



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

# Coursework Handbook

## Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010

For examination from 2023



In order to help us develop the highest quality resources, we are undertaking a continuous programme of review; not only to measure the success of our resources but also to highlight areas for improvement and to identify new development needs.

We invite you to complete our survey by visiting the website below. Your comments on the quality and relevance of our resources are very important to us.

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GL6Z NJB](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GL6Z NJB)

Would you like to become a Cambridge International consultant and help us develop support materials?

Please follow the link below to register your interest.

[www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridge-for/teachers/teacherconsultants/](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridge-for/teachers/teacherconsultants/)

Copyright © UCLES 2020

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.

UCLES retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered Centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to Centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party, even for internal use within a Centre.

---

# Contents

---

Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	4
1 About the written coursework component .....	5
2 Task-setting .....	8
3 Standards .....	12
4 Examples of coursework assignments .....	14
5 Supervising coursework.....	44
6 Moderation .....	46

## Introduction

---

### Advice and guidance

This handbook provides a guide to the written elements of the coursework portfolio, Component 5, in the Cambridge O Level Literature in English syllabus.

It offers advice and clarification on:

- the requirements of the portfolio
- assessment standards
- marking learners' assignments
- preparing the portfolio for external moderation.

#### **Further help**

We hope that this Coursework Handbook will provide a thorough introduction to the requirements and criteria for the assessment of coursework in Cambridge O Level Literature in English. However, if you have any further questions or difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact Cambridge.

Customer Services  
Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge CB2 8EA  
United Kingdom

Our website: [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)  
Email: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org)  
Telephone: +44 1223 553554

# 1 About the written coursework component

## 1.1 Syllabus overview

Cambridge O Level Literature in English candidates take Component 1 and **either** Component 2 **or** Components 3 and 4 **or** Components 3 and 5.

All candidates take		Weighting
<p><b>Component 1 Poetry and Prose</b> 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer <b>two</b> questions on <b>two</b> texts: one poetry and one prose.</p> <p>There is a choice of two questions (one passage-based and one essay) on each text.</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>Externally marked</p>	50%	
<b>and either:</b>		
<p><b>Component 2 Drama</b> 1 hr 30 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer <b>two</b> questions on <b>two</b> texts.</p> <p>There is a choice of two questions on each text: (one passage-based and one essay) on each text.</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>Externally marked</p>	50%	
<b>or:</b>		<b>and:</b>
<p><b>Component 3 Drama (Open Text)</b> 45 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer <b>one</b> question on <b>one</b> text.</p> <p>There is a choice of <b>two</b> questions (one passage-based and one essay) on each text.</p> <p>25 marks</p> <p>Externally marked</p>	<p><b>Component 4 Unseen</b> 1 hour 15 minutes</p> <p>25% + 25%</p> <p>Candidates answer <b>one</b> question.</p> <p>There is a choice of <b>two</b> questions requiring critical commentary (one based on literary prose and one based on a poem or extract of a poem).</p> <p>25 marks</p> <p>Externally marked</p>	
<b>or:</b>		<b>and:</b>
<p><b>Component 3 Drama (Open Text)</b> 45 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer <b>one</b> question on <b>one</b> text.</p> <p>There is a choice of <b>two</b> questions (one passage-based and one essay) on each text.</p> <p>25 marks</p> <p>Externally marked</p>	<p><b>Component 5 Coursework</b></p> <p>25% + 25%</p> <p>Candidates submit a portfolio of <b>two</b> assignments each on a different text.</p> <p>25 marks</p> <p>Internally assessed and externally moderated</p>	

## 1.2 Content of the coursework portfolio

The requirements listed below form a basic checklist, which teachers are encouraged to use.

- Candidates submit **two** assignments.
- The assignments must be on different texts.
- The texts may be from the same form: drama, poetry or prose.
- The texts must be equivalent in scope and demand to the texts set for examination.
- Texts must be originally written in English. Texts translated into English are **not** permitted.
- One of the assignments may be on a text set on Papers 1, 2 or 3.
- The recommended guidance for word limits is 600–1200 words for each assignment – including quotations, but excluding references/bibliography.
- Each assignment should be based on the study of a complete text: e.g. play, novel or novella. Assignments based exclusively on particular scenes or chapters are not acceptable.
- Assignments on short stories must include detailed reference to a minimum of two short stories.
- Assignments on poetry must include detailed reference to a minimum of two poems (unless the poem is a lengthy one such as Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*).
- There is no requirement to compare stories or poems, as can be seen from the assessment criteria.
- One of the assignments may be an empathic response to a prose or drama text (see page 29).
- The phrasing of each assignment's title must allow for assessment in relation to all four assessment objectives. The full assignment title must appear clearly at the top of the assignment.
- Candidates should list references to secondary source material at the end of the assignment.
- Each page of each assignment should contain evidence of teacher annotation. Brief summative comments drawing on the wording of the assessment criteria should appear at the end of assignments and in the space provided for the teacher's comments on the Individual Candidate Record Card. The audience for these comments is the moderator.
- Evidence of drafting should **not** be included in the portfolio.

## 1.3 The advantages of coursework

Coursework allows teachers greater flexibility and a degree of creativity in the way they design and deliver courses. Texts and tasks can be chosen which complement the study of the examination texts and which take into account the interests and abilities of learners, as well as the literary enthusiasms of teachers.

Coursework allows learners to re-draft their written responses, developing skills such as critical thinking, editing and proofreading, which will benefit them in other areas of the syllabus, in other subjects and in future stages of their education. Coursework helps learners to develop the writing skills necessary for producing informed personal responses to literary texts and enables them to demonstrate the quality of work they can produce away from the pressure of the timed examination.

For those taking the coursework option, the examination Components 1 and 3 together require the study of three texts: one Poetry, one Prose and one Drama. A coursework text could be another book by an author studied for the examination, or a text, which explores in a different way a theme, encountered in one of the examination texts. Careful selection of texts should help centres to fulfil the first aim listed in the syllabus: 'enjoy the experience of reading literature'.

Highly successful responses see learners drawing upon a wide range of pertinent textual reference, which they have selected themselves, leading to more precisely focused analytical comment in the case of critical responses. Moderators would not wish to see all candidates from a centre making the same series of points in the same order with the same textual references.

The coursework option is designed to encourage wider reading, and for this reason, at least one of the assignments must be on a text not studied in the examination. Adopting a minimalist approach to the reading required would not be in the spirit of the syllabus. For example, centres teaching poetry for an assignment often encourage their learners to select two poems to write about from a wider selection of poems.

## 1.4 Scheduling coursework

Since the aim of the coursework option is to encourage a flexible response from the centres who opt for it, too much prescription would be counter-productive. However, the following general comments, based on the experience of centres, may be useful.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the scheduling of coursework assignments within the overall course. Setting them at the very beginning of the Cambridge O Level course may not lead to learners producing their best work. During the early stages, they might be offered opportunities to develop their writing skills by producing short responses to extracts from the texts they are studying. Without undertaking introductory work of this kind, it is likely to prove difficult for learners to produce sustained personal responses to complete texts.

Put another way, coursework is likely to be more successful only after learners have developed confidence in their writing skills. Because of this, candidates are likely to produce their best coursework later in the course. On the other hand, it is prudent, perhaps, not to schedule too much coursework during the later stages of the course when learners should be devoting their energies to preparing for the examination units, which have a combined weighting of 75 per cent of the overall marks.

Centres must ultimately decide for themselves both the teaching order of examination texts and the most efficient timetabling of coursework reading and writing activities. It is, however, important to remember to include time for the following activities:

- the study of texts in class
- learners' individual research
- the writing of the first drafts
- revision of first drafts
- completion of the final draft.

## 2 Task-setting

---

It is important for teachers within the centre to meet before or during the early stages of the course to establish that planned coursework tasks allow learners to demonstrate the full range of assessment objectives. Useful starting points in these discussions would be both the aims and assessment objectives of the syllabus, reproduced below.

### 2.1 Syllabus aims and objectives

Cambridge O Level Literature in English aims to develop learners who:

- enjoy the experience of reading literature
- understand and respond to literary texts in different forms and from different periods and cultures
- communicate an informed personal response appropriately and effectively
- appreciate different ways in which writers achieve their effects
- experience literature's contribution to aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual growth
- explore the contribution of literature to an understanding of areas of human concern.

### 2.2 Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives for Cambridge O Level Literature in English are:

**AO1:** Show detailed knowledge of the content of literary texts in the three main forms (drama, poetry and prose), supported by reference to the text.

**AO2:** Understand the meanings of literary texts and their contexts, and explore texts beyond surface meaning to show deeper awareness of ideas and attitudes.

**AO3:** Recognise and appreciate ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects.

**AO4:** Communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to literary texts.

### 2.3 General observations about task-setting

It is not possible to highly reward assignments that demonstrate no more than a retelling or explanation of content. It is, therefore, important to stress from the outset that plot summaries and character sketches will not receive high marks, either in coursework or examination responses. Successful critical essays are those which are characterised by an ability to explore the ways in which writers make their characters, themes and settings memorable and vivid – that is, 'appreciate ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects' (Assessment Objective 3). Indeed, it is the ability to probe texts critically that differentiates the good from the average learner. In order to realise their potential, learners need to respond to tasks that have a sharp focus, and that require a detailed engagement with the literary aspects of texts.

Broad invitations to write reviews of plays or novels, or to compare two poems, do not really allow learners to sustain a critical analysis of texts. Unfortunately, such tasks often result in unfortunate learners writing large tracts of narrative or exposition which do not effectively meet the assessment criteria. Assignment titles that are simply the titles of the texts studied are not helpful; a title such as *'Twelfth Night: A Synopsis'* effectively creates a ceiling on the marks learners can achieve.

Similarly, in the case of empathic responses to texts, great care needs to be exercised over the setting of tasks. Tasks should be framed in such a way that the author's created world is central to any response. The most successful empathic responses integrate a compellingly authentic voice for the chosen character and a

wide range of detail rooted in the text, which together create a sustained insight into such literary concerns as characterisation, themes and setting.

A degree of imaginative invention is acceptable; a world largely invented by the learner is not, since such a response is not rooted in the text. Tasks that require, for example, an alternative ending or a glimpse into the future do not allow learners to meet the syllabus assessment objectives. Any requirement to write in a particular format, such as a diary entry, can detract from the literary thrust of the task. Experience has shown that imagined newspaper reports (e.g. the murder of King Duncan in *Macbeth*) can too readily degenerate into story-telling at the expense of literary appreciation.

## 2.4 Examples of unsuitable critical tasks

- (1) *Macbeth*.
- (2) 'Porphyria's Lover'.

Examples 1 and 2 are simply the titles of the texts; the precise focus of the task is unclear to learner and moderator.

- (3) Write about Scout's education.
- (4) A commentary on *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Tasks beginning 'Write about...' and 'A commentary on...' act as a trigger for the unloading of narrative and/or the regurgitation of second-hand views.

- (5) Proctor – a character study.
- (6) The characters of Stanley and Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Examples 5 and 6 invite the writing of character sketches. There is no requirement to deal with the ways in which writers depict these characters.

- (7) 'I have a dream...'

Example 7 relates to Martin Luther King's powerfully eloquent speech and it could serve as the basis for worthwhile linguistic analysis of persuasive speech, but the syllabus requires that assignments be based on literary texts.

- (8) Give an account of what happens to the main character in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

Example 8 offers little, if any, opportunity to engage with the ways in which the writer conveys character.

