

**C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION®  
MAY/JUNE 2012**

**LITERATURES IN ENGLISH**

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2012 examination was the first sitting of the 2010 revised syllabus for Literatures in English. The total candidate entry increased by 10.3 per cent over 2011. In Unit 1, the improvement in candidate performance seen in 2011 was maintained in 2012. However, candidate performance in Unit 2 declined by five per cent. In order to improve performance, candidates are encouraged to practice good time management so as to complete all tasks assigned. Additionally, candidates must continue to employ analytical and evaluative skills in their responses to the essay topics, and to be judicious, coherent and cohesive in their organization and communication of information.

In the area of knowledge, candidates should demonstrate aspects of knowledge beyond the basic features of genre — plot, theme and characterization — and should be able to demonstrate knowledge of literary devices and their functions, and knowledge of literary context. In the module on drama, theme, plot and characterization are emphasized to the general exclusion of knowledge of other generic features of drama, knowledge of literary devices and their function and knowledge of literary context.

While many candidates are familiar with the conventions of the poetic genre, some candidates fail to demonstrate knowledge of the genre beyond the basic level, that is, what the poem is about. Although attention is now being given to symbolism, imagery and diction, it is important that candidates demonstrate knowledge of the other generic aspects of poetry. Nevertheless, there is evidence that, to their credit, many more candidates are exploring the range of poetic devices.

On the prose module, candidates are very keen to discuss theme, plot and characterization, but often ignore the other generic features, such as narrative technique. In both poetry and prose, candidates need to understand not just the terms associated with the generic features, but the ways in which writers manipulate the different features of each genre to achieve artistic effect.

The ability to explain how different artistic choices reinforce an author's view on a particular issue is an important skill for candidates to learn; listing the features of the genre is not sufficient. In the prose genre, some candidates are merely narrating the story or relevant sections of the story instead of producing analytic essays that engage with the stimulus provided. In all genres, candidates have expanded their range of knowledge of extra-textual information — contextual, biographical and critical — and have accordingly improved their performance on the knowledge profile. However, candidates must be encouraged to integrate extra-textual information appropriately and relevantly.

There is evidence that some candidates have improved their essay writing, question analysis and argumentative skills, and as such, their grades for application and organization have improved. Candidates should be mindful of the importance of writing a good introduction; this entails more than a repeat of the question posed and a list of the books or poems that will be referenced in their discussion. The expectation is that emphasis will be placed on isolating the key terms in the question, and, if necessary, defining those key words while building an argument in which a position on the issue is taken and a clear focus is established to guide the reader. In other words, candidates must

be able to write a thesis statement articulating their own position in relation to the question, to develop their supporting arguments and to marshal different kinds of evidence they will be using to support their argument. Candidates should also be encouraged to effectively use topic sentences, clincher sentences and transitions to organize their argument.

Some candidates need to be taught how to integrate textual as well as secondary source information (from critical sources) into their discussions. Additionally, training in helping candidates to analyse examination questions must continue so that candidates will learn to strip away the trappings of a question, distil its essence, formulate an apt thesis, and effectively synthesize and marshal information (textual, literary devices/elements, and extra-textual) to address the thesis.

Candidates should be given more CAPE structured practice questions to aid in their preparation for the level of analysis that is required of them in the examination. Additionally, teachers also need to engage students in more critical-thinking discussions to get them to interrogate varied aspects of the text.

While film versions of literary texts can be very useful in exploring the ideas and issues of the set texts and in providing a context for evaluating artistic choices, they should not be used as a substitute for the actual literary text.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **UNIT 1**

#### **Paper 01 – Short-Answer Questions**

On Paper 01, far too many candidates spend time rewriting the questions and far too many fail to attempt entire questions or parts of questions. Since the marks on Paper 01 are awarded for specific responses, failure to attempt a question results in the loss of marks for that section or question. Candidates should also pay attention to how many marks are awarded for particular questions because they might lose too many marks when they fail to attempt questions with a higher weighting of marks. In many cases where candidates were scoring eight or ten out of a possible 24 marks, these were candidates who did not answer the whole question or left out parts of a question.

It is clear that candidates need to be given practice in time management under examination conditions. Some candidates spent far too long on the first and second modules and seemed to have had difficulty completing the third module. It is important, therefore, that candidates maximize their chances of doing well by giving due attention to all modules on the paper. Also, all candidates must pay equal attention to both Paper 01 and Paper 02 in order to maximize their performance overall.

#### **Module 1: Drama**

The questions on this dramatic extract tested candidates' ability to identify setting, character traits, and props, and to comment on the dramatic significance of props and

stage directions. Candidates were also expected to explain irony and comment on its significance to the extract as a whole.

Many candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the genre of drama in their addressing of the elements of character traits, props and stage directions. Dramatic significance, however, needed to have been comprehensively discussed, showing how props, stage directions or irony advanced the plot, or developed a character, or heightened conflict or created audience expectancy. Candidates must learn not to substitute a comprehensive response with one that is off-topic, unnecessarily lengthy and uninformative.

### Question 1

Generally, this comprehension question was well answered. Candidates were able to identify setting and to state the activity taking place on stage.

### Question 2

This application question was well handled and many candidates received full marks for this question. Most candidates could identify one character trait for Creeper and Father O'Connor, and they were also able to correctly cite evidence, whether a quotation, line reference, paraphrase or summary, to support their answers. Weaker candidates wrote extensively about the behaviour or action of characters rather than highlight traits.

### Question 3

This comprehension/analysis question required an identification of props and a commentary on their dramatic significance. Well prepared candidates correctly identified the props — the cot, the book and the chair, while less prepared candidates confused props with costumes. The commentaries, however, were not always insightful. An appropriate response on the dramatic significance of the prop could have been

*the cot highlights Father O'Connor's dominance in the relationship, his strength: he forces Creeper down onto the cot. It also highlights his bravery.*

### Question 4

This analysis type question was the least well done question in the module. Like Question 3, candidates' commentaries on *dramatic significance* tended to be deficient. Candidates' responses needed to have focused more pointedly on *significance*, discussing issues such as the stage directions fuelling plot development, animation of drama, or establishing setting, mood and context.

