

N5

National Qualifications

2025

English

Critical Reading

Tuesday, 6 May

Instructions to Candidates

Candidates should enter their surname, forename(s), date of birth, Scottish candidate number and the name and level of the subject at the top of their first answer sheet.

Total marks — 40

SECTION 1 — Scottish text — 20 marks

Read an extract from a Scottish text you have previously studied.

[For Section 1, only Part C — Poetry Text 1 is provided in this paper.]

Attempt ALL questions for this text.

SECTION 2 – Critical essay – 20 marks

Attempt ONE question from the following genre – Prose

[For Section 2, only Prose has been provided in this paper.]

An ow in the margin indicates a new question.

[Braille page 2] You must clearly identify the question number you are attempting on your answer sheet.

Marks are shown in square brackets at the end of each question or part question.

[Braille page 3] SECTION 1 — SCOTTISH TEXT — 20 marks

PART C — SCOTTISH TEXT — POETRY

Text 1 — Poetry

Read the poem below and then attempt the following questions.

In Mrs Tilscher's Class

by Carol Ann Duffy

You could travel up the Blue Nile
with your finger, tracing the route
while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.
Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswan.

5 That for an hour, then a skittle of milk
and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.
A window opened with a long pole.
The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.

This was better than home. Enthralling books.

10 The classroom glowed like a sweet shop.
Sugar paper. Coloured shapes. Brady and Hindley

[Braille page 4] faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.

Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found

she'd left a good gold star by your name.

- 15 The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.
A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term, the inky tadpoles changed
from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs
hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce,

- 20 followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking
away from the lunch queue. A rough boy
told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared
at your parents, appalled, when you got back home.

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.

- 25 A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,
fractious under the heavy, sexy sky. You asked her
[Braille page 5] how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled,
then turned away. Reports were handed out.

You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown,

- 30 as the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

Questions

- ow 35. Refer to lines 1-8. By referring to two examples of language, explain how the poet makes it clear that memories of the classroom were positive. [4 marks]
- ow 36. Refer to lines 9-16. By referring to one example of language, explain how the poet makes it clear that the speaker felt supported in the classroom. [2 marks]
- ow 37. Refer to lines 17-23. By referring to two examples of language, explain how the poet creates a clear impression that the children are growing up. [4 marks]
- ow 38. Refer to lines 24-30. By referring to one example of language, explain how the poet makes it clear that the speaker finds growing up disturbing. [2 marks]

[Braille page 6]

- ow 39. By referring to this extract and to at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet explores powerful emotions. [8 marks]

[Braille page 7]

SECTION 2 — CRITICAL ESSAY — 20 marks

Attempt ONE question from the following genre — Prose.

PROSE

Answers to questions in this part should refer to the text and to such relevant features as characterisation, setting, language, key incident(s), climax, turning point, plot, structure, narrative technique, theme, ideas, description ...

- ow 3. Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction which explores a theme that interests you. By referring to appropriate techniques, explain how this theme is explored.
- ow 4. Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction in which there is a memorable character. By referring to appropriate techniques, explain how the writer makes this character memorable.

[END OF SECTION 2]

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]