. ~~z~~ Taking of all of my clothes but my shorts I run up to the edge of the boat and leap in the water which was as warm as a jacuzzi. ~~z~~ After being woken up fully ~~z~~ climb aboard again and prepare myself and my boat for another day in paradise.



The response opens with a range of similes, building sensory images which continues throughout the piece. Description is effective but becomes repetitive towards the end of the piece. The overall experience of being on the boat is more prominent than that of the sunset, but the candidate is successful in their crafting of a clear and sometime successful response.

In terms of AO5, there is an attempt at varied vocabulary shown throughout the piece. There are some inaccuracies and loss of control which does not meet the criteria for Level 4 – all of Level 3 is achieved.

The Sunset experience

★ that swept and
dived and leapt

She was consigned to the sky to the wisps of clouds,★ to the kaleidoscopic colours that tumble over one another. Often reflected on the tranquil surface of a body of water, she could never quite penetrate to the ebony depths below. She had never been a superficial person before, but it seemed, in death, she now only existed to be beautiful - ~~a~~ sunset.

Love appeared to be the panacea of grief.

She never rose, only seemed to set. To fall down, down, down to the west of the sky and return a day later. Acrimoniously, she would ~~patiently~~ wait for her family to visit her, when her golden and pink would ~~be~~ fracture in the tears that welled in their eyes and swooped along their cheeks. With her ~~pas~~ death, her family would often eulogise her to whomever would listen. The shape of her name on their

tongue had turned them sick with sadness, but they still persevered with her memory. That was the one thing that could not die. That is the one thing that would never become a sunset.

Longing. Such a fickle concept. So tangible, yet so useless.

Her little brother did not think of her as a sunset. "Oh, No." He said, one dusk, "I think she is the stars." And so that's what she became! Just for him. The bittersweet ~~now~~, sticky feeling within her now lingered after dark, after the light had faded and pink had turned to blue had turned to black. Her lines of soft colour no longer tattooed the sky, and she had become her antithesis.

He had waited up for her, eyes bright and awake, teeth brushed, pajamas on, but not in bed. She came to him as the stars; she was ~~new~~ beautiful but distant.

She lived vicariously, but she was not alone.

She was a perpetual voyager, but her little brother

stared ^{back} just as hard. ~~back~~

This became routine. Cynics would tell him that she wasn't there, but she always was. She collected and cherished the whispered secrets he would share with her, and she would sprinkle them amongst the stars, like delicate fragments of glass. She was dead yet oh so alive.

The sunset experience. A lie. She could not be contained or described ~~with~~ with such a lack of grandiosity. She was a sunset and the stars. But she was also the moon, unmoving but persistent. She was constellation after constellation ~~but also~~ She was 'Aurora Borealis'. A shadow. The rain. The gentle breeze that put out candles. A hummingbird ~~by~~ ^{behind} the window pane.

A reflection of whatever her loved ones needed her to be.

Until death do us part. Another lie. A vicious lie.



This is a crafted piece of writing, where the communication is definitely perceptive and subtle. The candidate begins with a narrative hook, with the reader wondering who the character, 'she' is. The idea of the sunset experience is cleverly weaved throughout the response as the candidate explores the idea of her family visiting her in death. There are complex ideas throughout this piece. The candidate cleverly uses sentence types to manipulate the reader's feelings, for example, around the word 'Longing' on the second page; this with the two short sentences 'Such a fickle concept. So tangible, yet so useless.' The shift / change in focus to the brother shows deliberate crafting. The whole idea of her living 'vicariously' and the fact that she is a 'perpetual voyeur' shows a sharp attention to detail and very deliberate and sophisticated use of form, tone and register.

Level 5 is met in full for AO4 in the perceptive and subtle communication and manipulation of ideas in this response. It is perceptive and sophisticated throughout. The focus on feelings and the juxtaposition of the sister's position in death and the feelings of the brother are poignant. The ending is deliberately crafted for impact.

For AO5 information and complex ideas are manipulated, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text. There is an extensive vocabulary, used strategically, for example consigned, panacea, acrimoniously, vicariously, perpetual and many more. There is a range of sentence structures used accurately and selectively to manipulate the reader.

This is a short response that does more than enough to achieve full marks.

