

Course report 2026

Higher English, SCQF level 6

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

Note: we've made changes to the course assessment from session 2026–27.

Check your [subject page](#) for more information.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question papers and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

For information about the performance–spoken language, you should read the verification summary 2025–26 on the English page of our [website](#).

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 37,129

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 38,165

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	9,857	25.8	25.8	71
B	10,439	27.4	53.2	61
C	8,686	22.8	75.9	52
D	6,258	16.4	92.3	42
No award	2,925	7.7	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

General commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels, and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It's very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do

this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).

How the course assessment performed

Question paper: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

This question paper performed broadly as intended. Most candidates were familiar with the topic and engaged well with it, leading to a slight easing in demand in the reading challenge. Most candidates had enough time to complete the paper, although a small percentage did not complete questions 8 and 9.

The two passages provided appropriate challenge in terms of content and language. They focused on the challenges faced by environmental campaigners, outlining the nature and extent of the problems caused by climate change:

- the drawbacks in using language that can be interpreted positively
- the role of big oil and gas companies
- the need for greater urgency and a degree of hope in the messaging

We received positive feedback on the passages from centres, candidates and on social media.

The eight questions on passage 1 gave candidates opportunities to apply a range of skills, for example identification of key ideas, explanation of the writer's ideas, analysis of language including word choice, sentence structure, imagery and tone. In the final question, candidates had to identify three key ideas that the writers of both passages agreed on and give evidence to support their choices.

Question paper: Critical Reading

In response to feedback from centres and candidates, we increased the exam duration for this question paper by 15 minutes.

Section 1: Scottish texts

The Scottish text section performed as intended and gave candidates the opportunity to respond to the text or texts they had studied during the course, demonstrating their knowledge and analytical skill.

As in previous years, the emphasis in the Scottish text questions was on analysis. In the first three questions in each option, candidates had to comment on the use of language and literary techniques to convey central concerns, such as aspects and experiences of characters, theme and mood and to create, for example, tension or an effective ending.

In the final 10-mark questions, candidates had to discuss an element of the writer's work, for example an aspect of characterisation; a theme, such as the impact of change or a specific feature such as conflict; use of contrast, imagery and/or symbolism in relation to central concerns in both the text printed in the question paper and the wider work or other works.

This year, there were new texts and collections in the Scottish text question: *Sequamur* by Donald S Murray, *The Sunlight Pilgrims* by Jenni Fagin, the poetry of Imtiaz Dharker and Kathleen Jamie along with a new Scottish short story and poetry collection.

In terms of uptake, the most popular genre was poetry. The most popular option was Carol Ann Duffy, followed by *Men Should Weep* by Ena Lamont Stewart and the poetry of Norman MacCaig, *Jekyll and Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and the short stories of Iain Crichton Smith. In poetry, after Carol Ann Duffy and Norman MacCaig, the most popular choice was Liz Lochhead, followed by Don Paterson. For the new poetry options, more candidates chose Imtiaz Dharker and Kathleen Jamie, and a small number answered on the Scottish poetry collection. In drama, after *Men Should Weep*, *The Slab Boys* by John Byrne was the more popular choice. Some candidates studied the new play, *Sequamur*, which was the most popular of the new

texts. In prose, after *Jekyll and Hyde* and the short stories of Iain Crichton Smith, the more popular prose option was the Scottish short story collection. A small number of candidates studied *The Sunlight Pilgrims*.

Section 2: Critical essay

The critical essay questions performed as intended.

Candidates answered on a range of texts for their critical essays, with most choosing questions from drama or prose fiction. Candidate performance was similar across the different genres. This year, there was a significant increase in the number of candidates studying longer texts, such as novels and plays. These texts worked well for candidates as they offer a range of material in terms of characterisation and thematic development, through which to demonstrate their reading skills. Some candidates wrote about shorter texts, such as short stories or non-fiction essays, and others wrote about media texts, especially films.

Some candidates wrote their essay on a text that was also in the Scottish text list, a valid choice if they answered on a different genre in the Scottish text section. A few candidates wrote essays on the new Scottish texts, for example *The Sunlight Pilgrims*, *Sequamur* and the poetry of Imtiaz Dharker.

In drama, Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire* was a very popular choice. Other popular drama choices included *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, *The Crucible*, *All My Sons*, and *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, and other works by Tennessee Williams, such as *The Glass Menagerie* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*.

In prose, F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* was a particularly popular novel, along with *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J D Salinger, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini's, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *1984* by George Orwell, and *The Wonder* by Emma Donoghue.