- (9) What does Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* tell us about life in India?
- (10) What is the relevance of Squealer in *Animal Farm* to modern life?
- (11) What does Orwell's *Animal Farm* tell us about the Russian Revolution?

Examples 9, 10 and 11 miss the point, as they take learners away from the literary concerns of texts. The task on *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* relates to social and cultural contexts. The *Animal Farm* task focuses on historical or contemporary relevance. All three questions lack a clear focus on the text itself.

- (12) 'Frankenstein is both a romantic and gothic novel.' Discuss.

The focus in example 12 is on literary traditions, and the (bald) imperative 'Discuss' does not offer learners a clear focus.

- (13) From the stories you have studied, choose four in which the setting seems to you particularly important, and give detailed reference to support your views.
- (14) How do the five poems studied portray a bleak view of modern life?

The main thrust in each of examples 13 and 14 is satisfactory, from a literary perspective. But these two tasks demand a lot. With so much to write about (four stories or five poems), there is a danger that responses will become superficial and descriptive.

- (15) Compare the ways in which two poems deal with childhood innocence.

Example 15 introduces an unnecessary level of complexity, as there is no requirement in the syllabus that poems be compared – and the assessment criteria do not reward comparison. Experience has shown that such tasks can lead learners to concentrate on content rather than the exploration of poetic language, thereby making it difficult for responses to meet the criteria of the top levels.

(16) How does Dickens create suspense in Chapter 1 of *Great Expectations*?

Example 16 has a clear literary thrust, but the exclusive focus on one chapter means that the task does not meet the syllabus requirement that ‘the candidate has studied the whole text’ (Syllabus, page 18).

(17) Explore how Shakespeare vividly presents *Othello*.

By contrast, the focus in example 17 is too broad for an assignment with a recommended maximum word limit of 1200 words.

(18) How far do you agree with Malcolm’s description at the end of the play of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as ‘this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen’?

Example 18 makes no reference to Shakespeare as the writer and does not invite consideration of the ways in which the writer presents characters. An exploration of the writing is required for the higher levels.

## 2.5 Examples of unsuitable empathic tasks

(19) An interview between the learner and Jane Austen.

(20) A newspaper article on the death of Duncan.

(21) Lady Macbeth’s letter to Macbeth shortly before her death.

(22) The diary entries of Eva Smith.

A potential danger with Examples 19 and 20 is that the focus might shift to language instead of literature. Sometimes a rigid prescription of a format (here drama script and newspaper article) can become something of a distraction from the central literary concerns. Examples 21 and 22 invite learners to carry out tasks that are not rooted in the constructed reality of the texts. The Lady Macbeth task is slightly better than the Eva Smith task since it specifies a moment for the production of the letter.

## 2.6 Examples of suitable critical tasks

The following tasks have a manageable and specific focus. They require learners to give an informed personal response to the text and task. Some of the tasks ask for this explicitly (‘How do you think...?’), and others implicitly (‘Explore...’).

All these tasks invite learners to consider the effects of the writing, enabling them to analyse the ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects (Assessment Objective 3). For this reason, it is important that the writer’s name appears in the task.

- (1) How do you think Shakespeare makes Lady Macbeth’s change during the course of the play so dramatic?
- (2) In what ways does Williams powerfully convey the tensions in the relationship of Blanche and Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*?
- (3) How does Hansberry vividly capture the dreams of **two** of the characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*?
- (4) How does [your chosen poet] strikingly convey the loss of childhood innocence in **two** of the poems studied?
- (5) Explore the ways in which Wordsworth uses imagery to powerful effect in **two** of his poems.
- (6) Explore the ways in which **two** short story writers create memorable settings.
- (7) In what striking ways does Poe create tension in **two** of his short stories?
- (8) Heathcliff: ‘victim’ or ‘monster’? How does Brontë’s writing incline you to one view or the other?
- (9) In what ways does Dickens use setting to reflect **two** of the characters in *Great Expectations*?
- (10) How do **two** of the short story writers powerfully convey conflict between a man and a woman?
- (11) How effective do you find the ending of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?

## 2.7 Examples of suitable empathic tasks

Tasks should be framed in such a way that the author's created world is central to any response. Responses should assume the voice of a character at a particular moment in a prose or drama text. The most successful empathic responses integrate a compellingly authentic voice for the character and a wide range of detail convincingly rooted in the text.

The following examples indicate a precise moment for the learner to assume the voice of a particular character in the prose or drama text. Each task ends with the instruction: 'Write your thoughts'. This is a formula that can be usefully adopted by centres.

Even where learners cover the same text, the precise choice of character and moment in the text should be left to the learner. Learners might be asked to submit their proposed choice of character and moment to their teachers as part of a dialogue about the suitability of the task.

Assessment criteria for the marking of empathic assignments can be found in Section 7.

- (1) You are Cassius, after Brutus has agreed that Antony will speak at Caesar's funeral. Write your thoughts. [Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*]
- (2) You are Stella, alone, at the end of the play, thinking about what has happened to your sister. Write your thoughts. [Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*]
- (3) You are Willy, on your way home after having been sacked by Howard. Write your thoughts. [Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*]
- (4) You are Abigail, as you make your escape from Salem. Write your thoughts. [Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*]
- (5) You are Mr Chawla. You have just heard about the behaviour of Sampath at the wedding of the DPS's daughter. Write your thoughts. [Kiran Desai, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*]
- (6) You are Nwoye, leaving your father Okonkwo for the last time. You are walking back to the church. Write your thoughts. [Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*]
- (7) You are Ralph, hiding from Jack and the others after Piggy's death. Write your thoughts. [William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*]
- (8) You are George Appleby-Smith. You have just been informed of the suicide of Chief Matenge. Write your thoughts. [Bessie Head, *When Storm Clouds Gather*]

## 3 Standards

---

### 3.1 General comments

The best coursework conveys not only the learners' powers of appreciation but also their enjoyment of their reading. Such coursework is characterised by a confidence in expressing individual views based on sound textual evidence. This is what literary study should lead to, as opposed to a reliance on a mere parroting of the words of study guides (or teachers).

The assessment criteria credit learners' ability to think for themselves, so it would be disconcerting to see from any centre, essays on the same topic which make the same points and employ the same quotations in the same order. This would be against the spirit of the coursework option (and the same is true of the examination).

A response that addresses the task straight away is to be preferred to one that unloads extraneous background material before getting to the point. Statements of the obvious ('Shakespeare was a great writer...') or declarations of intent ('In this essay I shall discuss two poems...') do not receive credit and are best avoided.

The strongest critical essays skilfully integrate succinct, apposite, textual reference and precise, analytical comment. Successful essays use quotations to crystallise a point or to shine a spotlight, as it were, on a particular word or phrase in order to comment on how writers achieve their effects. In this way, a line of thought can be pursued and the overall argument advanced. By contrast, a learner using copious reference and quotation without pausing to comment is demonstrating little evidence of the capacity to sustain critical analysis. Supporting argument with textual detail requires more than the listing of inert quotation, which will not give access to higher marks.

Critical vocabulary can very often enhance an argument but is not very helpful if it is merely used to list literary devices. The observation 'Time's winged chariot is an example of personification' is an accurate *description* but should not be confused with *analysis*, which must involve a consideration of the effectiveness of Marvell's language. There is little, if any, merit in the following kind of generalisation which can too often be found at the beginnings and ends of essays: 'Shakespeare uses a wide range of similes, metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia and oxymoron.' Such a response does not constitute precise or perceptive critical comment.

### 3.2 Characteristics of successful assignments

#### Critical essays

- mastery of detail demonstrated by a wide range of points and textual references
- points made clearly and developed into a coherent argument
- sustained critical analysis in which points are clearly substantiated by means of well-selected and sometimes less obvious, though pertinent, references
- brief, apt quotations integrated with precise critical comment on the ways in which language, structure and form shape meanings and effects
- a critical vocabulary used economically and effectively
- a convincing and informed personal response which engages with the task directly and confidently.

#### Empathic responses

- detailed knowledge demonstrated by a wide range of textual reference or echoes of the text
- a well-crafted and sustained insight into the character at a specified moment
- the assumption of a compellingly authentic voice and viewpoint for the character
- a convincing and informed personal response which engages with the task directly.

### 3.3 Characteristics of less successful assignments

#### Critical essays

- a few scattered, unconnected points
- generalised points lacking development and clear focus, sometimes laboured
- prevalence of unsubstantiated assertions and tendency to narrate or explain rather than explore
- critical vocabulary not used, or imperfectly understood, or used injudiciously
- reliance on second-hand opinions (from teachers or study guides) and/or irrelevant background material.

#### Empathic responses

- knowledge and development of points sketchy
- response not rooted in the detail of the text – too much unfounded creativity
- little or no appreciation of characterisation
- a voice lacking in authenticity
- uncertainty about the moment specified.

## 4 Examples of coursework assignments

---

This section contains two whole portfolios and five individual assignments, together with commentaries on their strengths and weaknesses. The assessment criteria can be found in Section 7. Please note that learners' work has been reproduced with the grammar, punctuation and spelling uncorrected in order to provide an authentic experience.

### 4.1 Using the assessment criteria

You should use the assessment criteria to assess each assignment out of 25. The total folder mark is out of 50.

The criteria are arranged in nine levels. If read from the bottom (Level 0) to the top (Level 8), each describes a more assured performance than the one preceding.

You should read and mark the work and then make a 'best fit' judgement as to which level to place it in. Very often you may see qualities that fit more than one level, so always use two levels at least and come to a decision between them.

If all the criteria in a level fit your judgement, award the highest mark and check the level above just in case a mark at the bottom of the next level is appropriate.

When you assess all the portfolios for which you are responsible, place them in rank order, and award the marks accordingly, paying especial attention to the borderlines between levels. Try to differentiate between portfolios that lie within the same level.

## 4.2 Assessment criteria for coursework

Level	Marks	Description
<b>Level 8</b>	23–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by incorporating well-selected reference to the text skilfully and with flair (<i>or seamlessly uses well-selected textual detail in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>sustains a critical understanding of the text showing individuality and insight (AO2)</li> <li>responds sensitively and in considerable detail to the way the writer achieves her/his effects (<i>or sustains an entirely convincing voice for the character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>sustains personal and evaluative engagement with task and text (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 7</b>	20–22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by integrating much well-selected reference to the text (<i>or integrates much well-selected textual detail in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>shows a clear critical understanding of the text (AO2)</li> <li>responds sensitively and in detail to the way the writer achieves her/his effects (<i>or sustains a convincing voice for the character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>sustains a perceptive, convincing and relevant personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 6</b>	17–19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by supporting with careful and relevant reference to the text (<i>or supports with careful and relevant textual detail in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>shows a clear understanding of the text and some of its deeper implications (AO2)</li> <li>makes a developed response to the way the writer achieves her/his effects (<i>or develops a generally authentic voice for the character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>makes a well-developed, detailed and relevant personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5</b>	14–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by showing some thoroughness in the use of supporting evidence from the text (<i>or shows some thoroughness in the use of supporting textual detail in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>shows understanding of the text and some of its deeper implications (AO2)</li> <li>makes some response to the way the writer uses language (<i>or uses suitable features of expression suitable for the character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>makes a reasonably developed relevant personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	11–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by using some supporting textual detail (<i>or uses some supporting textual detail in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>shows some understanding of meaning (AO2)</li> <li>makes a little reference to the language of the text (<i>or begins to assume a voice for the character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>begins to develop a relevant personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>

Level	Marks	Description
<b>Level 3</b>	8–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by making a little supporting reference to the text (<i>or makes a little supporting reference to the text in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>makes some relevant comments (AO2)</li> <li>shows a basic understanding of surface meaning of the text and language (<i>or shows a basic understanding of character and voice in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>attempts to communicate a basic personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	5–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by making a little reference to the text (<i>or makes a little reference to the text in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>makes a few straightforward comments (AO2)</li> <li>shows a few signs of understanding the surface meaning of the text and language (<i>or shows a few signs of understanding of character in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>shows some evidence of simple personal response (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1</b>	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates knowledge by limited textual reference (<i>or makes limited reference to the text in an empathic task</i>) (AO1)</li> <li>shows some limited understanding of simple/literal meaning (AO2)</li> <li>shows a little awareness of surface meaning of text and language (<i>or shows a little awareness of surface meaning of character and voice in an empathic task</i>) (AO3)</li> <li>makes a limited attempt to respond (AO4)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 0</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No answer / Insufficient to meet the criteria for Level 1</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Portfolio 1, Assignment 1

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

**Ralph is changed by his experiences on the island. How does Golding show this?**

Who would have thought that the jovial “fair boy”, who “laughed delightedly and stood on his head” at the beginning of his unexpected journey on a heavenly island, would finish up alone, crying, and surrounded by ashes and burnt palm trees?

