

2005 English

Higher – Close Reading

Finalised Marking Instructions

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

2005 English Higher

Close Reading

Some important general principles

The marking of Close Reading is not a straightforward, mechanical task, but one which requires from the marker a considerable element of judgement in all but the most straightforward questions – and these are rare. In a typical allocation there will be over 200 different answers to every question. In order to award the correct mark to each answer, you must be guided by the detailed instructions which follow, by the exemplification given at the Markers' Meeting of how to apply these instructions, and by your own professional judgement.

If the standards and methods set out in these Instructions and at the Markers' Meeting differ from those you are in the habit of applying in your own marking, then you must adapt your approach to that which is required in order to maintain the national standard.

Each response must be read carefully and the points being made by the candidate considered against the Marking Instructions. Be alert to apparently insignificant words such as “even”, “just”, “really”, “too” etc which often make the candidate's thinking clearer.

The quality of candidates' expression is not being assessed in this part of the examination. You must not, therefore, mark down an answer which is expressed clumsily – indeed you should be as sympathetic as possible to the candidates, who are working under extreme pressure. Conversely, you must not be seduced by fluent emptiness.

As in the past, use is made of half marks in the marking. This allows for more sophisticated discrimination and can reward candidates for making weakish but nevertheless acceptable points which might otherwise not gain credit. Half marks should not, however, be awarded where they are not deserved; conversely, they should not be used in order to deny full marks to all but the exceptional answer. The use of half marks is currently under review.

Answers to questions testing “**Understanding**” (coded “U”) must be expressed “as far as possible in your own words”. Where candidates simply quote from the passage, they gain no marks. In order to earn marks they must attempt, however inelegantly, to “gloss” the key word or words.

Answers to questions requiring “**Analysis**” (coded “A”) are the most difficult to mark accurately and consistently. Markers must adhere to the statements in the Marking Instructions (“Reference alone: 0”) about not awarding marks for mere quotation or mere identification of a feature of sentence structure. Nor should any marks be awarded for quotation plus repetition of the question (plus any amount of empty waffle). Inappropriate marking of this type of question (eg the mechanical ticking of quotations) can lead to serious over-rewarding of candidates. Only genuine comment by the candidate is eligible for marks. The comment need not be all that mature or sophisticated, even to score full marks in a question. The brilliant answer is easy to spot, but less luminous responses might also be worth full marks.

Answers to questions on “**Evaluation**” (coded “E”) will involve evaluation of the writers' ideas (“U/E”) or the writers' styles (“A/E”). Be guided by the points above and by the specific guidance in the Marking Instructions.

Administrative matters

- Enter marks in red ink in the examination booklet as neatly and clearly as possible.
- According to your own preferences, use ticks, crosses and lines within an answer to help clarify your marking, but **do not write any words or comments in any part of the booklet**. Necessary comment on a specific answer or on the work of a candidate in general can be made only by means of referral to PA or as part of a referral under the heading of Special Arrangements (in the case of suspected malpractice).
- Total the marks and enter the total (rounded up if necessary) to the “Others” box under “Total Marks” on the front cover.
- Check this total at least once.

2005 English Higher

Close Reading – Draft Marking Instructions

Questions on Passage 1

	<i>Marks</i>	<i>Code</i>
<p>1. (a) According to the first sentence of the passage, what important discovery has been made about comet impact? Use your own words as far as possible in your answer.</p>	2	U
<p>There must be some attempt to use own words; blatant lifts: 0.</p> <p>Any two of the following for 1 mark each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 It wiped out/destroyed ...2 ... half of the existing life-forms ...3 ... including dinosaurs <p>Alternatively, an understanding of the implication of “significant breakthrough” causing change to scientific thinking could be worth up to 2 marks depending on the clarity of the explanation.</p>		
<p>(b) By referring to lines 5-12 (“Brilliant ... on earth.”), describe briefly one method scientists used to find the evidence for this discovery.</p>	1	U
<p>Candidates are asked to “describe”; blatant lifts: 0.</p> <p>Any one of the following for 1 mark:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 They used information provided by fossils.2 They counted the objects in space surrounding the earth.3 They employed clever methods of detection.		
<p>2. (a) Explain, using your own words as far as possible, what is meant by “the most important driving force behind evolutionary change on the planet” (lines 17-18).</p>	2	U
<p>Candidates must use own words; straight lifts: 0.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 gloss on “driving force” (1 mark) – eg cause, factor, impetus, agent of change2 gloss on “evolutionary change” (1 mark) – eg development, the way the species has evolved <p>Some answers will be less precise than this and markers may have to “dig out” acceptable explanations.</p>		

