

[C270/SQP273]

English
Higher
Close Reading—Text
Specimen Question Paper

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

There are TWO passages and questions.

Read both passages carefully and then answer all the questions, which are printed in a separate booklet.

You should read the passages to:

understand what the authors are saying about the proposal to put online the contents of some major libraries (**Understanding—U**);

analyse their choices of language, imagery and structures to recognise how they convey their

points of view and contribute to the impact of the passages (**Analysis—A**);

evaluate how effectively they have achieved their purposes (**Evaluation—E**).

PASSAGE 1

In the first passage George Kerevan, writing in The Scotsman newspaper in December 2004, responds to the prospect of an “online library” and explains the importance to him of the type of library we have at the moment.

DESPITE GOOGLE, WE STILL NEED GOOD LIBRARIES

The internet search engine Google, with whom I spend more time than with my loved ones, is planning to put the contents of the world’s greatest university libraries online, including the Bodleian in Oxford and those of Harvard and Stanford in America. Part of me is ecstatic at the thought of all that information at my fingertips; another part of me is nostalgic, because I think physical libraries, book-lined and cathedral-quiet, are a cherished part of civilisation we lose at our cultural peril.

My love affair with libraries started early, in the Drumchapel housing scheme in the Fifties. For the 60,000 exiles packed off from slum housing to the city’s outer fringe, Glasgow Council neglected the shops and amenities but somehow remembered to put in a public library—actually, a wooden shed. That library was split into two—an adult section and a children’s section. This was an early taste of forbidden fruit. Much useful human reproductive knowledge was gained from certain books examined surreptitiously in the adult biology section.

At university, I discovered the wonder of the library as a physical space. Glasgow University has a skyscraper library, built around a vast atrium stretching up through the various floors. Each floor was devoted to a different subject classification. Working away on the economics floor, I could see other students above or below—chatting, flirting, doodling, panicking—all cocooned in their own separate worlds of knowledge. Intrigued, I soon took to exploring what was on these other planets: science, architecture, even a whole floor of novels. The unique aspect of a physical library is that you can discover knowledge by accident. There are things you know you don’t know, but there are also things you never imagined you did not know.

There is a stock response to my love affair with libraries: that I am being too nostalgic. That the multi-tasking, MTV generation can access information from a computer, get cheap books from the supermarket and still chatter to each other at a thousand decibels. Who needs old-fashioned library buildings? And why should councils subsidise what Google will provide for free?

There is some proof for this line of argument. The number of people in Scotland using their local public library falls every year, with just under a quarter of Scots now borrowing books (admittedly, that was 34 million books). As a result, local authorities have reduced their funding for new books by 30 per cent. Of course, fewer new books mean fewer library users, so guaranteeing the downward spiral.

It may well be that public demand and technical change mean we no longer need the dense neighbourhood network of local libraries of yore. But our culture, local and universal, does demand strategically situated libraries where one can find the material that is too expensive for the ordinary person to buy, or too complex to find online. Such facilities are worth funding publicly because the return in informed citizenship and civic pride is far in excess of the money spent.

Libraries also have that undervalued resource—the trained librarian. The ultimate Achilles’ heel of the internet is that it presents every page of information as being

equally valid, which is of course nonsense. The internet is cluttered with false information, or just plain junk. The library, with its collection honed and developed by experts, is a guarantee of the quality and veracity of the information contained therein, something that Google can never provide.

45 Libraries have another function still, which the internet cannot fulfil. Libraries, like museums, are custodians of knowledge—and should be funded as such. It has become the fashion in recent decades to turn our great national libraries and museums into entertainment centres, with audio-visually, interactive displays and gimmicks. While I have some enthusiasm for popularising esoteric knowledge, it cannot always be reduced
50 to the level of a child’s view of the universe. We have a duty to future generations to invest in the custodians of our culture, in particular its literature and manuscripts.

Of course, I can’t wait for Google to get online with the Bodleian Library’s one million books. Yet here’s one other thing I learned from a physical library space: the daunting scale of human knowledge and our inability to truly comprehend even a fraction of
55 it. On arriving at Glasgow University library, I did a quick calculation of how many economics books there were on the shelves and realised that I could not read them all. Ever. From which realisation comes the beginning of wisdom—and that is very different from merely imbibing information.

PASSAGE 2

In the second passage Ben Macintyre, writing in The Times newspaper, also in December 2004, responds to the same news, and considers the future of the “traditional library”.

PARADISE IS PAPER, PARCHMENT AND DUST

I have a halcyon library memory. I am sitting under a cherry tree in the tiny central courtyard of the Cambridge University Library, a book in one hand and an almond slice in the other. On the grass beside me is an incredibly pretty girl. We are surrounded by eight million books. Behind the walls on every side of the courtyard, the books stretch
5 away in compact ranks hundreds of yards deep, the shelves extending at the rate of two miles a year. There are books beneath us in the subterranean stacks, and they reach into the sky; we are entombed in words, an unimaginable volume of collected knowledge in cold storage, quiet and vast and waiting.

Perhaps that was the moment I fell in love with libraries.

10 Or perhaps it was earlier, growing up in Scotland, when the mobile library would lurch up the road with stocks of Enid Blyton for the kids and supplies of bodice-rippers on the top shelf with saucy covers, to be giggled over when the driver-librarian was having his cup of tea.