Question 4

Examiners felt that this title was another that lends itself well to metaphor, although with less variety seen than Question 3. Candidates tended towards the notion of struggle in metaphorical responses with a number of eating disorders overcome, a few battles with depression and some team sports events. A range of mountain-based adventures were presented with a tendency towards direct narrative, high level responses elevating their stories with a preponderance of description and less successful responses creating twist endings with little foreshadowing or internal logic. Examiners noted:

'some successful crafting – a mountain personified as she, with lovely description topped off with "two birds circling her peak served as her crown".'

There were also successful accounts with very vivid, descriptive passages which were able to engage the reader. Terrain, challenging weather and feelings were all dealt with in a convincing way. There were also imaginative pieces which dealt with the title in a symbolic way.

Success sometimes depended on how familiar candidates were with either the experience of at least walking in the hills/mountains and the basic 'nuts and bolts' of climbing as an activity, especially when a linear approach of climbing an actual mountain was taken. In less successful responses there was a tendency towards cliché, especially regarding the dangers faced on a mountain, and a significant number of candidates wrote pieces with a lot of action but a limited amount of engaging description and genuine suspense. Sometimes also there were a fair number of accounts which spent too much time giving reasons for protagonists taking on a challenge or describing the preparations needed for the trek, losing the sense of cohesion needed.

The mountain looked impossibly high. ~~But~~ I had come so far. 6 days. Sleepless nights, not out of an unwillingness to rest but terror of what may be lurking ^{around} ~~about~~ me. I had come so far and have given my all but all the energy I had put in throughout this journey may be all but a fraction of what I would need to complete this impossible task.

Three days in, the idea of how much I ^{would} ~~would~~ to write ping pinged ~~it~~ in my brain as I would spend hours on end ^{deliberating} ~~arguing~~ with myself on problems that should take no more than minutes to decide in the "real" world but what else was there to do. There seldom is a time when I'm not thinking about useless jargon on this journey. I already regret not taking notes by the day or even by the hour, but as quickly as I think that my mind turns the other direction as just writing the key events is the smart and logical option as if I had chosen to go the other route than these books would just be filled with endless useless information such as this and I only have ~~886~~ ^{one thousand and twenty four} 1,024 pages. Spread across four books anyway so I have to be smart which I feel I have been, on the outside at least.



This response is a Level 3 response with the mark of 8 for AO4. The communication is clear (mostly). There is a clear sense of the purpose – a story about the metaphorical mountain of writing looking impossibly high, and of the requirements of the intended reader. There is appropriate use of form, tone and register. The ideas are clear and came across as an engaging and creative piece of writing, if not fully developed.

For AO5 the candidate has met Level 3 securely with a mark of 6. For the first bullet in the mark scheme the ideas are developing and connected: withholding the information, hooking the reader in the opening paragraph, thought process continues in the second paragraph, rounding off. Looking at the second bullet in the mark scheme the response uses varied vocabulary (*unwant, fraction, ping ponged, deliberating, jargon, logical...*) and spelling is accurate. The candidate uses varied and mainly accurate punctuation, adapting sentence structures as appropriate. The response loses control towards the end and this therefore impacts on the overall placement in the level.

The mountain looked impossibly high. It's early in the morning I have got up and am ready to leave the house to go and meet my friends and prepare to climb the mountain. We're planning on it being a ~~seven~~^{give} day round trip to reach the peak and then climb down. I was frantically ~~was~~ checking my bag every two minutes to make sure I had everything I need and ~~that~~ wasn't forgetting anything. Then around ten minutes later I left my house and ~~was~~^{went} on my way to pick up my friend's.

~~Two~~ Two hours had passed by this point we had just arrived at the bottom of the mountain and we are doing last ~~minutes~~ minute checks to make sure we have everything we need. By this point it was around eight o'clock in the morning and we ~~had~~ just started climbing the absurdly high mountain.

The beginning of the climb was relatively easy but I knew that it was only going to get harder the higher we got. My bags that I ~~was~~ am carrying weigh a ~~ton~~ lot and I think that is slowing us

down but as we get higher the bags will lose weight as I will be carrying less ~~of~~ food and water.

