



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2024**

**Int GCSE English Language 4EA1 02R**

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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.

The paper comprises 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.

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 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 choose 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 that 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. Many candidates had been taught the context of, and background to, the poem.

Throughout the paper, 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 candidates in this paper are to:

- 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
- did not reference the question, with candidates simply writing all they knew about the poem
- followed a rigid structure, 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
- did not 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 imaginative writing was often engaging, 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 the presentation of overcoming difficulties. 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.

### AO1

AO1 requires candidates to 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.

The poem is always popular, providing a great deal of stimulating material; this was generally understood and almost all candidates were able to develop an appropriate response. Many responses were extremely lengthy and detailed, using technical information and quotations to support their points.

Candidates seemed to be familiar with the poem and responses tended to provide similar material, although there was considerable variation in the way the material was presented and in the level of understanding shown.

Most candidates kept a focus on the question, rather than just repeating what they knew. They appeared to take note of the bullet points in the question, which provided a guide and framework for their responses. Overall, apt selection of ideas with supplementary evidence was provided and there was very little misunderstanding shown.

Many responses went straight to discrimination through race and gender, as the difficulty the poem considered. In terms of race, responses looked at the history of slavery, including the 'bitter, twisted lies'/the 'huts of history's shame', the treatment of slaves and how they were expected to behave, with 'bowed heads', 'lowered eyes' and opposed this against the poet's challenge to the white oppressors, through her rhetorical questions and repeated refrain 'I rise'.

Candidates explored the power dynamics between the poet and the oppressors, showing how the self-empowerment of the former overcame the latter.

Gender discrimination was also considered and was often explored thoroughly. Here, candidates focussed on 'sassiness', 'sexiness', 'haughtiness' used in the rhetorical questions to anger the oppressors. The use of 'oil wells' and 'gold mines' was taken to mean the wealth the poet had from her attitude and background the 'gift' from her people. Some candidates avoided the 'diamonds at the meeting of my thighs' but others gave a full interpretation of the idea as showing her pride in her femininity, for example.

Many responses stressed the difficulty of being both black and female; this difficulty was opposed by the poet's growing self-confidence and her increasing recognition of her own self-worth and value. Here, candidates used the forces of nature, 'moons', 'suns', 'tides' and the 'black ocean'.

The least successful responses for AO1 tended only to repeat 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 idea of being trod in the dirt

## **AO2**

AO2 requires candidates to demonstrate that they 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.

In terms of structure, there were some interesting comments on the way the structure of the poem changes to reflect the poet's increasing confidence and freedom, as well as an unwillingness to accept the forms imposed by society, and, by extension, the oppressors.

A number of responses compared the shape of the poem to a protest banner, of the sort that would be raised at protest rallies, with the final lines representing the flagpole and the main body the flag.

Candidates offered considerable information about the techniques in the lines used, although this was not linked to the ideas of the poem as well as the material outlined previously; it seemed only to be showing what they knew of the techniques rather than using them to explore the ideas.

Candidates identified that the oppressors causing the poet's difficulties are not mentioned in the final two stanzas, demonstrating their lack of importance to the narrator. The focus is on the power of the poet to overcome the slights and slurs of the others, providing an uplifting and optimistic end to the text.

1 How does the writer try to present overcoming difficulties in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how difficulties are presented
- how the writer shows the ways that difficulties can be overcome
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

The author uses a powerful, impactful term, 'trod' which have to do with to stamp on, she is being stepped on which is a difficulty but later author writes she will rise like a dust she will rise which is how she overcome it.

Author uses the term 'tide' because tide is strong, fierceful, ~~devastating~~ big force. So he has to overcome the tides by stating she'll rise like a dust.

The author uses three action verbs which is 'shoot', 'cut', 'kill'. It's all bloody and striking your heart. It is dangerous to humans, these are ~~its~~ unsafe but the author gets over by saying like a ~~cut~~ air she'll rise.

From the 'shame' of his ethnicity, how people treat them unfairly, the inequalities they have no matter this, he'll rise like a dust.

'I bear in the tide' refers to because tide hits very powerfully and it's destructive. However, she is not feared nor affected she'll rise like a dust.

"Leaving behind nights of terror and fear" may suggest because of his race, she doesn't know what's going to happen next, the next second he could be in the danger, you never know if you're gonna see the sun the next morning for a black-raced person. But however, he has the unwavering faith, like a dust, she'll rise.

The rule of three at the end, I rise, I rise, I rise suggests ~~to~~ As long as she

is determined enough, other stuff can't move his soul of being a dust and rise. It highlights and emphasises of his belief.



AO2 requires candidates to demonstrate that they 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.

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(30)

The writer shows that she is discriminated ~~but~~ <sup>be confident</sup> because of her gender and identity. The writer is described with "trod me in the very dirt." dirt has connotation with insignificant and valueless, suggesting that she is being disrespected and seen as worthless. However, the writer suggests that the difficulties can be overcome with confident attitude. In the first stanza, the writer uses repetition of "you may" as if she is giving the permission for the people who hates her, this turns her ~~from~~ into the stronger character and she becomes passive. Furthermore, the writer shows her confident attitude in "Cause I walk like I've got oil wells" oil wells refers to wealth and rich, so the simile here shows that she is extremely confident. ~~and~~ ~~And~~

The writer shows that being confident is the way to overcome disabilities. In stanza six, the writer again uses the repetition of "you may" showing that she is the one with more power and control. Moreover, the word after "you may" is ~~pro~~ getting more and more violent and ~~ag~~ aggressive "shoot", "cut", and "kill", suggesting the writer is not afraid with the criticizes and has the bravery to face them. "But still, like air, I'll rise," the simile "air" is geographically high and this also refers to how the writer is better than the ones who criticizes her.

In the last two stanzas, the writer breaks her regular stanza length which is four sentences long. ~~It~~ Therefore, this shows that she is breaking the stereotype and restrictions from other people with the use of enjambment. The use of long sentences hooks the readers attention and also emphasises her messages. Moreover, the ~~repetition~~ repetition "I rise" further emphasizes her confidence, and rising also creates a positive image.



This looks to be a short response, however, the handwriting is small and there is more there than it seems just looking at the written page.

There is some sound understanding of the poem (Level 2/3), with a clear focus on the question on the first page (Level 3).

The answer offers sound explanation of ideas and techniques (Level 3). The development of ideas is less convincing on the second page.