Texts previously in the Scottish text list were also popular, for example *The Cone-Gatherers* by Robin Jenkins and *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassie Gibbon. Short story choices included *I have no mouth and I must scream* by Harlan Ellison, *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and *The Story of an Hour* by Kate Chopin.

In non-fiction, the works of George Orwell were popular, especially *Marrakech* and *A Hanging*. Other popular texts were *Life on Thin Ice* by Dan McDougall, *Consider the Lobster* by David Foster Wallace and essays from Maggie O'Farrell's collection *I am, I am, I am* including 'Lungs' and 'Neck'.

As many candidates chose poetry for the Scottish text section, there were fewer essays on poetry for the critical essay. Popular poems for essays included the works of Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Robert Browning, Philip Larkin and John Keats. Other poems studied included *The New Bride* by Catherine Smith, *After the Titanic* by Derek Mahon and *At Marsden Bay* by Peter Reading.

In the film and television drama section, popular choices included *Get Out*, *The Truman Show*, *The Shining*, *The Godfather*, *Psycho* and *Shutter Island*.

A very small number of candidates chose to write on language.

All questions were chosen by some candidates.

Portfolio-writing

Candidates submit one piece of writing for external assessment, chosen from either broadly creative or broadly discursive writing. The portfolio-writing performed as expected and was in line with previous years.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

Most candidates engaged well with the passage, which focused on the efforts of climate campaigners. They approached the task carefully and many performed well.

- Question 1: most candidates successfully analysed two examples of language used to convey dangers threatening our planet; some managed more than two. Successful analysis commented on word choice of 'scorching', 'unbearable', 'unquenchable' and 'emergency'.
- Question 3: most candidates successfully explained one or two reasons for the lack of interest in environmental threats; many managed three. Popular choices included the human tendency to prioritise immediate problems, our inability to plan for combatting future issues and our urge to be distracted by other events. Most candidates used their own words to explain these points.
- Question 4: many candidates successfully analysed two examples of language used to convey the writer's criticism of the oil and gas industry; some managed three. The most popular technique was analysis of word choice, including 'despicable', 'greed', 'sweet-talk', 'peddling' and 'relentlessly'.
- Questions 6: many candidates successfully analysed two examples of how the writer conveyed the ineffectiveness of the language used by climate campaigners; some analysed more than two. Successful analysis of word choice included 'gentle/soothing', 'ambiguous', 'blank faces' and 'confused'. Many candidates successfully analysed the use of the word 'hot' and the contradiction between positive connotations of this word and the intention to convey the danger involved in increased temperatures. Some candidates successfully analysed the use of a list.
- Question 9: many candidates successfully identified at least two key areas of agreement about the challenges facing climate campaigners. Of the six possible agreements, popular choices were the fact that the crisis is happening now, the lack of urgency in public attitudes, the role of fossil fuel companies, and the need

for improved communication of messages to the public. Most candidates provided appropriate evidence to support their ideas in the form of quotations and/or short comments; many provided detailed/insightful evidence in the form of detailed/insightful comments, sometimes supported by quotations.

Question paper: Critical Reading

Candidates prepared well for the critical reading question paper. When answering on the Scottish text and critical essay questions, candidates demonstrated enthusiasm for their texts and engagement with, for example, characters and themes, supported by detailed knowledge and understanding.

Section 1: Scottish texts

Candidate performance was strong in this section of the question paper, particularly in the final 10-mark question.

Many candidates:

- successfully selected and made appropriate comments on references or quotations from the extract or text
- spent sufficient time answering the final 10-mark question, providing full and well-organised answers, which made appropriate links between the printed extract or text and the wider work studied
- approached commonality by commenting on the text or extract in the question paper and one other text or extract, particularly in their approach to shorter texts. Some candidates approached commonality by making perceptive comments that showed good understanding of how the question related to the text or texts studied. Both approaches were valid and many candidates performed well
- provided clear structure for their answers relating to 'commonality', 'extract/text', and 'elsewhere/other texts' sections. This approach helped them organise their ideas. In the 'elsewhere' section (particularly for longer texts), some candidates used references rather than quotations: this worked well as they were not limited by specific quotations that may not suit the question. This approach is exemplified in some of our [Understanding Standards materials](#). Most chose to answer this question in a series of bullet points, an approach that worked well.

Candidates who had a broad knowledge of their text or texts and a good understanding of the central concerns/themes performed well in this section. This approach was more successful than trying to fit an answer around pre-learned quotations

Section 2: Critical essay

In this section, many candidates wrote about longer and more complex texts, such as novels and plays, and many performed well.