15 Or perhaps the moment came earlier yet, when my father took me deep into the Bodleian in Oxford and I inhaled, for the first time, that intoxicating mixture of paper, parchment and dust.

I have spent a substantial portion of my life since in libraries, and I still enter them with a mixture of excitement and awe. I am not alone in this. Veneration for libraries is as old as writing itself, for a library is more to our culture than a collection of books: it is
20 a temple, a symbol of power, the hushed core of civilisation, the citadel of memory, with its own mystique, social and sensual as well as intellectual.

But now a revolution, widely compared to the invention of printing itself, is taking place among the book shelves, and the library will never be the same again. This week Google announced plans to digitise fifteen million books from five great libraries, including the Bodleian.

Some fear that this total library, vast and invisible, could finally destroy traditional libraries, which will become mere warehouses for the physical objects, empty of people and life. However, the advantages of a single scholarly online catalogue are incalculable and rather than destroying libraries, the internet will protect the written word as never before, and render knowledge genuinely democratic. Fanatics always attack the libraries first, dictators seek to control the literature, elites hoard the knowledge that is power. Shi Huangdi, the Chinese emperor of the 3rd century BC, ordered that all literature, history and philosophy written before the founding of his dynasty should be destroyed. More books were burnt in the 20th century than any other—in Nazi Germany, Bosnia and Afghanistan. With the online library, the books will finally be safe, and the bibliophobes will have been beaten, for ever.

But will we bother to browse the shelves when we can merely summon up any book in the world with the push of a button? Are the days of the library as a social organism over? Almost certainly not, for reasons psychological and, ultimately, spiritual. Locating a book online is one thing, reading it is quite another, for there is no aesthetic substitute for the physical object; the computer revolution rolls on inexorably, but the world is reading more paper books than ever.

And the traditional library will also survive, because a library is central to our understanding of what it is to be human. Libraries are not just for reading in, but for sociable thinking, exploring and exchanging ideas. They were never silent. Technology will not change that, for even in the starchiest heyday of Victorian self-improvement, libraries were intended to be meeting places of the mind, recreational as well as educational. The Openshaw branch of the Manchester public library was built complete with a billiard room. Of course just as bookshops have become trendy, offering brain food and cappuccinos, so libraries, under financial and cultural pressure, will have to evolve by more actively welcoming people in to wander and explore . . . and fall in love.

Bookish types have always feared change and technology, but the book, and the library, have adapted and endured, retaining their essential magic. Even Hollywood understood. In the 1957 film *Desk Set*, Katherine Hepburn plays a librarian-researcher whose job is threatened by a computer expert (Spencer Tracy) introducing new technology. In the end, the computer turns out to be an asset, not a danger, Tracy and Hepburn end up smooching, and everyone reads happily ever after.

The marriage of Google and the Bodleian will surely be the same.

[END OF SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER]

[C270/SQP273]

English
Higher
Close Reading—Questions
Specimen Question Paper

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

Answer all questions.

50 marks are allocated to this paper.

A code letter (U, A, E) is used alongside each question to give some indication of the skills being assessed. The number of marks attached to each question will give some indication of the length of answer required.

When answering questions coded “U—Understanding”, use your own words as far as is reasonably possible and do not simply repeat the wording of the passage.

Questions on Passage 1

Marks Code

You are reminded of the instruction on the front cover:

When answering questions coded “U—Understanding”, use your own words as far as is reasonably possible and do not simply repeat the wording of the passage.

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1. Read lines 1–6. | | |
| (a) What two contrasting emotions does the writer have about the plan to put the great university libraries online? | 2 | U |
| (b) How does the writer’s word choice in these lines help to convey his view of the importance of “physical libraries” (line 5)? Refer to two examples in your answer. | 2 | A |
| 2. In your opinion, does the writer think Glasgow Council gave the library in Drumchapel a high priority? Justify your answer by close reference to lines 7–13. | 2 | U/E |
| 3. Show how the writer uses imagery and word choice in lines 14–22 to convey the “wonder of the library as a physical space”. | 4 | A |
| 4. Read lines 23–32. | | |
| (a) Show how the writer’s language in lines 23–27 conveys his attitude to the “MTV generation”. You should refer in your answer to such features as sentence structure, word choice, tone . . . | 3 | A |
| (b) Explain the “downward spiral” (line 32) to which the writer refers. | 1 | U |
| 5. (a) Give four reasons the writer presents in lines 33–44 in favour of maintaining traditional public libraries. | 4 | U |
| (b) Show how the writer’s word choice in lines 39–44 emphasises the contrast between his attitude to libraries and his attitude to the internet. | 2 | A |
| 6. Read lines 45–51. | | |
| (a) Twice in this paragraph the writer refers to libraries as “custodians”. What does this word mean? | 1 | U |
| (b) Show how the language of lines 45–51 suggests that the writer has some reservations about the entertainment aspect of present day libraries and museums. | 2 | A |
| 7. How effective do you find the ideas and/or language of the final paragraph (lines 52–58) as a conclusion to the passage as a whole? | 3 | E |

(26)

Questions on Passage 2

Marks Code

You are reminded of the instruction on the front cover:

When answering questions coded “U—Understanding”, use your own words as far as is reasonably possible and do not simply repeat the wording of the passage.