### Question 5

Generally, this two-part application/evaluation question could have been better handled. Candidates were asked to explain the irony in lines 39–40 and comment on the

significance of the irony to the extract as a whole. For Part (a), weaker candidates merely provided a definition of irony rather than apply the concept to the situation in the line. A majority of the responses to Part (b) did not sufficiently engage with the word *significance* and/or *the extract as a whole*. A suitable answer to Part (b) would have been that

*the irony facilitates character revelation. The line is effective because Creeper who seemed threatening, tough and in control of himself breaks down at the end of the scene. It allows the audience to witness his vulnerability.*

## **Module 2: Poetry**

The questions in this module tested candidates' ability to identify activities taking place within the poem, to correctly identify literary devices such as imagery, metaphor, alliteration, simile and symbolism and to evaluate the effectiveness of their use. Candidates were also required to comment on the significance of the poet's use of certain phrases and symbols, and to comment on the effectiveness of the last line of the poem. On this module, most candidates performed satisfactorily. However, Question 10 posed a challenge for a number of candidates.

### Question 6

This comprehension question required candidates to identify activities taking place within the poem, and for the most part, candidates did a commendable job in answering this question.

### Question 7

This question was two-pronged, assessing candidates' comprehension of literary devices and also their ability to analyse by offering a commentary on the effectiveness of the devices. For the most part, candidates managed to correctly identify the devices; however, the commentaries on effectiveness tended to be limited and not sufficiently convincing. Interestingly, many candidates did not seem to know what a *sunflower* was, which therefore meant that they did not answer the second part of the question or provided inaccurate or inadequate responses. One would have expected that had candidates decided on symbolism, the following would be an appropriate commentary:

*The writer's use of the open sunflower or open faces of the children as a symbol is very effective in conveying the sense of eagerness and welcome that the children (when young) had towards their parents, and which was still anticipated when they were teenagers (after the silent treatment had stopped). The flower opening is now transferred to the eagerness of the children to accept their parents' engagement with them.*

Question 8

This comprehension/analysis question, which required candidates to explain the meaning of two phrases and to comment on their significance, was a little better done than the previous question, which tested similar skills set. Most candidates produced satisfactory responses in their explanation of the first phrase, producing answers like

*the poet uses the metonymy of the “mouth” to represent the children and by this focus on the mouth, she (the poet) highlights the theme or issue of communication as the theme of the poem or the theme of communication causing a problem in the parent/children relationship*

when commenting on effectiveness. Unfortunately, too many candidates grappled unsuccessfully with the second phrase, producing unimaginative and/or inadequate commentaries on the significance of the phrase. Examiners were expecting commentaries along this line:

*The image of skin stretching to fit bones reminds us of a kind of mutation taking place in an alien body. The image of an alien figure helps to convey the parents’ sense of estrangement from their children. It is almost as if the parents are unable to identify or accept that the children are the same ones they once knew.*

Question 9

This question tested candidates’ ability to analyse by asking them to comment on the significance of the poet’s use of “door” as a symbol. In responding to this question, candidates tended to focus on explaining what a symbol is, rather than treating with its significance in the lines so indicated. As such, many of the responses remained at the literal level instead of advancing to the analytical level. The following are examples of what was expected of candidates in responding to the poet’s use of the “door” as a symbol (Line 3 and Line 9, respectively):

“Doors and lips shut” (Line 3) — *The first reference to doors helps to symbolize the separation or gap between the generations. The shut door suggests a separation/isolation between the parent and the children and in this way suggests a separation/isolation between the generations.*

or

“Years later the door opens” (Line 9) — *This second reference to the door comes to symbolize the change in the parent-child relationship, where the children have begun to interact with the parent again. An open door suggests much more welcome and accommodation than the closed door does.*

Question 10

Candidates did not perform satisfactorily on this evaluation type question. While most candidates were able to explain the last line of the poem, they could not link its effectiveness to the poem as a whole. Even more surprising, some candidates did not

seem to know what “pearls” were. An appropriate response to this question would have been:

*The description of the children as “glowing almost like pearls” helps to reinforce the theme of “growing up” as a kind of slow and sometimes difficult process that can eventually produce beautiful and worthwhile people. A pearl is a beautiful gem that takes time to mature, cocooned in a shell before it is revealed. The children who become uncommunicative and shut themselves away for some years like the hidden treasure of the pearl will emerge later to show their beauty and worth.*

### **Module 3: Prose Fiction**

Candidates understood the extract and performed fairly well on this module. The questions here tested candidates’ knowledge of narrator’s tone, symbolism, narrative point of view, and their ability to assess the effectiveness of the use of certain statements, as well as provide commentary on the significance of the title of the extract.

#### Question 11

Candidates’ responses to this comprehension question were generally accurate and precise in explaining why Teddy was so good at what he did. Responses ranged from *Teddy was an expert/professional* to *Teddy does not leave prints/traces/evidence*, to *Teddy is not daunted by challenges*.

#### Question 12

For this application question, most candidates were able to correctly identify the narrator’s tone as reflecting admiration, pride, respect, intrigue, fascination, awe or amazement, and they also linked suitable textual evidence to support their claim.

#### Question 13

This analysis question posed some challenge to many candidates who seemed only able to come up with one reason why the name “Cadillac Ted” was symbolic. In dealing with these types of questions, candidates need to think beyond the surface or literal level. Some reasonable answers that could have been devised include

*linking Teddy to a “Cadillac” suggests that he steals only expensive, top-of-the-line cars;*

or

*the adjective “Cadillac” suggests that Teddy, similar to the feel and ride (speed and efficiency) of a Cadillac, is smooth and sleek when he steals cars;*

or

*there is the suggestion that Teddy is in a league of his own, that he is a very good car thief. Linking Teddy to a specific type of car – a Cadillac,*

*rather than say a Honda – suggests that he is not an ordinary car thief. After all, he steals only cars for which he has an order;*

or

*there is the hint that Teddy enjoys a flamboyant (flashy/ostentatious) lifestyle since he is linked to a Cadillac, a flashy/ostentatious car.*

#### Question 14

This question posed the greatest challenge to candidates doing this module, probably because narrative point of view and identifying aspects of the narrator's character are not items that are frequently tested on Paper 01 (even though these are just as important literary concepts noted on the syllabus for candidates to show an understanding of what they are and how they work). Candidates should have been able to identify the narrative point of view as being the first person or "I" narrator, and they should have been able to identify any of these aspects of the narrator:

*the narrator is perceptive since he has a good understanding or sense of his client, Teddy"*

or

*the narrator is a non-judgemental reporter because although Teddy's actions are morally inappropriate, the narrator is never judgemental nor does he chide Teddy; instead, he finds Teddy intriguing and fascinating.*

#### Question 15

This application/evaluation question was better handled for Part (a) than for Part (b). Part (a) elicited full, clear explanations of the significance of the statement. For Part (b), however, the main deficiency in candidates' responses was the omission of the thematic or structural link between the title and its significance to the overall extract.

