

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 0397/11  
Poetry and Prose

## Key Messages

For high marks, candidates need to know their texts in great detail to make secure references and use quotations to support points.

Answers should always focus on the writing and the author's language and literary methods.

Answers to **(b)** passage questions in particular must be very detailed, commenting very closely on the writing of the extract. Poetry answers should focus on the set poem.

Answers should focus on the writing of the texts, avoiding dwelling on the biography of their authors.

Candidates should focus more closely on the language, imagery and structure of prose and drama as well as poetry.

## General Comments

Candidates demonstrated a real interest in what they had read and often wrote with a genuine appreciation of the effectiveness of literary methods. There were a number of detailed, scholarly and penetrating discussions of the texts in response to the questions set. Such essays inevitably were closely focused on how those texts are constructed and how the writers employ specific diction, imagery and other devices to provoke particular responses in the readers or audiences. Often the essays were perceptive in their acknowledgement of the variety of possible responses. However, many candidates relied on a recall of character and plot, sometimes with what they termed a 'theme'. Such approaches cannot be fully successful in answering the questions set, which always focus in some way on how the text is written. Weak responses lapsed into narrative summary and characters were discussed almost as if they were real people, rather than the imagined constructions of their authors.

Candidates should note these issues are particularly important in the passage based questions. Every passage based question demands close commentary on the writing and candidates who do not address this requirement will not score high marks. All answers on the paper require quotation to support points, but in the passage based questions the material for the quotations is provided on the question paper. It is therefore vital that candidates examine the writing of the passage in very close analytical detail, whether it is poetry, prose or drama.

## Question Specific Comments

### **Question 1** Sujata Bhatt: *Point No Point*

- (a) Favoured poems used in response to this question were 'Whatever Happened to the Elephant', 'Sujata: The First Disciple of Buddha' 'Genealogy', 'Angels' Wings' and 'The Echoes in Poona'. Candidates succeeded best when they were able to recall the poems in sufficient detail to select appropriate quotation to support their points. Such essays commented on how point of view is established in the poems through diction and imagery and some commented on how structure and form are used to juxtapose a child's point of view with that of an adult.

- (b) This was quite a popular option, though many candidates struggled to move beyond recounting the narrative of the poem. Since the poem is about a lack of narrative, this created difficulties. More perceptive candidates appreciated the moment of stasis created by the baby 'asleep' and commented on ways in which Bhatt makes the inconsequential moment memorable, combining a colloquial informality of diction and reference with the resonant imagery of 'Beethoven's piano'. Candidates commented on the contrast between inside and outside, the promise of 'rich round fullness', echoing the pot of tea and pregnancy, and the way the short line 'in the air' prepares for the piano image. Some candidates made illuminating connections with other poems in the collection to develop points about '29 April 1989'.

**Question 2. Thomas Hardy: *Selected Poetry***

- (a) Nearly every candidate who answered this question wrote about 'The Darkling Thrush'. Among other poems considered were 'The Year's Awakening', 'Beeny Cliff', 'At Castle Boterel' and 'The Convergence of the Twain'. Most essays pursued the argument that Hardy uses references to the natural world and imagery drawn from it to reflect mood and these were successful when carefully illustrated with relevant quotations. Some interesting answers broadened the argument, many of these referring to 'The Convergence of the Twain' as a poem where Hardy represents nature as dangerous and vengeful, quite contrary to his more habitual depiction. These answers clearly constructed an argument in response to the question set.
- (b) 'Afterwards' was a very popular choice. Successful candidates addressed the requirement to comment closely on Hardy's use of language, with appreciation and analysis of imagery as well as considering the phrasing and tone of the rhetorical questions. Such answers often commented on the progressive and cyclical structure of the poem, commenting on the way each stanza is introduced as the poem moves from day to night and from spring to winter, with the suggestion of rebirth at the end. Candidates noted the anonymity of the commentators, and the irony that, while the poem reinforces a desire to be remembered as an appreciator of nature rather than as a poet, this is communicated through a carefully fashioned poem. Some answers commented on a wistful, lamenting tone, while others saw the poetic voice as pathetically egocentric. There is much to comment on in the poem, and candidates were rewarded for exploring its details.

