

X270/12/02

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2012

THURSDAY, 17 MAY
11.05AM – 12.35 PM

ENGLISH
HIGHER
Critical Essay

Answer **two** questions.

Each question must be taken from a different section.

Each question is worth 25 marks.



Answer TWO questions from this paper. Each question must be chosen from a different Section (A–E). You are not allowed to choose two questions from the same Section.

In all Sections you may use Scottish texts.

Write the number of each question in the margin of your answer booklet and begin each essay on a fresh page.

You should spend about 45 minutes on each essay.

The following will be assessed:

- the relevance of your essays to the questions you have chosen, and the extent to which you sustain an appropriate line of thought
- your knowledge and understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- your understanding, as appropriate to the questions chosen, of how relevant aspects of structure/style/language contribute to the meaning/effect/impact of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- your evaluation, as appropriate to the questions chosen, of the effectiveness of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- the quality of your written expression and the technical accuracy of your writing.

SECTION A—DRAMA

Answers to questions on drama should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text and be supported by reference to appropriate dramatic techniques such as: conflict, characterisation, key scene(s), dialogue, climax, exposition, dénouement, structure, plot, setting, aspects of staging (such as lighting, music, stage set, stage directions . . .), soliloquy, monologue . . .

1. Choose a play in which a character shows signs of instability at one or more than one key point in the play.

Explain the reason(s) for the character's instability and discuss how this feature adds to your understanding of the central concern(s) of the play.

2. Choose a play in which an important part is played by one of the following: crime, punishment, retribution.

Show how the dramatist explores the issue and discuss its importance to your understanding of character and/or theme in the play as a whole.

3. Choose from a play a scene which you find amusing or moving or disturbing.

Explain how the scene provokes this response and discuss how this aspect of the scene contributes to your understanding of the play as a whole.

4. Choose a play in which a central character's changing view of himself/herself is an important feature.

Show how the dramatist makes you aware of the character's changing view of himself/herself and discuss how this affects your understanding of the character in the play as a whole.

SECTION B—PROSE

Prose Fiction

Answers to questions on prose fiction should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of prose fiction such as: characterisation, setting, key incident(s), narrative technique, symbolism, structure, climax, plot, atmosphere, dialogue, imagery . . .

5. Choose a **novel** or **short story** which explores loss or futility or failure.
Discuss how the writer explores one of these ideas in a way you find effective.
6. Choose a **novel** in which a main character refuses to accept advice or to conform to expectations.
Explain the circumstances of the refusal and discuss its importance to your understanding of the character in the novel as a whole.
7. Choose a **novel** in which a particular mood is dominant.
Explain how the novelist creates this mood and discuss how it contributes to your appreciation of the novel as a whole.
8. Choose a **novel** or **short story** in which there is a character who is not only realistic as a person but who has symbolic significance in the text as a whole.
Show how the writer makes you aware of both aspects of the character.

Prose Non-fiction

Answers to questions on prose non-fiction should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of prose non-fiction such as: ideas, use of evidence, selection of detail, point of view, stance, setting, anecdote, narrative voice, style, language, structure, organisation of material . . .

9. Choose a **non-fiction text** which you consider to be a successful blend of narration and observation.
Show how the writer successfully blends narration and observation, and discuss how this blend contributes to your appreciation of the text as a whole.
10. Choose a **non-fiction text** the conclusion of which you think is particularly effective.
Explain why you find the conclusion to be so effective.
11. Choose a **non-fiction text** which engages you not only intellectually but also emotionally.
Show how the writer successfully engages both your mind and your emotions.

SECTION C—POETRY

Answers to questions on poetry should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate poetic techniques such as: imagery, verse form, structure, mood, tone, sound, rhythm, rhyme, characterisation, contrast, setting, symbolism, word choice . . .

12. Choose a poem which features a complex character.

Show how the complexity of the character is presented and discuss how significant this aspect of characterisation is to the impact of the poem.

13. Choose a poem in which aspects of structure (such as verse form, rhyme, metre, repetition, climax, contrast, narrative development ...) play a significant role.

Show how the poet uses **at least two** structural features to enhance your appreciation of the poem as a whole.

14. Choose **two** poems which approach a similar theme in different ways.

Explain the nature of these different approaches and discuss which approach leads, in your opinion, to the more pleasing poem.

15. Choose a poem which explores **either** the problems of growing older **or** the joys of being young.

Show how the poet presents these aspects and discuss to what extent she/he succeeds in deepening your understanding of them.

SECTION D—FILM AND TV DRAMA

Answers to questions on film and TV drama should address relevantly the central concern(s)/ theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of film and TV drama such as: key sequence(s), characterisation, conflict, structure, plot, dialogue, editing/montage, sound/soundtrack, aspects of mise-en-scène (such as lighting, colour, use of camera, costume, props . . .), mood, setting, casting, exploitation of genre . . .

16. Choose a **film or TV drama*** which explores the experience of war.

Show how the film or programme makers explore the experience and discuss to what extent they are successful in deepening your understanding of important aspects of war.

17. Choose a **film or TV drama*** in which symbolism is an important feature.

Show how the film or programme makers create this symbolism and discuss its importance to your understanding of the text as a whole.

18. Choose a **film or TV drama*** set in a restricted environment such as an island, a ship, a prison, a hospital, a village, a house, a room . . .

Show how the film or programme makers' use of this setting contributes to your understanding of character and theme.

19. Choose a **film or TV drama*** which explores a social, environmental or moral issue.

Briefly explain the issue and go on to show how the film or programme makers explore it in a way you find effective.

*“TV Drama” includes a single play, a series or a serial.

SECTION E—LANGUAGE

Answers to questions on language should address relevantly the central concern(s) of the language research/study and be supported by reference to appropriate language concepts such as: register, jargon, tone, vocabulary, word choice, technical terminology, presentation, illustration, accent, grammar, idiom, slang, dialect, structure, point of view, orthography, abbreviation . . .

20. Consider some of the ways language is evolving as a result of advances in communication technology.

Basing your answer on specific examples, discuss to what extent these advances are improving or impeding communication.

21. Consider the spoken language of a particular geographical area.

Identify some of the characteristics of the language and discuss to what extent it enhances communication for the people of that area.

22. Consider the language of persuasion used in advertising or in politics.

Discuss several ways in which the language you have chosen attempts to be persuasive.

23. Consider aspects of language associated with a particular group in society which shares a professional or leisure activity.

Identify some examples of the language used and discuss how these examples facilitate communication within the group.

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