### **Paper 02 – Extended Essay Questions**

At this first sitting of the 2010 revised syllabus, many candidates did not demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and were unable to capitalize on the opportunity to score high marks. Although more candidates are referring to the writer's biographical, historical and social contexts in their answers, many of them are still not synthesizing this information into a strong argument in response to the questions.

To reiterate a point made earlier, candidates need to formulate a proper introduction and conclusion to their argument. *Outlining the argument in the introduction of an essay establishes, from early, a candidate's main thesis and provides a guide for the candidate to maintain focus throughout the essay.* A re-statement of the question followed by an assertion does not constitute a proper introduction.

In drama, more focus needs to be given to Objectives 2 and 3. Candidates' ability to *assess how meaning is expressed through the playwright's choice of language, use of literary devices and stage conventions and manipulation of the structural elements of*

*drama* is what is being tested. Much more emphasis has to be given to exercises that help candidates develop critical judgements about literature.

Whenever some themes are highlighted in a question, candidates tend to ignore the fact that the writer has chosen a particular genre to articulate those concerns. On the poetry module, candidates should be guided not to treat poetry as merely sociology. The elements of poetry, literary devices and poetic forms, for example, should be given equal focus. More attention needs to be given to Objectives 1 and 5 of the syllabus. Candidates' ability to discuss the relationship between the elements of sound and sense, and to assess the relationship between structure and meaning, are the skills being assessed in this examination.

While there has been improvement on the prose module with fewer candidates merely telling the story, more work has to be done on reinforcing the features of the genre. Close attention must be given to Objective 4. Candidates' ability to assess the relationship between structure and meaning, and to discuss how the author specifically shapes the novel to obtain desired meaning, are skills being assessed in this examination. Carefully selected incidents from the plot should be used primarily as evidence to support an argument. Furthermore, elements of prose fiction beyond plot and theme should be given attention. Narrative point of view, characterization, setting, the use of various motifs, literary devices, styles of narration like interior monologue, stream of consciousness and satire might become significant aspects of the writer's narrative technique in exploring various issues. Many candidates are confusing narrative structure with narrative technique. This area of weakness needs immediate attention.

## **Module 1: Drama**

### Question 1

This text-specific question was designed to test candidates' ability to critically assess the impact of Shakespeare's utilization of dramatic techniques in the play, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*. Candidates were specifically asked to discuss the extent to which they agreed that it is the tension between appearance and reality that produces dramatic impact in the play. Weaker candidates tended to discuss appearance and reality solely in terms of Viola's disguise as Cesario and recounted episodes in the play where this produced confusion. They also showed limited understanding of the concept of dramatic impact.

Better prepared candidates were able to argue that while this theme affected the main plot, it is also replicated in the subplot and this helps to create dramatic impact. For example, that the duping of Malvolio is successful primarily because Maria capitalizes on Malvolio's tendency to self-delusion. These candidates went on to argue that public spectacle of the cross-gartered Malvolio provokes audience laughter and is a moral corrective to Malvolio's over-reaching when he mistakes Olivia's kindness for romantic interest. Candidates for the most part did not engage the word "only" and missed out on the opportunity to argue that there are other themes which produce dramatic tension. Many candidates did not take advantage of the opportunity to engage with the various dynamics of theatrical appeal for audience entertainment or engagement.

It remains a grave concern that some candidates are still unfamiliar with the unique characteristics and elements of drama. Teachers need to facilitate more critical-thinking discussions that are geared at using and sensitizing students to the conventions, elements, and features used to communicate meaning in the genre of drama.

### Question 2

This question was not as popular as Question 1; however, performance on this question was comparable to that on Question 1. The question required candidates to assess the centrality of Feste in the dramatic development of the play. Many candidates devoted their attention to a discussion of plot and characterization and argued that Feste's interactions with characters allow them to reveal themselves fully to the audience. Stronger candidates were able to discuss Feste's contribution to humour and festivity. These candidates made a case for Feste as the embodiment of the spirit of the twelfth night and discussed him in terms of his function as the Lord of Misrule.

### Question 3

Of the two *Richard III* questions, the better performance was seen on this question. This question required candidates to discuss the extent to which they agree with the statement that "for dramatic power of *Richard III*, Shakespeare relies solely on the complex characterization of Gloucester." Candidates generally engaged the question well by sufficiently analysing the ways in which Gloucester, through his language and in his actions, dominates the play. Stronger candidates were able to argue that in creating this complexly-wrought character, Shakespeare is able to showcase other characters who serve to illuminate Gloucester's character or who serve as foils. Discussion was not limited to an exploration of characterization and some candidates who took issue with the word "solely" were able to argue that the dramatic power of the play comes from sources other than characterization and went on to discuss themes, dramatic action, spectacle, structure and setting.

Generally, there were fewer cases of storytelling as well as the propensity to focus mainly on plot. This is a marked improvement when compared to previous years.

### Question 4

This question was the more popular of the two *Richard III* questions. Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which they agreed with the statement that "deception is central to the dramatic impact of *Richard III* to the exclusion of all features of the drama." Generally, the scripts were interesting to read, demonstrating sound textual knowledge and insight. Candidates who agreed with this statement argued that Gloucester, the central character in the play, deceives many as to his Machiavellian nature and as to his royal ambitions. One area of weakness was that many candidates did not move beyond a discussion of theme and characterization.

Stronger candidates were able to argue that deception is at the heart of the various political machinations that undergird history plays and deployed extra-textual information to support this claim. Some candidates were able to discuss the ways in

which the audience, by virtue of being seduced by Gloucester's language, is also deceived and that the power of the play comes from the audience's gradual disengagement from the villainous Gloucester.

## **Module 2: Poetry**

### Question 5

This question was the more popular of the two set in this section of the paper. Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which they agree with the statement that poets rely exclusively on vivid imagery to explore personal issues. Candidates, in their responses, did not engage with the word "exclusively" and limited their discussion to an exploration of imagery. In these instances, the tendency was to discuss visual imagery without paying attention to other forms of imagery. Only a minority chose to include the poet's use of figurative devices, form, meter, tone and mood in their exploration of personal issues. With this in mind, teachers, in preparing students for this exam, need to put greater emphasis on the interpretation of questions and on synthesizing a range of techniques in treating with the question. On the positive side, many candidates included in their discussions the background of poets and historical contexts of the poems.

### Question 6

This question was not as popular as Question 5 and was not as well done. Many candidates limited their interpretation to a narrow exploration of symbolism, ignoring other literary devices that can contribute to reader enjoyment. While many candidates were able to discuss symbolism, they were unable to link it to reader enjoyment. Stronger candidates were able to sustain a discussion of the effectiveness of poetic techniques and poetic craft in providing reader enjoyment. A discussion of a wide range of poetic devices is expected for all the questions and in order to gain high marks candidates should endeavour to showcase this range of knowledge.