**Question 3. *Songs of Ourselves***

- (a) This question was designed so that candidates could interpret 'loss' widely, and so they did, with warfare a frequent subject as well as loss of love, life and youth. The most frequently used poem was, appropriately, 'One Art'. This was often discussed very well, with close attention to the poem's development, form and structure, closely related to the question. Other poems often considered were 'Because I Could Not Stop for Death', 'Tears Idle Tears', 'For Heidi with Blue Hair', 'You Cannot Do This,' 'Cambodia' and 'Anthem For Doomed Youth'. Essays which described the type of loss, sometimes, illustrated with quotations, did not achieve great success, but there were very many sharp and thoughtful pieces of writing on the language, imagery and structures chosen by poets to present the idea of loss. The strongest essays kept the imperative 'compare' very much in mind, moving between their two chosen poems in an informed way.
- (b) Successful answers to this question, and there were many, discussed the structure in some detail, noting the change in mood at the beginning of the fourth stanza and the link between Immortality in the first and Eternity in the last. The personification of Death as a Gentleman Caller, together with a Chaperone, clearly appealed to candidates, and 'kindly' and 'civility' were read appropriately. Some candidates commented on the effects of the change in tense from past to present in line 22 and pointed out that unawareness of time is experienced only when facing eternity after death. Dickinson's characteristic use of capitals and dashes was generally interpreted as her way of emphasising important words and creating pauses to demonstrate the slowness of the journey and the jolting rhythm of the carriage wheels. The ending with just a hyphen to symbolise the eternity ahead of the speaker was another common comment. Less successful answers identified examples of alliteration, repetition and personification without discussing their effects.

**Question 4.** Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

- (a) This was a popular question, though answers were frequently limited by being confined to a consideration of the various characters with a religious dimension, particularly Helen Burns, Brocklehurst and St John Rivers. These worked well enough as examples of the different kinds of Christianity Jane encounters, though really successful answers moved well beyond these limitations, noting the question was about 'Jane's characterisation' rather than about religious characters. Stronger answers focused on the influence of these and other characters on Jane: Helen's instructions on forgiveness, the rejection of Brocklehurst's hypocrisy and the presentation of her decision to resist St John's attempts to make her submit to his interpretation of God's will and agree to marriage. These answers identified pivotal moments in the novel when Jane's religious convictions and sense of identity are seen to shape the decisions made. The most successful answers picked up from the cue quotation and focused very clearly on Jane's characterisation through her understanding of religion, her prayers and relationship with God.
- (b) This passage rewarded candidates who were able to blend consideration of the context with very detailed examination of the dialogue. Very alert answers were able to pinpoint that at this stage, Rochester knows more than either Jane or the reader. Such precise observations and knowledge underpinned high quality answers, allowing candidates to explore the subtleties of Rochester's responses and the way in which not only Jane, but the reader too, is manipulated. Some candidates effectively considered the difference between a first and second reading of the passage. Strong answers paid attention to the vivid quality of Jane's description of her horrific visitor, with appropriate consideration of the Gothic genre and explored the structure of the dialogue: Rochester's short questions and Jane's longer responses before that structure is reversed with Jane's ominous proleptic 'Not yet.' Some discussions were informed by consideration of the respective statuses of Jane and Rochester signalled in their dialogue and there were some strong personal responses to Rochester, often suggesting that the final flinging of his arms around Jane is to control his own shuddering rather than to comfort Jane.