8. Read lines 1–16.
- (a) Briefly describe the mood created in lines 1–3 (“I have . . . girl.”). 1 U
- (b) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 3–8 (“We are . . . waiting.”) conveys a sense of awe. 3 A
- (c) How effective do you find the repetition of “perhaps” (lines 9–16) in conveying the writer’s recollections about libraries? 2 A/E
9. By referring to one example, show how the writer’s imagery in lines 17–21 conveys the importance of libraries. 2 A
10. Read lines 22–36.
- Explain:
- (a) what, according to the writer, the potential disadvantage of the online library is; 1 U
- (b) what, according to the writer, the advantages of the online library are. 3 U
11. Read lines 37–52.
- (a) Explain what the writer means by “there is no aesthetic substitute for the physical object” (lines 40–41). 2 U
- (b) Explain why the writer believes libraries will “survive” (line 43). 2 U
12. How effectively does the writer use the reference to the film *Desk Set* to conclude the passage in a pleasing way? Refer in your answer to the ideas and language of lines 53–59. 3 E
- (19)

Question on both Passages

13. Consider the attitude displayed by each writer to traditional libraries (ie the type we have at the moment as opposed to an online library). Referring to important ideas in the passages, identify the key areas on which they agree.
- You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points. 5 U/E

(5)

[END OF SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER]

Total (50)

[C270/SQP273]

English
Higher
Close Reading
Specimen Marking Instructions

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

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 of Analysis questions. 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 “in your own words as **far** as is reasonably possible”. 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.

1. Read lines 1-6.

- (a) What two contrasting emotions does the writer have about the plan to put the great university libraries online?**

2 U

Acceptable gloss on “ecstatic” (1) – eg joyous, thrilled, excited, delighted ...; “happy” by itself is not acceptable – there must be some idea of intensity

Acceptable gloss on “nostalgic” (1) – eg looking back fondly, wistful, regretful, reflective, ... “sad/unhappy” by itself not acceptable – there must be some idea of something connected with past OR the idea that he is apprehensive, fearful (at possible loss/demise of libraries) (1)

- (b) How does the writer’s word choice in these lines help to convey his view of the importance of “physical libraries” (line 5)? Refer to two examples in your answer.**

2 A

Marks will depend on quality of comment on the chosen words. For full marks, two examples must be dealt with.

Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 1 | “book-lined” | suggests large number/area of books, implying organised, impressive nature... |
| 2 | “cathedral-quiet” | connotations of solemnity, reverence, devotion, large hushed space... |
| 3 | “cherished” | suggests cared for emotionally (rather than just practically), warmth... |
| 4 | “civilisation” | connotations of that which marks us out from less sophisticated societies |
| 5 | “lose” | sense of being deprived, bereft... |
| 6 | “cultural” | suggests traditions, heritage, civilised society,... |
| 7 | “peril” | suggests threat, risk, menace, danger (to something precious) |

2. **In your opinion, does the writer think Glasgow Council gave the library in Drumchapel a high priority? Justify your answer by close reference to lines 7-13.**

Marks Code

2 U/E

Candidates could argue either way or on both sides. Marks will depend on the quality of explanation. A single basic point will be worth 1 mark; a more developed justification will be worth 2 marks.

Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

“High priority”:

- 1 use of “remembered” suggests that the library, although initially overlooked, was indeed a priority
- 2 despite the fact they “neglected shops and amenities”, they still put in a library, which suggests that it was considered more important than these

“Low priority”:

- 3 the high number (60,000) of potential users contrasted with the smallness of the facility (a “shed”) suggests inadequacy
- 4 use of “remembered” suggests it was an afterthought, a last-minute idea
- 5 the fact it was a “wooden shed” suggests it was basic, cheap, unsophisticated, temporary and therefore considered of little importance
- 6 the use of “somehow” indicates that nobody was sure why the decision had been taken; it just happened
- 7 tone of “– actually, a wooden shed” as if a rather amused, sarcastic aside suggesting an afterthought, a wry admission of its inadequacies...

3. **Show how the writer uses imagery and word choice in lines 14-22 to convey the “wonder of the library as a physical space”.** *Marks Code*
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 up to 1 mark each. For full marks there should be comment on both imagery and word choice, but markers should be sympathetic to areas of overlap.

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.

Answers on word choice must deal with the connotative areas of the words chosen, exploring why the choice of word is effective.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of an image: 0.

Possible answers:

Imagery:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | “stretching” | gives the impression of something being pulled or elongated with connotations of never-ending, upward movement, aspiring |
| 2 | “cocooned” | as larvae are protected and self-contained in their cocoons, so each floor in the library is separate and shelters the students within their specialised knowledge areas |
| 3 | “worlds of knowledge” | the number of floors is so great and they are so separate that they are like different, independent planetary systems, each specialising in a particular area of knowledge |
| 4 | “planets” | the separation into large, distinct learning areas, each self-contained like the isolation and individualism of each planet in space |

Word choice:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 5 | “wonder” | connotations of awe, freshness, childlike amazement, admiration ... |
| 6 | “skyscraper (library)” | slightly exaggerated description suggests size and magnificence (be sympathetic to candidates who choose to see “skyscraper” as an image) |
| 7 | “vast” | gives the impression of an enormous extent of space |
| 8 | “atrium” | idea of large, impressive central area – with connotations of classical ideas/learning |

- 9 “devoted” connotations of love, reverence, dedication ...
- 10 “chatting, flirting, doodling, panicking” (any of these) – suggestions of human foibles, ordinary behaviour contrasted with the extraordinary nature of the library
- 11 “exploring” suggests excitement of new discovery, sense of quest, hint of size,...
- 12 “unique” suggestions of something very special, to be marvelled at ...

