

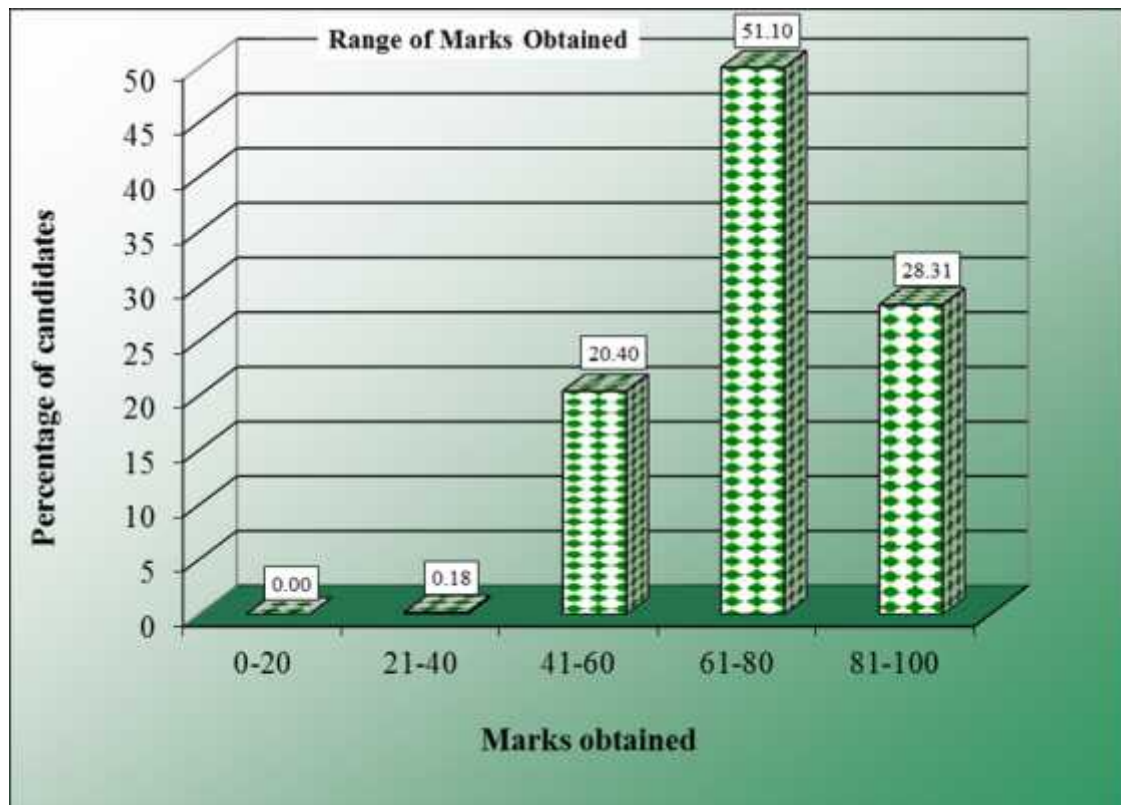
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

A. STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Total number of students taking the examination	544
Highest marks obtained	96
Lowest marks obtained	30
Mean marks obtained	72.78

Percentage of candidates according to marks obtained

	Mark Range				
	<i>0-20</i>	<i>21-40</i>	<i>41-60</i>	<i>61-80</i>	<i>81-100</i>
Number of candidates	0	1	111	278	154
Percentage of candidates	0.00	0.18	20.40	51.10	28.31
Cumulative Number	0	1	112	390	544
Cumulative Percentage	0.00	0.18	20.59	71.69	100



B. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE

WUTHERING HEIGHTS – *Emily Bronte*

Question 1

Discuss *Wuthering Heights* as a novel of love and revenge.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

Many candidates attempted this question, relying on a synopsis of the novel in which the points supporting the themes of love and revenge emerged. However, candidates lost out on analytical response and / or quotes and therefore did not earn the marks set aside for a heightened answer.

