

2005 English

Higher – Critical Essay

Finalised Marking Instructions

These Marking Instructions have been prepared by Examination Teams for use by SQA Appointed Markers when marking External Course Assessments.

Comments on scripts:

No words (or codes/abbreviations such as “Sp”, “Gr”, “Rel?”, “!!” etc) should be written on a candidate’s script. This instruction applies to all subjects and all levels. You may use ticks, crosses and lines within an answer to help clarify your marking, especially to indicate weaknesses in Technical Accuracy, but **do not write any words or comments in any part of the booklet.**

Any report required concerning an essay or the work of a candidate in general should not be written on the script but should instead be submitted as part of a formal referral to the Principal Assessor (eg in the case of serious doubt about the mark to be awarded or in the event of a genre infringement) or as part of a referral under the heading of Special Arrangements (in the case of suspected malpractice).

Administrative procedure:

- At the end of each essay indicate the Category (in Roman numerals) and the Mark out of 25.
- Transfer the two marks to the back cover of the booklet and total them there.
- Enter the total in the “Others” box under “Total Marks” on the front cover.
- Please check the arithmetic.

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 5), including relevance and the standards for technical accuracy outlined in Note 2 on page 3.
- If minimum standards have been achieved, then the supplementary marking grid (see page 8) will allow you to place the work on a scale of marks out of 25.
- If minimum standards are not achieved in any **one** or more of the Performance Criteria, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 11. Markers should avoid “double-penalising” a fail essay ie going to the lowest mark in Category IV simply because the essay has failed to meet one criterion – the fail at 10 or 11 should be penalty enough.
- Essays which are so deficient that they do not meet the Criteria for Category IV should be deemed to fall into “Category V”, and awarded an appropriate mark from 0-7. Marks below 6 will be extremely rare – mostly for essays which are exceptionally short.

Notes.

1. 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.

2. “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.

Referrals to the Principal Assessor

For details of how to make a PA referral, see paragraph 10 on page 7 of the General Instructions to Markers. Remember to write “PA” on the EX6 and on the script as well as completing a PA Referral form.

A script should be referred to PA in any of the following circumstances:

- it contains a genre infringement (see below)
- it contains an Essay on Section E – Language
- you wish, in exceptional circumstances, to seek a second opinion.

Use the PA Referral form to explain the reason for the referral and, if appropriate, the thinking behind the mark you have provisionally awarded. Please note that **all** scripts referred to PA, for whatever reason, **must** have been allocated a mark by you in the usual way and that a total should appear on the script and on the EX6.

Genre Infringements

You should be alert to possible genre infringements such as:

- wholly unacceptable genre for the chosen question (eg a poem for a drama question; a play for a novel question)
- confusion of prose genres (eg short story in a question for novel only; fiction for a non-fiction question)
- two questions chosen from the same section
- two essays on the same text.

In such cases, having identified the infringement, you should thereafter mark the essay as if it were completely acceptable and ignore the infringement, ie you **must not** impose a penalty, consciously or subconsciously. The script should then be the subject of a PA Referral.

The referral to PA will ensure that an appropriate penalty is applied consistently to all infringements. There will always be a penalty. There is, however, no fixed “tariff” of deductions; the penalty will depend on the nature of the infringement and the degree of advantage the candidate may have gained from it.

Advice on marking essays on texts with which you are unfamiliar

As experienced teachers of Higher English, markers are likely to be very familiar with most texts offered by candidates. It is accepted, however, that from time to time you will face answers on texts you know less well or not at all, although it is important to remember that texts do not fall simply and conveniently into those you know well and those of which you have never heard – rather, there is a spectrum which includes texts you know reasonably well, those you recall dimly, those you recognise but have not read, ...

When faced with answers on such texts, one or more of the following strategies could be employed:

- the text of most poems can be readily accessed via an Internet search (or on sites such as www.poemhunter.com) and it is not too time-consuming to familiarise yourself with a new text
- synopses of longer texts can be found in reference works such as *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* or on sites such as www.sparknotes.com; these can allow you to re-familiarise yourself with a text
- if the packet contains more than one essay on the text in question, read all the essays before assigning any marks; this should broaden your knowledge of the text
- although one essay must not be used in order to predict a mark for the other, it can be helpful to read the candidate's other essay to give you some indication of her/his general level of ability to handle literature
- where appropriate, you could, without divulging details about a centre or a candidate, consult school or college colleagues about a text
- as a final check, you may refer the script to the Principal Assessor.

Critical Essay

GRADE C Performance Criteria
<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>

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:

1. Many characters have a complex relationship with the truth, so there may well be some overlap in a candidate’s answer to this question. Be sympathetic to such answers.
 2. Both sides of the chosen theme need not be discussed in equal depth. However, an answer which concentrates exclusively on only one side of the opposition is unlikely to do well.
 3. Accept a wide definition of “mystery”, and be generous to a candidate’s definition of “at or near the beginning”.
 5. Be reasonably generous to a candidate’s definition of a “flaw”.
 8. Be reasonably generous to a candidate’s definition of “main”. If in real doubt, mark as if acceptable and refer to PA.
 10. Definite and potential confusions between fiction and non-fiction should be marked as if acceptable and referred to PA.
 11. Accept a wide definition of “social issue”.
 12. Accept a wide definition of “setting”.
 14. If a candidate chooses a poem in which humour does not play a “significant part”, this will be self-penalising.
 15. If two (or more) poems are chosen, they need not be discussed in equal depth. Also, markers should not expect two (or more) poems to be dealt with in as much detail as would be appropriate for an answer dealing with one poem only.
 16. The audience response may be emotional or intellectual or both.
 17. The “key images” part of the question may be addressed through analysis of mise-en-scene (individual shots) and/or of editing (sequencing of shots). The “soundtrack” element may be addressed through dialogue and/or thematic music or sounds.
 18. Where a marker is uncertain about the conventions of a particular genre, the essay should be marked on its merits and then referred to PA.
- 20-23. See page 7.

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 candidate 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.

All essays from Section E – Language should be marked in the normal way (following this general advice) and then referred to PA.

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. <hr/> <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. <hr/> <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. <hr/> <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>

* **Essays which are so deficient that they do not meet the Criteria for Category IV should be awarded an appropriate mark from 0-7. Marks below 6 will be extremely rare – mostly for essays which are exceptionally short.**

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]