**Question 5.** Tsitsi Dangarembga: *Nervous Conditions*

- (a) In general, responses to this question showed sound knowledge of the text and a convincing engagement with elements of the question. There was some useful commentary of the ways in which the two girls act as foils for one another and symbolise different aspects of colonialism. Some answers described differences in the characters without much supporting reference, while strong answers were detailed and well supported. In contrasting the characters, candidates wrote relevantly about the rural poverty of Tambu compared with the educated middle-class western upbringing of Nyasha and developed comments on the position of women in Shona society. Good answers presented a range of ideas, and discussed how the girls had been affected by their experiences with some apt quotations, while the strongest also commented on the importance to the comparison of Tambu's first person narration, particularly considering the end of the novel.
- (b) Candidates usually focused effectively on the question but were varied in their success at engaging with the passage in an appropriate degree of detail. The tendency was to be able to respond well to the ideas in the passage that helped answer the question but fewer candidates engaged with the nuances of language, form and structure. Those who did so noted the passage's shift from 'we' and 'us' to 'I' and commented on the implications of vocabulary such as 'herded', 'recruit' and 'privilege'. Discussion of the superior attitude of the nuns was helped if candidates noted the inappropriateness of questions on 'acorns', 'gumboots' and 'snow shoes' for African children. Many answers showed evidence of strong personal response, which was rewarded if supported by such attention to detail as this. Many candidates criticised the arrogance of Tambu in this passage, for example, but the strongest answers were able to demonstrate a tone of gentle but critical ironic humour in the narration of her younger self.

**Question 6.** *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) *The Door in the Wall*, *To Da-Duh In Memoriam*, *Journey* and *Sandpiper* were popular stories chosen to engage with this question, though other stories were considered too. Most candidates showed a reasonable working knowledge of each story as a whole but did not always support this with quotation and precise reference. Therefore, many answers tended to have a slightly narrative quality, rather than engaging rigorously with 'ways in which.' However, all candidates were able to relate their chosen stories relevantly to the question, with some interesting interpretations of what constitutes being 'out of touch' – and some interesting comparisons between how characters responded to their being so. Answers which engaged with how the narrative is told, and used detail to support the answer, scored highly.
- (b) A number of candidates answered this question without a clear detailed knowledge of the story of which it forms the climax, and thus treated it as an unseen passage. Such answers were not able to contextualise the extract and relied on narrative summary. Confident answers explored the position of the narrator, who closely follows the correspondent's experience, and contextualised the passage within the camaraderie of the men in the boat and the savagery of the sea. There was focus on the description of the man on the beach, combining the ridiculous with the saintly, the power of the sea turned momentarily benign as the correspondent is 'flung with ease' toward the shore, the simplicity and courtesy of the dialogue in such a wild situation. The answers which focused on 'the way the climax is presented' examined the tale's melancholy twist, as the dénouement seems to be salvation before the final discovery of the dead oiler.

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**Question 7.** Peter Shaffer: *Equus*

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated thorough understanding of the presentation of Alan's parents and their roles in the play. There were some particularly poised and sophisticated answers to this question with original analysis, well-integrated support and good use of alternative interpretations. Candidates often wrote at length, with relevance and insight. Less successful answers presented a less detailed exploration of Dora and Frank, often lacking close reference and quotation to support points.
- (b) Many candidates wrote convincingly about the use of stage directions and setting in this passage, as well as the language of Dysart's speech. Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of Dysart's 'journey' to this scene, which was appropriate context if handled concisely; in some answers this became a summary of the play and took attention away from the extract. Strong answers noted the scorn expressed in Dysart's speech, looking at both vocabulary and sentence construction, while candidates with a sense of theatre noted the effects of the shifting address to the theatre audience and to Alan, with thoughtful comment on the last three lines of stage direction.