Overall, there is some clear understanding of language and structure (Level 2/3), with explanation offered.

The ideas are supported by appropriate references (Level 3).

Overall, 'best-fit' is at the lower end of Level 3 for both assessment objectives.

1 How does the writer try to present overcoming difficulties in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how difficulties are presented
- how the writer shows the ways that difficulties can be overcome
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

The writer uses direct address as shown in the repeated use of "you" to make it a personal message to the reader which provides emphasis to the writer's views of their difficulties and how they overcome them.

When describing the difficulties that the writer faces, the repeated use of "me" creates a sense of ambiguity which shows the reader that many people face the difficulties described by the writer and that

these difficulties aren't specific to her.

The constant use of rhetorical questions throughout the poem shows the overwhelming number of difficulties the writer faces. This is further accentuated by the use of anaphora in the sixth stanza, "you may..." However, the use of "may" instead of "can" makes the difficulties/reader inferior to the speaker, showing that despite the constant problems the speaker faces, they still hold power over those that are causing them difficulties.

The writer also presents the difficulties as foolish and ineffective. This is shown through the use of juxtaposition in every stanza where it may begin with an image of the difficulties she faces, such as people who "trod me in the very dirt", however the stanza ends with an image of triumph over these difficulties where she uses the motif "I'll rise". The idea that the difficulties are ineffective is further demonstrated in the use of punctuation. The obstacles she faces and people's view of her ends with question marks which shows uncertainty while ideas of her overcoming these difficulties often end with an end stop, such as in "but still, like

air, I'll rise."

The writer also presents the idea that difficulties can be overcome through confidence and determination. She describes herself overcoming the difficulties through similes "like moons and like suns" and the metaphor of herself being "a black ocean, leaping and wide" showing how unstoppable she is compared to those trying to oppress her. The use of the constant questioning of the ~~the~~ reader such as "does my sassiness upset you?" has an underlying derogatory tone which shows her confidence outweighs the difficulties. This is further highlighted through the numerous uses of ~~the~~ hyperbole in similes such as "couse I laugh like I've got gold mines diggin' in my own backyard" and "couse I walk like I've got oil wells pumping in my living room."

The writer changes the stanza length and structure at the end of the poem. The final two stanzas lack the rhetorical questions that challenge her showing her absolute ridance of her difficulties and how they no longer affect her. The perfect rhyme and repetition of "I rise" in the last three lines of the poem creates a powerful image of

her resilience crushing her difficulties. This finalises the writer's message of determination and confidence besting the numerous obstacles and difficulties in her life.



There is sound understanding of the poem illustrated. The selection and interpretation of information and ideas is appropriate and relevant to the points being made.

For AO2, language and structure are explained throughout. A number of devices, such as rhetorical questions, anaphora, juxtaposition, punctuation, similes, metaphors, for example, are included, but none of them move into exploration.

The selection of references is appropriate and relevant to the points being made.

All of Level 3 is met for AO2, but there is not enough evidence of exploration to move into Level 4. There are some 'glimmers' that it could have reached Level 4 with more development but the response stops just short of moving into 'explore'.

1 How does the writer try to present overcoming difficulties in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how difficulties are presented
- how the writer shows the ways that difficulties can be overcome
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

In *Still I Rise*, the writer Maya Angelou presents her difficulties in life for being 'minority' and considered as 'weaker' because of her identity of being a black woman. Throughout the poem, Angelou uses a determined tone to ~~present~~ convey her sense of confidence and her significance, boldly stands up for her community and states her values through the language and structure.

Angelou first presents her difficulties in life being a black woman at the time. As they are presented in history by 'bitter, twisted lies' reveals how they are treated unfairly. Violent verb 'trod' also suggests how difficult for

them to live a normal life with equality, their reputations are always ~~being~~ ~~maintaining~~ ~~being~~ thrown dirt on. The oppressor's cold heartedness and discrimination against Angelou's community is fully shown as they only want to see others 'broken', and wish them with 'bowed head'. In ~~their~~ the oppressors' point of view, black people are 'coloured' and are minorities of the society. The background of this poem was when the 'apartheid' still exists. This made them automatically think black people should be 'weakened' and only suffer from their situation. However, in this stanza, Angelou uses mocking tone to analyse the oppressors' pathetic ~~and~~ opinions of wanting to see others 'cries'. This has prevented the ~~loss~~ lack of confidence of the oppressor as they only receive pleasure when others are being treated unfairly. Later on, the use of anaphora 'you may' ~~is repeatedly~~ ~~used~~ repeatedly emphasises the ~~resilience~~ ~~or~~ resilience of the writer, also ~~supported~~ by following violent hard verbs 'shoot' ~~and~~ 'cut', ~~or~~ creates a cruel image. The line 'you may kill me with your hatredness' metaphorically paints an image of holocaust, ~~but~~ not with guns but hate. The word 'kill' vividly presents the unfairness and insult ~~or~~ on Angelou and her people, but the repetition at the ~~end~~ end - 'I'll rise' further emphasises their resilience.

This ~~sense~~ sense of resilience comes from her strong sense of confidence and her self-esteem — she clearly recognises her own value, which builds her strong mind that fights back the ~~an~~ unequal social situation back then. ~~With~~ With the three

rhetorical questions with anaphora - 'does my...?' conveys her mental stability and calm inside, which builds strong contrast with the oppressor's strong sense of ~~few~~ negative feeling of being 'upset' and 'offend'. This strong negative feeling of oppressor being ~~off~~ offended also suggests the lack of confidence and low self-esteem, they have no clear view of their own value. In contrast, Angelou uses three simile in the poem to present her confidence and value to stand for her community and pride. As she walks 'like I've got oil wells' and 'laugh like I've got gold mines'. The verbs 'walk' and 'laugh' creates a peaceful and calm mood with vitality, as she was never bothered by the discrimination and unfairness. And the ~~metaphor~~ simile of 'oil wells' and 'gold mines' ~~are~~ are considered as 'white possession' at the time, which upsets the oppressor, the emphasis on ~~own~~ ownership 'my own' again addresses that her values can't be taken away. She measures her own value above money ~~and jewellery~~ ~~out side~~ as an addition. And the third simile 'I dance like I've got diamonds at the meeting of my thighs', the locative 'at the meeting of thighs' does not just present her protection over her identity of being black, she ~~is~~ also stands up for her identity of being a woman. The verb 'dance' creates vitality and strength, which conveys all ~~the~~ woman has their own strength, and woman's value ~~and~~ are always ~~more~~ so much more than sacrificing ~~the~~ in marriages. It's a symbolism of all people should seek equality. Her confidence

and boldness overcomes the unfairness from the society.

and she always seeks for equality.