While narrating the sequence of events, some candidates focussed on the love of the two predominant characters, Catherine and Heathcliff, and ignored the love of others or gave it insufficient attention. Some or many of the major facets of love were missed out (or their substantiation):

- Catherine – Heathcliff
- Catherine – Edgar
- Isabella – Heathcliff
- Young Cathy – Linton, Hareton

Similarly, of revenge:

- Hindley – Heathcliff
- Heathcliff – Catherine / Edgar
- Isabella as a tool of revenge
- Change in Heathcliff – nature of his revenge

Suggestions for teachers

- Candidates must be taught how to identify themes and connect the narrative to themes and underlying ideas. Critical analysis and application should be polished, and use of quotes encouraged.
- Teachers can point out that mere knowledge of sequence of events does not make for an answer. Candidates' judgment in identifying relevant sections of that sequence to address the question fully must be developed. In this case, the candidates should have known that love and revenge are pervading ideas in the novel at various levels and for various characters, and also should have understood that the question was not about Catherine and Heathcliff only.
- Thus, teachers should make their students practise reading a question with comprehension, understanding its focus and key idea, in this case "love and revenge", not the Catherine and Heathcliff relationship.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 1.

Wuthering Heights as a novel of love and revenge:

Wuthering Heights is the only novel by Emily Bronte who died at thirty, a year after it was published. It is novel of character and of passions springing from conflict of personalities and passions, its intensity suitably set in a wild and eerie setting of the Yorkshire moors Bronte was very familiar with. The passionate love between Heathcliff and Catherine causes little happiness and much pain and makes this novel a novel of revenge, although there are moments of gentle and powerful love and the novel ends on the redemptive power of love. Both, love and revenge play very important roles in the plot. The feeling of revenge arises out of thwarted love. Heathcliff's love for Catherine is thwarted by Hindley as he does not consider Heathcliff a gentleman.

The novel follows the life of Heathcliff, a mysterious gypsy-like person, from childhood to his death in his late thirties. Heathcliff spends much of his life trying to gain his revenge on the two families that he believed ruined his life.

When Mr. Earnshaw returned from Liverpool, he brought back with him "a gift from God", a "dirty, ragged, black-haired child." Hindley quickly learnt to hate him but Catherine grew much attached to him. Hindley was eventually sent to college but he returned, three years later, when Mr. Earnshaw died. With a new wife, Frances, he became master of Wuthering Heights and **exactd his revenge for being excluded from his father's affections by forcing Heathcliff into the company of servants, depriving him of the instructions of the curate and making him work outdoors.** At first, Heathcliff "bore this degradation pretty well" but once, after Catherine's return from Thrushcross Grange and his altercation with Edgar, Heathcliff was locked in the attic he vowed to get his revenge on Hindley.

Catherine expressed the struggle within herself to Nelly, defending her decision to accept Edgar Linton's proposal of marriage. **She said that she did not really love Edgar but Heathcliff.** Unfortunately she could never marry the latter because of his lack of status and education. She burst out passionately, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him ... he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same."

She therefore planned to marry Edgar and use that position to help raise Heathcliff's standing. Unfortunately Heathcliff overheard only the first part about not being able to marry him and fled from the farmhouse. Despite the love, in fact because of his love for Catherine, he became increasingly bitter about the Earnshaws and the Lintons.

Six months after Catherine's marriage to Linton, Heathcliff returned as a gentleman, having grown stronger and richer during his absence. Catherine was delighted to see him although Edgar had strong misgivings. Isabella, now eighteen, fell madly in love with Heathcliff, seeing him as a romantic hero. He despised her but encouraged the infatuation, seeing it as a chance for revenge on Edgar, who was "appalled at this fantastic preference" his sister showed. Catherine tried to warn Isabella but Isabella was adamant. Noticing Heathcliff's musing on realizing she was the heir to her brother, Nelly too felt a sense of foreboding: it seemed "God had forsaken" the sheep to "an evil beast (that) prowled ... waiting his time to spring and destroy."