**Question 8.** William Shakespeare: *Henry IV part 1*

- (a) Many candidates approached this question only in part through a comparison of Hal and Hotspur without considering King Henry IV himself. Some more organised answers which considered the King had a tendency to focus on the burdens of kingship more than the attractions. The strongest answers presented a thorough consideration of both aspects with appropriate textual support and development.
- (b) In answers to this question, some weak candidates lost focus by explaining the immediate context and neglected the detail in the passage. Stronger answers sought to explain Hal's behaviour and showed how his language revealed his informal relationships with the other characters, commenting on the use of hyperbole and opposites for comic effect. Such responses often commented on the warm relationships evidenced in the scene, which distract Hal from his princely duties, seen in the rejection of Sir John Bracy.

**Question 9.** Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar named Desire*

- (a) Stronger responses kept a proper balance between a detailed examination of specific scenes in the play and broader discussion of William's background and his ideas about the new working class macho culture as typified by Stanley. They showed some awareness and appreciation of the dramatic impact of the action, some aspects of the language and the music. More modest answers tended to give some detailed accounts of obvious scenes though not many dealt with the rape scene in any detail. Some of the weaker answers attempted to argue that the violence was necessary to the play.
- (b) Strong answers showed that candidates had a clear understanding of Blanche's manipulative character and looked closely at way in which she manipulates Mitch, commenting with some astuteness on the degree of calculation in the reference to her packing and her class superiority. Few commented on the reference to the 'streetcar named Desire' though even modest answers could explain the irony of her fear of being 'lost'. Most candidates were able to demonstrate Mitch's nervousness through stage directions and halting dialogue. Less confident answers concentrated unnecessarily on filling in the back story to explain Blanche's behaviour.



# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 0397/12  
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## General Comments

Candidates demonstrated a real interest in what they had read and often wrote with a genuine appreciation of the effectiveness of literary methods. There were a number of detailed, scholarly and penetrating discussions of the texts in response to the questions set. Such essays inevitably were closely focused on how those texts are constructed and how the writers employ specific diction, imagery and other devices to provoke particular responses in the readers or audiences. Often the essays were perceptive in their acknowledgement of the variety of possible responses. However, many candidates relied on a recall of character and plot, sometimes with what they termed a 'theme'. Such approaches cannot be fully successful in answering the questions set, which always focus in some way on how the text is written. Weak responses lapsed into narrative summary and characters were discussed almost as if they were real people, rather than the imagined constructions of their authors.

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## Question Specific Comments

**Question 1.** Sujata Bhatt: *Point No Point*

- (a) The very few candidates who attempted this question wrote, often perceptively, about 'For Nanabhai Bhatt', '3 November 1984' and 'Wine from Bordeaux'. The quality of the answers depended strongly on how much detail the candidates recalled from the poems, enabling them to write about the 'means' and 'effects' of Bhatt's treatment of political events.
- (b) This was a more popular choice and most candidates managed to recognise the child's and adult's perspectives in the two sections of the poem. There were many and varied personal responses: some suggested that the poem is an attack on religion and an adult's mature rejection of childlike naivety of belief; others saw the poem as a plea for animal rights. Perhaps the most interesting was the argument that Bhatt herself, in exile, had lost her Indian 'head' and was troubled by her identity. Some argued that the first section represents appearance, myth and fantasy while the second represents reality through the adult viewpoint. Many were able to

comment on ways in which Bhatt creates the child's persistence in the first section, noting the innocence and preoccupation with discovering logic and truth.

**Question 2.** Thomas Hardy: *Selected Poetry*

- (a) There were a number of thoughtful answers which focused on the terms of the question and showed Hardy's concern with the passage of time. There were some good examples of close textual reference with accurate quotation; equally, many candidates referred only in general terms to the poems. The most popular poem for this answer was 'The Darkling Thrush', but the following were also popular: 'Afterwards', 'The Voice', 'The Man he Killed', 'A Church Romance', 'The Self Unseeing', 'The Going', 'Beeny Cliff' and 'At Castle Boterel'. The strongest answers were those which selected two poems which treated different aspects of time, or treated time in different ways, and were able to develop a comparison. Answers which dwelled on Hardy's biography were seldom strong.
- (b) Candidates demonstrated strong personal response and recognised the particular context of the poem. However, many candidates dwelt inappropriately on Hardy's regret about his wife Emma's death, often to the exclusion of focus on the language and structure of the poem itself. Biographical information should be used sparingly – the questions are about literature. Some candidates also produced intelligent summaries of the poem without detailed engagement with the language. The strongest answers considered the poem's poetic voice, sometimes considering to whom the haunter addresses the poem. The tone of quiet intimacy was often noted, with comments on how the lines and stanzas structure the developing thought towards the final note of 'peace'.