Through a progressive decay in his physical appearance and psyche, Golding describes the change in Ralph caused by the “Beast”, or more exactly man’s capacity for evil, that lies inside of us and can rise at any time given the right conditions. Ralph has tried to fight this foe, this barbarism that raised among the island; it’s not only the island that has been wounded; it’s also Ralph’s heart that has been “scarred”.

To each story, there is a beginning; so is there to a metamorphosis. When first stranded on the island, Ralph is delighted by his arrival on the mysterious island, and looks forward to thrilling and exciting adventure. Nonetheless, this meant that he and the children had to behave as adults, and take care of themselves. Ralph feels capable of taking responsibilities and being a “chief”, in democratic and civilised conditions, by maintaining peace and order. He had not even got to know the boys, that had already Ralph’s charismatic figure and “stillness” “marked him out”. Golding present Ralph as an attractive character: “he might make a boxer [...] but there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil”. Many symbols are present in the novel, one of them being the conch, the one which gives you the right to talk and represents order; when the boys saw that Ralph was in possession of the “ever so valuable” conch, their desire of electing him as chief was even stronger. Not only is he good-looking, but his actions also pull him to a high peak of sensibility and maturity. For instance, he forms the democracy (with the conch) and sets sensible rules to stay as close to the civilised world as possible. Ralph is, at the beginning of the novel, presented as a natural leader, who maximizes their chances of being rescued, and has got some clever ideas, such as “making smoke on top of the mountain” to enable ships to see them.

Unfortunately as the story goes on, Ralph does not remain the powerful character he was at the beginning of the novel, and many weakening obstacles will come on his way. First of all, the entrance of the “Beast” in the minds of the boys will distract the boys (even Ralph) who will little by little start believing in it. This great fear of the “Beast” among the boys will get to a point where Ralph loses control over the group. This loss of democracy and order is the first step to the savagery. Ralph, despite the fact that he is supposed to be the democrat and represent sagacity, will experience this

capacity for evil in the pig hunt dance. Even to him, "the desire to squeeze and hurt was overmastering". Golding here shows an important change in Ralph: he is a victim of the mob mentality: otherwise why would he have committed such a primitive act?

Also, Ralph is challenged by Jack, who will do anything to become "Chief". He ostracizes rules and favours hunting, and is clearly a symbol of dictatorship, which takes over democracy. He tells people what they want to hear, as he knows the boys are more attracted to pig hunts and dances than group meetings, and promises them meat. Indeed, he has got the good words, but not the good ideas.

It is possible to see that Ralph is shown as a good-looking character at the beginning of the novel; therefore, his progressive decay is also visible in his hygiene: he is frustrated with his hair, which is now long, mangy and always manages to fall in front of his eyes. Last but not least, the breaking of the conch and Piggy's glasses is important: these two symbols of order, democracy and wisdom and intelligence completed Ralph, especially the conch that is part of his "democratic system". To summarize, Ralph's main "foes" are incontestable: the "Beast" and Jack. All those little details contribute to the decline of Ralph and gives place to barbarism.

By using an explicit "before/after" system, Golding clearly contrasts Ralph's estate between the beginning and the end of the novel: a positive beginning, for an atrocious ending. In the end, the novel reaches a point where nobody is civilised, nobody seems to have moral order; nobody except Ralph. Piggy, symbol of intelligence, and Simon, "the saint", get killed; all the factors of democracy and order have been lost; but evil can only be kept under control by society's laws, sense of responsibility, and intelligence. This leaves him alone and segregated by the others, he who was the leader and the popular boy of the island. Also, the chasing down of Ralph clearly shows a status change: the respected figure turns out to become a hunted animal. Golding also puts in evidence Ralph's changing throughout the eyes of the naval officer who sees him as "kid" who "needed a bath, a hair-cut, a nose-wipe, and a good deal of ointment": the leader is reduced to a filthy, poor looking animal.

Who would have thought that the jovial "fair boy", who "laughed delightedly and stood on his head" at the beginning of his unexpected journey on a heavenly island, would finish up alone, crying, and surrounded by ashes and burnt palm trees?

Through a progressive decay in his physical appearance and psyche, Golding describes the change in Ralph caused by the "Beast", or more exactly man's capacity for evil, that lies inside of us and can rise at any time given the right conditions. Ralph has tried to fight this foe, this barbarism that raised among the island; it's not only the island that has been wounded; it's also Ralph's heart that has been "scarred".

To each story, there is a beginning; so is there to a metamorphosis. When first stranded on the island, Ralph is delighted by his arrival on the mysterious island, and looks forward to thrilling and exciting adventure. Nonetheless, this meant that he and the children had to behave as adults, and take care of themselves. Ralph feels capable of taking responsibilities and being a “chief”, in democratic and civilised conditions, by maintaining peace and order. He had not even got to know the boys, that had already Ralph’s charismatic figure and “stillness” “marked him out”. Golding present Ralph as an attractive character: “he might make a boxer [...] but there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil”. Many symbols are present in the novel, one of them being the conch, the one which gives you the right to talk and represents order; when the boys saw that Ralph was in possession of the “ever so valuable” conch, their desire of electing him as chief was even stronger. Not only is he good-looking, but his actions also pull him to a high peak of sensibility and maturity. For instance, he forms the democracy (with the conch) and sets sensible rules to stay as close to the civilised world as possible. Ralph is, at the beginning of the novel, presented as a natural leader, who maximizes their chances of being rescued, and has got some clever ideas, such as “making smoke on top of the mountain” to enable ships to see them.

Unfortunately as the story goes on, Ralph does not remain the powerful character he was at the beginning of the novel, and many weakening obstacles will come on his way. First of all, the entrance of the “Beast” in the minds of the boys will distract the boys (even Ralph) who will little by little start believing in it. This great fear of the “Beast” among the boys will get to a point where Ralph loses control over the group. This loss of democracy and order is the first step to the savagery. Ralph, despite the fact that he is supposed to be the democrat and represent sagacity, will experience this capacity for evil in the pig hunt dance. Even to him, “the desire to squeeze and hurt was overmastering”. Golding here shows an important change in Ralph: he is a victim of the mob mentality: otherwise why would he have committed such a primitive act?

Also, Ralph is challenged by Jack, who will do anything to become “Chief”. He ostracizes rules and favours hunting, and is clearly a symbol of dictatorship, which takes over democracy. He tells people what they want to hear, as he knows the boys are more attracted to pig hunts and dances than group meetings, and promises them meat. Indeed he has got the good words, but not the good ideas.

It is possible to see that Ralph is shown as a good-looking character at the beginning of the novel; therefore his progressive decay is also visible in his hygiene: he is frustrated with his hair, which is now long, mangy and always manages to fall in front of his

eyes. Last but not least, the breaking of the conch and Piggy's glasses is important: these two symbols of order, democracy and wisdom and intelligence completed Ralph, especially the conch, that is part of his "democratic system". To summarize, Ralph's main "foes" are incontestable: the "Beast" and Jack. All those little details contribute to the decline of Ralph and gives place to barbarism.

By using an explicit "before/after" system, Golding clearly contrasts Ralph's estate between the beginning and the end of the novel: a positive beginning, for an atrocious ending. In the end, the novel reaches a point where nobody is civilised, nobody seems to have moral order; nobody except Ralph. Piggy, symbol of intelligence, and Simon, "the saint", get killed; all the factors of democracy and order have been lost; but evil can only be kept under control by society's laws, sense of responsibility, and intelligence. This leaves him alone and segregated by the others, he who was the leader and the popular boy of the island. Also, the chasing down of Ralph clearly shows a status change: the respected figure turns out to become a hunted animal. Golding also puts in evidence Ralph's changing throughout the eyes of the naval officer who sees him as "kid" who "needed a bath, a hair-cut, a nose-wipe, and a good deal of ointment": the leader is reduced to a filthy, poor looking animal.

#### 4.4 Portfolio 1, Assignment 2

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

**Chapter 24: "The village crier was abroad again" to "He ground his teeth". How does the writer illustrate how Okonkwo is feeling? How does this passage from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* prepare us for events to come in the rest of the story?**

This passage from chapter 24 of *Things Fall Apart* written by Chinua Achebe, comes across as a turning point of the story. Umuofia is going to have a meeting to discuss the previous imprisonment and mistreating of Okonkwo and five other villagers by the court messengers, which inevitably made the Ibo realise how the white people are using them. Hoping that this meeting will not only be one of compromise, Okonkwo sees war as the only way to send the white men away and the only chance to take revenge for what they have done, but also to regenerate the fighting souls of the Igbo tribe, who seem to have been hypnotised by the colonisers.

By making us enter Okonkwo's mind and revealing his future plans, Achebe presents the myriad of feelings and thoughts filling his heart at this time when the future of Umuofia is being decided, but also foreshadows the story and Okonkwo's ends.

Okonkwo is very excited to finally see Umuofia reacting and understanding that they have been pushed to the limit. As we can see, Okonkwo "slept very little that

night”, emphasizing his anticipation to finally express, or more exactly “avenge” himself and explain to the tribe that they need to do something. Of course, for Okonkwo, the only solution is war: he considers diplomacy and the use of words as “womanish wisdom”. Also, the “beat[ing]” of the “iron gong” images the beating of Okonkwo’s heart, creating a fast rhythm and emphasizing his excitement.

This planning of revenge is a natural reaction to the humiliation Okonkwo has suffered. He is angry and nurses “bitterness in his heart” of the white man. His rage is even more outlined when thinking about “the treatment he had received”, he “[swears] vengeance. This shows that, by having been beaten by the court messengers, he lost his pride and thinks he is now seen as weak by his tribe. However, being weak means being like Unoka, his father. Moreover, going to war is an occasion to redeem some of his lost glory he had been deprived of during his seven years of exile. Okonkwo “ground his teeth” several times in the passage because his back hurts. This repetition shows his feelings of revenge, fury and acrimony.

Also, the use of terms such as grinding one’s teeth assimilates the character to an animal eager to catch its prey.