NB words from 1-4 above could be the subject of appropriate comments as word choice.

4. Read lines 23-32.

Marks Code

(a) Show how the writer’s language in lines 23-27 conveys his attitude to the “MTV Generation”. You should refer in your answer to such features as sentence structure, word choice, tone...

3 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment on one feature could score up to 2 marks; alternatively, a candidate could make more basic comments for 1 mark each. For full marks there should be reference to more than one feature.

The writer’s attitude may be implicit in the candidate’s answer.

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

Possible answers:

Sentence structure:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 climactic nature of second sentence | building up from an abrupt start to the negative attitude by “chatter...at a thousand decibels” or (possibly) presenting a positive attitude in admiring their ability to communicate loudly or their ability to carry out more than one task at a time |
| 2 use of questions | could suggest a positive attitude by backing up the idea that young people are modern and that they do not approve of subsidising libraries or combined with a mock-scornful tone could suggest that he believes the answer to the questions is that we do need libraries rather than the slick media world of the MTV generation – ie a negative attitude |
| 3 structure of the first sentence | a case might just be made that the colon is used to introduce a demonstration of the writer’s attitude that he prefers the past to the present and therefore will be critical of the MTV generation |

Word choice:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 4 “multi-tasking” | suggests positive attitude in that these people are seen as talented in their ability to perform several tasks simultaneously or suggests a negative attitude in that in trying to do so many things at once, due attention is not given to the important matters |
|-------------------|--|

		<i>Marks</i>	<i>Code</i>
5	“cheap books”	suggests positive aspects in that these books are readily available to all without recourse to a library or negatively, the books are cheap in the sense of not worth much intellectually	
6	“chatter”	negative in that the word suggests inconsequential communication or positive in that it suggests easy personal interaction	
7	“thousand decibels”	probably negative in that it suggests that the noise is too loud for real thought	
8	“old-fashioned”	probably negative in that it suggests he thinks the MTV generation is too readily dismissive, or too keen to believe libraries are outdated	

Tone:

9	derogatory	backed up by any of the comments suggested above
10	admiring	backed up by any of the comments suggested above
11	mock-scornful/sarcastic	backed up by any of the comments suggested above

(b) Explain the “downward spiral” (line 32) to which the writer refers.

1 U

A basic understanding that diminishing use of libraries leads to diminishing levels of provision, which leads to diminishing use ...

5. (a) Give four reasons the writer presents in lines 33-44 in favour of maintaining traditional public libraries. Marks Code
4 U

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

Any four of the following for 1 mark each:

- 1 idea of accessibility (ie acceptable gloss on “strategically situated”)
- 2 idea of free access (ie acceptable gloss on “too expensive ... to buy”)
- 3 idea that resources are more sophisticated (ie acceptable gloss on “too complex to find online”)
- 4 idea of supporting democratic responsibilities (ie acceptable gloss on “informed citizenship”)
- 5 idea of community awareness/cohesion (ie acceptable gloss on “civic pride”)
- 6 idea of professional support (ie acceptable gloss on “trained librarian”)
- 7 idea of informed/refined selection (ie acceptable gloss on “honed and developed by experts”)
- 8 idea of high standard of material (ie acceptable gloss on “quality ... of information”)
- 9 idea of authenticity (ie acceptable gloss on “veracity of information”)
- 10 idea of selectivity of information (in contrast with junk online)

- (b) Show how the writer’s word choice in lines 39-44 emphasises the contrast between his attitude to libraries and his attitude to the internet. 2 A

No marks for attitude(s) alone; these will probably be implied in the candidate’s answer.

Marks will depend on the quality of comment on the words selected. For full marks the contrast must be demonstrated by referring to at least one word from each of the lists given below.

Reference alone: 0.

For libraries, answers should make acceptable comment on the positive connotations of any of the following:

“trained ... honed ... developed ... experts ... guarantee ... quality ... veracity”

For the internet, answers should make acceptable comment on the negative connotations of any of the following:

“Achilles’ heel ... (of course) nonsense ... cluttered ... false ... (plain) junk ... never”

6. Read lines 45-51.

Marks Code

- (a) Twice in this paragraph the writer refers to libraries as “custodians”. What does this word mean?

1 U

Any acceptable gloss, eg guardians, protectors, those who keep something safe, ...

- (b) Show how the language of lines 45-51 suggests that the writer has some reservations about the entertainment aspect of present day libraries and museums.

2 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment on one example/feature could score up to 2 marks; alternatively, a candidate could make more basic comments for up to 1 mark each.

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

Possible answers:

Word choice:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | “(become the) fashion” | connotations of transience, shallowness, ... |
| 2 | “entertainment centres”/ “audio-visuals” | connotations of pandering to popular taste, lack of seriousness, ... |
| 3 | “gimmicks” | connotations of cheap trickery, merely to capture attention, ... |
| 4 | “popularising” | connotations of dumbing down, aiming for lowest common denominator, ... |
| 5 | “reduced” | connotations of loss of quality, depth, sophistication, ... |
| 6 | “child’s view” | connotations of naiveté, lack of sophistication, limited perspective, ... |

Tone:

- | | | |
|---|----------|--|
| 7 | grudging | “some (enthusiasm)” suggests reluctance to welcome the idea fully |
| 8 | scornful | appropriate comment based on any of 1-6 above |
| 9 | didactic | appropriate comment on lines 52-54 (“cannot always be reduced”, “duty”, “future generations”, “invest”, “culture”) |

Structure:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 10 | list (“audio-visuals, interactive displays and gimmicks”) ending in the anti-climax (“gimmicks”) | reduces the other items to meaningless technical tricks |
| 11 | structure of “While I have ... universe” | limited concession emphasises the dismissiveness of what follows |

7. **How effective do you find the ideas and/or language of the final paragraph (lines 52-58) as a conclusion to the passage as a whole?** *Marks* 3 *Code* E

Marks will depend on the quality of comment on the ideas and/or language. For full marks the concept of “the passage as a whole” must be addressed.

Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

Ideas:

- 1 Google and the Bodleian Library are brought together again in this paragraph
- 2 The idea of large numbers (one million books) on Google/the vastness of libraries leading to an understanding of the enormous amount of material which can never be known
- 3 The differentiation between information and wisdom is what the passage has been leading up to

Language:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 4 | “Of course” | strategic concession/idea of bringing reader inside/of being reasonable – in preparation for conclusion |
| 5 | “Yet here’s” | conversational tone – leading the reader to come on board and share his ideas |
| 6 | “daunting” | strong word suggesting the enormous and frightening amount of knowledge |
| 7 | “even a fraction” | suggests, in contrast, the very small proportion with which one person can come to grips |
| 8 | “Ever.” | emphatic, one word sentence closing the door on the possibility of conquering all knowledge |
| 9 | “merely imbibing” | in contrast with wisdom, suggesting that information acquired simply as quantity, without understanding or context, is as mechanical as drinking |
| 10 | word order in last sentence | the inversion of normal order places the realisation very close to the “ever” which gives it more impact, and leaves the important word “wisdom” to follow its verb and take a central place in the last sentence |
| 11 | dash plus final statement in last sentence | the pause created by the dash puts emphasis on the last words (“merely imbibing information”) throwing them into stronger contrast with “the beginning of wisdom” which is the thrust of the passage as a whole |

8. Read lines 1-16.

- (a) Briefly describe the mood created in lines 1-3 (“I have...girl.”). 1 U

Any one of the following for 1 mark:

- 1 (very) happy
- 2 idyllic
- 3 carefree
- 4 nostalgic
- 5 calm, peaceful
- 6 any other answer which conveys a positive feeling or the importance of the memory to the writer

- (b) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 3-8 (“We are ... waiting.”) conveys a sense of awe. 3 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment could score up to 3 marks. More basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each.

Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | “We are surrounded by eight million books.” | the very short, declarative, unembellished sentence emphasises the simple, breathtaking fact |
| 2 | “eight million books” | overwhelming sense of quantity |
| 3 | “on every side” | awe-inspiring because books are inescapable, almost intimidating |
| 4 | “hundreds of yards deep” | the sheer scale of the collection |
| 5 | “at the rate of two miles a year” | impressive growth rate |
| 6 | “surrounded by”, “Behind”, “beneath” | directional details – use of a variety of prepositions and adverbial phrases of place to convey the omnipresence of books |
| 7 | “reach into the sky” | idea of towering beyond the normal, aspirational, connotations of heavenly, ... |
| 8 | “(in compact) ranks” | image of armed forces which suggests the highly organised positioning of the books |
| 9 | “subterranean” | sense of dark, mysterious, alluring |
| 10 | “subterranean stacks” | alliteration suggests hushed reverence |

11	“entombed in words”	image of burial suggests the all-encompassing presence of books	<i>Marks Code</i>
12	“unimaginable (volume)”	beyond the power of the mind to conceive	
13	“cold storage”	sci-fi idea of some potential waiting to be revived	
14	“quiet and vast and waiting”	climactic description to suggest the overpowering, slightly menacing, nature of such an enormous collection	

(c) How effective do you find the repetition of “perhaps” (lines 9-16) in conveying the writer’s recollections about libraries?

2 A/E

Marks will depend on the quality of the comment. Reference alone: 0.

Evaluation may be implicit.

Possible answer:

The repetition of “perhaps” conveys the writer’s wistful uncertainty and makes the reader aware that he has a wealth of happy memories from which to choose.

9. **By referring to one example, show how the writer’s imagery in lines 17-21 conveys the importance of libraries.** *Marks* *Code*
2 A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment on one image. An insightful comment could score up to 2 marks; a weaker comment will be worth up to 1 mark.

Mere identification of the image: 0.

If more than one image is discussed, mark all and award the better/best mark.

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.

Possible comments:

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | “temple” | just as a temple is a place of worship and reverence, a library deserves our utmost respect (because of the accumulation of knowledge which it contains) |
| 2 | “core” | just as the core is the heart, the essential part, a library is central to our lives and society |
| 3 | “citadel” | just as a citadel is a fortress, a library provides a stronghold to safeguard all that we consider most precious |

10. Read lines 22-36.

Marks Code

Explain:

- (a) what, according to the writer, the potential disadvantage of the online library is;**

1 U

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

It could signal the end of conventional libraries, (which will no longer be used) (1 mark) – ie a basic understanding of “could finally destroy traditional libraries, which will become mere warehouses for the physical objects, empty of people and life” (lines 28-30).

A gloss on “destroy” which suggests merely the physical demolition of libraries: 0.

