2006 English

Higher – Critical Essay

Finalised Marking Instructions

Comments on scripts:

The statement on the front cover of these instructions about comments on scripts must be interpreted as meaning that absolutely 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). For details of how to refer a script to PA, see page 3 below; for referral under Special Arrangements, see page 9 of General Instructions to Markers.

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 (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. 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.

Genre Infringements and Referrals to PA

For details of how to make a referral to a PA, see the General Instructions to Markers.

All essays referred to PA, for whatever reason, **must** have been allocated a mark by the marker, who should explain on the form the reason for the referral and, if appropriate, the thinking behind the mark awarded.

Markers should be alert to potential 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.

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.

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

Performance Criteria

a) **Understanding**

As appropriate to task, the response demonstrates secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the text(s).

b) **Analysis**

The response explains accurately and in detail ways in which relevant aspects of structure/style/ language contribute to meaning/effect/impact.

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).

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, grammar and punctuation are sufficiently accurate.

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.   Be reasonably generous to a candidate's definition of a "flaw".

4.   Accept the candidate's definition of a "scene" or "incident", unless there is no attempt to focus on a particular section of the text. The chosen scene or incident must be capable of supporting discussion about an acceptable "important theme".

5.   Accept, wherever possible, the candidate's definition of "a central character".

6.   Accept, within reason, the candidate's interpretation of "a time different from your own". The choice of a novel set in the recent past is likely to be self-penalising.

9.   Accept, within reason, the candidate's choice of a "piece of journalism". If in doubt about suitability, mark as if acceptable and refer to PA.

13.   Accept a wide definition of "a childhood experience".

14.   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 an answer dealing with one poem only. If a candidate chooses two poems by different poets, mark as if acceptable and refer to PA.

15.   Accept, within reason, the candidate's interpretation of what constitutes "bravery", "compassion" or "tenderness".

A note on the marking of answers to Section D – Film and TV Drama

In light of the re-naming of this Section (as intimated to centres in June 2005), the following general advice is offered to Markers:

Section D of the Critical Essay paper seeks to elicit responses on Film and TV Drama broadly similar to those on Drama, Prose or Poetry. The essay should deal with the text as a whole and should support the line of thought by reference to the impact of techniques appropriate to the genre. Some Film/TV Drama techniques are specific to these genres (eg editing and use of camera), but others are shared with Drama, Prose and Poetry.

The essay should demonstrate awareness that the film or programme makers are working in an audio-visual medium, but need not concentrate heavily (and certainly not exclusively) on highly technical features specific to Film or TV Drama. A useful comparison may be made with the Poetry section, where it is not usually appropriate or necessary for candidates to deal exhaustively with very technical areas of scansion and metre, nor deal exhaustively with single sounds, words, phrases or lines at the expense of demonstrating an appreciation of the text as a whole.

18. The traditional use of "epic" is of a narrative text celebrating the achievements of a heroic person from history or legend. Markers should reward essays which identify and deconstruct such "epic" elements as heroic characterisation, depiction of historical or legendary setting, presentation and analysis of conflict, exploration of appropriate theme(s). *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Braveheart* and *Troy* are examples of recent films which fall into the "epic" category. *Spartacus* and *Ben-Hur* are examples from the 1950/1960s and *Napoleon* from the silent era.

    The term is applied colloquially to any major work that stands out from the ordinary. Markers should not automatically award a fail mark. Mark as if acceptable and refer to PA.

19. The balance of the answer should be towards deconstructing appropriate elements of the film or TV drama rather than the original novel. An essay would be seriously flawed if it spent, for example, four pages analysing Jane Austen's characterisation of Darcy and Elizabeth and then a single page on how the BBC serial constructed the characters.

20-23. See below.

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 the box at the head of the section provides prompts for the candidates, but is not exclusive. Some appropriate use of technical terminology should be expected.

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

All essays from Section E – Language should be 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
An essay which falls into this category may do so for a variety of reasons. It could be • 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.	Understanding • Knowledge of the text(s), and a secure understanding of the central concerns will be used. …………………………………… • to provide an answer relevant to the task. • Detailed reference to the text(s) to support the candidate's argument will be made. Analysis • There will be an accurate explanation of the contribution of literary/ linguistic techniques to the impact of the text. Evaluation • There will be a positive engagement with the text(s) which will state or imply an evaluation of its effectiveness. Expression • Language will communicate the argument clearly, and there will be appropriate critical terminology deployed. Spelling, grammar and punctuation will be sufficiently accurate.	Understanding • Knowledge and understanding of the central concerns of the text(s) will be clearly demonstrated. …………………………………… • 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. Analysis • There will be analysis of literary/linguistic techniques and how they affect the impact of the text(s). Evaluation • 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). Expression • Language will be used confidently and the deployment of critical terminology will add to the strength of the candidate's argument. 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).	Understanding • Thorough knowledge and insight into the central concerns of the text(s) will be demonstrated at this level. …………………………………… • 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. Analysis • There will be a convincing evaluative analysis of the writer's literary and linguistic techniques. Evaluation • There will be an appreciative response allied to a committed stance with respect to the text(s) which may be implicit. Expression • The language used will be controlled and fluent, making accurate and appropriate use of critical terminology in pursuit of a skilful analysis. 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.

* 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]