Indeed he had spiteful designs in mind, and on being caught embracing Isabella, Heathcliff cried out to Catherine **that he knew she had treated him "inferally" and that if she fancied he would "suffer unavenged" he would "convince (her) of the contrary".** He sought no revenge on Catherine but wanted to "amuse" himself as she had done at his cost. As Catherine lay ill, Heathcliff eloped

with Isabella, causing Edgar to disown his sister. The only tenderness that existed amidst this turmoil and vengeance was **Edgar's devoted care** to his failing wife, yet it could do little to overcome the fury of emotions. Even **Catherine's avowal of love to Heathcliff in her last few days was furious, tormenting** both Heathcliff and her, the former believing that she wanted him to suffer all his life because of her words.

The "fierce, pitiless and wolfish man", as Catherine described, had been staying at the Heights, **gambling with Hindley and teaching Hareton bad habits. Hindley was gradually losing his wealth, mortgaging the farmhouse to Heathcliff to repay his debts. Hareton, Hindley's son, grew into a foul-mouthed boor who would throw stones at strangers.** It was to this household that **Isabella came as a bride and she soon realized the folly of her deed as she came to be brutally treated by Heathcliff.** Isabella escaped Wuthering Heights to the south of England where she gave birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son.

Six months after Catherine died, Hindley too died, leaving **Heathcliff the master of Wuthering Heights and the guardian of Hareton. Hareton's upbringing continued to be as degrading as Heathcliff's had been under Hindley.** Heathcliff "bent his malevolence on making him a brute."

On Isabella's death, Edgar brought to Thrushcross Grange Linton, a weak and sickly boy. Although the younger Cathy was attracted to him, Heathcliff insisted on having him taken to the Heights. Three years later, Ellen and Cathy were on the moors when they met Heathcliff who took them to Wuthering Heights to see Linton and Hareton. **His plans now were for Linton and Cathy to marry so that he would inherit Thrushcross Grange.** Nelly got to know later that to ensure the success of his "avaricious and unfeeling plans", he treated his dying son "tyrannically and wickedly".

The next year, Edgar fell very ill. **Ellen and Cathy were held captive by Heathcliff who wanted to marry his son to Cathy and, at the same time, prevent her from returning to her father before he died.** Cathy escaped with Linton's help just in time to see her father before he died. Upon Linton's death, although Hareton tried to be kind to her, she retreated into herself.

Towards his final days, **Heathcliff changed.** He kept to himself and behaved as if he saw Catherine all around him. **He admitted to Nelly that he no longer wished to strike. With his "old enemies" dead, he could enjoy the "destruction" of their "representatives" but he was under the "shadow" of a "strange change".** Upon his death, he was buried near his beloved Catherine. The novel ends on this note of supernatural reunion and the promise of a fresh start with love and marriage of young Cathy and Hareton.

Wuthering Heights is not wholly a novel of revenge, although its protagonist is driven by vengeance against those he feels have wronged him. He ruins two families and uses their innocent members to take his vengeance. However, underlying this is strong, almost supernatural love even though it tragically finds its expression in rage and "a selfish, unchristian life". Despite **its predominant note of darkness and revenge, the novel has the tenderness of and redemption through love.**

Question 2

Write short notes on:

[20]

- (a) Catherine Earnshaw (Mrs. Linton).
- (b) Nelly Dean.

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Most candidates did not mention that Catherine develops a dual character after her stay at Thrushcross Grange, taking on the veneer of being prim and proper over her essentially wild and passionate nature. Her description of being wild but with charm was omitted.

None of the candidates analysed her as a foil to the more socially conditioned Isabella Linton. A few candidates confused her with her daughter, forgetting that the younger Catherine was not 'Mrs. Linton' but 'Miss' Linton or Mrs. Linton Heathcliff or Mrs. Catherine Earnshaw.

- (b) Several candidates did not mention the full name (Mrs. Ellen Dean), her relationship with or feelings towards Heathcliff, her role in the Young Cathy – Linton relationship and the shortcomings or weakness in her character.