Her resilience also shows in the simile of herself ~~to be~~ ~~to be~~ ~~to be~~

to permanently exist — being 'like the moons and like suns' and 'like certainty of tides' presents the determined tone of winning the battle, winning the battle for equality. The upbeat & simile of being like 'suns' and 'moons' are long term existing light sources, which reminds reader of hope.

And 'just like hope springing high', she exists as her spirit will always continue to go on. The repeated 'I'll rise' through out the poem also reveals her hope inside and the positive vision of seeing a better world, and the difficulties never beats her down.

The change in structure of last two stanzas to sublimates her pain, and the tone ~~switch from~~ shift from

future to present tense 'I rise', which conveys a sense of immediacy. It emphasizes her rise as an unstoppable ongoing action, despite all difficulties and 'terror and fear', ~~she~~ her stability and determination will not be

born. Out of the 'pain' in the past, 'I rise'. ~~Instead~~

~~of using words of simile~~ The use of simile in the text of being 'like dust' and 'like air' are ~~soft~~ <sup>very</sup> soft and small,

~~was~~ which uses a soft way to present how she will always rise and exist. In the last stanza, instead of

simile, Angelou uses a metaphor 'I'm a black ocean' which is enormous and powerful to show her strength. This shows her

features of being 'black' and a woman as the source of life, she is ~~un~~ inignorable and unstoppable now. ~~The 'I rise' repeats three times at the end of the poem, again emphasise her growth of power against the oppressor, and the use of simile makes her more de even more determined. 'I rise' with the repetition of three times in a role emphasise the growth of power and the strength of spirit. We can not be beaten, and she ~~is~~ always overcomes troubles in life and 'rise'.~~



This response does definitely show sound understanding of the poem. This understanding is quite sustained throughout, although some references to context that sit 'outside' of the poem take the focus away from the text itself.

The selection of information is quite detailed (Level 3/4) and is relevant to the points being made (Level 3).

For AO2, the candidate definitely explains how language and structure are used throughout, and in some places explores, for example, the use of similes and the shift in tone that comes with structural changes.

The references are appropriate and support the points being made, and there is some detail in places.

The range of points places this towards the top of Level 4 for both assessment objectives.

1 How does the writer try to present overcoming difficulties in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how difficulties are presented
- how the writer shows the ways that difficulties can be overcome
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

In the poem 'Still I Rise', Maya Angelou presents racism towards Black people as the difficulty. yet despite the harsh ~~hate~~ hate towards them, she is able to overcome the racist views, stand up against them ~~and~~ and 'rise'.

In the poem 'Still I Rise', Maya presents racism as a difficult problem that has lasted for many years throughout history. In the second line, she uses the plural term of 'lies' to indicate the misrepresentation of Black people in society during that time. She follows with the violent verb ~~'trud'~~ 'trud' in the next line, linking to the ~~physical~~ abuse of Black people in society, including forms of slavery and segregation, making

them feel oppressed. In stanza 2 and 4, the use of rhetorical questions in the lines 'Does my sassiness upset you? / Why are you beset with gloom?' and 'Did you want to see me broken? / Bowled head and lowered eyes?' both add onto the mocking tone of the ~~speaker~~ poet, showing her rejection of these harmful ~~stereotypes~~ stereotypes and hate towards Black people. In stanza 6, Maya writes 'You may shoot me with your words, / You may cut me with your eyes, / You may kill me with your hatefulness', The anaphora of 'you may' acts to challenge the oppressor and ~~the~~ their mindset of hating against Black people. The violent verbs of 'shoot', 'cut' and 'kill' all link to the difficulties that Black people, including physical acts of violence such as lynching or other activities performed by the racist group the KKK (Ku Klux Klan). Maya also uses the metaphor of 'huts of history's shame' to mock the shameful ~~the~~ racist behaviour of society towards Black people, overall identifying racism as the difficulty.

Despite ~~this~~ this, Maya overcomes the difficulty of racism through two main methods. One of which is having self-belief and being confident about her <sup>cultural</sup> identity. Throughout the poem, simile is a technique that is repeated to ~~highlight~~ highlight this point. The line 'cause I walk like ~~that~~ I've got oil wells / Pumping in my living room' includes the use of simile, ~~where~~ where Maya compares herself with 'oil wells' which have a connotation of wealth, indicating her wealthy status. In the third stanza, Maya uses the simile 'like moons and like suns', comparing herself to uncontrollable aspects by mankind in nature, linking to the idea that she is uncontrolled by anyone, including her oppressors. In

the fourth stanza, she again uses the simile of 'laugh like I've got gold mines', with 'gold' having a connotation to wealth, indicating her success. It ~~may~~ <sup>means that</sup> also ~~mean~~ she feels proud of rich cultural background despite the hate towards them, and well appreciates it.

The other method she uses is resilience — not giving up despite having difficulties. In the first stanza she uses the simile in the line 'like dust, I'll rise' to show how despite the occurrence of racism, she will stand up against it and fight back. She also uses the simile and the metaphor of 'hopes springing high' in the line 'Just like hopes springing ~~the~~ high / Still I'll rise', with the metaphor linking to ~~the~~ the idea of not giving up. The enjambment in the line indicates a ~~seamless~~ seamless argument with no stop, meaning she will not give up, ~~making the statement~~ <sup>along</sup> With the repetition of the title 'Still I Rise' to emphasise the message. In the final stanza, Maya uses the juxtaposition between the rhyming couplet of 'fear' and 'clear' in the lines 'Leaving behind nights of terror and fear / I rise / Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear / I rise', linking to the idea ~~that~~ of resilience that she has rejected the racist views and decided to bounce back against them. In the final lines of 'I rise / I rise / I rise' acting as a repetition and perfect rhyme emphasises the final message that she will not be broken down by her oppressors, rather she will 'rise' up against them and fight for herself. The enjambment used also links to the idea of no stopping or giving up, once again emphasising her message. n\*\*

n\*

Overall, in the poem 'Still I Rise', Maya presents the difficulty she faces as racism towards Black people ~~thru~~ throughout history, and how she overcomes them by appreciating her own self-worth and ~~being~~ <sup>showing</sup> ~~resilience~~ <sup>resilience</sup> against the difficulties she faces as a Black woman due to the racism inflicted on her by ~~society~~ society.