- (b) what, according to the writer, the advantages of the online library are.**

3 U

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

Any three of the following for 1 mark each:

- 1 a single catalogue will ensure that everything is stored in one place
- 2 democracy – knowledge will be available to all
- 3 it will be impossible to wipe out knowledge (by destroying books)
- 4 totalitarian states will not be able to keep knowledge to themselves/ deny it to the masses.

11. Read lines 37-52.

Marks Code

- (a) Explain what the writer means by “there is no aesthetic substitute for the physical object” (lines 40-41).

2 U

Marks will depend on the clarity of the explanation.

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

Either or both of the following:

- 1 there is visual beauty in the book itself
- 2 there is sensual pleasure in holding the actual book

- (b) Explain why the writer believes libraries will “survive” (line 43).

2 U

Marks will depend on the clarity of the explanation.

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

Blatant lifts: 0.

Any one or more of the following:

- 1 acceptable gloss on “central to our understanding of what it is to be human” – libraries allow us to find out about life and our position in it
- 2 acceptable gloss on “sociable thinking, exploring and exchanging ideas” – function of libraries as a meeting place for discussion
- 3 acceptable gloss on “recreational” – libraries as places of relaxation or even romance

12. **How effectively does the writer use the reference to the film *Desk Set* to conclude the passage in a pleasing way? Refer in your answer to the ideas and language of line 53-59.** *Marks Code*
3 E

For full marks there must be reference to ideas and language, with some evaluative comment.

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

Ideas:

- 1 the film illustrates the conflict between libraries and new technology – the two main characters represent the two sides
- 2 the passage ends on a positive note – libraries and online catalogue can happily co-exist

Language/Style:

- 3 literal and metaphorical marriage
- 4 “smooching” – jocular, informal reference to easy, affectionate, slightly old-fashioned relationship
- 5 play on words – “everyone reads happily ever after”
- 6 single sentence final paragraph sums up the link between the film and the co-existence of libraries and an online catalogue

13. Consider the attitude displayed by each writer to traditional libraries (ie the type we have at the moment as opposed to an online library). *Marks Code*

Referring to important ideas in the passages, identify the key areas on which they agree.

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

5 U/E

The mark for this question should reflect the quality of the response in two areas:

- identification of the essential areas of agreement in attitude/ideas
- reference to/treatment of the ideas which inform the writers' attitudes

A response which clearly identifies at least three essential areas of agreement in attitude and has at least some supporting evidence will score a minimum of 3 marks.

These essential areas of agreement are:

- 1 libraries are a vital part of our culture
- 2 libraries are repositories of vast amounts of learning/knowledge
- 3 libraries provide access for everyone (to the physical object)
- 4 libraries are part of the community/encourage sociability
- 5 early experiences of libraries remain deep in the psyche

There will inevitably be some overlap among these points (eg between 1 and 2). Markers will have to judge the extent to which a candidate has covered two points or just one.

Where a candidate has identified satisfactorily at least three of these essential areas, then the decision to award 3, 4 or 5 marks will depend on the sophistication of her/his treatment of the ideas which inform each writer's attitude.

The following guidelines should be used:

5 marks	identification of essential areas of agreement, with an intelligent use of supporting evidence
4 marks	identification of essential areas of agreement, with sound use of supporting evidence
3 marks	identification of essential areas of agreement, with some supporting evidence
2 marks	identification of only two essential areas of agreement or identification of more than two without supporting evidence
1 mark	identification of just one essential area of agreement
0 marks	failure to identify any essential area of agreement and/or complete misunderstanding of the task

The following main ideas could be used in support, but some other points might be used successfully:

Passage 1:

- belief in the importance of “physical” libraries
- impact of early experiences (Drumchapel, Glasgow University)
- idea of libraries as part of the community
- libraries as guarantor of quality
- importance for future generations

Passage 2:

- early nostalgic memories of various libraries
- the library as the “hushed core of civilisation”
- the attraction of libraries (despite benefits of online plan)
- access to the “physical object”
- libraries as part of the community

[END OF SPECIMEN MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]

[C270/SQP273]

English
Higher
Critical Essay
Specimen Question Paper

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

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.

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 there is a scene dominated by confusion, complications or uncertainties.
Explain the cause(s) of the confusion, complications or uncertainties, and go on to discuss the importance of the scene to your appreciation of the play as a whole.
2. Choose a play in which a character keeps something hidden or pretends to be something she or he is not.
Explain the reasons(s) for the character's behaviour and discuss how it affects your attitude to the character.
3. Choose a play whose main theme is made clear early in the action.
Show how the dramatist introduces the theme and discuss how successfully he or she goes on to develop it.
4. Choose a play in which one scene or moment determines the fate of a main character.
Explain fully why you think this is the key moment in the character's fortunes.

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 is influenced by the presence of a powerful or overbearing character.
Show how the novelist creates this impression of the character and discuss to what extent you felt you could sympathise with him or her.
6. Choose a **novel** or **short story** in which a family disagreement plays an important part.
Explain the circumstances of the disagreement and show how the writer uses it to develop theme and/or character.
7. Choose a writer whose **short stories** often make use of dramatic or shocking or surprise endings.
By referring to at least two of his/her stories, show how the writer exploits this feature to give added impact to the stories as a whole.
8. Choose a **novel** in which the novelist makes effective use of symbolism.
Show how the writer made use of this technique to enhance 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 **work of travel writing** which introduced you to a new culture.
Show how the writer's presentation made you aware of the new culture.
10. Choose a **non-fiction text** which has made you think about an environmental issue.
Explain briefly what the issue is and at greater length show how the writer's treatment of the issue conveyed her or his point of view.
11. Choose a **biography or autobiography** which presented a person's life in an effective way.
Evaluate the techniques the author uses to make the presentation of the life story effective.