Candidates must avoid mere listing of generic features; they must be able to engage in detailed analysis of the effectiveness of devices. Additionally, although the question required reference to a minimum of three poems, candidates ought to be encouraged to reference more than the minimum and to also cross reference for similarities and differences in themes and techniques in poems by the same writer.

### Question 7

This question was not as popular as Question 8. It required candidates to assess the extent to which narrative techniques are used to highlight a preoccupation with the fate of the victim. Performance on this question was unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in answering this question surfaced in the form of candidates not using the correct literary jargon and producing essays that focused on plot details on the fate of the victim. Candidates should be encouraged to see how themes are developed by way of the resources of the prose genre. The explicit reference to "narrative techniques" enabled some of the stronger candidates who attempted this question to readily identify and discuss a wide range of narrative strategies.

### Question 8

This question was the more popular of the two questions asked in this section. Indeed, the best performance on the entire Paper 02 of this unit was on this question. The question required candidates to assess the validity of the assertion that prose writers carefully craft their narratives so as to address problematic love relationships. To their detriment, some candidates focused their discussions solely on love between men and women. Generally, candidates were able to establish the reasons why the relationships were problematic and were able to sustain a convincing discussion on the effect of the writers' choice of narrative strategies to explore love relationships. Weaker candidates dealt only with thematic exploration and were unable to discuss the other literary devices used by the writers to treat problematic love relationships in the texts. However, most candidates provided detailed evidence of the literary and structural devices that are deployed in the exploration of this theme. Stronger candidates were able to make the point that carefully crafting is not limited to exploration of one specific theme but can be deployed in the treatment of other specific concerns.

Candidates are again reminded that the ability to discuss the relationship between theme and narrative technique is absolutely crucial for doing well on these questions. Additionally, candidates should note that knowledge of generic features (plot, characterization, point of view, setting, structure, motif, flashback and interior monologue) is more than just a matter of listing these conventions. Candidates will need to discuss the ways in which each element of fiction or each narrative technique is mobilized to reinforce theme. These questions require candidates to assess the relationship between form and content. In addition, in responding to the question, candidates need to engage with words such as “carefully” and “problematic” so as to produce in-depth responses.

In answering Questions 7 and 8, some responses provided more in-depth analysis of one book than the other. Candidates should strive to give equal attention to each book in this two-book response. In addition, candidates need to develop their writing skills, paying attention to diction, syntax and the use of transitions to connect their ideas.

### **Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)**

Students' performance on the SBA this year reflected a general improvement. Although this is the first examination of the 2010 revised syllabus, it was heartening to note the sustained interest in the range of activities offered in the syllabus. Varied creative approaches to the broad spectrum of tasks were informed by a more secure grasp of the requirements outlined in the syllabus. At the higher end of the performance scale, candidates demonstrated accurate and adequate critical awareness of generic features which enabled them to engage in meaningful, vigorous analysis.

This year, with varying degrees of success, the most popular types of SBA choices were the film adaptations of a play/dramatic text. While it was apparent that students enjoyed the performance/film, they lacked specific knowledge and skills for comparative analysis and resorted to a description or narration of events, sometimes relieved by very

occasional commentary. The best responses for the film adaptations were presented as comparative analyses of the characteristic features of both modes, that is, the dramatic text and the film version of the dramatic text.

A review of the play/dramatic text realized greater successes since candidates did a close reading of textual features combined with interpretive commentary on audience impact.

Creative literary and artistic pieces in the form of an adaptation or reinterpretation were commendable. The better candidates produced critical essays which offered incisive analyses of generic features, while stating their choices with sound justification. Evidence of weaker responses pointed to contracted essays, amounting to a brief statement or descriptions of the created pieces. Some responses merely identified and discussed features of the adaptation or reinterpretation, to the exclusion of any analytical insight and discussion of characteristic features of the original genre. The weakest responses merely substituted the reinterpretations or adaptations for the critical essay. The word limit does not include the reinterpretation or the adaptation. More importantly, no marks are awarded for only the reinterpretation or the adaptation; it is the accompanying commentary, which critiques and validates the choices made in the reinterpretation or the adaptation, for which marks are awarded.

The critical response of a review continues to be a most challenging task for candidates, except in a few cases where a mastery of the skills of comprehension, analysis and argument is demonstrated. Excellent candidates' reviews displayed acute sensitivity to ideas and techniques of the critic's review, while simultaneously confirming and/or challenging the arguments, using appropriate illustrations in the form of close textual references to generic features and concepts. Poor performances on this task often betrayed lack of understanding of the issues raised or stylistic strategies employed, or are sometimes evident in extensive copying and pasting of quotations from critics, or an over-reliance on the critic's vocabulary.

Essays ranged from excellent, to very poor, to incomplete. This was because not all the students conformed to the requirements established for the essay. Some deficiencies were

- the absence of continuous essay or prose style of writing.
- essays falling too short or grossly exceeding the word limit requirement.
- lack of proper sequencing of ideas within and across paragraphs.
- poor sentence structuring, faulty expression and pervasive grammatical errors.
- abrupt ending of essays or repetitious essays, or inappropriate style.
- plagiarism.

Some schools/teachers are not paying enough attention to the requirements of the syllabus. Here are a few reminders:

- Students are reminded that the syllabus stipulates the use of ‘*prescribed*’ texts for assignments.
- Students will be severely penalized for plagiarism. Where critical sources are used, it is expected that students will provide a *Works Cited* page.
- Students registered for one particular unit should do assignments based on that unit. Students are required to do a single text and are not awarded additional points for comparing two texts.
- Students must use the text relevant to the genre; they cannot use a drama text to answer the question on the prose section or vice versa.
- The responses need to be presented as one continuous essay and not a segmented response. In some cases, students included unnecessary biographical sketches and histories of the texts.
- Assignments should be identified by name.
- It is the detailed commentary (1500 – 2000 words) that is marked out of 48 **not** the reinterpretation or other creative pieces.
- Teachers should ensure that, if students are given the highest marks in each category, their assignments are excellent in nature.
- Teachers *must* adhere to the stipulation of sending five samples. If there are fewer than five students *all* samples should be submitted.