She was referred to as a 'servant' rather than the 'housekeeper'. Many described her as the 'second' narrator instead of the 'chief' narrator.

Suggestions for teachers

- Character study involves deep insight into the personality and role of the character in the novel. All aspects, at least the more obvious ones, of traits and impact on novel should be taken into account. Teachers should teach that 'notes' on characters involve physical description and changes in character. Also, discussion of traits includes opinion / analysis supported by textual illustration.
- The background and the social context of the novel are important. Remembering the novel is set in England would have precluded the mistake in names and surnames since the convention of naming daughters and wives would have been clear. Teachers must be particularly careful to teach how to correctly identify the character being asked about if there is even a slight chance of confusion because of names.
- 'Note' on characters must include details like name, physical appearance, role in the novel, relationship with other characters, idiosyncrasies and habits, substantiated with textual examples.
- Teachers must teach students to delve into the 'minor' characters as well since in terms of roles these may be important. In Literature in English, which is an elective paper, attention must be paid to vocabulary and the nuance of usage of words

MARKING SCHEME

Question 2.

Short notes:

- (a) Catherine is the younger child of the Earnshaw family and the principal heroine of the novel – the girl who motivates Heathcliff to passionate love and equally passionate hatred.

We first meet Catherine as a child before Mr. Earnshaw goes on this journey to Liverpool. **She is “A wild, wicked slip with the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile and the lightest foot in the parish”. She is egoistic, passionate and ambitious. She can ride any horse in the stable and it is signature that she wants her father to bring back a whip for her: the whip represents domination and Catherine proves to be obstinate, self-willed and not easily subdued.** When her father comes home with Heathcliff, but without the whip, her reaction is only to grin and spit at Heathcliff unlike Hindley, who though, fourteen years old, “blubbers aloud”. Of mercurial temperament, she is constantly at odds with her father and Nelly’s affection is tinged with irritation:

“She put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day. Her spirits were always at high water mark, her tongue always going singing laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same”.

When Cathy returns to the Heights after a brief stay at the Grange, Nelly has this to say about her: “Our young lady returned to us, saucier and more passionate and haughtier than ever.” Her father says of her, “Nay, Cathy, I cannot love thee; thou art worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child and ask God’s pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee.”

It is her passionate, wild nature which draws her to Heathcliff. They are two of a kind, **both of them savage and untameable, escaping to the moor whenever time permits. They represent the natural forces as against the values of society.** Hindley’s ill-treatment of Heathcliff, only draws Catherine closer to Heathcliff and as they grow the bond becomes an elemental force of love – **a passion so strong that even while Catherine recognizes Heathcliff’s degraded social status and her inability to marry him, she is driven to say, “I am Heathcliff! He’s always in my mind; not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.”** She shares an almost mystical relationship with him in which they see themselves as facets of one another, not as two separate people. To her heaven is Wuthering heights and no other place and she yearns to be united with Heathcliff even in death, so much so that she promises to haunt him and she does.

The **adult Catherine is increasingly selfish and loses her spontaneous wildness.** Nelly confesses that she “did not like her, after her infancy was past.” It is a child, **when she goes to the Linton house and comes back as a prim and proper lady that begins the split in her. Her true nature is wild and rough and passionate, but in the face of the invariable courtesy she experiences at the Grange she conceals her true nature, and adopts a double character.** Thus, she is lady-like with the Lintons, unlike her natural wild self at the Heights. It is this natural self which Edgar Linton glimpses when she nips Nelly, shakes Hareton, and slaps Edgar himself, so that he says to her, “you’ve made me afraid and ashamed of you.”

The untameable side of nature is drawn irresistibly to Heathcliff. She says, **“Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton’s is a different as a moonbeam**

from lightening, or frost from fire.” She recognizes this and yet she sacrifices her love for Heathcliff at altar of social status and in choosing Edgar Linton she paves the way not only for her own misery, but also destroys the lives of Heathcliff and Edgar Linton, causing tragedy in the households.

