

X115/303

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY
10.50 AM – 12.20 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 central character is heroic yet vulnerable.
Show how the dramatist makes you aware of both qualities and discuss how they affect your response to the character's fate in the play as a whole.
2. Choose a play which explores the theme of love in difficult circumstances.
Explain how the dramatist introduces the theme and discuss how in the course of the play he/she prepares you for the resolution of the drama.
3. Choose from a play a scene in which an important truth is revealed.
Briefly explain what the important truth is and assess the significance of its revelation to your understanding of theme or character.
4. Choose a play in which a character has to exist in a hostile environment.
Briefly describe the environment and discuss the extent to which it influences your response to the character's behaviour and to the outcome of the play.

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** which explores the cruelty of human nature.
Show how the writer explores this theme and discuss how its exploration enhances your appreciation of the novel as a whole.
6. Choose a **novel** in which a confrontation between two characters is of central importance in the text.
Explain the circumstances of the confrontation and discuss its importance to your understanding of the novel as a whole.
7. Choose **two short stories** which you appreciated because of the surprising nature of their endings.
Compare the techniques used in creating these surprising endings and discuss which ending you feel is more successful as a conclusion.
8. Choose a **novel** or **short story** which is set during a period of social or political change.
Discuss how important the writer's evocation of the period is to your appreciation of the text as a whole.

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 inspiring or provocative.
Explain how the writer's presentation of his/her subject has such an impact on you.
10. Choose a piece of **travel writing** which offers surprising or amusing insights into a particular country or culture.
Explain briefly what you learn about the country or culture and in greater detail discuss the techniques the writer uses to surprise or amuse you.
11. Choose a **non-fiction text** in which you consider the writer's stance on a particular issue to be ambiguous.
Show how the writer's presentation of this issue illustrates the ambiguity of her/his stance.

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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 deals with conflict or danger or death.
Show how the poet creates an appropriate mood for the subject matter and go on to discuss how effectively she/he uses this mood to enhance your understanding of the central idea of the poem.
13. Choose a poem which is strongly linked to a specific location.
Show how the poet captures the essence of the location and exploits this to explore an important theme.
14. Choose **two** poems which explore human relationships.
By referring to both poems, discuss which you consider to be the more convincing portrayal of a relationship.
15. Choose a poem in which the speaker's personality is gradually revealed.
Show how, through the content and language of the poem, aspects of the character gradually emerge.

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*** in which a particular sequence is crucial to your understanding of an important theme.

By referring to the sequence and to the text as a whole, show why you consider the sequence to be so important to your understanding of the theme.

17. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** which presents a life-affirming story.

By referring to key elements of the text, show how the story has such an effect.

18. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** in which intense feelings have tragic consequences.

Show to what extent the film or programme makers' presentation of these feelings and their consequences is successful in engaging you with the text.

19. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** in which a complex character is revealed.

Show how the film or programme makers reveal the complexity and discuss to what extent this aspect of the character contributes to your response to the text.

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

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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 uses of language designed to interest you in a social or commercial or political campaign.
Identify aspects of language which you feel are intended to influence you and evaluate their success in raising your awareness of the subject of the campaign.
- 21.** Consider the spoken language of a clearly defined group of people.
Identify features which differentiate this language from standard usage and assess the extent to which these features have useful functions within the group.
- 22.** Consider the language of newspaper reporting on such subjects as fashion, celebrities, reality TV, soap stars. . .
Identify some of the characteristics of this language and discuss to what extent it is effective in communicating with its target audience.
- 23.** Consider the language (written and/or symbolic) associated with the use of e-mails or text messaging or instant messaging.
Describe some of the conventions associated with any one of these and discuss to what extent these conventions lead to more effective communication.

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