## UNIT 2

### Paper 01 – Short Answer Questions

#### Module 1: Drama

Candidates found this extract interesting and responded satisfactorily to the questions. The questions on this module tested candidates’ ability to explain the ways in which meaning is conveyed through the playwright’s use of structural elements such as characterization and use of features of drama such as props and stage directions. However, the ability to explain the dramatic significance of stage entrances and of props is not always evident in candidates’ responses. The ability to see relationships between a stage action, dialogue, and the way in which the entire drama is being developed continues to require attention. Teachers need to devote more time to developing their students’ ability to comment on the playwright’s artistic choices for the development of various aspects of the drama (character revelation and development, thematic development, plot development — creation of conflict, complication, climax, building dramatic tension, creating stage symbol or action or to develop audience engagement). Candidates should also pay attention to mark allocation for questions. Where a question is worth two marks, it is unwise to write a page-long response, especially as this tends to leave limited time to answer questions that are worth six marks.

### Question 1

This application question was satisfactorily done. Most candidates could identify character traits. Weaker candidates tended to confuse character with situation, or gave examples of habit instead of character.

### Question 2

This comprehension/analysis question was satisfactorily done. Most candidates were able to explain the phrase “twenty thousand tiaras and twenty thousand smiles buried alive.” Stronger candidates went on to explain that the act of burying so much money in a casket was as horrendous as the Queen being buried alive. The second part of this question required candidates to comment on the dramatic significance of the reference to the smiling face of the queen of England that is on a five-pound note. It is expected that in commenting on “dramatic significance” candidates will show how the playwright’s choice of words is related to the elements and features of drama. Stronger candidates were able to explain the significance of the comment in terms of plot development, character revelation, thematic development, irony, humour and symbolism.

### Question 3

For this analysis question, many candidates were unable to explain the dramatic significance of the repetition of the phrase “you need a larger income”. Candidates tended to ignore the word “repetition” and were unable to explain how the repeated phrase contributes to plot development, or character revelation, or creates suspense, or allows for character revelation, or reinforces theme or creates dramatic tension. Candidate performance on this question was unsatisfactory.

### Question 4

This question on the dramatic significance of two named props was satisfactorily done. Candidates were able to comment on the dramatic significance of the coffin in terms of its contribution to stage action, character revelation, setting, atmosphere, spectacle and symbolism. Stronger candidates were able to explain the dramatic significance of the coffin in terms of thematic development and provided insightful explanations of the coffin as a focal point around which major issues, such as obsession with money and a lack of concern with morality, are being played out. In commenting on the dramatic significance of the pipe, many candidates were unaware that “pipe” in the extract refers to a tube with a small bowl at one end that is usually filled with tobacco. They instead assumed that the pipe was used for holding marijuana and went on to discuss the dramatic significance of the prop in terms of Truscott having a drug problem.

### Question 5

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this application/evaluation question. They were required to identify the irony in selected lines and further, to comment on the significance of irony to the extract as a whole. Most candidates were able to explain the irony of Truscott’s comment. The second part of the question posed considerable difficulty for

weaker candidates. Two tasks were required: the explanation of the use of irony in the extract and the significance of that use. Very few candidates were able to comment that this is an extract that is rife with irony. It was only very strong candidates who were able to show that it is ironic that the extract begins with Truscott outraged by his involvement and ends with not only his sharing in the ill-gotten gains but his justifying his involvement as accessory to a burglary. These candidates went on to explain that the audience would have expected that as a member of the police force Truscott (whose name seems to suggest trustworthiness) would have continued to uphold rightness. These candidates then went on to comment on the significance of irony in revealing character and in producing humour.

## **Module 2: Poetry**

The questions in this module tested candidates' ability to state and support two impressions, to correctly identify literary devices such as imagery, metaphor, irony, personification, assonance and symbolism and to evaluate the effectiveness of their use. They were also required to comment on the significance of the poet's word choice and to explain the effectiveness of the poet's use of a particular comparison at the end of the poem. There was improved performance on the poetry module this year. Generally, candidates understood the poem. However, the inability of many candidates to evaluate the effectiveness of literary devices continues to be a weakness and, accordingly, candidates were unable to offer adequate comments on the significance of these devices. It is important that students learn how a specific choice of literary device contributes to the interpretations we arrive at in reading poetry.

### Question 6

This comprehension type question was well done. The majority of candidates scored full marks because they were able to provide and support with evidence from the poem, two impressions of the city. The evidence given was in the form of a direct quote, a summary, a paraphrase or a reference to a specific line.

### Question 7

This application question was satisfactorily done. Candidates were required to comment on the effectiveness of the poet's choice of specific adjectives. Weaker candidates tended to provide literal definitions of the adjective rather than show how it functions in the context of the poem. Stronger candidates were able to show how in using the adjective "brown" to describe the odour the poet allows the reader to associate a visual image of something dirty with the olfactory image of the smell. These candidates went on to explain that the gutters, which are brown with garbage and filth carry a foul smell and that by describing the smell as brown, the poet metonymically emphasizes how awful the smell is. Some candidates explained the poet's choice of "brown" by saying that the smell is so foul, it seems it carries a colour. While this response is correct, candidates would have scored more marks if they had gone on to show how this word choice is effective. Candidates were generally stronger on the commentary on the adjective "sweaty" to describe the lane. Most candidates were able to show how this adjective suggested how crowded the lane is and how crowdedness makes people become sweaty

and makes the lane hot and congested. These candidates went on to explain that in the poet's associating the lane with an image typically linked to humans, the lane, as a physical space, takes on the characteristics of the human body.

### Question 8

This question required candidates to identify the literary devices and to provide a clear explanation of the effectiveness of the writer's use of literary devices. Generally candidates were able to identify metaphor, imagery and alliteration. Weaker candidates tended to comment on effectiveness by explaining the literary device. For example "The device enables the reader to get a picture of what is taking place". This kind of comment can be said about any literary device which produces sensory appeal. There needs to be practice explaining how the association of one thing helps us to understand another. In the response, one expects that an explanation will help us see specifically how the device functions in reinforcing ideas being communicated in the poem, or how it relates to poetic structure or how it helps create mood or atmosphere. Stronger candidates were able to explain the effectiveness of "the ripeness of open sewers" in the following way:

*The poet uses the image of the sewers to further reinforce the unpleasant atmosphere of the city. A sewer is a passageway that carries the waste of a community. This refuse often presents an unpleasant sight and smell and evoking this image alongside all the other images of seediness helps to contribute to the creation of an unpleasant atmosphere.*

In the instance of the literary device in the phrase "bag of bones", candidates were able to explain the effectiveness of the metaphoric comparison of Powell's body to a bag of bones. Although weaker candidates tended to incorrectly interpret this to mean that Powell is now dead, stronger candidates were able to explain "bag of bones" as an idiomatic phrase that conveys the idea that a person is extremely thin. These candidates were able to show how thinness, in the poem, becomes symbolic of Powell's culturally, or psychologically, or materially, or socially denuded state. A bag of bones is light (and rattling), not heavy. The poet, in using the idiomatic, indeed clichéd phrase in his poem, taps into an image with which readers are familiar, but makes it startling and effective by the application in an unfamiliar context — to refer to other kinds of denudation besides the physical. Indeed, if Powell is a "bag of bones" (culturally, socially...), the reader gets an extremely vivid picture of the extent of Powell's devastation. A few candidates were able to cinch their discussion of "bag of bones" by concluding that this picture of an emaciated Powell is set up in powerful, activist contrast to the radical intervention of the phrase "treasure of a man".