^\* Throughout the poem, Maya uses a mocking tone to show her disapproval towards the racist thoughts and acts by society against Black people. This along with the constant use of enjambment throughout the poem shows her continuous link of arguments against racist behaviour, highlighting herself as powerful and will reject any opposition against herself and her race in what she believes in.

^\*\* An endstop is also used in the final line 'I rise.' to ~~show~~ create a strong ending, leaving no room for the opposition to rebuttal as Maya believes strongly and firmly in standing up against racism towards Black people by society.

^\*\*\* as she no longer fears racist behaviours placed against her



There is a clear focus on the question and a sustained understanding of the poem throughout.

The selection of material supports the points being made. There is thorough understanding and exploration of both language and structure, to demonstrate the ways racism against black people can be overcome.

The choice of valid references is detailed, with embedded quotations used to emphasise the points being made.

Level 4 mark scheme descriptors are met in the main.

1 How does the writer try to present overcoming difficulties in *Still I Rise*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- how difficulties are presented
- how the writer shows the ways that difficulties can be overcome
- the use of language and structure.

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

(30)

Angelou presents difficulties as inevitable and expected, but she does not allow those difficulties to burden her and dehumanise her. The overall tightly structured poem, consisting of 7 quatrains ~~from~~<sup>at</sup> the start, and the ABCB rhyme scheme ~~suggests~~ mirrors societal expectations and the certainty of difficulties that are in Angelou's life, as being a black woman in society guarantees hardship and discrimination. By starting the poem with 'you', it creates a personal and direct level of criticism, allowing the reader/audience reflect ~~on~~ on their

actions that may cause minorities trouble. Although the poem is most likely directed towards white men/people who were active supporters of the slave trade, it is also a reminder that modern American society is built from racist ideals and ideologies that cause such suffering in the lives of African-American people. Angelou explores oppression ~~by~~ through sarcasm, as she states that her 'sassiness' might 'upset' who she is addressing. 'Sassiness' is chosen deliberately because it is a ~~sex~~ stereotype of black women, even in today's society. This also supports her mentions of her/black women's 'haughtiness', 'sexiness', suggesting that black women were treated like objects, as society never changed its attitude for African-American women. This further supports the concept of the unavoidable problems that people like Angelou may face, and bringing them to ~~the~~ <sup>attention</sup> may help to de-stigmatise the problem of racism and misogyny our society currently face. The semantic field of pain and oppression like 'broken', 'cries', 'hatefulness' also suggests that the reader should acknowledge the past, and that we can't change history, but

encourages us to do better, as she will not give up no matter the hardship she'll face.

Angelou shows that she is proud of her heritage and sex despite the difficulties her people has gone through. The rhetorical question 'Does my sassiness upset you?' displays a sense of confidence as she challenges her oppressors. The repeated usage of rhetorical question complets further emphasises her confidence, as well as mocking how ridiculous it is to get offended over someone's heritage. It is clear that Angelou is confident and has a high self-esteem through the metaphorical comparisons of her 'walk' and having 'oil wells pumping in (her) living room'. The image of an oil well generates wealth, luxury, which juxtaposes the image of slaves working in oil rigs in the past, which goes against the societal norms, therefore making her seem confident and proud. This image of wealth appears again as she mentions 'gold mines digging in (her) own backyard.' the image of wealth also highlights power, as she seems so confident that she has

power over her oppressors, as well as the mental power to speak out, making this poem empowering. When talking about her sex, she uses 'diamonds' to describe what's 'between (her) thighs', which empowers her as a woman suggesting that she is valued and tough, like a 'diamond'. Her continuous references to black history, like 'soulful cries', ~~as~~ as a reference to ~~the~~ soul music which empowered slaves, or 'huts' in which slaves lived in, also suggests her love and appreciation for her ancestors and culture, further creating this idea of confidence and power that contrasts the image of slavery and oppression.

Angelou remains proud and confident by breaking out of the cycle of oppression and societal norms. The repeated phrase 'I rise' creates a sense ~~of~~ that Angelou is unstoppable if responds and contrasts the theme of oppression and racism. Ending with 3 lines of 'I rise', it is an unforgettable reminder that no matter what hardships Angelou and black people may face, they'll always 'rise' to the top. The last two stanzas also deviate from the quatrains, creating a physical break

from the cycle of discrimination and racism on paper as black people broke free of the chains of slavery. The semantic field of nature, claiming that she's a 'black ocean' makes her ~~an~~ 'rise' inevitable as nature is an indomitable force that cannot be stopped. The direct address of slavery also demystifies from societal norms, as slavery is often considered a taboo topic, and bringing it up fuels her confidence and uniqueness, giving her power as she is the 'hope' and 'dream' of her people.



This response demonstrates perceptive understanding of the poem and selects the textual references precisely to suit the given question how the writer presents overcoming difficulties.

The response manages to cover a real breadth of the poem as well as looking at specific parts in depth.

It begins dynamically with a clear overview of meaning before moving on to the form and structure of the poem.

One real strength of this response is the way in which the candidate is constantly making reference to the question and tailoring their response to what has been asked.

There is detailed and sustained understanding of both the poem and the poet, a 'writer at work', who has made deliberate choices for impact and to manipulate the reader.

Aptly selected textual evidence of both language and structure is analysed and integrated, developing and breaking down each idea.

The candidate is persuasive and is able to justify the judgements they make about the text with discriminating references.

The AO2 comments about her 'sassiness' are very perceptive, as are the comments on the semantic field of pain and oppression.

Full marks for both assessment objectives is well-deserved.

## Question 2

This question was the least-answered of the three. In many instances, the writing felt as if it was based on factual information and there was an excitement and determination conveyed about having an ambition and trying to fulfil it.

The title triggered a sense of realism, of time for self-reflection and there were often moments of self-reflection and sometimes humour. The responses were in both first and third person. Candidates began by explaining the ambition, then trying to achieve it, with obstacles and failures along the way.

Successful responses were able to explore the emotions and thoughts of the narrator. Successful responses also made good use of tension: as to whether or not they would be successful in their ambition was doubtful right to the end.

