

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 4 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 owl 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 4 — Poetry

Read the poem below and then attempt the following questions.

Whilst Leila Sleeps by Jackie Kay

I am moving in the dead of night,  
packing things, turning out lights.

My fingers tie knots like fish nets.

I want to be in my mother's house

5 but she is all the way over

the other side of the world. Boxes;

I can't see out of the back window.

Leila is a bundle in her car seat.

Her small mouth hanging open.

10 Maybe it is not innocence after all,

it could be the sleep of oblivion.

My headlights are paranoid eyes

sweeping the streets for — what?

A split second before they appeared  
15 I thought I was safe. What is that fear.  
  
Does it have a name. They want my name.  
Their smiles tighten my stomach.  
**[Braille page 4]** I bite on my tongue, hard. Their faces.  
I have no witness. They take my licence,  
20 my papers. Now there is nothing left  
  
but to go with the men in plain suits.  
Leila stirs and opens her eyes wide.  
I try and say something to soothe.  
My voice is a house with the roof  
25 blown off. What do I tell my daughter —  
  
We are done for. There is a need to worry.  
I cannot lie to her. The night dreams  
my terror; a slow light tails the fast car;  
Leila tugs at my coat. I whisper  
30 her cradle song and she holds on.

#### Questions

- ow 49. Refer to lines 1-7. By referring to two examples of language, explain how the poet creates an atmosphere of fear. [4 marks]
- ow 50. Refer to lines 8-21. By referring to two examples of language, explain how the poet creates a sense of uncertainty. [4 marks]
- [Braille page 5]**
- ow 51. Refer to lines 22-30. By referring to two examples of language, explain how the poet makes the speaker's feelings clear. [4 marks]
- ow 52. By referring to this poem and to at least one other poem by Kay, show how the poet explores challenging situations. [8 marks]

[END OF SECTION 1]

**[Braille page 6]**

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]