### Question 9

Surprisingly, this question about the meaning of phrases produced responses that were unsatisfactory. Many candidates merely explained the meaning of the phrase and did not go on to indicate what idea is being reinforced by the use of the literary device — this may be either a specific idea at that point in the poem or a larger idea throughout the rest of the poem. It is disappointing that, at this level, candidates are unable to show how these phrases revealed character or were effective in conveying theme, mood and

atmosphere. Very few candidates were able to explain “broken treasure of a man” beyond the literal “Powell was sick.” It is expected that, at this level, candidates will be able to explain why the comparison of Powell to treasure is effective, or what effect the poet achieves in his description of Powell as broken — an adjective not typically used to describe animate things. The following is an example of an acceptable response:

*The metaphor of treasure used to represent Powell helps to reinforce the idea that, though his body was broken by illness, or his spirit broken by the travails of urban destitution (“broken” here suggesting a shattering of something whole and pending death), Powell was still considered someone as precious as treasure.*

The phrase “the sickness dragged him down” posed considerable difficulty to candidates. While many candidates were able to recognize this as an example of personification, they were unable to explain why this phrase was effective. Some stronger candidates were able to explain the effectiveness of the phrase in terms of imagery. Here is an example of an appropriate response:

*The word “drag” is associated with carrying heavy loads. The phrase is significant because the poet suggests by the word choice “dragged” that the illness was a kind of burden on his body. The phrase therefore highlights the damaging effect of illness on Powell’s body.*

### Question 10

This evaluation question on this module required candidates to engage the words and images of the comparison. Additionally, candidates were required to discuss the effectiveness of the comparison at the end of the poem and to comment on its structural relationship in terms of development, reinforcement of theme, structure, mood and atmosphere. This analysis-type question that required candidates to make connections between ‘the part and the whole’ (the ending and the entire poem) continues to create difficulty for weaker candidates. In most cases, candidates were unable to identify the symbolic association of the nature imagery, and to see the connection between the specific moment and the overall development of theme or the careful creation of poetic structure. Very few candidates were able to comment on the thematic and/or structural association of salt as healing and curative. Here is an answer that sees some symbolic association with the sea salt imagery and also sees the role of this imagery in the larger patterning of the poem:

*The description of people’s shock over Powell’s death is compared to being stung — by the bite of sea salt being blown by the wind in the eyes or face. This seemingly small object can cause real/serious pain. The stinging pain can also cause one to pay more attention and it is as if Powell’s death has awakened the community. One man’s death as the source of other people’s awakening becomes another theme. Early in the poem, the idea that Powell was teaching the community (even in his illness “he taught us ...the way to heal”) was introduced. This idea is now*

*further developed at the end of the poem because Powell's death teaches his community to value life.*

Candidates are reminded that the evaluation of appropriateness could be connected to thematic development, structural arrangement or contribution to atmosphere.

### **Module 3: Prose Fiction**

The questions on this module tested candidates' knowledge of character traits, imagery, irony, and other literary devices. Candidates were also asked to comment on the effectiveness of the title. This passage elicited very few good responses, perhaps because purging is not an experience with which many candidates are familiar. Many candidates were unable to answer all questions because of poor time management.

#### Question 11

This comprehension question was fairly well done. Weaker candidates described characters' reactions rather than identify what character trait is suggested by their behaviour. For example: "Edgar is exaggerating" rather than the more appropriate adjective: *Edgar is melodramatic, or the mother bosses the children around, rather than the mother is authoritarian.*

#### Question 12

Candidates performed excellently on this question. In this application question, candidates were required to explain two ways in which Edgar's fear of the capsules is conveyed. Here is an example of an answer produced by stronger candidates:

*Edgar's fear is conveyed through diction. From his choice of words, "mental torture", "shadow", "darker the threat", the reader gets a clear picture of Edgar's fear. His fear is also conveyed through his detailed description of the purging process. This suggests that, because of his fear, he is preoccupied with the process.*

Weaker candidates lost marks because they identified Edgar's fear without being able to discuss the narrative technique that is being deployed to achieve this.

#### Question 13

This comprehension/analysis question required candidates to identify the literary device used in each of two lines and to comment on the effectiveness of each device. Most candidates could correctly identify a literary device, but many could not comment on the effectiveness of the use of the literary device. Typically, candidates provided this incomplete response: "The imagery in the line is effective because it provides readers with a clear picture of how the capsule was presented to the children". The following is an example of an appropriate response:

*The diction “cotton-wool”, “white” and “pill-box” — creates an image of a sterile, sanitized environment which helps to convey an atmosphere of purification and cleansing.*

Here is an appropriate response to the comparison of the capsules to torpedoes:

*The capsules are presented as “torpedo-shaped”. The choice of diction is effective here in conveying an image of precision, of the capsule carefully travelling through the stomach to destroy and remove foreign agents that are not supposed to be there.*

#### Question 14

This knowledge/analysis question posed considerable difficulty for most of the candidates. Many candidates failed to see the irony in the phrase. Here is an example of the type of response that is expected of candidates.

*It is ironic too that calomel that is supposed to be doing the washing-out also has to be “washed-out” of the human system because it too can poison and create problems for the human system. This irony is significant because it confirms and reinforces for readers Edgar’s and Lucille’s suspicions and fears about their mother’s “pharmaceutical spectre”, that it is a torturous process, a central theme of the extract.*

#### Question 15

This evaluation question was satisfactorily done by the candidates who attempted it. There were not many responses to this question, because candidates did not manage their time properly and were unable to complete the paper. However, candidates who attempted this question were able to comment on the thematic and structural significance of the title. Candidates scored marks for making points such as:

*If the title is read as having only negative connotations, then that is fleshed out in the extract since both Lucille and Edgar have had to endure a long, torturous night. The extract is about a horrific night, beginning with images of torture and ending with a morning dedicated to even more torture (after the first ordeal with calomel). The extract measures up to or mirrors the negative expectations that are established in the title.*

### **Paper 02 – Extended Essay Questions**

The performance on Unit 2, Paper 02 was not as good as performance in Unit 1, Paper 02. Of the three genres, the best performance was on the responses to Kendel Hippolyte’s poetry. However, less than 200 candidates wrote on this poet. Generally, performance was impacted by candidates’ tendency to limit their responses to a thematic exploration without engaging with the features of the specific genre.