While his feelings of battling and revenge are very powerful, Okonkwo regrets the past and is very nostalgic. To express such feelings, the writer uses flashbacks: we enter Okonkwo’s mind as he remembers the “noblest war” against Isike and describes it as a “war of the past”. This anecdote shows how the art and skills of war are building blocks of the traditional Ibo society, that war is dignifying, but also implies that these times of warfare are over, which make Okonkwo’s sorrow even bigger. In addition, Okonkwo contrasts the glorious past with Okudo, a man with an empowering voice that “turned every man into a lion”, and the miserable present with Egonwanne, whom he sees as an “obstacle in Umuofia” and has a “sweet tongue that can fire into cold ash”. Okonkwo sees Okudo as a paragon, and also gratifies the old ways of Igbo people, “when men were men”, but is condescending towards the foolish attempts of the Igbo people to be diplomatic. Okonkwo looks upon all these strong memories and war values as something that must not be lost.

The flashbacks and Okonkwo’s predictable character foreshadow that Okonkwo, regardless of Umuofia’s decision, will go to war, if alone need be, in the name of his ancestors and of his dignity.

First of all, the reader is warned of Okonkwo’s future plans: “If Umuofia decided on war, all would be well. But if they chose to be cowards he would go out and avenge himself”. When Okonkwo belittles Egonwanne about his cowardice, he mentions: “If they listen to him I shall leave them and plan my own revenge”. This is very relevant

to the reader and clearly shows us that his determination and stubbornness are blinding him. However, the use of the conditional attenuates Okonkwo's certainty and creates some suspense: the narrator makes sure not everything is revealed to us.

Moreover, Okonkwo prepares his outfit for D-day: he "brought down his war dress and raffia skirt", the traditional war outfit "he had not touched since his return from exile". Okonkwo is preparing himself mentally, and putting on his war clothes that hadn't been used for seven years symbolises for him a new era, a new chance to win his fame, but also showing that making war is clearly his aim.

Motivated and boastful, Okonkwo does not, however, realise that he is somehow bound to lose: his armour and weapon, which are a "head-gear and a shield", are powerless compared to the guns of the white men. Achebe makes this "incident" ironic, as Okonkwo thought "they were all satisfactory", not aware of the unequal strength of his tribe. Furthermore, he will be fighting alone, as he thinks "worthy men are no more".

Unwilling to let his clan be seen as cowardly, Okonkwo makes an act of self-destruction more than one of rescue, as the conditions in which he is achieving this will lead him to nothing more than his own death, only to escape to a new law he refuses to submit to, which is Christianity.

### **Comment**

The *Lord of the Flies* essay focuses on the change experienced in Ralph's character, and on Golding's presentation of this. The use of neatly integrated, succinct quotation supports a detailed and perceptive evaluation of characterisation (i.e. Golding's presentation of the character) and an appreciation of techniques, such as symbolism. A mark of 25 was appropriate.

The task on *Things Fall Apart* has a dual focus, requiring close analysis of a particular extract (Chapter 24) and an evaluation of its significance for the remainder of the novel. Having been given such tightly focused tasks, this strong candidate is able to demonstrate Level 8 qualities such as flair and sustained engagement with text and task. Again, 25 marks were awarded.

This portfolio, contains outstanding work for a 16-year-old and received an overall mark of 50.

## 4.5 Portfolio 2, Assignment 1

Willy Russell, *Educating Rita*

Should *Educating Rita* actually be called *Educating Frank*?

*Educating Rita* by Willy Russell, is a play about, a woman in her twenties who is very keen to gain more knowledge. But her husband disagrees with her gaining knowledge, and asks her for a family. The title of this play by Willy Russell is *Educating Rita*. But, in the play the opposite takes place; perhaps Rita is the one educating Frank.

Rita has gained many things from her experience. She has widened her social circle, meaning she could get to know more about other people and is able to have conversations with people. She also feels comfortable with people of different classes; it doesn't matter if that person is lower than her or higher than her by class.

She has gained confidence, as shown when she stood up in front of all the people and asked a question. She mentioned, "Frank, you would have been dead proud of me." After a while she started to make her own choices. By the end she has her mind trained to think and question. "Wasn't his wife a cow?" she said to Frank.

Rita doesn't only gain she also loses. She loses Denny because, she didn't give him what he wanted and continued to self-educate herself. She also loses her own ideas and opinions. Most of all she loses her identity, herself. She is also similar to a robot because people order her to do things.

Frank is another person who has a lot in mind. He re-experiences the world in a fresher way by getting Rita to help him; she also helps Frank imagine things that he couldn't imagine. She helps him to see things in a certain way.

The closest friend he has is Rita. Most of the time they always together in tutorial chattering with each other, not only about the topics their going to begin.

Sometimes they just talk about friendship, their future. Rita helps Frank to gain confidence when he leaves to Australia so he doesn't feel lonely.

Frank doesn't really have close friends and not much support from the community around him. Most of the time he is getting support from his bottle of whisky that is hidden behind the books on the bookshelf. This bottle of whisky is the closest possession Frank has ever possessed.

This piece should really be called *Educating Frank* because the title *Educating Rita* tells us that Rita is the one that is going to be educated. But eventually Rita is giving Frank a few tips about life, e.g. she helps him experience the world in a fresher way, helps him to imagine things he can't imagine.

## 4.6 Portfolio 2, Assignment 2

**Explore the persuasive techniques used in three poems of seduction.**

The three poems studied are 'To his coy mistress' by, Andrew Marvell, 'To the virgins, to make much of time' by Robin Herrick and 'Song' by, Ben Johnson. 'To his coy mistress' focuses on the attempts of the speaker to convince his girlfriend to sleep with him while there is time left. 'To the virgins, to make much of time' is about the speaker, giving advice to virgins to make the most of their beauty while there is still time. 'Song' is from the play 'Volpone' by, Ben Johnson. This poem is concerned with the speaker wanting to sleep with an innocent married woman. All three poems are to do with having sex, and on the whole they are sordid. 'To his coy mistress' means, to the speaker's shy lover. 'To the virgins, to make much of time' is referring to all the virgins to make use of their beauty while there is time.

The reader of the first poem would learn that the speaker of the poem tries his best to convince his girlfriend to sleep with him. The audience of this poem would be the mistress because the speaker is always referring to her. We've learned that the audience of this poem happens to be very shy. This poem is divided into three different stanzas. The first stanza is about the reader trying to soften his mistress by saying flattering things to her and, he is also trying to convince her to sleep with him. The second stanza is about the speaker trying to rush her because, time is flying by without any notice and he tried to frighten her into having sex. The last stanza is he telling her to make love with him while there is still time.

The second poem is "To the virgins, to make much of time". This poem was written by, Robert Herrick. In this particular poem the audience should notice, that the speaker is giving advice to young women, instead of seducing them. The difference between the speaker of this poem and the first one is that in this poem the speaker is giving advice, but in the previous poem the speaker is desperate to sleep with his mistress. The audience in this poem would be the young women, who are the virgins in the title of the poem.

The title of the poem is the speaker trying to tell all the virgins to make most of their time, while there's still time left. This poem is not very similar to the previous poem because this poem is about the speaker giving advice and the previous poem is about the speaker wanting to have sex. The previous poem is written in one continuous stanza. This poem is written in four stanzas. Each stanza has a different focus.

In the first stanza, the speaker is telling all the virgins to seize time, whilst they can. He is telling them to go and make use of their beauty, while they still have it. The second paragraph is very similar to the first one, because all it says is that the sun is still shining

so make the most of the day, before it becomes dark than it is too late. The third section is the speaker encouraging the virgins to go out and make the most of their beauty since they are very young, and have good features. The very last section of this poem is up to the virgins what they want to do. The entire speaker says she either go find a husband and get married, or wait for death to come and haunt you. The speaker tries to flatter the woman in many ways, he uses many different techniques. He speaks to her gently, he doesn't threaten. He uses many ways to try and soften her until she agrees to sleep with him. He wouldn't give up until she agrees to.

The speaker persuades the virgins by softening them, by telling them how beautiful they are and by telling them what awaits them in the future.

The devices used in "His coy mistress" and these poems are similar, in a way that they both have to do with time. Carpe diem is used in both poems, this means seize time while you still may.

"Then be not coy, but use your time."

This quote was taken out from the second poem. This has to do with Carpe diem.

"Had we but world enough, and time,"

This quote was used in the very first poem. This quotation also has got to do with time. In "The virgins to make much of time," time is personified. Human qualities are given to time. Fear is used in the same way in both the poems. In the first poem the speaker is encouraging her to sleep with him but she's afraid to, and in the second poem, the virgins are coy and also afraid to make use of their beauty.

The very last poem is known as "Song" by Ben Jonson. This poem is about the narrator wanting to have an affair with his friend's wife. That is very similar to the other two poems. This poem is about the speaker encouraging 'Celia' to make love with him while there is enough time for the both of them.

Celia disagrees to make love with him, so he is prostituting her. Once again in this poem we learn that he speaker is a very desperate to make love with his partner. He tries to soften her by saying things such as:

"Come, my Celia let us prove, While we can, the sports of love."

The speaker tells his partner to make use of time, if the time is not used than it would be too late for them to ever make love again because, they will both be dead very soon.

In Volpone's world, accepted moral codes are subverted: What we think is right. Volpone thinks it is wrong. The style of this poem is not written in any stanzas it is

*more like one piece. There are rhyming couplets in every two sentences. The last word of every sentence rhymes with the end of another sentence, which comes after it.*

*The content used in this poem is quite difficult to understand but it makes much sense. Perpetual night is a word used in this poem, it represents death forever. In the poem the speaker tells his partner that if love is not made than it will be too late and than there won't be anything left for you after death.*

### **Comment**

In these two assignments there is some knowledge of the content of the texts and a recognition of key themes, but at the same time there is an inability to connect ideas into a developed argument and little evidence of the ability to respond to the literary qualities of texts. In the response to poems in particular, there is too much description about what happens in each stanza. Perhaps the need to write on three poems (rather than a more manageable two) was too great a burden for this candidate and prevented him from focusing on selected aspects of the poems in any detail. The ideas appear to be received rather than a genuinely personal response. These two assignments really only begin to organise and develop an appropriate response, showing some understanding only.

Both assignments received marks in Level 4 of 12, making an overall portfolio mark of 24.

## 4.7 Further examples (single assignments)

### Sample 1

**F Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby**

**How does Fitzgerald make Tom Buchanan such an unpleasant character?**

Fitzgerald uses a variety of ways to show Tom's unpleasant character, beginning with a description of his physical characteristics. He has a rather imposing stature and appears dominant, having 'a body capable of enormous leverage'. Not only does he have an intimidating physique, but the capabilities suggested by Fitzgerald's writing imply that Tom has a personality to match his 'cruel body'. This implication of malice is backed up by the description of Tom's 'Two shining arrogant eyes', as they are said to have 'had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward'. To have eyes like these suggests a deeper, inbuilt cruelty and that they 'established dominance over his face' produces a violent appearance.

In addition to his 'cruel body', Tom is seen to put it to authoritative and often violent use. In the first scene with Nick and Tom together, Tom is reported to be 'Turning me round by one arm', 'me' referring to Nick. This is a clear example of Tom's dominant nature. He is described as having 'a touch of paternal contempt' in his voice, giving the impression of an internal feeling of superiority towards others. This is clear when he forcibly moves Nick to show him his home during their first interaction, which demonstrates his unpleasant nature in two ways. The first is his forceful action of directing Nick, showing Tom to be an overbearing character, but also his self-satisfying need to show Nick his home.

Tom himself says 'I've got a nice place here', stated like a fact which shows the extent of his high self-opinion and inner feeling of superiority.