- (b) **Using your own words as far as possible, give any two examples from lines 18-29 which the writer uses to illustrate the point being made in lines 17-18.**

2 U

Any two of the following for 1 mark each (blatant lifts: 0):

- 1 Comets and other fragments combined to create the earth.
- 2 Comets contained water which allowed life to develop.
- 3 Comets brought the organic elements which are necessary for life.
- 4 Comets and change often coincided.
- 5 Collisions sometimes caused almost complete extinction of species/life.
- 6 After collisions new forms of life emerged.

- (c) **How does the language of lines 18-29 highlight the writer’s ideas? You should refer to at least two of the following techniques: structure, word choice, imagery.**

4 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment on one technique could score up to 3 marks; alternatively, a candidate could make more basic comments for 1 mark each.

Answers on imagery must “deconstruct” the image, ie show an understanding of the literal root of the image and then explore how the writer is extending it figuratively – see the examples in points 10-12 overleaf.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of an image or a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

Structure:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | openings of sentences: reference to some of “Originally/After that ...” | convey a sequence through time of effects caused on the planet by comet impact |
| 2 | repetition of simple sentence structure (of the first three sentences) | contributes to the ongoing, repetitive, inevitable nature of the effects of comets on creation |
| 3 | structure of last two sentences (eg placing of “all life” and “wiped out” | could be seen as climactic, dramatically emphasising point |

(Continued on page 6)

(Question 2 (c) continued)

4 A

Word choice:

4	“smashed”/“slammed”	connotations of the force/impact/violence with which these objects hit earth
5	“violence”	emphasises force, suggestion of aggression
6	“precipitated”	brought matters to an extreme point, connotations of lack of control
7	“extinction”	extremity of the danger to life
8	“catastrophe”	idea of total, extreme devastation
9	“wiped out”	total nature of disaster/ blanket disappearance

Imagery:

10	“punctuate the story”	just as punctuation marks show divisions in a sentence or paragraph, the impacts act as landmarks, divisions in the history/narrative of the earth’s evolution
11	“aftermath”	just as there is debris left after harvesting, there were the later (bad) consequences of impacts
12	“wiped out”	just as a blackboard etc can be wiped clean of any marks or meaning, the damage caused by impacts was total

3. Read lines 30-43.

- (a) Explain in your own words why the writer thinks that the theory of the “survival of the fittest” will have to be reconsidered.** **2 U**

Marks will depend on the quality of explanation. Blatant lifts: 0.

Clear explanation: 2 marks; less assured explanation: 1 mark.

Acceptable explanations include (for 2 marks):

- 1 The idea that “lucky” or “the essentially random nature of impacts” is incompatible with the logical/purposeful progression implied by the theory of the survival of the fittest.
- 2 Collisions have changed the course of evolution more than the innate ability of the strong of a species to survive.
- 3 The effort put into surviving in a particular environment is wasted when that environment suddenly changes.

- (b) Explain how the writer creates a slightly humorous tone in lines 34-43.** **2 A**

Marks will depend on the quality of explanation. A single point well explained and suitably supported by reference could score 2 marks. A more basic comment will score 1 mark.

Reference alone or mere identification of a feature: 0.

Possible answers include:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | use of “lucky” | not usual scientific terminology, suggests a more flippant approach |
| 2 | use of “dust settled” | literal/metaphorical ambiguity could be seen as humorous |
| 3 | “being thumped (on the head)” | unscientific terminology creates a humorous picture |
| 4 | “thumped” and “conductive” (or any similar combination) | juxtaposition of colloquial and formal gives rise to humour |
| 5 | “not conducive to a long and happy existence” | ironic, understated, deliberately clichéd, contrast with “thumped” |
| 6 | use of italics/inverted commas to suggest method of vocal delivery | creates comic effect and emphasis |

4. **What does “Our new understanding” (line 44) about the extinction of other species lead us to think about our relationship with the planet? Use your own words as far as possible in your answer.**

1 U

The explanation should contain a gloss (or an implicit understanding) of “not specifically designed for our well-being”. Blatant lifts: 0.

