

2003 English

Higher – Critical Essay

Finalised Marking Instructions

Marking Principles for Critical Essay are as follows:

- Each essay should first be read to establish whether the essay achieves success in **all** the Performance Criteria for Grade C (see page 3), including relevance and the standards for technical accuracy outlined in Note 1 below.
- If minimum standards are not achieved in any **one** or more of the Performance Criteria, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 11.
- If minimum standards have been achieved then the supplementary marking grid (see page 6) will allow you to place the work on a scale of marks out of 25.
- The Category and the mark should be placed at the end of the essay.

Notes.

1. "Sufficiently accurate" can best be defined in terms of a definition of "consistently accurate".

Consistently accurate

Few errors will be present. The candidate may use complex language. Sentences may be internally complex in terms of main and subordinate clauses. Paragraphs, sentences and punctuation are organised so that linkage and expression allow clear understanding of the writing. Spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) should be infrequent.

Sufficiently accurate

As above but with an allowance made for speed and the lack of opportunity to redraft.

2. Using the Category descriptions.

Categories are not grades. Although derived from performance criteria at C and the indicators of excellence for Grade A, the four categories are designed primarily to assist with placing each candidate response at an appropriate point on a continuum of achievement. Assumptions about final grades or association of final grades with particular categories should not be allowed to influence objective assessment.

Once an essay has been deemed to pass the basic criteria, it does not have to meet all the suggestions for Category II (for example) to fall into that Category. More typically there will be a spectrum of strengths and weaknesses which span categories. Assessment at this stage is holistic.

Genre Infringements and Referrals to PA

Markers should be alert to genre infringements such as:

- unacceptable or inappropriate genre for a question (eg a poem for a drama question, or confusion of prose genres)
- two questions chosen from the same section
- two essays on the same text or material (eg film and book versions)

In such cases, the essays should be marked in the normal way, as if they were acceptable, and the script should be referred to the PA for an appropriate penalty to be applied. Markers should not impose their own penalties.

In addition, please refer to the PA (after marking in the normal way) all essays from Section E – Language.

Critical Essay

GRADE C Performance Criteria

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| <p>a) Understanding
As appropriate to task, the response demonstrates secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the text(s).</p> <p>b) Analysis
The response explains accurately and in detail ways in which relevant aspects of structure/style/language contribute to meaning/effect/impact.</p> <p>c) Evaluation
The response reveals clear engagement with the text(s) or aspects of the text(s) and stated or implied evaluation of effectiveness, substantiated with detailed and relevant evidence from the text(s).</p> <p>d) Expression
Structure, style and language, including appropriate critical terminology, are deployed to communicate meaning clearly and develop a line of thought which is sustainedly relevant to purpose; spelling, syntax and punctuation are sufficiently accurate.</p> |
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It should be noted that the term "text" encompasses printed, audio or film/video text(s) which may be literary (fiction or non-fiction) or may relate to aspects of media or language.

Critical Essay

Supplementary Marking Instructions

Markers are reminded that all critical essay questions require candidates to select from their knowledge of a text in order to shape a response to a specific question. Thus, obviously "prepared" answers which entirely fail to focus on the question cannot pass. Similarly, blanket coverage (especially of a poem) which merely touches on the question is very unlikely to do well. Markers should reward good selection and genuine efforts to address the chosen question.

It is not necessary to provide detailed instructions for each question, but the following points should be noted:

3. Make allowances for plays which do not contain clearly delineated scenes. The answer should nevertheless concentrate on one pivotal section of the chosen play.
 4. Allow a wide definition of "family".
 6. Be generous to a candidate's definition of "main". If in real doubt, mark on merit and refer to PA.
 10. Some texts blur the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. Answers to this question on such texts should be marked as normal and then referred to PA.
 11. Allow for a wide definition of "society". An answer on a work of fiction should be marked as if it were acceptable, and then referred to PA.
 12. Although two poems must be chosen, they need not be discussed in equal depth. Also, markers should not expect either poem to be dealt with in as much detail as would be appropriate for a question requiring one poem only.
 14. Although the wording of the question is more likely to suggest traditional forms such as ode, sonnet, villanelle and ballad, less obvious choices should be marked according to the merit of the case being made.
 15. Allow a wide definition of "family".
 18. "Topical" may be taken to refer to the time of the production.
 19. "Period" may be very recent; it is the concept of periodicity which matters.
- 20-23. See Page 5.

General advice on the marking of questions from Section E – Language

The "text" which must be dealt with in a language question is the research which the pupil has done and any secondary language texts which may have been consulted.

Examples taken from their research must be there for you to see.

However, to demonstrate understanding and analysis related to these examples there has to be some ability to generalise from the particular, to classify and comment on the interesting phenomena discovered. It is not enough merely to produce a list of words in, say, Dundonian with their standard English equivalents. This is merely description and without any further development does not demonstrate understanding of any principle underlying the choice of words.

The list of features offered to the candidate in each question is supportive. There may be others of course, but one would expect that some of those mentioned would be dealt with.

Explicit evaluation is required by each of the questions, but there may also be evaluation integral to the research itself.

Higher Critical Essay Supplementary advice

This advice, which is supplementary to the Performance Criteria, is designed to assist with the placing of scripts within the full range of marks. However, the Performance Criteria as published give the primary definitions. The mark range for each Category is identified.

IV 8 - 11	III 12 - 15	II 16 - 19	I 20 – 25
<p>An essay which falls into this category may do so for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>It could be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that it fails to achieve sufficient technical accuracy • or that any knowledge and understanding of the text(s) is not deployed as a response relevant to the task. • or that analysis and evaluation attempted are unconvincing. • or that the answer is simply too thin. 	<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the text(s), and a secure understanding of the central concerns will be used. <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide an answer relevant to the task. • Detailed reference to the text(s) to support the candidate's argument will be made. <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an accurate explanation of the contribution of literary/ linguistic techniques to the impact of the text. <p><u>Evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a positive engagement with the text(s) which will state or imply an evaluation of its effectiveness. <p><u>Expression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language will communicate the argument clearly, and there will be appropriate critical terminology deployed. Spelling, grammar and punctuation will be sufficiently accurate. 	<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the central concerns of the text(s) will be clearly demonstrated. <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and deployed sensibly to form a sound developed answer which is relevant to the task. • Detailed reference to the text(s) will be used appropriately as evidence for the candidate's argument. <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be analysis of literary/linguistic techniques and how they affect the impact of the text(s). <p><u>Evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a positive engagement with the text(s) (which may be implicit) leading to a considered evaluative stance with respect to the text(s). <p><u>Expression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language will be used confidently and the deployment of critical terminology will add to the strength of the candidate's argument. <p>At this level there should be no doubt that the question has been answered out of a sound knowledge and understanding of the text(s).</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge and insight into the central concerns of the text(s) will be demonstrated at this level. <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and there will be a relevant, well-structured response to the demands of the task. • Extensive and skilful reference to the text(s) will be used appropriately as evidence for the argument. <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a convincing evaluative analysis of the writer's literary and linguistic techniques. <p><u>Evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an appreciative response allied to a committed stance with respect to the text(s) which may be implicit. <p><u>Expression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language used will be controlled and fluent, making accurate and appropriate use of critical terminology in pursuit of a skilful analysis. <p>An answer of this standard will give the impression that it is drawing skilfully on an extensive knowledge of the text(s) to focus on the demands of the question.</p>

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]