Tom's conceitedness is seen as a common theme through the novel, as he asserts his dominance over several of the main characters. Notably in his relationships with Daisy and Myrtle, both of whom have an intimate relationship with Tom and both of whom he treats with disdain. In each relationship we are shown evidence of physical violence, both a display of Tom demonstrating his authority and a brutish act which makes him both a threatening and repulsive character. We first see this happen to Daisy, as we see a 'black and blue' knuckle, a hideous contrast to the pure, innocent imagery connected to Daisy, such as her 'white' dress 'rippling and fluttering'. This delicate language creates a contrast which heightens the atrocity of Tom's actions. The blame is clearly placed when she cries 'I know you didn't mean to but you did it', the lack of intention implies carelessness to Tom's character. Daisy goes on to call Tom 'a

brute of a man, a great, bit, hulking physical specimen', which strengthens the claim to Tom's physical dominance. In response we see only an objection from Tom, who says 'I hate that word hulking', indicating a completely unsympathetic attitude towards his wife's pain and a refusal to accept his own harmful behaviour, further signs of Tom's selfishness. Towards Myrtle we are given a far more dramatic display of violence, when Tom uses 'a short deft movement' to break Myrtle's nose. This description works effectively to show Tom as a very unpleasant character, as the description is so concise that it sounds factual, like a report, reducing any empathy in Tom's action.

The brief nature of Tom's violence, yet spectacular aftermath, seen in Fitzgerald's description of 'bloody towels', gives an insight into Tom's insolence towards Myrtle. She is made to seem of little worth to him, as suggested by the speed of his actions, and the descriptions of her 'perceptible vitality' demonstrate the shallow intentions of Tom's affair. She is portrayed as a mere commodity, referred to as 'my girl' by Tom, and his violent outburst shows this disregard for her humanity. In addition to Tom's treatment of Myrtle, his entire interaction with her and attitude concerning their relationship make Tom even more despicable. Despite the adulterous activities Tom carries out, he does not see them as either serious or morally unjust.

During the bout in the hotel with Gatsby and Daisy, Tom admits 'Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself', belittling his affairs in this manner. This is another sign of Tom's selfish nature, as he dismisses his relationship with Myrtle as a spree, despite buying an apartment for her, making their affair solid and irrefutable. Furthermore, he tries to make himself the object of pity, claiming 'I always come back', that it only happens 'Once in a while' and even calling himself a 'fool'. However, these unsubstantial excuses are placed into greater futility in the face of Tom's previous affairs, as the consistency of his transgressions reveal unwillingness to change and Tom's underlying egocentricity. Tom's boorish behaviour is a reflection of the 'Jazz Era', the time the novel is set in. He belongs to the rich elite and, with thanks to his wealth, is able to live out his decadence with little regard for the consequences.

In chapter six we are shown several instances of Tom's infidelity and hypocrisy. He seems suspicious when Gatsby mentions to him 'I know your wife', which prompts Tom to wonder 'where the devil he met Daisy', and claims that 'women run around too much these days'. The tone of condescension implies that Tom sees Gatsby as being inferior, despite his wealth, and he dismisses him as a 'crazy fish'. Tom's comment also shows his distaste towards Daisy's social activities, as Tom's words imply a suspicion and condemnation of adulterous deeds. However, later in the same chapter Tom

commits such an act in the presence of his wife. Fitzgerald not only uses the regularity of Tom's actions to make him unpleasant, but the sense of freedom that Tom relishes in.

The carelessness attributed to Tom's actions here mirror many other instances in the novel where Tom lacks a moral awareness. Fitzgerald notes this aspect of Tom, which he shares with Daisy, that 'They were careless people...they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness'. This quotation directly alludes to the attitude held by Tom during his final conversation with Nick. He is made to look like a force of destruction as the cause of Gatsby's death, yet he shows no empathy, claiming, 'That fellow had it coming to him'. His indifference towards a human life not only displays Tom's vast capacity for cruelty, but also his selfishness. He disregards the deaths of Gatsby, Wilson and, even his lover, Myrtle, concerned only for his 'share of suffering', of which there is no great indication.

Tom's objectified view of Myrtle and his condescension of Gatsby reveal a far more universal arrogance, which exceeds his own feeling of superiority. We are given indications of Tom's great conservative beliefs throughout the novel, such as his treatment of the Wilsons, seeing Myrtle as a commodity and cruelly manipulating George. Tom sadistically asks Wilson 'How's business?' when we are shown that Wilson's 'unprosperous and bare' garage benefits only from Tom's custom, which Tom strategically withholds when wishing to control or play with the poor man. We can see in this manner that Tom can use his wealth to control the Wilsons, a harsh and unpleasant suggestion of Tom's manipulative tendencies, but his opinion of Gatsby shows his own social distinction. In addition to his dismissive attitude to Gatsby's death, Tom shows a deep contempt for Gatsby's life. At the party Tom claims, 'I'd rather look at all these famous people in – in oblivion', his disdainful views of Gatsby's company a reflection of Tom's distaste of the lower classes.

The *Great Gatsby* takes a foreboding tone at times, with very suggestive language implicit of the later deaths in the novel and the ominous indications towards the collapse of consumerism. We see a similar suggestion shadowing Tom's character, as at times he shows a premonition of the rise of fascism.

This is evident when he declares suddenly 'Civilisation's going to pieces', with an apparent fear that 'the white race will be – will be utterly submerged'. This arrogant view of belonging to a superior race and needing to protect it displays a complete racial insensitivity. His view of Gatsby is also far from pleasant, as he jumps to hasty, if moderately accurate, conclusions of Gatsby's occupation. He makes the claim, 'A lot of these newly rich people are just big bootleggers', a display of Tom's suspicion and aversion

*to those with 'new money'. Using Tom's bigoted mannerisms Fitzgerald stresses two objectionable elements of Tom's character, firstly an unjustly intolerant attitude towards characters such as Gatsby, whose 'extraordinary gift for hope' and 'romantic readiness' encourage sympathy and therefore heighten our contempt for Tom. Secondly we are shown a ruthless need for superiority and absolute dominance.*

*In conclusion using a combination of accentuated arrogance, abusiveness, dishonesty and callousness, Fitzgerald gives an in depth impression of Tom Buchanan's fundamental self-centred nature. His actions towards others imply a great deal of cruelty, such as his wilful manipulation of Wilson or his merciless beating of Myrtle, and the language accompanying his fiendishness suggest, at times, complete carelessness.*

### **Comment**

The assignment has a clear task with a manageable scope, focusing on the ways in which Fitzgerald makes Tom Buchanan such an unpleasant character. This is a tightly focused, perceptive and convincing response to the question set, supported by a wide range of well-selected references. The quotations are for the most part smoothly integrated into the candidate's own writing. There is much evidence of insight, sensitivity and flair. The clear argument and careful support reveal a strong personal response, showing a complete and sustained engagement with both text and task.

This is a clear Level 8 response.

## Sample 2

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

[no title supplied]

America in the 1920's underwent dramatic development.

This is the period after World War I in which America was not affected economically by the war which didn't happen at on their soil. Development of sports like golf, cinema's for passing time, manufacturing of cars and the birth of Jazz music. The author F Scott Fitzgerald portrays this in book in various ways.

This period was referred to as the 'boom'. It was where America was prospering. There was the growth of cities when the first sky-scrapers were built in the U.S.A. The entertainment industry blossomed during this time the average working hours dropped so people had more leisure time. The average working much greater access to music in this case Jazz music. This time there was also growth of sports, e.g. golf and many more. Also the car industry was born and many people rushed to buy cars.

F Scott Fitzgerald portrays this in the *Great Gatsby* and gives his view on the society then. He comes across immorality, passed by the flappers and the decadence of the American dream.

The author emphasizes on how prosperous America was and how people only wanted to get money. How corruption was on the rise, immorality and signs of even homosexuality in the 1920's. I think the author is just enlightening the society on what use to go on in the roaring twenties.

Yes America prospered but had its shortcomings, the rise and drastic fall of the American dream, the prosperity and decadence of the 'roaring twenties' how immorality spread its roots and corrupted the whole society. Till this is brought and in different characters throughout the *Great Gatsby*.

During the Jazz age people only focused and pondered on getting material wealth and getting rich. The author F Scott Fitzgerald brings it out through the main character Gatsby. How Gatsby was inspired, after seeing a glamorous yacht to change his name.... 'He changed it at the age of 17 and at the specific moment he witnessed the beginning of his career when he saw Dan Cody's yacht'...most certainly, it was a luxurious yacht. To Gatsby it was a motivation an inspiration and drive. One of the reasons why he made it his obligation to become wealthy. F Scott Fitzgerald is trying to portray how material wealth and money was inscribed in people's minds ever since they were young. This actually meant a lot because the same was in the minds of the

old. In my opinion, America then was still a young society and many people had just come from the Great War. They were looking for ways of making money.

The yacht Gatsby saw was known as the 'Tuolomee' it was named after a gold mining area in Western Nevada, California. It belonged to Dan Cody, Gatsby's mentor 'Cody was 50 yrs then...a product of Nevada silver fields of the Yukon, of every rush of metal since seventy-five...'. Through this, the writer emphasizes on the urge of the citizens of America to get wealthy. It came to be known as the Yukon gold rush.

America was also divided in terms of wealth. There were the aristocrats; Tom and Daisy Buchanan are the main symbols of the old riches. The author F Scott Fitzgerald, talks about their wealth indirectly by what surrounds them '... their house was even more elaborate than I had expected.... Red and White Georgian colonial mansion...'. F Scott Fitzgerald gives us a taste of how the wealthy lived like. The aristocrats had inherited wealth. Passed down from generation to generation. F Scott Fitzgerald doesn't give us readers no entry not even a tiny peak on the occupation or professions of the aristocrats. They lived on the wealth they inherited and didn't work. F Scott Fitzgerald uses emphasis to make it clear to us the readers how wealthy the aristocrats with the old money were.

The middle class and the newly rich migrated from the West to the East. In *The Great Gatsby* it is symbolized or shown by Gatsby. 'The newly rich' and Nick 'middle class'. Gatsby had his own reason for moving East. His mistress Daisy Buchanan, Tom's wife had moved East. While Nick was a bondsman '... what you doing Nick?... Am a bondman...'. Through he comes from a well off background, and decided to make his own money. Then F Scott Fitzgerald portrays the poor in an embarrassing way. He associates them with where they live. George Wilson and his wife Myrtle who is also Tom Buchanan's mistress, live in the valley of ashes '....A fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges.... Where ashes take the form of houses, chimneys and rising smoke.... And finally with a transcendent effort of ash grey men...'. It is portrayed as a dull lifeless place, a desolate dying town. F Scott Fitzgerald just shows the readers how it is unexpectedly dull. In my opinion he shows as that even though America was prospering in the 1920's not everywhere was the magnitude and effect of the boom was felt.

The American dream had its ups and downs, highs and lows. In reality, America in the 1920's experienced an economic boom, it came to be known as the 'Roaring twenties' This was brought about by the First World War. The war did not happen on the American soil therefore, their industries were still intact. They exported to Europe and their economy sky-rocketed. In the book F Scott Fitzgerald uses *Gatsby* to represent the American dream. Most people in America acquired their wealth illegally especially the

newly rich. In the book F Scott Fitzgerald uses *Gatsby* to show how the American dream prospered illegally. Consumption of liquor was banned in the 1920's, which Gatsby got his wealth through and bootlegging; illegally selling liquor. 'I found out what your drug store was... That's one of his little tunts... Sold grain over the counter I picked him for a bootlegger first time I saw him....' Tom Buchanan telling Nick Carraway the narrator of the book. In the relation to the American dream, this presented a loophole: signs of decadence in the first stages of the book. F Scott Fitzgerald also used a character to symbolize death '...A stout middle aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles...' the author gives us this vivid description of owl eyes. Owl are considered an omen in the society, so by the author introducing him in the beginning of the book suggest death of the American dream, and death in the American dream. There were also the flappers who attended the parties Gatsby used to host every fortnight.