- Most candidates chose a suitable question and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the texts they studied, supported by textual evidence.
- Most candidates showed enthusiasm for and engagement with the texts, often evident through their whole essay and also in their evaluative stance.
- Many candidates analysed the effects of features specific to their chosen genre.
- Many candidates constructed a relevant response to their chosen question and dealt with both parts of the question.
- Many candidates displayed their knowledge and understanding by creating a line of argument that was a direct response to the question, using quotation and/or reference to enhance the argument. This was a successful approach that helped candidates to structure their essays relevantly.
- Many essays were in the 10–12 mark range.

Portfolio–writing

Most candidates submitted a piece of writing that addressed the requirement for a piece of broadly creative or broadly discursive writing. Candidates have the opportunity to redraft and improve pieces, and many candidates' writing and technical accuracy in their finished work was of a high standard.

Most candidates chose to write on a topic or in a genre that interested them. Many candidates gained between 9 and 11 marks. However, there were slightly more candidates gaining marks in the higher mark ranges.

In creative writing:

- many candidates chose to write about personal experience, often focusing on significant life events. A number explored the pressures caused by social media on young people growing up in today's world. Many candidates who wrote on such personal topics, did so with maturity and insight
- many explored the challenges and achievements of sporting, musical, dance and dramatic performance experiences, often with insight and reflection
- many candidates who chose to submit imaginative writing showed awareness of genre requirements, such as character and thematic development. Candidates gaining high marks focused on creation of atmosphere, setting and characterisation, while keeping plots simple
- a small number of candidates chose to submit poetry or drama, and this worked well for some
- a small number of candidates chose to write in Scots, for example West Coast, Doric and Shetlandic Scots. This approach often enriched candidates' writing

In discursive writing:

- most candidates chose a subject that interested them, for example environmental topics such as climate change, the impact of generative artificial intelligence, the influence of social media, fast fashion and aspects of celebrity culture. There were topics of local relevance, such as the Cameron Barracks in Inverness, child poverty in Glasgow, and cuts to music services in various authorities. Many candidates handled these well
- many candidates did appropriate research, structured their essays effectively and expressed their ideas clearly
- most candidates chose to word process their pieces, and the standard of presentation was high
- most identified any sources used

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

- Question 5: many candidates gained 1 mark for explaining the idea of ineffective messaging as a reason for the lack of public understanding of global warming. However, few candidates gained the second mark for explaining either the lack of understanding of scientists' consensus on climate change or the insufficiently forceful messaging on the subject.
- Question 8: many candidates found it challenging to analyse how the writer used imagery and sentence structure to convey the urgency of the situation. When answering on imagery, some candidates did not analyse 'propaganda war', 'battlefield' or 'frontline' as a metaphorical war of words, instead referring to literal fighting between different groups. When answering on sentence structure, some candidates provided generic or insufficient analysis of the use of short sentences, repetition or a single dash.
- Some candidates chose examples of word choice instead of imagery or sentence structure and missed out on marks.
- In questions requiring candidates to use their own words, some struggled to do this, instead lifting large sections or key expressions such as 'climate change' from the passage, and missed out on marks.
- In questions requiring candidates to analyse the use of language features, some candidates tended to assert the effects created by language rather than analysing how these were created and gained no marks.

Question paper: Critical Reading

Section 1: Scottish texts

- Some candidates tended to assert rather than analyse in the lower-mark questions and in the final 10-mark question. Answers that only explain the selected word or phrase gain no marks.
- Some candidates began by answering the final 10-mark question, an approach which often led to difficulties as they had not familiarised themselves with the text by answering the first three questions.

- Some candidates based their answers in the 'elsewhere' part of the final question on specific, pre-learned quotations. This approach often limited the scope and relevance of their answer. There is no requirement to use quotations, and candidates who performed well demonstrated their wider knowledge through comments accompanied by references and/or quotations.

Section 2: Critical essay

- Some candidates wrote on short or less complex texts and did not develop a sufficiently detailed or coherent point of view.
- Some candidates structured their essays around quotations, rather than structuring a line of thought supported by quotations or references. These essays lacked coherence and did not demonstrate breadth of knowledge.
- Some candidates did not focus on the requirements of the question, producing a more generic essay. These essays, even if demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the text, were less relevant and did not gain high marks.
- Some candidates wrote very short essays and were unable to address the question fully.
- Some candidates had difficulty with the requirement to 'discuss how this contributes to your appreciation/understanding of the text as a whole.' Some candidates focused on retelling the narrative or describing characters in a limited way. Other essays had inappropriate microanalysis, for example detailed consideration of punctuation or word choice in drama or longer prose texts.
- A small number of candidates had difficulty choosing an appropriate critical essay question and were unable to develop a relevant line of thought as a result.
- A small number of candidates did not follow the genre requirements of the paper, for example using a drama text to answer on prose or mixing up non-fiction and fiction texts.
- A very small number did not follow the instruction that 'Your essay must be on a different genre from that chosen in section 1.' Some candidates wrote on prose fiction for the Scottish text question and prose non-fiction for the essay.
- A very small number answered their Scottish text question and critical essay question on the same writer or the same text.