**Question 3.** *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) This question required candidates to focus on the construction of poems and how the structure conveyed meaning, rather than to focus on the meaning itself. Answers which sidestepped the direction of the question and discussed the content with little attention to structure were self-limiting and received little reward, while essays which clearly explored form and structure – stanzas, metre, rhyme, enjambment, line lengths, punctuation – were successful. Some strong answers compared Owen's use of the sonnet form with Sassoon's varied sentence length and use of caesurae, the way Nichols and Mew use indents and spacing, the use of single and multiple stanzas, or careful regular punctuation with Dickinson's dashes. The strongest answers looked closely at structure and related it to ways in which it communicates the central issues of each poem.
- (b) This question was very popular and candidates focused on analysing and exploring the poem. There were many strong, careful answers, though a number limited themselves by failing to note the word 'anticipation' in the question. Successful answers discussed the changes of pace in the poem created by the different verbs and references to distance and made incisive comments on both its visual and auditory effects. There were also thoughtful comments on the two stanza construction, the rhyme scheme with the couplets in the Centre of each stanza and the use of the present tense. A number of candidates explored a potential sexual reading of the poem, often in intricate detail.

**Question 4.** Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

- (a) There were some excellent answers to the question on Bertha Mason, demonstrating articulate and very well supported arguments about her significance. Some strong answers presented a sympathetic portrayal of Bertha, while weaker responses wrote about parts of the novel where Bertha is seen, usually with a narrative focus. The character was often considered as a narrative device of symbolic significance, with some thoughtful considerations of Bertha as Jane's alter ego, the Gothic, suppressed sexuality and feminism. Many candidates referred effectively to the historical context of the character and Victorian views on colonies and madness, though in some cases the contextual information and speculation outweighed the discussion of the novel itself.
- (b) Strong answers to this question focused closely on the passage and were able to comment on a range of linguistic and structural features. The language, imagery, repetitions, questions and sentence structures were discussed in confident answers. In terms of contextual knowledge, most candidates understood Jane's dilemma in leaving Rochester and the role her conscience plays in the extract. However, a number of answers were weak, failing to 'comment closely' as the (b) questions always require, and either retold the passage in their own words or summarised the

events of the novel up to the point of Jane's flight. Candidates are reminded of the need to focus on the language and structure of prose in the same way as poetry.

**Question 5.** Tsitsi Dangarembga: *Nervous Conditions*

- (a) Although some weaker candidates produced general essays about women in the novel, more successful answers focused well on Maiguru's characterisation and her role. Such answers looked at her pride in her family's time in England, her pet names and subservience to Babamukuru and crucially at the revelation of her own education and her temporary departure from the family household. Her characterisation as an example of cultural hybridity, which is seen in a more extreme form in Nyasha, was often at the heart of these strong answers.
- (b) There were some detailed approaches, but a number of responses failed to focus on the terms of the question and look at the detail of the text. More successful answers focused on ways in which the extract reveals aspects of Tambu's character and the differences between herself and Nyasha. These answers looked at Tambu's careful descriptions of the wedding preparations together with her tone, revealing her sardonic dislocation from events. Examples of diction such as 'ridiculous', 'play-acting', 'show' and 'comedy' were noted, contrasted with 'Sweet', 'wonderful', 'generosity' and 'occasion'.