After the universal suffrage in the 1920 by Warren Harding, women were allowed to do certain things they couldn't do before.

In the book we find them going for the parties Gatsby used to host. In *The Great Gatsby* Jordan Baker symbolizes this. Tom Buchanan comments '...they oughtn't to let her run around the country this way... her family is one aunt about a thousand years old...' Suggesting that things should go back to the way things were before the universal suffrage. The author shows as that not all were for it. Actually some were greatly against it. I think that, it was a positive effect to many, and simultaneously negative effects could be felt.

The motor-vehicle industries also developed, Henry Ford revolutionized it and started the first production line in this world. Because of hire purchase, many people were able to buy cars. Also because of the 'New freedom' of women they brought color in the American society. Nearly all the characters in *The Great Gatsby* are contrasts of the colours they are associated with '... they were both in white dresses rippling and fluttering...' What Nick said first time he saw Daisy and Jordan, White suggest purity and cleanliness but not in their case. All that glitters is not gold.

A dishonest woman who stayed in a bad marriage and disowned her daughter at birth '...I asked the nurse if it was a boy or a girl...She said it was a girl...And I hoped she'll be a fool – that's the best girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool...' the author explains that women married in the 1920's were in bad marriages. In my opinion, these women couldn't run around the country and join the rest of the 'Flappers society'.

Infidelity was also rampant due to the new freedom of women. Tom Buchanan cheated on Daisy with Myrtle Wilson, George Wilson wife. '...We're getting of, he

insisted. I want you to meet my girl...' Tom telling Nick, Daisy cousin when he went to visit her with Nick. He was so open and proud of his promiscuity that he brought Nick along knowing he was Daisy Cousin. Moreover I think that the men of the 1920's did not feel insecure about it. Daisy felt guilty of the same, reunited again with her long forgotten lover, Jay Gatsby. Like America in the 1920's the citizens were over confident in themselves and there country's economy. In *The Great Gatsby* how Daisy felt about him '...your wife doesn't love you, she never did and she loves me...' Gatsby confronted Tom about it. This over confidence brought him down. The overconfidence of the American society brought about the Wall Street crash. Just as the green light at the end of chapter 1, it symbolized hope, Gatsby goals and encouragement. 'He stretched out his hand towards the dark waters; I gained seaward and distinguished nothing but 1 single green light...'. It still symbolizes the hope and dream of America, even after wall - street crash, which is Gatsby death. In chapter 8, we read about the death of the dream. Leaving behind the neglected children, Pammy, the flappers Jordan, the world of crime, Meyer Wolfshiem, the promiscuous woman Myrtle and Daisy and most of all the down fall of America.

Gatsby was also disillusioned by Daisy. This is represented by the colour blue, his cheuffer wears blue, his garden is blue and most of all what separates him from Daisy is the blue waters. It represented Gatsby fantasies and illustions. Illusioned by Daisy Fay, while Americans by the boom better yet, the 'Roaring twenties'.

As Owl Eyes was a sign, an omen in the beginning of the book. We are given a more clearer sign, preceded over by the ever watching eyes of Dr TJ Eckleburg in the valley of ashes, Nick says ;..So we drove on towards death in the cooling twilight...' F Scott Fitzgerald gives us the tip of the ice burg of things to occur in the near future. I think the author is preparing as for the ending of the dream, the fall by giving these signs of death.

'The death car newspapers called... Didn't stop it came out of the gathering darkness and disappeared... Myrtle Wilson her life violently extinguished..' When Daisy ran over George Wilson wife, the reason of his infidelity was extinguished, maybe it was Daisy maybe it wasn't. Out of hatred, George Wilson seeks his wife's killer, the owner of the death car. It belonged to Gatsby. Next day he turned up at Gatsby's garden... the next thing.

'...the chauffer ...heard the shots...it was after we started with Gatsby towards the house, that the gardener saw Wilson body...'

The past had merged with the present, that's what F Scott Fitzgerald is putting out. I think that it was destined be, the best things in life are brought on a silver platter on

that same plate life offers us disaster. The tragic end of the Gatsby; the American dream and what it posed.

F Scott Fitzgerald portrays to us the readers, all that was entailed in the American society in the 1920's. It ranged from infidelity, corruption, flappers. The distinct boom and how it was 'murdered'. I think during this time America discovered itself. From the motor vehicle industry, that magic spark ignited by Henry Ford. The overconfidence of Americans in their own country shown by Gatsby's overconfidence in Daisy Fay. The development of Jazz music which involved different genres from different regions of the world.

The rise of the Harlem renaissance which was brought about by the blacks. It brought about a new revolution that affected all races and made America the world's entertainment centre. Some of the people who benefited from this are distinct in history, Jesse Owens in sports while Charlie Chaplain in movies and Ella Fitzgerald as one of the greatest Jazz musicians.

Through the good, bad and ugly of the American society in the 1920's or the 'roaring twenties' the auther tries to comprehend all what was happening and to some point he seemed like a critic of the U.S.A. society 1920's.

The books narrator Nick tells us it was fall when he moved east, trees sheded their old leaves, quite a coincidence it ends during fall, with the death and memories of the dream, the American dream. But hope is not futile as the green light gives hope for the future, we just have to wait and see.

### **Comment**

This assignment is not provided with an assignment title, and it is difficult to determine from the candidate's writing a clear focus for the task. It starts unhelpfully with a good deal of background material which is not directly related to details from the text *The Great Gatsby*: e.g. Jazz music, the boom, skyscrapers, the entertainment industry. Indeed most of the assignment seems to concentrate on the wider social and historical contexts rather than a clearly-delineated aspect of the text itself. Where the text is mentioned, there is an attempt to communicate a basic personal response to the text, with some relevant comment. There is some supporting textual detail but it is not always used cohesively as part of a clear unfolding argument.

This is a top Level 3 response, with elements of Level 4 in its use of 'some supporting textual detail'. However, the lack of a clear focus (and task) limits the overall performance.

## Sample 3

George Orwell, *Animal Farm***How does Orwell reflect Stalin's rule in his allegorical novel 'Animal Farm'?**

*Animal Farm* by George Orwell was meant to make the British realize what kind of person Joseph Stalin really was. In this text, Orwell manages to portray Stalin through the strong and dictatorial pig Napoleon. Through various actions, themes and imagery, George Orwell has been capable of reflecting Stalin's rule in his allegorical novel *Animal Farm*.

Throughout the text, basing ourselves on the various actions in the novel, we perceive Stalin's commanding and self-centred rule. Firstly, in relation to the text, we understand that the two pigs Napoleon and Snowball are fighting against each other for power over the farm. Already here, we see that Orwell has managed to mirror part of Stalin's rule; which mostly consisted of rivalling Trotsky (here paralleled as Snowball) and gaining progressively more authority. Furthermore, when it is known through which ways Napoleon triumphs from the battle, one cannot help but state the similarity between Napoleon and Stalin's proceedings. Firstly, it is known through Orwell that part of this success was because Napoleon had clandestinely trained Jessie and Bluebell's puppies as his brutal agents of control. This mirrors perfectly Stalin's police, the KGB. Moreover, we see that Snowball just like Trotsky is driven into exile resulting in Napoleon, just like Stalin, to become more and more egotistic, cruel and dictatorial. From now onwards, one can state that through the main character Napoleon, Orwell is able to demonstrate how Stalin rises to power and maintains it. This starts with the fact he forms part of a greatly authoritative organization (the pig elite), but is insensitive and strong-minded (he keeps the milk for himself); he builds up an assembly of followers and ejects all those who are against him, like the four porkers, or people who are great rivals like Snowball. In addition, we perceive in the text that Napoleon maintains authority by means of terror performed by the dogs and various executions. Another way is through propaganda with the help of his subordinate Squealer, another pig. Lastly, Napoleon introduces a cult of character: he seldom appears and only then accompanied by great ceremony. We also see that he maintains power by making himself indispensable to the other animals on the farm and also by terrifying them with the thought that without him things could go wrong and way off-beam.

Furthermore, through themes like violence, rules and order, lies and deceit, leadership and corruption, Orwell manages to reflect Stalin's command. As mentioned previously dictators use terror to maintain leadership and this is done through the theme of

violence. 'Violence in *Animal Farm* is a tool of political oppression. Not only do we see actual violence used to kill and to exile enemies of the leadership, but equally important is the threat of violence as a punishment.' This parallels Stalin's dictatorship as with his police, The KGB, he practiced terror to achieve more power. In addition, another theme present in the text which in some way coincides with the actual Russian revolution is the theme of 'rules and order'.

Based on the novel, we remember the commandments given by the animals. Rules are often considered as ways to accept ideas of order. In *Animal Farm* this theme acts again as a political tool. The commandments and traditions set up after the rebellion were meant to unite and energize the animals but later in the text we perceive that both the rules and traditions are easily changeable. Unfortunately, the animals are not aware of it due to the leader's dictatorial ways. They therefore do not realize that they are being deceived and tricked. *Deja-vu* occurs here, as we realize that Stalin adopts the same method. Then, another theme used by Orwell to convey his message is the theme of 'lies and deceit'. In a way, deception achieves power. In the novel, the pigs deceive the other animals about the past, the present, as well as plans for the future. They have the aim of gaining the appreciation of the animals and therefore the pigs (Napoleon especially) gain more command. This theme is appropriate for portraying Stalin's leadership since to preserve his power, he used a lot of propaganda which involved deliberately changing information. Lastly, another theme suiting Orwell's aim is the theme of 'leadership and corruption'. *Animal Farm* sums up the idea that power corrupts. 'When pigs take over they claim that their goal is to preside over a farm of equal animals, all working together to support one another. Yet power quickly proves to be too much for a pig. Small privileges quickly bloom into full-scale corruption, and the pigs begin more and more to resemble those they claim to replace.'

### **Comment**

The assignment task seems to invite an almost exclusive focus on historical context, which is what the candidate produces: e.g. 'Orwell manages to reflect Stalin's command', 'parallels Stalin's dictatorship', 'we realize that Stalin adopts the same method'. There are some relevant comments about aspects of character but no detailed probing of *the ways in which* Orwell creates character or communicates themes.

There is a basic understanding of surface meanings, placing this in Level 3.

## Sample 4

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

**Discuss the dramatic impact of the way in which Shakespeare introduces the audience to Macbeth's character – and how that character develops from a loyal, brave, war hero to a treacherous murderer'.**

Throughout the play, the audience sees the deterioration of Macbeth's character from a brave hero, the pinnacle of respect and honour, to nothing more than a murderer driven mad by the damage that he himself has caused, led by his own greed and by the influence of those close to him. At the start of the play, Macbeth is seen as a valiant warrior, loyal to his King and his country in everything he does. The King's fondness and generosity towards Macbeth – although with good intention – becomes a contributing reason leading Macbeth to strive for more than he deserves and drives his greed. And it's this in turn that causes Macbeth to become a tragedy. However, one could argue that Macbeth himself was in fact never a hero, and was merely a man true to himself and unchanged, and that it was the audience's perspective of him that changed as the character of Macbeth became clearer.