Possible answers include:

- 1 The universe/our world is essentially an indifferent/hostile place for humans as well as other species.
- 2 Our survival is a matter of luck.
- 3 We are just as likely to become extinct as other species have (because we have no defence against these enormously powerful, random events).
- 4 We have no special protection from the elemental forces of the universe.

5. **How does the writer’s use of punctuation in lines 51-59 (“For more ...tsunamis?”) help you to understand what he is saying?**

2 A

No marks for mere identification of a punctuation mark, or its function completely divorced from the context (eg “There is a colon followed by an explanation.” - 0).

Any of the following for up to two marks depending on the sophistication of the explanation:

- 1 The mention of “three questions” followed by a colon leads to expectation that three questions (about the possibility/implications of comet impact) will appear after the colon.
- 2 The use of two semicolons to separate the three questions helps us to isolate each of the questions (about the possibility/implications of comet impact).
- 3 The use of the question mark at the end of the sentence helps to remind us of the fact that we are dealing with a series of questions (about the possibility/implications of comet impact).

6. **Referring to lines 62-74, explain in your own words one way in which the “third of these questions” leads into an area which may be described as “beyond the scientific” (line 64).**

2 U

Marks will depend on the quality of explanation. Clear explanation: 2 marks; less assured explanation: 1 mark. Mere paraphrase and/or extensive quotation are unlikely to gain any credit.

The answer should refer to “religious significance” or “long-held beliefs” or “legendary” or “ancient beliefs, legends, sagas and myths” and show recognition of its/their non-scientific nature.

7. **In lines 75-85, the writer deals with various threats to the survival of our species.**

Show how effective the last sentence “And there would be ... event.” (lines 83-85) is as a conclusion to this paragraph.

2 E

For full marks, an answer must connect a specific aspect of the sentence with the main idea of the paragraph. Evaluation will probably be implicit.

Main idea: by comparison with other threats, comet impact is much more serious.

Final sentence intensifies/makes clear the main idea by any of:

- 1 reinforcing/expanding the idea of widespread devastation
- 2 using understatement, irony, scientist’s idea of humour
- 3 making an unexpected addition, afterthought
- 4 using a relatively short sentence
- 5 by starting the sentence, unusually, with “And”
- 6 any other acceptable answer

8. **Explain briefly in your own words what, according to the writer, is “an irony” about “our knowledge of the threat of comets and asteroids”. You should refer to lines 86-96 in your answer.**

2 U

Marks will depend on the quality of the explanation. For any credit there must be some indication that the candidate understands the term “irony”.

The key idea is that we have become so advanced in our knowledge of the universe, we are able to see that our destruction is likely.

It might be argued that there is irony in the idea that the threat of comet impact was in fact not a “threat” to the human race because it was a contributor to our emergence as a species, ie something positive.

9. (a) According to the writer in lines 97-105, what two possible courses of action are open to us with regard to future “impact catastrophes”? Use your own words as far as possible in your answer.

2 U

There must be some attempt to use own words; blatant lifts: 0.

- 1 Do nothing (and just hope that no comet hits us too hard). (1 mark)
- 2 Take preventative action (against the comets/asteroids so that they don't hit the earth). (1 mark)

- (b) Show how effective you find the writer's use of imagery in lines 106-112 in conveying the excitement of the “debate”.

2 A/E

Marks will depend on the quality of comment on one or more than one image. An insightful comment on one image could score up to 2 marks; weaker comments will be worth up to 1 mark. Mere identification of the image: 0.

Answers on imagery must “deconstruct” the image, ie show an understanding of the literal root of the image and then explore how the writer is extending it figuratively.

Note that the extended image may be dealt with as one item.