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 is light-hearted or playful or not entirely serious.
Show how the poet makes you aware of the tone, and discuss how effective the use of this tone is in dealing with the subject matter of the poem.
13. Choose two poems on the subject of war or hostility.
Compare the way the two poems treat the subject, and explain to what extent you find one more effective than the other.
14. Choose a poem which depicts one of the following: the sea, the night, the countryside, sleep, a dream, travel.
Show how the poet brings the subject to life for you.
15. Choose a poem which explores loneliness or isolation.
Show how the poet explores the theme, and discuss to what extent your appreciation of the theme was deepened by the poet's treatment.

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 which has a particularly effective or arresting opening.
Referring in detail to the opening, discuss to what extent it provides a successful introduction to the text as a whole.
17. Choose from a film or TV drama* a scene in which the conflict between two characters is at its most intense.
Outline briefly the reasons for the conflict and then by examining the scene in detail, show how it gave you a deeper appreciation of the text as a whole.
18. Choose a TV drama* in which the character struggles with her or his conscience.
Outline briefly the reasons for the character's dilemma and go on to discuss how successfully the programme-makers engage your sympathy for her or him.
19. Choose a film or TV drama* in which setting in time and/or place is significant.
Explain why you think the setting is important for your appreciation of the text.

*"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.** Choose an aspect of language which you have investigated within a specific interest group in society.
Identify the kind of group or groups you investigated, making clear what it was they had in common. Show to what extent the specialist language connected with the interest of the group(s) increased the effectiveness of communication within the group(s).
- 21.** Choose an aspect of communication technology, such as TV, e-mail, mobile phone, which has brought about developments in our language in the last decade.
Explain the nature of the developments you have investigated and evaluate what impact they had on the effectiveness of communication.
- 22.** Choose an aspect of spoken language which you have investigated within a particular age group.
Briefly describe the parameters of your investigation. Show how far the language characteristics of the group you investigated differed from the general population and go on to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of these differences.
- 23.** Choose an area of communication in which emotive language is commonly used to influence the reader, viewer or listener.
Outline the purposes of the communication(s) you have chosen. Go on to analyse the methods used and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication in achieving its purpose.

[END OF SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER]

[C270/SQP273]

English
Higher
Critical Essay
Specimen Marking Instructions

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

The Marking Procedure

1 Judging against the Performance Criteria

Each essay should first be read to establish whether it achieves success in all the Performance Criteria below, including relevance and the standards for technical accuracy (see 2 below).

Understanding

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

Analysis

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

Evaluation

The response reveals clear engagement with the *text(s) or aspects of the text(s) and stated or implied evaluation of effectiveness, substantiated by detailed and relevant evidence from the *text(s).

Expression

Structure, style and language, including use of 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.

*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.

2 Confirming Technical Accuracy

An essay which does not satisfy the requirement for “sufficient” technical accuracy cannot pass. If, however, technical accuracy is deemed “sufficient”, then there are no penalties or deductions for such errors.

The definition of “sufficiently accurate” is the same as that given below for “consistently accurate”, but with an allowance made for examination conditions, ie time pressure and no opportunity to redraft.

Consistently accurate (in line with Core Skills statement)

Few errors will be present. Paragraphs, sentences and punctuation are accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood. Spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) are infrequent.

3 Assigning a Category and Mark

Each essay should then be assigned to the appropriate Category as outlined in the Broad Descriptors, supported by reference to the Detailed Descriptors.

(a) Broad Descriptors

Essays which **pass** (ie meet the minimum requirements of the Performance Criteria) should be assigned to one of four categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
I	25	Outstanding
II	21 or 23	Very sound
III	17 or 19	Comfortably achieves the Performance Criteria
IV	13 or 15	Just succeeds in achieving the Performance Criteria

Essays which **fail** to meet the minimum requirements of one or more than one Performance Criterion should be assigned to one of two categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
V	11 or 9	Fails to achieve one or more than one Performance Criterion and/or to achieve sufficient technical accuracy, or is simply too thin
VI*	7 or 5**	Serious shortcomings

In Categories II – VI, the choice of which mark to award should be determined by the level of certainty with which the response has been assigned to the Category.

* Essays in this Category will be extremely rare. It should be used only in cases of significant misunderstanding of a text, extreme thinness, or serious weaknesses in expression and/or technical accuracy.

** Marks below 5 could, in exceptional circumstances, be awarded – for example to a response which was of extreme brevity, perhaps just a few lines.

(b) Detailed descriptors

Category I (25 marks): A sophisticated response which, allowing for the pressures of examination conditions and the limited time available, is outstanding in nearly every respect. Knowledge and understanding of the text(s) are sound. The question is addressed fully and convincingly in such a way as to show insight into the text(s) as a whole, and selection of evidence to support the argument is extensive and skilful. The essay is effectively structured as a genuine response to the question. As appropriate to the task and the text(s), the candidate demonstrates a sophisticated awareness of the literary and/or linguistic techniques being exploited. There is a committed evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task, although this is not necessarily explicit. Expression is controlled and fluent.