The ambitions themselves tended to be career or study-related. Some were linked to hobbies and interests. The interest came from partaking in what was often an uneven journey. Some of the ambitions were more typical, like becoming a professional footballer, but others were more unusual, like completing a marathon when the participant had only a short time to live.

Some candidates used what they wanted to be, for example an artist/fashion designer/musician/actor as opposed to what their family, specifically parents, had in mind and the conflict was often explored sensitively. There was a number of answers that used the idea of climbing a mountain (inspired by a past paper), either literally or metaphorically, until the ambition represented by the mountain was reached, for example 'until one day I reach the peak!'

Some responses seemed to have difficulty with how to introduce dialogue into the stories, often missing punctuation or not demonstrating accurately that they had transitioned from description into speech. The most successful responses used accurate sentence demarcation, clearly separated description from speech and built tension throughout their story. Often they left the achievement until the end, then allowed some time afterwards to describe the aftermath of the person achieving their ambition.

Overall, examiners felt that many of the responses lacked enough detail to reach the higher sections of the mark scheme, however, they did all achieve the purpose of writing a story focusing on achieving an ambition.

Less successful responses often went for a straightforward concept of an ambition: achieving academic or sporting ambitions of grades or winning competitions. The chronological approach in this question meant that the structure was generally sound.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒ Question 4 ☒

In everyone's life, there could be many ambitions. Some ambitions may be achieved, some may not be achieved. I have many ambitions, and it is ~~unfortunate~~ <sup>unlucky</sup> ~~unlucky~~ that I had not achieved all of them. But, in all of the ambitions that I achieved, I ~~am~~ have one that is not possible to forget.

When I was a grade one student, I participated in a class music concert. The musician who plays the violin attracted my attention. I was ~~amazed~~ ~~amazed~~ shocked by the vivid sound of this instrument. After the concert, I decided that I ~~must~~ have to learn the violin. And I have an ambition that I want to play the violin at the school's concert.

I started learning and practising. To be honest, violin is really a hard instrument to learn. It is Greek to me. I even cannot ~~to~~ find the right place to play this instrument. Also, practicing an instrument is an extremely boring thing. When my

friends are playing video games, I am practicing the violin. When my friends are sleeping, I still have to practice the violin.

To handle the violin is not a easy thing, but I insist to learn and practice, while I still believe I ~~can~~ could learn this instrument well. After five years of insisting, I finally got a chance to show myself.

When I was a grade six student, my school set a gradual ceremony, and they require some students who can play the violin well. I then join this concert.

I choose a song that I like the best. On the stage, I was very nervous at first, but I then calm down by the familiar rhyme. I plays the song fluently. When the music stop, I heard the ~~clamps~~ sound of clamps under the stage, like a sea. I then ~~realize~~ realize that I did very well. I achieved my ambition!

Overall, I ~~will~~ would never forget ~~of~~ this success. I achieved this ambition by the

years of insisting. I am so proud of myself.



AO4

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 .

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.

AO5

For AO5 it is necessary to apply 'best-fit'. The candidate expresses information and ideas (Level 1).

There is some attempt to order them, but this is not very successful. Paragraphs and some structural and grammatical features are used, for example repetition of sentence structures.

For the second bullet point in the mark scheme, there is some varied vocabulary spelt correctly, for example *musician, vivid, instrument, familiar, rhyme* . This meets Level 3.

For the third bullet point, however, there is basic control of punctuation (Level 1), because there are issues with articles, tenses and control.

This mix of achievement for the bullet points places the response just into Level 2.

Level 2

AO4: 7 marks

AO5: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks



I walked up to him and told him that I was adamant he gave it another go, he doubted me harder than anyone ever has so I gave him another speech he had to sit through besides our parents. "You inspire me! I wake up every day go to collage hoping to be just as half as motivated and driven as you. This is your dream, ~~or maybe~~ some traffic shouldn't stop you. Do this for me and most importantly for your 11 year old self, he ~~deserve~~ deserves this." I thought he would ~~ing~~ ignore me and move on, back <sup>to</sup> his ~~dumb~~ <sup>surrender</sup> ideas ~~of quitting~~. But I got through to him. He went back to training and his journey reimbursed.

~~After~~ After a while he got distracted with life, Girlfriend, parties and bad friends who convinced him his dreams were unreachable. I knew that this was his passion and that deep down he wanted this I just had to remind him what he had worked so hard for. Me, my parents and surprisingly his Girlfriend staged an intervention just to remind him how much he loved tennis, how he had hoped and prayed for his big break to embark upon him. This thankfully worked and all we did was hope and pray that his carelessness wouldn't get the best of him again. His hopes and dreams were on the line and we just hoped that nothing would get in the way of it.

A while after that he was basically drafted in football terms. He got a manager and started playing small but pro football tournaments, and ~~he~~ slowly but surely he built his way up to the top, & my heart was obliterated with joy and every single inch of me was proud of him, he became my hero through these years ~~and~~ and all I could think of was the 11 year old boy ~~that~~ back in our bunks, I cry a lot thinking about these years and hope one day I can be as brave as him.

~~And~~ And so there I was sitting in the bleachers watching him completely demolish his opponent, watching his smile light up the room every time he won a game, ~~and~~ As a big sister I only prayed for the best, and ~~so~~ he got it, my mind could no longer bare the excitement and joy.



AO4

The response shows generally clear communication, with an equally clear sense of purpose and an awareness of audience. There is some repetition.

Form, tone and register are straightforward and mainly appropriate.

AO5

The response attempts to use a varied vocabulary, but there are many errors throughout.

The punctuation is not ambitious and there are problems with the use of capital letters and with comma splicing.

AO4: 10 marks

AO5: 15 marks

Total: 25 marks

### Question 3

This question was the most popular of the three in this series.

This question provided perhaps the most original material, covering everything from the breakdown of a relationship, to appearing on a game show to win a large sum of money.

There were also physical challenges which focused on training before an event and the determination involved during the challenge itself.

Another common focus was performing in front of an audience and not being a victim of stage fright.

There were moments of envy, jealousy and intense competition with others. The challenge was sometimes self-imposed but often it presented itself through social media or even through the post, possibly inspired by Image 1 (although images are always linked to Q04, candidates are able to use the images for any or none of the questions).