Candidates are again reminded that they will not score very high marks if they only write on one book for the drama module in which they are required to answer the questions with reference to two books. Candidates must pay attention to the directive of questions that helps them to focus on the matter of artistic representation; yet, many candidates' knowledge of the writer's craft was in name only. In many of the responses, candidates were only listing some techniques, but were not demonstrating that they understood how these techniques helped to reinforce meaning/theme.

The ability to write a cogent argument, using evidence to explain why the writer's choice of a particular poetic technique helps the reader to understand the thematic emphases was glaringly absent from many of these responses. In respect to the third module, there is insufficient reference to *the elements of prose fiction such as narrative point of view, characterization, setting, structure, motif and use of literary devices* that provide a writer with tools for representation. Candidates should by now be aware that the term *narrative technique* covers all the tools of prose fiction that a writer can manipulate to explore various issues and themes.

Candidates should be given exercises in improving their writing, which is often pedestrian. At this level, clarity of expression and even elegance in writing are expected. Many more candidates need to be encouraged to make use of the opportunities created by the questions to offer their unique informed perspectives on literary production.

### **Module 1: Drama**

This year there was a marked improvement in the use of extra-textual (contextual, biographical and critical) material. Fewer candidates are restricting their responses to a discussion of plot, theme and characterization.

#### Question 1

This question required candidates to assess the playwright's use of stage action to represent family dynamics. Is stage action the sole tool used by the playwright in order to represent this theme? If not then what other tools of drama does the playwright wield in order to represent family dynamics? This question was not a popular choice. Many candidates were limited in their definition of family and this negatively impacted on their performance. Other candidates defined stage action as activity seen on stage and did not engage with the other features of drama such as dialogue, soliloquies, the importance of entrances, exits and asides. While the question required discussion of stage action, candidates should recognize that the syllabus for this subject identifies a host of other literary devices deployed by playwrights and as such a stronger response would be one that demonstrated knowledge of these devices. These types of debatable statements provide room for candidates to establish various responses that can incorporate their informed personal response.

#### Question 2

Based on the plays they prepared and their own evaluation of the plays, candidates were required to discuss the extent to which they argued that it is primarily through his use of

stage conventions that the dramatist is able to explore the relationship between past and present. While the question required discussion of stage conventions, candidates should recognize that the syllabus for this subject identifies a host of other dramatic techniques deployed by playwrights and as such a stronger response would be one that demonstrated knowledge of these other dramatic techniques. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question. Stronger candidates took issue with the word “primarily” and made the case that, along with stage conventions, dramatists deploy other features of drama. This attention to question analysis and to the significant features and elements of drama helped these candidates to respond more effectively to this question.

## **Module 2: Poetry**

More candidates attempted the questions on Olive Senior than on Kendel Hippolyte. However, performance on the Hippolyte questions was better than performance on the questions on Olive Senior. Candidates are again reminded that they must avoid mere listing of generic features; they must be able to engage in detailed analysis of the effectiveness of devices. Many candidates failed to engage the range of poetic techniques beyond the basic. Even when they referred to these basic techniques, they used them randomly, incorrectly or without commenting on the effectiveness of the devices employed or their relevance to the question.

Teachers must engage in exercises that force students to make connections between poetic technique and theme. Students should also be warned about discussing thematic issues in isolation and treating poetry as merely history or sociology; they should not ignore the artistry of poetry. Objective 3 of the poetry objectives needs to be emphasized. In order to maximize marks, the candidates must demonstrate the ability to *explain how meaning is expressed through the poet’s choice of language, literary devices, and the structural elements commonly found in poetry such as imagery, symbol, alliteration, assonance, metre, lineation and rhyme.*

Additionally, although the question required reference to a minimum of three prescribed poems, candidates ought to be encouraged to reference more than the minimum and to also cross reference for similarities and differences in themes and techniques in poems by the same writer.

### Question 3

Few candidates attempted this question and performance on it was the lowest for the entire paper. This question represented the first of four specific questions on Paper 02. It required candidates to assess whether or not the distinctiveness of Senior’s poetic craft comes from her use of sound imagery. Candidates who chose to agree were required to make a case by detailing the instances of aural imagery and by showing why this feature was the most indicative of distinctiveness. Candidates who chose to disagree had the option of arguing that the distinctiveness of Senior’s poetic craft comes from the many poetic resources that she uses and is not limited to sound imagery. Most candidates were able to identify sound imagery in Senior’s poetry but were unable to offer nuanced arguments as to how sound imagery made the poems distinctive. Further, although the use of the word “distinctive” invited candidates to engage their own personal responses,

very few candidates established how sound imagery works in tandem with various poetic techniques to elicit enjoyment in the reader.

#### Question 4

This question required candidates to assess whether plant symbolism is the most important technique used by Senior to expose the problems of Caribbean life. In discussing the validity of the claim, candidates needed to discuss the relationship between symbolism and themes and how the poet's craft allowed for reader enjoyment. The question also created a space for candidates who agree with the statement, to use their extra-textual information and knowledge of the poems to discuss the problems of Caribbean life.

Candidates did not perform well on this question although it was a popular choice. Identification of the problems of Caribbean life was often superficial and did not allow candidates sufficient space to discuss the relationship between artistic choices and thematic development in Senior's poetry. Some of the best essays argued that Senior uses more than plant symbolism and expanded their argument to include a range of poetic techniques. Candidates are reminded that there are different ways of approaching the question. A valid argument could be made by suggesting that Senior is concerned about other issues and that the use of plant symbolism is not limited to the exposure of Caribbean problems. It cannot be over-emphasized that an informed personal response can allow candidates to receive optimum returns in the awarding of marks for application of knowledge.

#### Question 5

This question required that candidates examine the relevance of the statement that "in addressing universal concerns, Kendel Hippolyte employs a range of poetic techniques. Performance on this question was good. Indeed, although very few candidates attempted it, the best performance on the entire Paper 02 of this unit was on this question. Candidates were able to establish a firm connection between Hippolyte's exploration of Caribbean and international concerns and his effective manipulation of poetic language. This kind of focusing on aspects of poetic language such as tone, symbolism, diction, imagery, oxymoron, repetition, puns, motifs and exaggeration led many to discuss the relationship between artistic choices and thematic development in Hippolyte's poetry. Consideration of all parts of the question allowed candidates to receive optimum returns in the awarding of marks for application of knowledge.