Portfolio–writing

- A few candidates did not adhere to the word limit of 1,300 words. This approach did not work well for candidates, as they often produced overlong and less well-structured pieces. A small number of candidates wrote very short pieces.
- In imaginative writing, some candidates concentrated too much on plot, developing complicated or unrealistic narratives at the expense of developing character, atmosphere and theme. Some candidates submitted a collection of poems, in which a weaker poem affected the overall mark.
- In personal writing, some candidates did not focus enough on exploring their thoughts, feelings and reactions to an experience. Instead, they spent too long detailing the event or the build up to it.
- In discursive writing, some candidates asserted their views, but without enough argument or evidence to support these.
- Some candidates created overlong and repetitive pieces, which lost coherence and clarity.
- In a small number of cases, candidates conducted research, but they did not use this effectively to support their viewpoint, for example using quotation from sources without integration into the line of argument.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

This paper requires candidates to demonstrate both broad and close reading skills.

You should ensure candidates:

- read challenging non-fiction, for example broadsheet journalism and travel writing
- explore how writers use language to convey ideas, and how specific features such as imagery and word choice achieve their effects in a real-world setting to help them confidently approach a range of questions
- practise identifying key ideas in a writer's line of argument to help prepare for the final question on both passages
- show their full understanding in questions asking for a response on the writer's ideas
- are aware that in 'Identify' and 'Explain' questions, they must show their understanding using their own words. Direct lifts of words and expressions from the question and/or passage gain no marks
- explain their analytical comments as clearly and fully as they can
- are aware that in questions requiring analysis of the writer's use of language, no marks are awarded at Higher for references or quotations alone
- analyse how a technique achieved its effects: no marks are awarded for assertion of what that effect is. For example, if a candidate chooses to answer on an image, it is not enough to assert what the effect of the image is: they must analyse how this effect has been achieved
- if they choose to answer on a list, short sentences or parenthesis, know that it is not enough to provide a generic comment on the function of the feature: the comment must refer to the passage and to the requirements of the question
- when answering on a list, know that referring to the number, scale or variety of items is a good starting point
- when answering on short sentences or parenthesis, know that examining their emphatic function in the context of the passage is an effective approach

- if choosing to answer on word choice, know that considering the connotations of the chosen word or expression is an effective approach. We recommend that candidates focus on one word or a small group of words, rather than quoting a whole sentence or longer expression. This helps them to focus on the impact of the word or words and avoid making generalised comments that are more about explaining the meaning, rather than analysing the technique. Comments that only explain the meaning of an expression or word gain no marks
- are aware the division of marks in many Higher questions are '2 marks for detailed/insightful comment; 1 mark for more basic comment'
- are aware that 'at least two examples' does not mean they're restricted to giving two points in their answer
- in 4-mark analysis questions, know providing four points is one effective strategy
- are aware that using bullet points can help structure their answers for high-mark questions

Question paper: Critical Reading

Changes have been made to this course following feedback. These are live from session 2026–27.

- Critical Reading Section 1 Scottish text: the allocation of marks has been amended. There are 12 marks available for the initial analysis questions on the printed text or extract and 8 marks for the final question. In the final question, there will continue to be 2 marks available for commonality and 2 marks for the extract or text used in the exam. There will now be 4 marks available for 'elsewhere' comments rather than the current 6 marks.

There's no change to teaching and learning. Please inform candidates of these changes and update your assessments, for example prelims. The specimen question paper and marking instructions have been updated to reflect this change.

For the critical essay, you should ensure candidates study texts of sufficient demand for Higher. The [Higher English Course Specification](#) has guidance on text selection.

For the Scottish text and critical essay, candidates should revise overarching ideas, themes and issues when preparing their texts.