It was also one where the challenge led to some totally unrealistic ideas, like rescuing a 'dear friend who was in the body of a see-through lion' or pursuing a gigantic grey mouse, later a rat, which jumped out of a letter that was found, or going into a tunnel to bring out a phoenix. Some challenges were inspired by television shows or films.

The less successful responses were the ones that relied on using a game or a popular series. Whilst there is nothing fundamentally wrong with using ideas as stimulus, these answers tended to be less successful with a heavy reliance on simple plotline. Perhaps candidates should be guided that when they are going to use a known storyline, to ensure that a level of individuality needs to be considered.

There were some more realistic challenges, like facing the challenge of being 'socially awkward' and 'Love is a challenge we all must face'. Almost inevitably, there were a number of challenges that involved exploring a haunted house. Here, the description of the surroundings was often effective, as with a 'scent of darkness and whispered secrets'.

## The Challenge

As the dying fireball slipped slowly behind the distant silhouettes of rolling hills, streaks of orange and <sup>glow</sup> ~~wave~~ <sup>on the</sup> surface of the pond. I look in awe.

"Andrew, ~~it's~~ it's time to go home!" ~~A~~ A shout from Dad snapped ~~me out of~~ me back to reality from ~~a~~ the dream-like scenario.

"No. I want to practise more."

I had ~~just~~ attempted to ride a bicycle for the past two hours — to no avail. I knew I was really close though. I knew it.

"Fine. One more try."

I took a deep breathe. This is my last chance. I'll have to do it. I looked at the challenge. A shabby old bike, ~~the~~ the once lively red paint on it had become dull and blotched from use, but it's still my most prized possession. I got it for my birthday.

I ~~carefully~~ carefully got on the worn seat, ~~trying~~ trying to land a foot on the ground. I end up sloped like a ~~motorbike~~ motorbike racer banking a sharp turn. My sweaty hands grasp the handles. I ~~take~~ <sup>took</sup> a final look at my Dad, and my ~~right~~ right foot kicked down on the ground. ~~with~~

At that <sup>same</sup> instant I ~~felt~~ <sup>felt</sup> myself losing balance. ~~but~~ I quickly placed my right foot back on the pedals while ~~the~~ <sup>my</sup> left

worked to gain speed. Suddenly, the bike thrust to one side.

Adrenaline rushed through my veins, I jerked the handle to the opposite side. The metal joints <sup>gave</sup> a loud creak. As if in slow motion, the bike tilted over. ~~It~~ ~~tilted~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~ground~~. My vision was full of the orange and red and —

My vision turned black as I land with a thud. Immediately the sharp clunking of metal followed — a sound I was too familiar with.

~~I try to open my~~

My head was spinning. My joints in pain. I open my eyes to a blurred world.

"Are you okay?" Dad asked.

But I didn't ~~re~~ reply. I was full of energy and determination and anger — why can't I overcome this challenge!

Ignoring the pain, I ~~got~~ ~~up~~ ~~and~~ forced myself to get up. Sprinting over to the fallen bike, I lift it upright and swing myself over. Dad shouted, but I couldn't hear him.

Again I kick on the ground. As the bike tilts to one side, as if in a movie, moments play out ~~the~~ frame by frame.

I turn the handle. Too far. I quickly adjust it to line up with my path. I lower myself, observing ~~every~~ every detail of my ride, as if my life depended on it.

There was a bump in front. I turned left, the bicycle glided smoothly past it. I was in control. ~~The~~ ~~spring~~ ~~breeze~~ ~~ruffle~~ ~~my~~ ~~hair~~. I ~~felt~~ the spring breeze ruffle my hair. Trees and rocks was <sup>felt</sup> left behind in an instant. I let out a cry of exhilaration.

---

*I had done it.*

---



AO4

This response communicates successfully in the main, using a single event and exploring that in depth.

The candidate manipulates the pace of the narrative and crafts the piece carefully, using a range of devices.

The sense of purpose is secure and there is the sense of trying to build tension for the reader.

The use of form, tone and register is mostly effective.

AO5

The candidate manages information and ideas and attempts to use structural and grammatical features cohesively and deliberately, in order to show his emotions in relation to his current and previous failures on this bike.

There is use of a wide, selective vocabulary and some ambition here, although there are occasional spelling errors.

A range of punctuation is used for clarity, but not always with control.

There is an attempt to manage sentence structures for deliberate effect; the most successful of these are the one-sentence paragraphs and the short sentences that are used for impact.

Reading this response more than once will help see the range of devices used by the candidate.

AO4: 14 marks

AO5: 9 marks

Total: 23 marks

## The Challenge

It was midnight.

Clara was standing at the edge of the cliff, her mind had been messed up for weeks, and her tight nerve was just like a string, suddenly broke up earlier today. Her feet were trembling, she was afraid of the void down the cliff, but the cruel reality terrified her more, she forced herself to directly gaze to the void, tears began to spiral in her ~~metecholy~~ melancholy eyes.

Trees were muttering around her, were they giggling? Were they mocking her? Clara only felt the malicious animosity from the nature around her, even the merciless wind was slapping her face. She tried to find the last kind thing which ~~was~~ might bring her anticipation or convince her not to step forward, she raised up her head. But there were zero stars she could catch, the only light shimmering was from a bar, which near her school. That was exactly the place ~~caused~~ exerted overwhelming challenge and caused her to be traumatized.

Suddenly, a sense of nausea flashed into her every body

punts, just like an unstoppable tide. ~~She~~ That face appeared into her brain again, ~~just like~~ the same way as it appeared thousands of times in her mind everyday, the same way how it had been eroding her spirit and scraping off all her toughness and happiness.

It was his face, the liar's face. How could he pretend she's nothing and straightly ~~passed away~~ walked away from her and having fun with other girls after what they had done together? She still remembered his look when she asked him seethingly, while he ~~set~~ laughed as she had never existed. The love that had been cradled ~~was~~ all came from Clara's imagination, she was so addicted to him yet he simply forgot her easily, and all those promises were all sugarcloth. Clara's face looked like a lump of purple mottled cabbage soup once she memorized all of these, the ~~betrayal~~ betrayal she received as a return of her loyalty was beyond her capacity, a tear was not enough, she lowered her core and began to scream in-between her out-of-breath panting.