Dealing with longer texts, the response ranges effectively over the whole text where appropriate, selects effectively, and while focusing on the demands of the question, never loses sight of the text as a whole; dealing with shorter texts, the response uses a text which clearly allows the requirements of the question to be met fully, avoids “blanket coverage” and mechanistic, unfocused “analysis”, and shows a pleasing understanding of the text as a whole.

Category II (21 or 23 marks): A very sound response which, allowing for the pressures of examination conditions and the limited time available, is secure in most respects. Knowledge and understanding of the text(s) are sound. The question is addressed fully in such a way as to show some insight into the text(s) as a whole, and selection of evidence to support the argument is extensive. The essay is soundly structured as a genuine response to the question. As appropriate to the task and the text(s), the candidate demonstrates a sound awareness of the literary and/or linguistic techniques being exploited. There is a clear evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task, although this is not necessarily explicit. Expression is controlled.

Dealing with longer texts, the response ranges over the whole text where appropriate, selects sensibly, and while focusing on the demands of the question, never loses sight of the text as a whole; dealing with shorter texts, the response uses a text which clearly allows the requirements of the question to be met, avoids “blanket coverage” and mechanistic, unfocused “analysis”, and shows a sound understanding of the text as a whole.

Category III (17 or 19 marks): A response which, allowing for the pressures of examination conditions and the limited time available, is secure in a number of respects. Knowledge and understanding of the text(s) are on the whole sound. The question is addressed adequately in such a way as to show understanding of the text as a whole, and selection of evidence to support the argument is appropriate to the task. The essay is structured in such a way as to meet the requirements of the question. As appropriate to the task and the text(s), the candidate shows an awareness of the literary and/or linguistic techniques being exploited. There is some evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task, although this is not necessarily explicit. Expression is satisfactory.

Dealing with longer texts, the response makes some attempt to range over the whole text where appropriate, makes some selection of relevant evidence, and while focusing on the demands of the question, retains some sense of the text as a whole; dealing with shorter texts, the response uses a text which meets the requirements of the question, avoids excessive “blanket coverage” and mechanistic, unfocused “analysis”, and shows an understanding of the text as a whole.

Category IV (13 or 15 marks): A response which, allowing for the pressures of examination conditions and the limited time available, just manages to meet the minimum standard to achieve the Performance Criteria. Knowledge and understanding of the text(s) are adequate. The question is addressed sufficiently in such a way as to show reasonable understanding of the text as a whole, and there is some evidence to support the argument. There is some evidence that the essay is structured in such a way as to meet the requirements of most of the question. As appropriate to the task and the text(s), the candidate shows some awareness of the literary and/or linguistic techniques being exploited. There is some evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task, although this is not necessarily explicit. Expression is adequate.

Dealing with longer texts, the response retains some sense of the text as a whole; dealing with shorter texts, the response uses a text which meets the requirements of the question, avoids excessive use of mechanistic, unfocused “analysis”, and shows some understanding of the text as a whole.

Category V (11 or 9 marks): A response will fall into this Category for a variety of reasons: it fails to achieve sufficient technical accuracy; or knowledge and understanding of the text are not deployed as a response relevant to the task; or any analysis attempted is indiscriminating and/or unfocused; or the answer is simply too thin.

Some general guidelines

- Assessment must be holistic. It is not possible to see an essay in “subsets” such as Relevance, Analysis, Evaluation, etc. In every essay there will be strengths and weaknesses; assessment should focus as far as possible on the strengths, penalising weaknesses only when they significantly detract from the overall achievement.
- Categories are not grades. Assumptions about final grades or association of final grades (such as A, B or C) with particular categories should not influence the assessment.
- 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.
- The term “longer texts” should be taken to mean novels, most novellas, full-length plays, and particularly long poems; “shorter texts” should be taken to mean short stories, one-act plays, and most poems.
- The use of critical terminology is not an end in itself. The candidate’s explanation and appreciation of how a writer exploits literary/linguistic features is of more value than simply naming them.
- “Evaluation” need not be explicit. Indeed, in examination conditions, faced with unseen questions, the level of a candidate’s engagement with the question will be as telling as any superficial praise lavished on the text.
- Quality of expression should not be confused with “Technical Accuracy”, which is limited to matters of spelling, punctuation and grammar. An essay characterised by clumsy expression is likely to be self-penalising, but should not be failed for this alone.
- Where a question contains a twofold instruction, assessment should take a sensible view of the extent to which “both parts of the question” have been answered. Sophisticated responses will often tackle both parts concurrently, or give much more weight to the more demanding element. Weaker answers will often concentrate on the more straightforward element, perhaps to the near-exclusion of the remainder; such responses cannot score high marks, but may still pass.
- In the Descriptors, terms such as “sound”, “adequate”, “effective”, “sophisticated” and even “some”, can never be defined with precision, and their application can be made only after reference to exemplification. Detailed exemplification is given each year to those appointed to mark the examination, and is disseminated to the profession by such means as the Understanding Standards website, Professional Development Workshops, Development Visits.
- Markers should avoid hypothetical comparisons between essays at Higher and those at Intermediate 2. While a bare pass essay at Higher might sometimes compare unfavourably with a pass essay at Intermediate 2, the questions at Intermediate 2 are designed to be more straightforward than at Higher. Comparison, therefore, is not possible and should be resisted.

[END OF SPECIMEN MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]