Possible comments:

- 1 “heated” just as objects, liquids etc when heated are more volatile, full of movement etc, the debate has become voluble, possibly loud, animated, ...
- 2 “ferment” just as the process of brewing causes movement, effervescence, explosions etc, the debate has become lively, loud, possibly “dangerous”, ...
- 3 “brewing” just as the process of brewing causes movement, effervescence, heady liquids etc, the debate is developing, growing voluble, loud, ...
- 4 “symptom” just as a symptom is the outward sign of an underlying disease the debate is the outward sign of the underlying vigorous controversy

- (c) **Which course of action do you think the writer favours? Support your answer by close reference to lines 113-123.**

2 U

It is possible to make a case for either option, although the “Take action” option is more likely.

There is no credit for the choice alone. Marks will depend on the quality of explanation. Clear explanation: 2 marks; less assured explanation: 1 mark. Mere paraphrase and/or extensive quotation are unlikely to gain any credit.

For full marks there must be some acceptable reference (quotation or close identification). While this question is coded “U”, candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their understanding via “analysis” of tone, structure, etc.

Possible approaches:

- 1 Take action; because, while recognising that there are other, more probable, dangers to our lives, he points out that comet/asteroid impact could kill everyone.
- 2 Take action; because saying “...but that is not the point” implies something else is (recognising the extent of the devastation comet/asteroid impact would create) and must be addressed.
- 3 Take action; because the acknowledgement that there are other dangers is dismissed with a curt: “...but that is not the point”.
- 4 Take action; deliberate contrast between “cost us our lives” and “cost *all* of us our lives” (with italicisation to underline the difference) shows one threat is more serious than the other and should, by implication, be addressed more seriously.
- 5 Do nothing; it is a decision that cannot be made now; we need to learn more first; “great deal more” implies we know very little or don’t know enough at the moment.
- 6 Do nothing; he merely poses a question (and refers to “ask” and “question”) and uses conditional and future ideas (“risk”, “future”, “may”, “will”) – not indicative of strong feeling for doing something now.
- 7 His stance is ambiguous; a combination of any of the above.

Questions on Passage Two

10. Show how the writer captures your attention in the opening to the article (lines 1-18). You should refer to specific techniques and/or stylistic features in these lines.

4 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. For full marks there should be reference to and comment on at least two features or techniques.

Reference alone or mere identification of feature or technique: 0.

Possible features/techniques and comments:

1 use of “It” to open the article mysterious; mystery is not solved until paragraph two

2 **word choice:**

“destroy ... plunge ... giant ... racing ... unleash ... crashing ... hurtling ... direct hit ... huge ... billions ... blocking out ... perish ... starve ...devastating” The vocabulary chosen conveys violence or speed or power or size or disastrous effects of an asteroid striking Earth.

Note that comment on word choice may be on specific examples or be a generic comment on the accumulative effect – supported by several examples.

3 imagery (eg “unleash”) appropriate deconstruction and comment

4 illustrative detail used to convey:
size (Belgium is an entire country);
time (the Dark Ages suggests the severity of the consequences);
speed/power (comparison to the Hiroshima explosion suggests the scale of the potential disaster)

5 use of climax and anti-climax tension built up to the final sentence in both paragraphs; use of anti-climax to a lesser extent at the end of paragraph one and much more obviously at the end of paragraph two where the odds are quoted (1 in 909,000).

6 use of statistics/dates to convey sheer scale and/or precision

11. **By commenting on specific words or phrases in lines 19-27, show to what extent you would have confidence in Dr Alan Fitzsimmons.**

2 A/E

Candidates may argue for and/or against having confidence in Dr Fitzsimmons.

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment could score up to 2 marks. More basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each. Reference alone: 0 marks.

Possible answers:

Confidence:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | “Astrophysics expert”, “Dr”,
“University” | suggest academic ability and success |
| 2 | “advises” | recognition in his field |
| 3 | “accuracy”, “rule out”, “will” | suggest knowledge and precision |

Lack of confidence:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| 4 | “NEO (Near Earth Objects)” | vagueness of title does not inspire |
| 5 | “optimistic” | idea of being hopeful, not necessarily supported by facts |
| 6 | “In all probability” | not complete certainty |

12. **Show how lines 28-42 help you to understand the meaning of the word “Armageddon” (line 29).**

2 U

One mark for meaning: eg total destruction; an event of such decisiveness and on such a scale that survival is most unlikely, ...