Section 1: Scottish text

You should ensure candidates:

- have a good overall knowledge of the play, novel, collection of short stories or poems for the final question in the Scottish text section
- are aware of the need to analyse when answering the initial questions in the Scottish text section. This goes beyond asserting what the impact of a word or expression is, by demonstrating understanding of how that impact is achieved. Explaining only the meaning of a word or an expression gains no marks
- make appropriate links within a longer text or between shorter texts in the final question in this section. You should ensure they are aware that there is no need to quote when making these connections: relevant references are as valid
- are aware of the three-part requirement of the final question in this section. This is showing general understanding of how the question links to the wider text or texts (commonality); analysis of the printed extract or text (extract); and commenting on the wider text or texts ('elsewhere'). Candidates might benefit from organising their answers in a series of bullet points in three sections
- in the commonality part of the final question, are aware there are two acceptable approaches. One is to focus on general points about the writer's work in relation to the question. Alternatively, they can comment on the text or extract in the question paper and one other text or extract. Candidates should go beyond making a basic link between the question and a text or texts for the marks. A careful reading of the question is important here. For example, if the question asks about the link between the experiences of characters and central concerns, their answer should refer to this. Similarly, if the question refers to a specific technique, such as contrast, their answer must refer to this technique rather than making general comments about central concerns. If the question asks about, for example, the impact of change or the impact of secrecy, answers must go beyond simple statements about change or identifying examples of secrets
- are aware in the final part of the answer, which relates to the wider text or texts ('elsewhere'), that quotations are not needed. Learning a series of quotations and attempting to 'fit' these to the question is not beneficial for candidates. An approach based heavily on pre-learned quotations may be limited in scope or

lacking in relevance to the question. References are as valid as quotations. Using very short quotations, including one-word quotations, is unlikely to provide enough material to answer this part of the question well. For poetry answers, learning quotations from other poems can be a starting point, but the comments are where candidates gain marks. Developing a broad understanding of the wider work or works is a more useful approach when preparing for this part of the question

Section 2: Critical essay

You should ensure candidates:

- are aware of the requirements for choosing an appropriate question. This must be from a different genre to the Scottish text section, and an appropriate genre of question for their text
- are aware that their critical essay must be relevant to the question
- avoid retelling the story or repeating information that is not relevant to the question
- are aware that preparing an essay and trying to make it 'fit' a question in the question paper is not a helpful strategy
- are aware that microanalysis is not always appropriate or advisable in a critical essay, particularly on a larger text. There are many acceptable approaches to planning and developing the line of argument in an essay
- know that technical accuracy is important in the critical essay

An audio presentation and candidate evidence, which demonstrate many of these points, are available on our [Understanding Standards website](#).

You should be aware of the need to support complex analysis appropriate to SCQF level 6 when selecting texts for the critical essay. Shorter or less demanding texts do not always help candidates to perform well.

Portfolio-writing

You should ensure candidates:

- read and write pieces in different genres as a good starting point to help them develop their writing skills
- adhere to the stated word limit (1,300 words). It is possible to perform well without reaching this maximum, and overlong essays can become repetitive and self-penalising. However, very short pieces are unlikely to gain high marks
- are aware they should have clarity and coherence of structure in their writing
- in imaginative writing, focus on using language effectively to develop characters and atmosphere, rather than inventing over-elaborate or unrealistic plots
- in personal writing, reflect on their experiences, conveying thoughts, feelings and personality rather than relating a sequence of events
- when submitting poetry, are aware there is no requirement to submit more than one poem. It is acceptable to submit a collection of poems, but these must be linked, for example thematically or through the use of narrative voices.

A group of poems is considered and marked as one piece: therefore, inclusion of a weaker poem in a collection might negatively affect the overall mark.

Candidates should not add an explanation or analysis of their own work: this is not taken into consideration when marking

- when provided with poetry as a stimulus for writing, do not write their own 'versions' of poems, which remain close to the structure or content of the original
- in discursive writing, choose a topic that genuinely interests them and research the topic carefully
- know they must acknowledge all sources they use in preparation for pieces of writing. Taking time on the organisation and acknowledgement of sources improves presentation and develops good study habits
- are aware personal choice can be beneficial when considering topics for discursive writing. Often local and/or current issues have powerful relevance for them, and they often handle these topics well
- in discursive writing, are aware they must do enough research so they can fully explore their argument. Candidates should include evidence in an essay as part

of the coherent structure, rather than added as, for example, a long quotation from a source

- take care when preparing their final drafts, as technical accuracy is important in the portfolio–writing
- choose their own topics for discursive and/or creative pieces. This tends to work in candidates' favour. A whole cohort or most of a cohort submitting pieces in the same genre or on the same topic is unlikely to benefit candidates
- are aware there is no single genre that is likely to gain higher marks: each piece is read and assessed on its own merits
- refer to the 'Assessment conditions' section for the portfolio–writing in the Higher English Course Specification on our [website](#)

We remind centres about our current position statement on the use of [generative artificial intelligence \(GenAI\)](#) in assessments (including examples for English).