**Question 6.** *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) In responses to this question, some candidates retold their chosen stories accompanied by limited comment addressed to the question. More successful candidates demonstrated a clear overview of the stories and were able to construct essays using detailed references relevant to the question. These answers focused on the word 'present' in the question and discussed structure and other literary devices used by individual authors. *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Of White Hairs and Cricket*, *Tyres*, *The Open Boat*, *Sandpiper* and *To Da-duh, In Memoriam* were stories often used by candidates to answer the question.
- (b) There were many strong answers to this question, as candidates found the passage accessible and often were able to write in detail about its writing and effects. Many candidates commented on the narrator's emotional control at the beginning of the passage, where dynamite and shooting are discussed dispassionately, compared with the horror of the description of the slaughtered bodies in the third paragraph. Others noted that the central action of the passage is about human relationships and pointed out that the extract shows the importance of such normality in the midst of war. There were intelligent comments on the presentation of individuals, the Germans, the Maquis and the Mayor, who all have parts to play in wartime life as depicted in the excerpt.

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**Question 7.** Peter Shaffer: *Equus*

- (a) Most acknowledged the difficulty of sympathising with Alan Strang, but noted that this is what the play encourages. Candidates considered the presentation of Alan's parents and how his upbringing enables the audience to develop sympathy for him. Some of the strongest answers looked carefully at Dysart's role, which communicates both the horror of Alan's actions but also the possible reasons for it, as well as demonstrating Dysart's own sympathy for Alan. As Dysart guides the play and addresses the audience directly on several occasions, his role was recognised as crucial by several candidates.
- (b) Most answers to this question were well organised and discussed the use of stage directions as well as dialogue. Some stronger answers commented on the emergence of Dysart as a character in his own right and the development of his role from psychiatrist to 'patient' of sorts, recognising the honesty between him and Alan at the end of the extract. Sharply observant answers noted Alan's short lines and questions, indicating his apprehension and contrasted his colloquial vocabulary with Dysart's professional language.

**Question 8.** William Shakespeare: *Henry IV part 1*

- (a) A number of responses contained developed and articulate arguments supported by well-selected textual reference. There was appropriate use of personal response and most candidates made their choice clear, considering the qualities of either character. While most candidates sided with Falstaff, acknowledging his humour and close relationship with Hal in the course of the play, a significant number of carefully argued responses developed convincing arguments for Prince Henry, looking at the duties and responsibilities of a future monarch.
- (b) Some weak answers to this question relied heavily on narrative summary, recounting the history of the rebellion in order to account for its ending. More successful answers looked closely at the dialogue of the extract, noting the stoicism of Worcester, the confidence of the King's speeches and the honour evident in the Prince's speeches. The acknowledgement of this, and the unity evident between King and Prince at the end of the scene was commented on frequently.

**Question 9.** Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar named Desire*

- (a) There was some evidence of candidates misreading this question and discussing different locations referred to in the play, from the apartment to Belle Reve. The question's actual focus was on the apartment itself in its quarter of New Orleans, established by the initial stage directions and the actions and references of the play. Candidates who recognised this wrote about the poor, rather seedy working class setting, the world of Stella and Stanley, contrasted with Blanche's expectations and background. Strong answers focused on ways in which Williams creates and characterises this setting, through the set design itself, lighting, music, references to the streetcar, street vendors, Stanley's companions, and the way they create a world for the play in which Blanche is so much an incongruous stranger.
- (b) Strong answers to this question showed a good understanding of Blanche's character in the context of the encounter with the Young Man and effective comments were made on Williams' use of stage directions and symbolic features such as the cigarette and the 'blue piano'. The best answers looked closely at the dialogue and stage directions, charting Blanche's attempts at inappropriate intimacy and the Young Man's growing discomfort, with the context of the audience's understanding of her loneliness and history.