One mark for reference to and/or explanation of how the context led the candidate to this understanding:

- 1 “wipe out most of the human race”
- 2 “the end of the world is nigh”
- 3 the force of final short sentence “But the end *is* nigh.”
- 4 “face” suggests an ordeal and may gain some credit

NB If there is clearly no understanding of the meaning of the word, then there can be no credit for a reference to context which would otherwise score a mark.

13. The style of writing in lines 43-53 differs from that in the preceding paragraphs.

Describe these two different styles and support your answer by brief reference to the text.

2 A

Both styles must be described and supported to gain 2 marks; acceptable identification of styles alone – 1 mark.

Paragraphs 1-4
(lines 1-42)

possible answers:
dramatic, hysterical,
sensational, emotive ...

supported by reference to or
comment on the use of
opinions, sensationalism, etc

Paragraph 5
(lines 43-53)

possible answers:
factual, scientific,
historical ...

supported by reference to
background detail such as
research findings or past
events, etc

14. Show how Jay Tate’s language (lines 56-68) emphasises the devastating effects of asteroid impact. In your answer you should refer to such features as sentence structure, verb tense, word choice . . .

4 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. For full marks there should be reference to and comment on at least two features. A fully developed answer on one feature could score up to 3 marks.

Possible answers:

Sentence structure:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | step by step account | |
| 2 | sentences become shorter | |
| 3 | builds up to a very short final sentence | |
| 4 | goes from general to the specific | all of these suggest
progressive steps
towards the inevitable
doom |
| 5 | repetition of “dark” (with the reinforcing initial “And”) | |
| 6 | accumulative negatives – “no power, no communications, no infrastructure.” | |
| 7 | repetition of “back” | |

Verb tense:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | (future tense changes to) present tense | immediacy of the sudden impact, lack of time to take evasive action ... |
|---|---|---|

Word choice:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 9 | “injected” | suggestion of force, alien material |
| 10 | “cold”, “dark” | bleakness |
| 11 | “die out”, “lose” | sense of loss, extinction, mortality, ... |
| 12 | (repetition of) “no” | negative impact |

15. Explain why the bookmaker is speaking “happily” (line 73).

1 U

There must be some attempt to explain; mere quotation of what is said: 0.

Any of the following for 1 mark:

- 1 Bookmakers are accepting money knowing there will be no payout.
- 2 Winners will not be alive to claim their winnings.
- 3 Anyone making money so easily would be happy.

“No one will survive.” (if offered alone): 0

Question on both passages

16. Which passage do you find more effective in making you think about the implications for the human race of comet and asteroid impact? Justify your choice by referring to the ideas and style of both passages.

5 E

Note that the question is on “ideas and style”.

The mark for this question should reflect the overall quality of the response and may not be directly related to the length of the response or to the number of points/references made. A succinct, sophisticated response should be worth more than a series of fairly trivial points and obvious references. “Ticking and adding up” is not appropriate (or fair) here.

For full marks there must be reference to both elements (ie ideas and style) and to both passages (although not necessarily a balanced treatment) and convincing evaluative comment. Where reference is made to one passage only, the maximum mark is 3.

The following guidelines should be followed:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 5 marks | clear and intelligent understanding of both passages; sensible comments on style; evaluative comment is thoughtful and convincing |
| 4 marks | clear understanding of both passages; sensible comments on style; evaluative comment is reasonably convincing |
| 3 mark | understanding of both passages; acceptable comment(s) on style; there is some evaluative comment |
| 2 marks | some understanding of both passages; acceptable comment(s) on style; at least one appropriate comment |
| 1 mark | one or two relevant but unconvincing comments |

The following points could be made, but all points which candidates propose will have to be judged on their merits:

Ideas:

- theoretical/philosophical ideas more important in Passage 1
- practical problems mainly in Passage 2

Style:

- language more sensational/immediate in Passage 2
- more human interest in Passage 2
- use of illustration to explain in passage 1
- contrast in tone at end of passages

(5)

Total (50)

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]