Her own nature defeats her; **she cannot bear to be thwarted** and has difficulty in seeing anybody’s point view but her own. Thus, she expects Edgar to be as delighted as she is at Heathcliff’s return and she aspects Heathcliff himself to be able to accept her loss composedly. Herein lays her tragedy. **The struggle between her love for Heathcliff and her devotion to Edgar kills her.**

Inevitably her marriage to Edgar Linton leads to discord with the return of Heathcliff. Her tempestuous and high-strung nature cannot take things lightly. So Catherine flies into a rage and punishes her body for the self-inflicted anguish of her mind. **The pressures place upon her by her tormented and divided soul are too great; she is in the middle of a pregnancy and with her physical condition grossly aggravated by her psychological state, she suffers a total nervous breakdown. Catherine cannot reconcile herself to Edgar’s’ calm insipidity.** She wants him to react with passion to her own passionate fury. When he retires to his library, with drawing from the pounding conflict of love, she tells him,” I don’t want you, Edgar; I’m past wanting you”. Thus, Catherine’s passionate nature, frustrated, destroys itself, whereas Heathcliff turns outwards and destroys others.

Her death does not exactly exalt her to a tragic heroine; she is **morally wrong** in having chosen to marry Edgar Linton, knowing fully well that her heart and soul are bound up with Heathcliff. **She wrongs conventional social norms too, wanting Heathcliff’s love even after her marriage to Edgar.** Her love for Heathcliff has a mystical, a spiritual quality about it, which elevates and exalts it to beyond narrow moral standards and this is what redeems her. She is a tormented soul like Heathcliff and finds no peace even in death until Heathcliff too dies and is united with her. She **stands as a foil to** the more refined, socially conditioned Isabella.

- (b) **Mrs. Ellen Dean**, or Nelly as she is normally addressed as, is not a major character in the normal sense since she has no crucial part in the actual events of the story but her role is of great significance in the novel. It is Nelly who is **the chief narrator of the story, offering us insights from the point of view of a subjective observer closely involved with a number of protagonists.**

Nelly Dean’s **omniscience** means that **she reproduces the exact speeches of the dramatic personae** that love and hate and live a high strung life a Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Like a chorus, **she represents sanity and common sense view of life among people driven mad by passions, desires and sorrow.** The religious and moral beliefs of Nelly are an important factor in the novel. Her moral comprehension is of a limited kind depending on moral and religious clichés. **Sound and sensible though her judgment is,** it may be inadequate to judge the strong passions that move Heathcliff and Catherine.

We are introduced to Nelly as the **housekeeper** in Thrushcross Grange, whom Lockwood asks about the strange inmates at the Heights. Through her story we see Nelly herself emerging as **a kind, benevolent, dutiful and loyal** housekeeper who has no interests apart from the interest of the family she serves.

She acts as **a go-between for Heathcliff and Cathy at Thrushcross Grange and their**

clandestine meetings contrived through her are fraught with tragic results. She has some **sympathy for Heathcliff and cares for him as a child. She recognizes too his tormented anguish and deep love for Catherine** and therefore allows him to have a glimpse of his beloved Catherine, when she is dead. In doing so, she seems to be betraying her master Edgar Linton, but she does it with good intentions.

She fails as a chaperone to Catherine the younger, and abets her in meeting Linton much against Edgar's wishes. Though Nelly constantly warns Catherine, she is not firm enough.

She cares for Heathcliff when he is child and recognizes that Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff was such that it could make a fiend of a saint. Similarly she looks after Hareton after his mother's death and when she leaves the Heights to go with Catherine to the Grange, she does so with some sadness. She is again **caring and loving** towards the younger Cathy and brings her up, frequently putting up with discomfort like walking over the wet moors to please her mistress. Her **loyalty** is seen too, when she bravely stands up to Heathcliff as he ill-treats Catherine and keeps them imprisoned at the Heights.