A hero and its definition are very subjective, as one can be thought a hero for many things. Many people believe that an important trait for a hero to have is popularity, of which Macbeth quite clearly had. Yet anyone can be a hero. So there is no defined trait to which a hero can or must be described. One thing however, that always remains true in a hero, is that they are admired in one way or another. In this respect then undoubtedly Macbeth would and very certainly should be called a hero in the beginning of the play. Described as a war hero, Macbeth is valiant, loyal and faithful to both King and country, yet by the end of the play, Macbeth being described as a hero is to the audience in particular, as well as the other characters in the play is far from true. Almost from the beginning of the play, Shakespeare attempts to sway the audiences' opinion towards Macbeth's character; although this is done extremely subtly so that the audiences themselves do not recognise that they are being manipulated by Shakespeare to feel certain emotions. This is reflected quite evidently in the way that Shakespeare mirrors Macbeth's title to the traitors 'Thane of Cawdor', this could be interpreted as an attempt by Shakespeare to show that Macbeth's destiny is one that will ultimately lead him from being a symbol of honour and goodness, to a manifestation of evil itself.

The play itself is reflective to the cultural aspects of Greek tragedy, in which human suffering and displeasure result in the satisfaction of the audience. Therefore, by definition, the play itself is manipulated throughout its course to satisfy the animalistic needs of the audiences for revenge and retribution. Therefore one must

question whether Shakespeare himself intended the play to invoke a sense of pity or savage pleasure as he brings Macbeth a hero that is respected and held in huge regard, to something that the audience ends up despising. Immediately at the beginning of the play, Shakespeare displays Macbeth's high capacity for power and greed and this is displayed in the contemptuous way in which he addresses his comrades; 'why do you dress me in borrowed robes?' this could be interpreted as an attempt by Shakespeare to show the audience that Macbeth despises being contrasted with others which then also displays how the character could be considered arrogant egotistical, although at this point, the audience is still very much on Macbeth's side. The theme of greed therefore can be considered to be Macbeth's 'hubris', the fatal flaw within his character that causes him to fall as a hero.

Shakespeare starts *Macbeth* in the middle of an eerie, sinister and desolate scene, with a discussion between three witches, immediately setting the scene and creating an immense feel of both tension and fright particularly for the audience in Shakespeare's time, as the supernatural was a subject very feared and was believed by almost all to be a common practise at that point in history. This fear that was caused, and experienced by the audience, would have had a huge impact on the audiences' judgements and opinions of both the witch's characters, as well as the characters that the witches spoke about, including Macbeth. Shakespeare also started the whole play in the middle of a conversation, which was a common technique used by Shakespeare to grab the audience's attention, and gain their interest. This first scene also carries a huge sense of foreboding throughout, with the witches letting on through their dialogue that they know more of what is to come, leaving the audience in the unknown, another technique that Shakespeare uses to create a more dramatic sense overall, and to engage with the audience and make them feel almost as if they have to take. All of this is apparent, before Macbeth has even been introduced to the play, which Shakespeare has purposefully done in order to set the audience up for the unknown and further grab their attention, but as well as this he began to make the audience feel as if they should be taking sides and making judgements about the characters from the way in which the witches speak about what has happened and is about to happen.

In Act 1 Scene 2, Macbeth is still only spoken about, and thus the audience is still left in the dark as to who the mysterious Macbeth really is, and what their opinion of him is, in this sense he is spoken about with high regard by King Duncan, and it is announced to all except Macbeth and his friend Banquo who have fought valiantly for their country, that Macbeth will be given a new title; huge sense of dramatic irony, as the thane of Cawdor is being executed for being a traitor to the king, and Macbeth who will receive his title will

later murder his own king. However, the audience does not yet know that Macbeth will murder King Duncan and neither does Macbeth.

When the audience finally encounters Macbeth, he is with Banquo and they come across the witches by chance. Again the scene is set to be eerie and mystical, and this is where Macbeth's character is put to the test and challenged through greed and aspiration, when really he knows the right thing to do is to stay loyal to his King; but it is due to the influence of both the witches, and later in the play from his own wife Lady Macbeth that create a monster and ruin the person within, as although Macbeth is far from a puppet being led astray by others, he could be conveyed as a weak character as far as the fact that his better judgement is easily swayed through the persuasion of those he keeps close and trusts. One could almost argue that Macbeth's character, although being an image of heroism and good, is in fact one that is easy to manipulate and that he is what others have made him, and not a character in his own, yet this is not so, as this indecisive characteristic is what created a large part of his own character and what portrays the most important themes throughout the play. I personally did not see Macbeth as a villain even after he had committed the act of murder even toward King Duncan, a man who had supported him through everything, as the act itself was greatly influenced by Macbeth's wife, and we as the audience do not consider Macbeth as the sole perpetrator of this act, as we see that he had been to an extent; forced into committing this act. By showing Macbeth's reluctance to kill his king, these techniques by Shakespeare help to retain some of the sympathy and compassion for Macbeth in the audience.

However, as the play progresses, Macbeth's acts change their purpose from being because they seemed a necessity to being purely evil and based on greed. This is displayed in his ordered massacre of Macduff's family which not only shocks the audience but also shreds the last remaining respect for Macbeth. This could be considered as the lowest point in which Macbeth's character falls to in the play. Macbeth's character changes from being a loyal and good leader, to being a treacherous murderer who loses his emotional attachments to the characters that were in the beginning the closest to him; and the way that Shakespeare changes this in the audience's perspective is very steady, to the point where they almost do not realise quite how dramatically this position Macbeth finds himself in, and in the way he responds to them has changed through the play. Shakespeare constantly toys with the audience's emotions, offering them a chance to see Macbeth regain moral values, only to strip it away from him through the event of Macbeth's massacre where he murdered so many innocent people. It is in this scene that Macbeth turns from a hero that had to do what is necessary to survive and satisfy his burning need

for ambition, to a murderer and a tyrant that is not only paranoid of everyone, but is also drowned in his own monstrosity acts.

The beginning of the play shows very clearly what Macbeth should do and this is why the audience sees so obviously what and where Macbeth is going wrong, and if it weren't made so apparent by Shakespeare, then the audience would probably feel almost exactly the same way that Macbeth does, so not really understand fully that what he is doing is wrong. But then Shakespeare's effective use of the character Banquo gives the audience a strong character to whom it is easy to compare Macbeth, which gives the audience someone with moral sense and who is able to overcome the temptation of greed and thus Shakespeare shows the right thing to do through the decisions of another character. This is a very effective technique employed by Shakespeare as it causes the audience to have mixed emotions which in turn makes them question their own judgement of the characters. Some would argue that he was evil and would do anything to gain power, while others would disagree and suggest the fact that he is very much like the average everyday human, full of ambition and dreams, whereas the only difference is that he had the bravery and motivation to actually achieve his goals in any way possible. This is, in my opinion, one of Shakespeare's greatest triumphs throughout the play, as it not only entertaining, but also makes us question our own values and what we perceive as wrong and as right.

### **Comment**

This essay shows an understanding of the play and some of its deeper implications. Some of the comment is overly generalised: for example, the observations about heroism at the start of paragraph two. Similarly, paragraph three starts with a reference to 'cultural aspects of Greek tragedy' which is not clearly linked to the assignment task: 'Discuss the dramatic impact of the way in which Shakespeare introduces...'.

Overall, this is a reasonably developed (Level 5) personal response, and not quite a (Level 6) well-developed and detailed personal response.

## Sample 5

R C Sherrif, *Journey's End*

**You are Stanhope just after the death of Raleigh. You are sitting on the bench behind the table sharing at Raleigh's body on Osborne's bed. Write your thoughts.**

No, he's dead. How could I have let this happen? I've always protected him and the one time when it counts I failed him and his family. What is she going to think of me? Never mind the drinking she's going to throw me out for killing her younger brother. This can't have truly happened. This must be a dream. I have known Jimmy all my life – he can't just go like that. Where are the stretcher bearers?! Come on! We can't let him go just like that! There has to be something we can do, anything! We need to fight for him find a way through to the hospital. Then he'll get better.

Oh Christ, the last time I properly spoke to him – was when I was shouting at him about Osborne. I told him not to sit on Osborne's bed and now look; I had him strewn across the bed. He and Osborne were my only real friends and I let them both get killed. I let Osborne go up on that raid I agreed that he was the right man for it. And Jimmy – I just told him to go up. I didn't even look at him! I'm a monster. How could I have done that to Jimmy? Let him go up – knowing something like this might have happened. I knew we wouldn't win the attack! Why didn't I let him go sick, go home to his sister and to tell her that I am doing alright. That should have been me up there – it should be me laying on this bed now – not him. He shouldn't have even joined the army he is only here because I came. Oh Christ why did he have to choose me to be his hero! There were so many other people. Why couldn't he done what the other lads do and look to their fathers? The last time I properly spoke to him was when I was shouting at him about Osborne. He thought I didn't care that Osborne was gone. And now he will think I'd do the say for him. I guess him and Osborne went in a better way than some, better die a man fighting than die of trench foot, for these filthy dug outs, bloody Hardy should of cleaned up! It's bad enough without him making things worse.

Of all those battalions and companies he had to come to mine. Why Jimmy? What twisted plan did God have when he sent Jimmy to me? Was he planning on this happening? How could Jimmy go out on the raid and come back without a scratch then go up for five minutes and be hit in the back. I didn't even think anything of him going up – it's normal – it's what everyone was doing – I just expected him to go up and come back down when he could. I'm such a buffoon. I knew we wouldn't win this attack but yet I still let everyone go up. And why? Because I don't think it's fair that I've been here years – done all the work – while the weaker boys have just stopped for a visit. Because I am forced to follow the deluded orders of my superiors.

*Hibbert – that man – that worm – if anyone was going to be shot it should have been him! He hasn't even tried to make it through the war. Just a moment ago trying to say he was ill, even after our talk yesterday! I told him I would shoot him if he tried deserting but he still tried to feign an illness on to day of all days. I should shoot him myself, save the Boche the trouble. And to think, Trotter barely even knew the lad or how amazing he was. He only actually knew his name. Mason, poor Mason, caught up in the middle of all my problems. He's a good lad though going to help Hibbert get up and out. I would of just given Hibbert a kick. I need to stop this moaning, Jimmy'd want me to get on with my work, and have the day, just like every hero should. I'll just have a tot of Whiskey before I go up. There that's plenty. I – I guess this is goodbye then. I will miss you greatly. You were a great friend. I'll hold you in my heart always. Cheerio Jimmy.*

### **Comment**

This is a good empathic task. The character and the precise moment for the empathic response are given, followed by the instruction, 'Write your thoughts'. This format follows the guidance offered in Section 2.2 on task-setting.

There is a clear understanding of the moment, and the response is rooted in the detail of the text, integrating some well-selected reference to support the voice. The voice is largely convincing for the moment specified, and there is some attempt to hint at Stanhope's social class (e.g. 'I'm such a buffoon', 'Cheerio Jimmy'), There are, however, very occasional uncertain notes such as 'Because I am forced to follow the deluded orders of my superiors'.

Overall, this is a Level 7 response.

## 5 Supervising coursework

---

### 5.1 General observations

The *Cambridge Handbook* should be read in conjunction with the notes which follow.

Teachers should ensure that the texts and tasks chosen meet the syllabus requirements and that tasks are framed in such a way that a centre's learners might achieve their full potential.

Texts should be taught in such a manner that learners are encouraged to think for themselves rather than merely reproduce what their teachers tell them. Teachers may as part of their supervision suggest ways of approaching texts and planning assignments.

If plans and first drafts are completed under teacher supervision, then the authenticity of learners' work can be assured.