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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## Question Specific Comments

**Question 1.** Sujata Bhatt: *Point No Point*

- (a) The few candidates who chose this question wrote about poems such as 'The First Disciple', 'The Peacock' and 'Swami Anand'. Some responses showed an awareness of some aspects of the language but on the whole, there was little exploration of the methods used to present memory and the past. The language, imagery, structure and other poetic methods are always at the heart of these questions, so candidates who limit themselves to a discussion of content restrict the marks available to them.
- (b) The strongest answers gave clear accounts of the poem and the narrator's attitude to the experience described, focusing on the contrast between the forensic detachment of the scientist and the human interest though very few essays examined the significance of title and the figurative language or had the confidence to discuss form and structure. Some responses commented on the adult perspective of the experience as distinct from the experience itself, which proved a successful focus.

**Question 2.** Thomas Hardy: *Selected Poetry*

- (a) There were too few answers to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) Though there were very few answers on Hardy, there were some very good answers to this question on 'The Voice' examining how form and a range of poetic methods contribute to the tone. There was some particular sensitivity to sound effects. Weak answers focused unnecessarily on biographical information without paying sufficient attention to the writing of the poem.

**Question 3.** *Songs of Ourselves*

- (a) Candidates usually made sensible choices to discuss the poetic treatment of death, often opting for the war poetry, Dickinson, Bishop and Baxter's 'Elegy'. Answers often displayed an impressive command of quotation and made genuine efforts to analyse the treatment of the topic with appreciation of a range of poetic methods and effects. Competent answers were clear on meaning and point of view with some understanding of the effects of language. Less successful answers were often unbalanced, with, for example, one competent exploration being followed by a thin summary, or over-investment in biographical material.
- (b) Only the strongest answers on 'Time's Fool' managed to explore the treatment of time and arrive at a coherent interpretation of the poem. Most essays adopted a running commentary approach; many considered the use of natural imagery but struggled with the development of the narrator's feelings and consideration of time. Less confident candidates attempted to paraphrase and looked at rhyme schemes and caesuras in a mechanistic way.

**Question 4.** Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

- (a) Most candidates who attempted this question were successful in discussing Rochester and St John as opposites. The strongest responses presented articulate arguments evaluating the usefulness of this view, with most agreeing that it is a helpful structural perspective in understanding the novel. While most referred to these characters as polar opposites, there were also some good arguments that hinged on the controlling features of both men. Successful answers looked not only at the presentation of the characters themselves, but also Jane's response to them and their influence on the development of her character and therefore also the structure of the novel.
- (b) Most candidates who attempted this question commented on the presentation of Jane's suffering. Personal engagement was often particularly strong, with candidates showing sympathy for Jane's plight. Weaker responses relied heavily on narrative retelling, while the strongest engaged closely with the writing of the extract, noting the creation of the narrative tone of desperation and the lack of sympathy in the dialogue with the shopkeeper.

**Question 5.** Tsitsi Dangarembga: *Nervous Conditions*

- (a) There were too few answers to make a general comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make a general comment appropriate.

**Question 6.** *Stories of Ourselves*

- (a) The most successful answers looked at different versions of bravery, using such stories as *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Journey*, *The Open Boat* and *Tyres*. The focus on different kinds of bravery often encouraged candidates to discuss different narrative methods of dealing with it, leading to some fruitful discussions. Although comparison was not specifically required by the question, candidates often found that comparing the approaches of the two stories helped them structure their answer. Less confident and less successful answers tended to concentrate on the characters and plots of their chosen stories.

- (b)** This was a very productive question and most answers considered some of the effectiveness in the writing and the significance of specific details within the extract. Most focused on the relationship with the husband, in particular focusing on the narrator's 'foreignness' but many also considered the relationship with Lucy. Strong responses appreciated the significance of the conversation about mirages and showed depth by considering the implication of the husband's 'sidelong glance' and smile. The strongest answers understood how to 'comment closely' and produced perceptive appreciations of the writer's use of diction and sentence structure to present the character's feelings. Weaker answers focused on the situation itself or failed to address the question by explaining the reasons for the narrator's disappointment or discussed the difficulties of cross-cultural marriages more generally.