Nelly is a **good and sympathetic listener and hence is a confidante** of most of the characters. It is to her that Heathcliff bares his soul. He tells her of his plans of revenge over Isabella. He seeks her help in meeting Catherine and confides too in the end of being haunted by Catherine. Similarly Catherine confides in Nelly not only her love for Edgar but also her great bond with Heathcliff. The younger Catherine too has none to talk to except Nelly.

Nelly is a down-to-earth character. Brought up with the Earnshaw children as something between older sister and nurse; she later becomes housekeeper, first at Wuthering heights and then at Thrushcross Grange. By her own account she is "self-educated; a poor man's daughter". She is an avid reader and has read most of the books in the library at the Grange. Her actions are generally prompted by kindness and humanity or by the desire to avoid trouble for Edgar Linton. Her **judgment may be wrong, but never her motives**. She has the interests of her masters at heart.

Question 3

Justify the appropriateness of the title of the novel *Wuthering Heights*.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

This question was answered by only a few candidates. Those who answered it gave fairly comprehensive answers, although some left out salient points to justify analysis. All those who attempted it brought out the meaning of the title and the tumult it signifies. In some cases, quotes were found to be missing.

Suggestions for teachers

- Superficial reading of the novel should be discouraged by teachers.
- Students could be made to practise writing, putting down all relevant points in rough, either as a list or as a mind map and then fairing out the answer.

- Making a connection between the title and the novel in terms of not only literal meaning of terms but also plot, theme and character should be encouraged in class.
- Strategic and correct quoting must be taught.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 3.

In the first chapter when Mr. Heathcliff's new tenant Mr. Lockwood of Thrushcross Grange rides a distance of four miles to see his landlord: "Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling, Wuthering being a significant provincial adjective **descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather.**" Thus, the house is so named as it is exposed to snow, storms and roaring winds. The Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary gives the meaning of Wuthering as "To make a sullen roaring, as the wild."

The title refers to the **principal scene of action in the novel**. Most of the incidents of the novel occur at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff is brought to the Heights from Liverpool by Mr. Earnshaw, the old master. Hindley, Heathcliff and Catherine, all grow up at the Heights. It is at the Heights that Heathcliff having been persistently ill-treated by Hindley becomes his inveterate enemy and swears revenge on him. **So, the foundation on which is built the subsequent structure of the story is laid at Wuthering Heights.** Wuthering Heights gives rise to the **tumultuous revenge that tears apart people and families, and the storm of Catherine's torn loyalties that eventually claims her life.**

The novel is a story of love and revenge, and the first phase of **love between the hero and the heroine is developed at the Heights**. Likewise, it is at the Heights that the **hostility** between Heathcliff and Hindley is formed, so that the former decides to take revenge on the latter for the wrong done to him. The hero, **Heathcliff, lives and dies at the Heights, and it is there that he is spiritually united with his beloved, Catherine. The ghosts of the lover and resides in their final union at the Heights while Hareton and the younger Catherine go to live the Grange.** Only three important events occur at the Grange, i.e. the death of Catherine, elopement of Isabella and death of Edgar Linton.

After three years' absence from the Heights, Heathcliff returns to the Heights again, and it is there he works his plan of revenge on Hindley. **The Heights witnesses both the prosperity and the ruin of the Earnshaw family.** Hindley is reduced to an object, a miserable state at the heights and it is there that he dies. After marrying Isabella, Heathcliff brings her to live at the Heights. Likewise the younger Catherine is brought to the Heights to marry Linton Heathcliff, and after her father's death she is made to live at the Heights till the end of the story.

The characters are deeply, almost inseparably, attached to the Heights, particularly Catherine. In a scene in the novel she tells Nelly that she once dreamt that she was in not the Heights. Heaven was not my home," she said," and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth: and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of Wuthering Heights: where I woke sobbing for joy."