#### Question 6

This was the least popular question in Unit 2, Paper 02. However, candidates performed satisfactorily on this question because they understood the statement they were asked to evaluate and they were able to argue various points of view. Some candidates chose to argue that it is Hippolyte's mastery of poetic techniques that gives power to his poetry. Stronger candidates in making a case for the power of Hippolyte's bleak vision in shaping his poetic craft were able to integrate socio-historical information seamlessly into their analysis of Hippolyte's poetry.

Some of the best essays were those that were able to make a case that the power of Hippolyte's poetry is derived from his skilful deployment of poetic techniques and that even while he is critiquing his society, what remains prominent is his mastery of poetic form. These candidates were able to discuss aspects of Hippolyte's poetic language such as tone, symbolism, diction, imagery, oxymoron, repetition, puns, motifs and allusion. Stronger candidates were able to engage with language as well as with form and were competently able to discuss the relationship between artistic choices and thematic development in Hippolyte's poetry.

### **Module 3: Prose Fiction**

More candidates are integrating textual and extra-textual knowledge into their answers. Weaker candidates still tend to limit their responses to a discussion of plot and themes, and when other narrative techniques are mentioned, there is no full discussion. Moreover many candidates seem unfamiliar with the text set for this module and used novels that are not on the Literatures in English syllabus. Many candidates resorted to the use of poetry or drama to answer questions on this module and were penalized accordingly.

#### Question 7

Candidate performance on this question was less than satisfactory. The question required candidates to discuss whether language was the sole means used by the author to represent human trauma. Many candidates did not focus on all the key words of the question. The majority of candidates demonstrated significant knowledge of the theme of trauma, but many were unable to make the connection between theme and language. Stronger candidates tended to limit their responses to the discussion of language without taking issue with the word "solely". In such instances, candidates were unable to explore other aspects of the writer's narrative craft that can be used to illuminate trauma.

Candidates should note that the writer, in organizing his story so that it has maximum artistic effect, will take advantage of the many narrative conventions available to the prose fiction writer: plot, characterization, setting, narrative arrangement, motif, flashback and interior monologue. Very few candidates were able to link the various elements of craft to the theme of trauma and to make judgements on whether the statement provides a valid account of their experience of the novel.

#### Question 8

Performance on this question was better than performance on Question 7. The question required that candidates discuss the relationship between narrative structure and reader appeal. Candidates tended to restrict their discussion to plot, characterization and theme and were unable to link these to the various narrative resources that a writer deliberately deploys to create and maintain reader interest. Additionally, where candidates were able to name some of these narrative techniques, some of these candidates were unable to demonstrate their understanding of the significance of these techniques or how they function.

On a general note, on this section of the examination, opportunities for more refined arguments are often avoided by most candidates and this suggests that they need more practice in developing their own informed responses to literature and in building confidence in making judgements on artistic expression. The activities of the internal assessment provides such opportunities and teachers need to use them in such a way as to demonstrate the connection between those activities and the external papers that the students sit.

### **Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)**

Students' performance on the SBA this year reflected a general improvement. Although this is the first testing of the 2010 revised syllabus, it was heartening to note the sustained interest in the range of activities offered in the syllabus. Varied creative approaches to the broad spectrum of tasks were informed by a more secure grasp of the requirements outlined in the syllabus. At the higher end of the performance scale, students demonstrated accurate and adequate critical awareness of generic features which enabled them to engage in meaningful, vigorous analysis.

This year, with varying degrees of success, the most popular types of SBA choices were the film adaptations of a play/dramatic text. While it was apparent that students enjoyed the performance/film, they lacked specific knowledge and skills for comparative analysis and resorted to a description or narration of events, sometimes relieved by very occasional commentary. The best responses for the film adaptations were presented as comparative analyses of the characteristic features of both modes, that is, the dramatic text and the film version of the dramatic text.

A review of the play/dramatic text realized greater successes since candidates did a close reading of textual features combined with interpretive commentary on audience impact.

Creative literary and artistic pieces in the form of an adaptation or reinterpretation were commendable. The better candidates produced critical essays which offered incisive analyses of generic features, while stating their choices with sound justification. Evidence of weaker responses pointed to contracted essays, amounting to a brief statement or descriptions of the created pieces. Some responses merely identified and discussed features of the adaptation or reinterpretation, to the exclusion of any analytical insight and discussion of characteristic features of the original genre. The weakest responses merely substituted the reinterpretations or adaptations for the critical essay.

The word limit does *not* include the reinterpretation or the adaptation. More importantly, no marks are awarded for only the reinterpretation or the adaptation; it is the accompanying commentary, which critiques and validates the choices made in the reinterpretation or the adaptation, for which marks are awarded.

The critical response of a review continues to be a most challenging task for candidates, except in a few cases where a mastery of the skills of comprehension, analysis and argument is demonstrated. Excellent candidates' reviews displayed acute sensitivity to ideas and techniques of the critic's review, while simultaneously confirming and/or challenging the arguments, using appropriate illustrations in the form of close textual

references to generic features and concepts. Poor performances on this task often betrayed lack of understanding of the issues raised or stylistic strategies employed, or are sometimes evident in extensive copying and pasting of quotations from critics, or an over-reliance on the critic's vocabulary.

Essays ranged from excellent, to very poor, to incomplete. This was because not all the candidates conformed to the requirements established for the essay. Some deficiencies were

- the absence of continuous essay or prose style of writing
- essays falling too short or grossly exceeding the word limit requirement
- lack of proper sequencing of ideas within and across paragraphs
- poor sentence structuring, faulty expression and pervasive grammatical errors
- abrupt ending of essays or repetitious essays, or inappropriate style
- plagiarism.

Some schools/teachers are not paying enough attention to the requirements of the syllabus. Here are a few reminders:

- Students are reminded that the syllabus stipulates the use of *prescribed* texts for assignments.
- Students will be severely penalized for plagiarism. Where critical sources are used, it is expected that students will provide a *Works Cited* page.
- Students registered for one particular unit should do assignments based on that unit. Students are required to do a single text and are not awarded additional points for comparing two texts.
- Students must use the text relevant to the genre; they cannot use a drama text to answer the question on the prose section or vice versa.
- The responses need to be presented as one continuous essay and not a segmented response. In some cases, students included unnecessary biographical sketches and histories of the texts.
- Assignments should be identified by name.
- It is the detailed commentary (1500–2000 words) that is marked out of 48 not the reinterpretation or other creative pieces.
- Teachers should ensure that, if students are given the highest marks in each category, their assignments are excellent in nature.
- Teachers must adhere to the stipulation of sending five samples. If there are fewer than five students, all samples should be submitted.