The hurts of light from the bar ached her heart more and more, Clara could imagine how he was drinking and dancing ~~with the~~ and giving promises with other girls, leaving the only one standing in the challenge of true love. She clearly knew that her broken nerve could never

be repaired, there would always be cracks in her heart, she will never be a complete and sound person again.

Her ~~grieving~~ heart couldn't bear it any more, everything around her began to laugh at her like a wintery parody, ~~she~~ Clara took a small leap forward, embracing the endless void, now she understood what the trees ~~were~~ were muttering, they were ~~saying~~ saying "the axe never remembers the trees they cut."



AO4

This response communicates successfully and there is a real sense of the candidate trying to communicate effectively and trying to be subtle in their ideas.

The sense of audience is secure: there is the sense of trying to build tension for the reader.

The purpose could be more sharply focused on the idea of 'The Challenge' in order to move into Level 5.

There must be a link to the title in order to meet the purpose fully.

There is effective use of form, tone and register.

AO5

The candidate manages information and ideas and uses structural and grammatical features cohesively and deliberately in order to show the different feelings the narrator is having.

There is use of a wide, selective vocabulary with rare spelling errors.

Punctuation is used for clarity and there is an attempt to use a range.

There is an attempt to manage sentence structures for deliberate effect, although not always done in a way that would merit Level 5.

All of the bullet points in Level 4 are met overall.

Level 4

AO4: 15 marks

AO5: 10 marks

Total: 25 marks

## Question 4

Candidates won all sorts of things, for example a scholarship, a writing competition or a race of some sort.

A number of responses used computer games, as the image suggested. Sometimes the narrator was drawn into the game and had to perform various tasks/follow clues/to get back to reality, generally with mother telling them their meal was ready.

Sometimes, the winning involved a war, battle or siege, usually of a castle. The majority of these responses were around school-based competitions, from chess, athletics, jigsaws and spelling bees and the associated feelings of not being able to do it, then winning.

This resulted in a reasonable number of responses getting their life ambition and winning the said competition and with that the approval of their peers and parents.

The most successful responses were conceptual narratives around winning as an idea rather than an outcome. These responses were clever and admirable in their scope. Interestingly, many candidates wrote about a hollow win, turning their writing into a more of a cautionary tale. This was often successful.

The less-successful responses seemed to veer completely away from the purpose of the question. After starting with 'I had won', some responses began to write stories that did not really link to the question in any way. This therefore cannot achieve the purpose of the writing.

The least successful responses lacked any understanding of the purpose and expectations, instead telling a story that had nothing to do with the question focus, then circling back round in the final paragraph (or even final sentence) to end with 'I had won' in a vain attempt to connect the plot of their story back to the question.

Chosen question number: Question 2  Question 3  Question 4

I had won! finally!, ~~I felt as if I was dreaming~~  
I felt as if I was dreaming, I had to slap my face to make sure this all wasn't a silly dream and ~~that~~ that I actually finished my IGCSE. My life felt complete and I was stoked with happiness.

As soon as I put my pen down on the last exam I was filled with joyness and pride. There ~~were~~ were actual butterflies in my stomach. Everyone in the room were shouting with happiness as ~~this~~ this horror ~~journey~~ journey was finally over. I just wanted to go home ~~and~~ ~~and~~ and fall into a coma, I was extremely tired and exhausted by all the studying and pressure I had on myself. ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~sure~~ ~~as~~ I knew that all this studying was going to eventually pay off.

As soon as I got home, I got the most luxurious sleep I have ever gotten in a lifetime. All those all nighters really paid off. I was so excited to hear that I was going to travel ~~at~~ next week to the Bahamas. Finally a fresh new start at the most luxurious and peaceful place. I just knew

Summer was gonna be a blast. A week happened by so fast and I was already packing my bags to head off to the airport. Furthermore, ~~the~~ ~~we~~ we reached to the one of a kind paradise known as the Bahamas. As I walked ~~to~~ <sup>into</sup> my room, I just knew living here was the best thing ~~I~~ <sup>I have</sup> ever committed too.

A week in the Bahamas went by so fast, I was truely sad and shocked. I really missed the feeling of ~~the~~ sand on my foot and the smell of the crystal ocean blue water. All this is now just a memory, a memory that I would ~~never~~ never forget but inhance and cherish. The customer service in the Bahamas was one of a kind and the room service was to die for. I really missed the soft ~~and~~ and luxurios bed I slept on, it felt as if I was sleeping ~~on~~ on a cloud. Not to forget the enormous bathroom I had was as if I was dreaming. But suddenly it was time to leave, something I wished ~~never~~ would never have happened. I packed my bags and was ready to return to home.

As I walked into my house, I stopped and checked the mailbox to see if I had received anything while I ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> away. I was shocked and too stunned to speak, as I had gotten ~~to~~ my

IGCSE results just patiently waiting there ~~for~~ for me to open. As I opened it, I bursted with happiness to see all A's written next to each subject.

This ~~way~~ was way better than the Bahamas, as I felt that all my hard work paid off and that ~~that~~ nothing made me happier that day ~~than~~ than seeing me succeed in my results.



A04

The response shows mostly clear communication, although the link to purpose is somewhat vague.

The style, tone and register is mainly appropriate and generally straightforward.

A05

The vocabulary shows some attempt at variety and the spelling is mainly accurate, with some more obvious errors, for example *joyness* and *bursted*.

Similarly, the punctuation attempts to engage by offering some variety of sentence structures, although it is mainly straightforward.

A04: 8 marks

A05: 5 marks

Total: 13 marks

Chosen question number: Question 2  Question 3  Question 4

"I had won!"

Gazing at ~~the~~ my name printed on the top of the paper, I smiled, until the memory of my running race on this morning blazed through my mind-

Poised, I gazed at the finishline of the short 100 m. As a professionally trained ~~at~~ athlete, I reassured myself: "It will be fine". Despite battling with a fever just a day before, my profound passion for running surged and soared ~~&~~ like a vaulting horse, unbridled and unfettered.

My heart thumped tumultuously. "On your mark". I took a deep breath. "Get set!" The past four years' tiresome training blazed through my mind.

"Bang!"

With relentless resolve, I leaped into the race, pushing myself faster and faster, running like a cheetah with each rapid stride. I accelerated. Not ~~&~~ until the ~~90-meter~~ 90-meter-mark did I become the lead of

all competitors. The spectators' passionate cheers ~~echoed~~ <sup>echoed</sup> the rhythmic pounding of my footsteps on the track; the exhilaration's pleasant melody sang with elation in my heart; and the medal's golden promise glittered with determination in the distance.