We are around eight hours in now and the whole group were tired so we decided to camp here for the night we are in a lovely section of the mountain where it is flat you just wouldn't want to fall off in your sleep. I woke up at around four o'clock the next morning and I don't really remember much about last night so I must of fell asleep quick.

We set off again at around eight o'clock planning on being at the ~~top~~^{Peak} by sunset. Throughout the whole day the groups mindset was purely on just getting to the top of the mountain so in time to see the ~~sun~~^{sunset} set. We stopped for lunch at two o'clock and I was saving my nice meal for dinner tonight so all I ate was some crisps and a sandwich. Straight after setting off again after lunch the weather dropped from around 12°C to about 7°C, this cold weather gave me more of an urge to get to the top purely just so I can eat some hot food whilst watching the sunset.

We made it. We finally made it. We got to the peak of the mountain at around seven o'clock

which is enough time to setup camp before sunser. Sunser came at around ~~the~~ seven forty give it was the most astonishing sunser I had ever seen in my life. ~~It is also up~~ It is also up there with one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. ~~It~~ It was totally ~~not~~ worth the two day climb up.

We went to sleep that night at around ten after eating some food and chilling. The next day we decided to not leave early and spend around half the day admiring the beautiful views and getting some recovery in. That day we left the peak at around one o'clock and we started our descent back down.

After ~~the~~ seven hours of walking that day we setup camp and were preparing for the next day. ~~The~~ I woke up around six o'clock and waited for the others before we left knowing that we would be in our own beds tonight.

After another ~~the~~ eight hours of descent we made it to the car and said our final goodbyes to the mountain before leaving on the two hour drive. I made it home that night at

around three o'clock in the morning and went to sleep
dreaming about ~~the~~ the views at the ~~top~~^{peak} and that
astounding sunset.



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Examiner Comments

This response shows full achievement of Level 2 for AO4. The communication is broadly appropriate but is a little repetitive. There is some sense of the purpose, and of the requirements of the intended reader. It sets the scene and tries to include descriptive touches *astounding sunset*. There is straightforward use of form, tone and register with a series of statements about what happened next. There is some confusion over timings which detract from the overall clarity of the response.

In AO5 the candidate has met all of Level 2. The candidate uses punctuation with some control, with some range of sentence structures meeting Level 2. There is an attempt to use varied vocabulary, for example *frantically*, *absurdly*. Spelling, however, has some inaccuracies. Verb tenses are confused. These impact on the overall placement in the mark scheme so a mark at the top of Level 2 is appropriate.

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As always, examiners noted that these imaginative writing pieces were often really enjoyable to read, with an impressive amount and quality produced under timed conditions. It was also pleasing to see candidates using ideas and phrases borrowed from other anthology texts; for example 'The clouds had all but cleared away' and 'I had never looked on her save with love'. This demonstrated an impressive knowledge and a great use of the anthology texts for inspiration.

The least successful responses were basic response, with 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 – this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

The middle level responses 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 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 in this range to set out a stronger description in the start of the story and then focus more on quickly moving the plot on 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 descriptive techniques in their writing whether they were appropriate or not.

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. These responses 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 most successful 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. As always, advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short story 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 responses. The more 'pedestrian' responses 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.

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

Some comments from examiners include:

- 'What lovely pieces! A real joy to read – even the lower level responses had a glimmer of crafting'
- most candidates tried to introduce some varied sentence structure and punctuation
- some effective use of single-word sentences and single-line paragraphs
- most tried with similes and varying vocabulary
- rule of 3 was evident
- 'it was interesting to see where candidates had been inspired by all three titles in whichever they decided on – some had a sunset experience on a mountain, some had a sunset with friends or family, for example.'

Paper 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.
- Even in the text is a short poem consider what the key points are linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make sure you are covering the whole poem 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 poem you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case sympathy.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure you are offering ideas about how language and structure are used. Many candidates were able to give examples, but sometimes they did not offer a comment about the example was 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 sympathy for the boy.
- 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.
- Listen to your teacher's advice and make sure to plan – some responses felt as if they had little purpose or understanding of how they were going to conclude.
- 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 in your 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.
- Always respond to the questions set, not a question you have prepared – this does not often lead to effective responses.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