A general discussion of the progress of assignments is a natural part of the teacher/learner relationship.

Legitimate focus of the general discussion of a first draft might include the need to:

- develop points in more detail
- substantiate assertions
- integrate quotation more succinctly
- structure an argument more effectively
- adopt a suitably formal critical register
- reduce/increase the word count.

The learner must then be able to make a further draft without anybody's help.

The assignment submitted must not under any circumstances be the result of repeated re-drafting under teacher supervision nor can it be a fair copy produced after the teacher's detailed marking.

Additionally, a clear line needs to be drawn between the teacher offering opportunities in lessons for exploring the text and the teacher giving a tightly structured framework which simply requires learners to regurgitate the same points, quotations and conclusions. Such an approach, which suggests erroneously that there is such a thing as a model answer, would be against the spirit of Cambridge O Level Literature in English and certainly would not meet Assessment Objective 4, which requires an 'informed personal response'.

Learners may wish to use the internet or study guides to supplement their class reading of texts as part of the process of reaching their own conclusions, but they should be reminded that the first priority is a *personal response* to, and *individual exploration* of, the text. Irrelevant background material and regurgitated material are not rewarded, and moderators can spot such material very readily. Learners writing a couple of pages on romantic poetry before proceeding to somewhat perfunctory comment on actual poems have missed the point and wasted their time; teachers should think twice before including such essays in coursework portfolios.

### 5.2 Plagiarism

Teachers need to make clear, both at the outset and at intervals thereafter, the consequences of plagiarism. Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of a learner's assignment, immediate action must be taken in line with the centre's own procedures for dealing with suspected malpractice. Teachers can usually detect writing that is not consistent in quality with a learner's usual output. For example, there may be a seemingly lifted paragraph which sits oddly with the learner's own writing before and after it. Perhaps an ambitious phrase sets alarm bells ringing; in such cases, a simple enquiry about the meaning of the phrase will settle doubts one way or the other. (Beyond using search engine checks, there are programs available to swiftly establish whether outright copying of material has taken place.) Repeated warnings about plagiarism should eliminate what might be 'an innocent over-reliance on books or other published materials'.

The teacher's role in detecting plagiarism is crucial. It is not the external moderator's job to provide a second opinion. Consequently, plagiarised work must not knowingly be included in the folder, even if it means that an incomplete folder has to be submitted to the external moderator and the overall mark adjusted accordingly.

### 5.3 Length of assignments

The syllabus advises that each assignment should be 'of about 600–1200 words', though penalties are not applied if the word counts are below or over this range. Very short assignments tend to be self-penalising as they cannot show evidence of a sustained argument or produce the necessary range of detailed knowledge to secure marks in the higher levels.

Portfolios significantly exceeding 1200 words are in danger of becoming too bulky, and it should be remembered that longer assignments are not invariably better than shorter ones.

An *excessive* amount of time spent on coursework is done at the expense of the examination components, which have a combined weighting of 75 per cent. Striking a balance is key.

## 6 Moderation

---

### 6.1 Marking and annotation

It is important that all candidates' work shows evidence of having been read by the teacher. The assignments should be marked with reference to the *Assessment Criteria for Component 5: Coursework*, and brief comments in the margin and at the end of the assignment should refer to criteria which are met in the piece of work as well as making other comments on the individual merits of the work.

In the examination components, examiners are instructed to tick points, which are interesting, sensitive and thoughtful, and this is good practice too for the marking of coursework. The occasional tick with very little comment is not helpful to the moderation process. By contrast, precise ticking of points and occasional succinct comments from the teacher allow both other teachers within the centre and also external moderators to see how the original teacher's mark was arrived at. Ticking at the end of every paragraph, or even every sentence, does not assist the moderation process at all.

The primary purpose of the original teacher's ticking and annotation is to engage in a dialogue with the internal moderator about the strengths and weaknesses of a particular assignment.

It may be possible for a candidate whose technical command of language is limited, but whose language still manages to communicate understanding, to receive high marks for that understanding. Conversely, those who demonstrate a fluent and accurate control of English may not necessarily demonstrate a good understanding of the literary aspects of texts.

This is a *literature* assessment: there is no need to indicate errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, though teachers are likely to want to remind their learners in general terms of the need for accuracy as they re-draft and proofread their assignments.

### 6.2 Linguistic accuracy

It may be possible for a candidate whose technical command of language is limited, but whose language still manages to communicate understanding, to receive high marks for that understanding. Conversely, those who demonstrate a fluent and accurate control of English may not necessarily demonstrate a good understanding of the literary aspects of texts.

This is a *literature* assessment: there is no need to indicate errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, though teachers are likely to want to remind their learners in general terms of the need for accuracy as they re-draft and proofread their assignments.

### 6.3 Presentation

The *Cambridge Handbook* makes it clear that assignments should be completed on A4 sized paper.

If word-processed, the font size and type and line spacing should be suitable and clear to help the reader. Small fonts should be avoided in word processed work in the same way as illegible script is to be avoided in handwritten assignments.

### 6.4 Individual Candidate Record Cards

This card is the main contact between the centre and external moderator and represents the centre's definitive judgement on the portfolio after internal moderation, justifying as it does the final mark awarded. The figure on the card should be the final moderated mark for the whole folder, and not the teacher's original one (if these marks differ). It is important that learners are aware that the centre's final mark is subject to external moderation and that they do not actually know their coursework mark until after the publication of results.

The defining features of the folder should be set out in the Teacher Comment space provided, where teachers draw attention to the individual characteristics of the folder and also refer to the descriptors in the assessment criteria which best describe the features of the work. Perfunctory comments here are a disservice to candidates.

The tone of the comment should be objective; there can be no room for summaries of candidates' personal qualities or histories, which can play no part in the final judgement. The fact that a candidate has been a model learner, has loved reading and has worked hard in the face of difficult personal circumstances is not relevant to the moderation process. The coursework component examines candidates' work, not their personalities.

## 6.5 Examples of teacher comments on the Record Cards

(9) Sunita consistently responds to texts in a perceptive, self-assured, sensitive way. She carefully selects and embeds quotations carefully in order to aid her analysis of writers' intentions, concerns and effects. **Mark awarded: 45.**

The comment certainly corresponds to the mark. Perception, analysis of writers' effects and the capacity to integrate (or embed) quotations are all indicators of high ability. However, the comments are rather general and could be more effectively linked to the specifics of the writing.

(10) The folder demonstrates a sound knowledge of the texts and the responses are fluent and confidently expressed. There is a good level of quotation to support this knowledge, and the texts are interpreted and evaluated in terms of themes and attitudes (within the parameters of the essay titles). There is a high degree of appreciation of the content and well-considered personal response, clearly seen for example in her analysis of the way the alcoholic father is presented in *The Village by the Sea*. There is evidence of some attempt to express an appreciation of the ways in which writers achieve their effects, evident in her exploration of imagery in the two poems. **Mark awarded: 42.**

This comment does include reference to specific features of this candidate's writing, pointing the moderator in the direction of particularly credit-worthy aspects of the portfolio. Such specific comments linked to general comments drawn from the assessment criteria significantly assist the moderation process; a meaningful dialogue can thus take place between centre and moderator.

(11) Given that the candidate is one of the first to undertake this option, she has attained an exceptional achievement. Her portfolio is very comprehensive in that she displays a sound literary knowledge, development of interpretation and a fair degree of personal response. The range of treatment is also commendable. She only received six hours of tutorial guidance, but the portfolio indicates her effort and initiative. **Mark awarded = 38.**

The observations here are rather too general, though the phrase 'development of interpretation and a fair degree of personal response' does make some reference to the level descriptors. Without exemplification, however, the observation that the candidate's 'range of treatment is also commendable' is left somewhat vague and does not provide much assistance to the moderator. Additionally, some comments stray into personal history in what should be an objective summary of the candidate's work.

(12) The structure of the essay is loose, and the understanding of the poems over-simplified. He gives a very basic account of the situations presented in them but does not deal with the themes in depth. There seems to be no awareness of how form and content work together in a poem.

My assessment of coursework was restricted to the poetry assignment. All other work was administered and corrected by the permanent teacher, who I have replaced, due to illness.

The comment about the assignment on poetry is acceptable, and the essay was given the correct mark of 10 (top of Level 3). However, the second paragraph reveals a misunderstanding of the moderation process. It is the centre's responsibility to submit marks and sample coursework portfolios after internal moderation has

taken place. The folder should have been marked as a whole regardless of staffing circumstances of the kind described.

## 6.6 The process of internal moderation

Cambridge requires centres to standardise the marking of coursework portfolios across different teachers and teaching groups in order to ensure that all candidates in the centre are judged against the same standards, and also to produce a rank order of candidates for the centre as a whole.

The marking criteria must be applied to each portfolio and one final mark agreed, without regard to either the stage of the course at which work was produced or any personal considerations relating to the candidate.

If more than one teacher is involved, a meeting should be timetabled well in advance of the deadline for submitting coursework samples and marks, in order to allow for all the necessary administration to be completed in a timely and efficient manner.

## 6.7 Practical approaches for departments with two or more teachers

Two or more teachers might read portfolios from all sets and adjust marks where necessary to bring them into line with the Cambridge standard.

As a starting point, a sample of ten folders, in rank order, from the internal moderator's group could be marked by two or more teachers and any adjustments made. Then a sample from a second set might be compared with the standard of the first set and any adjustments made. Marks can be adjusted from any part of the range of marks, and if there is a discernible trend, marks should be adjusted for other folders in that range. If evidence points to a consistent pattern of either generous or severe marking, it is not difficult to scale marks downwards or upwards, without the need to re-mark all portfolios within the range affected.

If, however, there is not a clear pattern and if candidates are at risk of being awarded the wrong mark, more folders from that set should be marked and any adjustments made until all doubt about the accuracy of the marking is removed.

It is important at this stage to try to account for marking which does not meet the standard (has a teacher over-emphasised one of the criteria at the expense of the others?) so that similar mistakes can be avoided in the future. Once finished with the second set, samples should be marked from the remaining set(s) until the process is complete.

The internal moderator should ensure that discussion at all times focuses on candidates' work and not teachers' views of the candidate.

## 6.8 Preparing the portfolios for external moderation

All forms can be downloaded from the Samples Database [www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples). Just fill in your country/territory and the syllabus code to find the correct forms.

The following is a list of DOs and DON'Ts that enable the moderation process to run as smoothly and effectively as possible.

**DO** check that:

- all relevant details are included on the Individual Candidate Record Card form
- marks on assignments have been transferred correctly to the Individual Candidate Record Card form and that the total mark out of 50 is correct
- the *moderated* mark is transferred correctly to the MS1 sheet OR to the signed [electronic] printout of marks
- all pages of candidate work contain evidence of teacher annotation
- all assignments have a summative comment from the teacher/Centre, drawing on the wording of the assessment criteria
- all assignments bear the candidate's name, candidate number and full title (not abbreviations or approximations of the latter)
- pages of each assignment are numbered and presented in sequence
- word counts and references to secondary source material (where relevant) are listed at the end of the assignment
- the assignments are attached to the Individual Candidate Record Card by means of a treasury tag etc., i.e. in a way that makes them accessible and easy to read
- if the assignment is based on poems or stories which are not commonly known, copies are included in the sample despatched to Cambridge.

**DON'T**

- send bulky cardboard folders or plastic wallets
- use paper clips (as assignments can become detached from them too easily)
- include work that is known to contain plagiarism.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
t: +44 1223 553554  
e: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

Copyright © UCLES May 2020