Just when I was about to reach the pinnacle, a subtle weakness tightened its grip on my legs. A wave of exhaustion surged through my limbs, thwarting my ability to maintain balance. Ruthlessly though I tried, it didn't work; Relentlessly though I accelerated, my body rebelled against the commands. Five meters - three meters - the finish line loomed ~~agonizingly~~ <sup>agonizingly</sup> close! But the footsteps of other competitors grew louder and even louder. Within the final steps, I faltered, allowing the second-place ~~runner~~ <sup>runner</sup> to dash past the ~~finish-line~~ <sup>finish-line</sup> a fraction of second before me.

Defeated.

The crowds erupted in cheers, and their deafening symphony of celebration filled the whole stadium, isolating me overwhelmed by my tears. Their joyful ~~smiles~~ <sup>smiles</sup> ~~cheers~~ seemed to mock my perceived failures; their delightful ~~smiles~~ <sup>smiles</sup> cheers echoed with the haunting reminder

of my terrible defeat; ~~and~~ and their jubilant applause hammered my broken heart...

Blame, (I was the only one to blame) loss, and despair converged, manifesting in tears that streamed down my face. ~~Sobitony~~ Disbelief and despair, I stood vulnerably ~~under~~ beneath the sky: every ray of Sun searing me; every ~~of~~ piece of cloud enveloping me; every leaf on trees gloating with triumph that my soul ~~yearned~~ yearned for but ~~was~~ lacked...

Gone, all gone - an unforgiving tide swept away all my efforts!

An abrupt announcement crackled through the speakers, catapulting me out of the doom and gloom: "Due to Alisa's foul, Tamby, please come to the podium and claim the award"

~~My~~ The once burdened chest fluttered with new found lightness, piercing through the ~~of~~ gloom. ~~Who~~ ~~Could~~ ~~I~~ ~~be~~ My finger brushed against my name on the paper: Could I be the winner? Could I win the race with a painful headache? Could this be my long-awaited moment of dream materializing?

The air, filled with missed opportunities, now carried the fragrance of possibilities, casting aside the shadows that had clung to tightly. The sun no longer scorched me, but cast a warm and vibrant glow over the magnificent stadium, painting the scene in hues of gold, as if the nature itself was celebrating my triumph. The mind, like a gentle companion, whispered encouragement besides my ears; it softly said: "Congratulations!"

I was declared as the rightful winner. Success against all odds!



AO4

Although the response has a rather 'clunky' opening, it is one that definitely benefits from a second read.

It is well crafted, with some sophisticated creation of thoughts and feelings. The juxtaposition of the runner's thoughts and feelings against the actual action of the race works well to build both setting and character.

There is deliberate crafting with vivid description.

Level 5 is met for AO4 in the perceptive and subtle communication, but it lacks the real sophistication and sustained subtlety that would move it to the top of the level.

There is a sense of sharp focus on the feelings of the narrator, connecting sharply to purpose and audience. It is well-crafted and meets the expectations of the reader.

AO5

For AO5, the response achieves a mark of 12.

The response shows that ideas are conveyed to the reader in a complex way, manipulating their response.

A range of structural and grammatical features is used in a subtle way to support coherence and cohesion.

Vocabulary is used strategically and rare spelling errors do not detract from overall meaning.

The wide range of sentence structures and how these are crafted is a particular strength of this piece.

The response uses punctuation with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision, using a range of sentence structures accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects.

AO4: 17 marks

AO5: 12 marks

Total: 29 marks

## 4EA1\_02R\_SecB

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. This demonstrated an impressive knowledge and a great use of the anthology texts for inspiration.

The least successful responses were basic responses, 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.

The mid-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 level 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 and used devices such as a build-up of tension, 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. In general, examiners felt many candidates seemed to be thoughtful about the way they opened stories, keeping the reader guessing and engaged in the early stages of a story.

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.
- whether candidates had really considered the assessment objective requirement to write for ‘specific purposes and audiences’. This means answering **the question given** in an appropriate way, rather than using a past paper response prepared and trying to add the title in. This approach of preparing responses may not often achieve successful communication of purpose.
- 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.

As in previous series, sentence structure was clearly an area centres had focussed 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 less successful responses showed a lack of organisation and demonstrated a lack of planning and direction.

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. Some key issues were the achievement of the purpose of the writing, especially when candidates had created what appeared pre-prepared responses which just had a statement bolted on at the end to link it to the title, for example ‘I had overcome the challenge’. Examiners noted that candidates need to manage their time better, because even responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the end.

Examiners felt that, overall, there were some incredibly imaginative responses with a great range of ideas used creatively. One noted 'All three choices allowed for a full range of creative, imaginative and descriptive writing. It was evident that, whichever title candidates selected, their responses indicated an enthusiasm for the narrative that they constructed.' Another noted 'There was an impressive level of vocabulary demonstrated by a significant number of students. I am always impressed by the standard of creativity attained under exam conditions.'

## Paper Summary

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

- Ensure candidates have studied the poetry and prose texts in the Anthology fully and use the examination time to remind themselves of the text, not re-read it.
- Even where the text is a short poem, consider what the key points are, linked to the question being asked.
- Make sure candidates cover the whole poem from beginning to end in order to meet AO1 in the higher levels.
- Candidates should read the question carefully and make sure they are answering **this** question, not telling the examiner what they know about the poem they have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question being asked, in this case overcoming difficulties.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure candidates offer ideas about *how* language and structure are used. Many of them were able to give examples, but sometimes did not offer a comment about the example that 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 overcoming difficulties.
- When writing, candidates should always think about the reader, what information and ideas they want to develop and how they want the reader to react at different parts of their writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to achieve those effects. Think about 'how do you want your reader to feel?' and 'how will you achieve this?' to encourage more conscious crafting of writing.
- Listen to the 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 starts and ends. Think about how to begin to write so that it is engaging for the reader from the very start. As they begin to write, candidates should know where they will end. This will help them to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for the reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In writing, focus on crafting and organisation, whatever the nature of the task.
- Be ambitious in the structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original.
- Always respond to the questions set, not a question that has been prepared: this rarely leads to effective responses because the response needs to be appropriate and at least clearly linked to the purpose (ie the title).

## **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>

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