The hard winds blowing around Wuthering Heights are in consonance with the stormy and violent nature of the hero and the heroine. The children of storm in the novel dominate the

children of calm, or in other words, Wuthering Heights dominates the Grange. Heathcliff becomes the master of the Heights, and afterwards becomes master of the Grange also. The inhabitants of the Grange are under his full control, and he can do with them whatever he likes. Hence Wuthering Heights with Heathcliff as its master has a dominant position in the novel.

In the opening scene Mr. Lockwood visits Heathcliff at the Heights, and towards the end he visits the Heathcliff again to find that Heathcliff is dead, and that the younger Catherine and Hareton are about to be married. **Wuthering Heights, after all the storm, ends on a note of calm and love.**

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD – Harper Lee

Question 4

Critically comment on the given themes in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

[20]

- (a) Prejudice and Tolerance
- (b) Courage and Cowardice

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Many candidates could not write complete points for the key words of question. While “prejudice” was brought out, “tolerance” was left incomplete.

Even within the “prejudice”, racial prejudice was dealt with at too much length, ignoring class prejudice and bias against Boo. Almost none touched upon the prejudice against women and children.

For “tolerance”, the answers mostly focussed on Atticus and ignored other instances of tolerance.

- (b) Many candidates were thrown off balance by the perceived volume of detail to be derived from the entire novel and did not balance the answer. While “courage” was dealt with well, “cowardice”, the other side of the same coin, was forgotten.

Suggestions for teachers

- Students must be able to identify all key words in question and do justice to each part.
- The text must be known so thoroughly that an on the spot distilling of essence is easy.
- Précis writing skills developed for the Language paper should be applied to such questions that ask for great detail to be compressed.
- Thorough knowledge of text and regular written practice involving writing about the same key concepts as a full length or shorter answers is advised.
- Teachers must teach how to grasp and express essence if need be. Deciding content appropriate to the question and marks, and managing time effectively will come with such practice.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 4.

(a) **Prejudice and Tolerance:**

At one end of the spectrum are people who **fear and hate, such as the members of the jury who convict an innocent man of rape because of his race. Atticus and Calpurnia, on the other hand, show understanding and sympathy towards those who might be different or less fortunate.** When Scout brings a poor classmate home for dinner and then belittles his table manners, for instance, Calpurnia scolds her for remarking upon them and tells her she is bound to treat all guests with respect no matter what their social station. Atticus similarly bases his opinions of people on their behaviour and not their background. Unlike **Alexandra, who calls poor people like the Cunningham's "trash" because of their social station, Atticus tells his children that any white man who takes advantage of a black man's ignorance is "trash."**

Whilst Atticus and his children regard Calpurnia as a part of their family, **Aunt Alexandra epitomises the feelings of the majority of Maycomb society,** regarding Calpurnia as little more than a slave and a bad influence on Scout. She has the common **Southerner's prejudice regarding family, birth, blood line and kinship.**

Throughout the story **blacks are referred to as "niggers", and those who support them or show them any kindness, "nigger lovers".** Strangely, the churchwomen form a **missionary circle** to support the wonderful work being done with the heathen savages in Africa, but condemn those who do anything for the black residents in their own town.

Anyone who is different is also targeted. **Boo Radley is labelled as a monster and outcast because he is not seen outside his home.** It is not enough to just leave him alone – he is an object of gossip and games. The children re-enact stories they have heard about him and dare each other to spy on him. Although Atticus dissuades his own children from doing this, even at the end of the book it is obvious Boo will continue to be labelled and misunderstood by the majority of the townspeople. As he watches the world from behind his windows he witnesses Jem and Scout and feels a certain responsibility, caring for them by providing gifts and, when Scout is cold, warmth. Yet he is always able to do so without having to expose himself to the world.

Women and children are both targets of prejudice in the male-dominated population of Maycomb. Any woman who is not respectably married with children and occupied with baking, sewing or gardening is considered strange and an outsider. Miss Maudie and Mrs. Dubose are two such women who exist on the fringe of respectable society.

Despite the absence of a mother, Jem and Scout have been raised to regard women as equals. They are surprised to learn that **women cannot serve on juries**, yet accept Atticus' reasoning that women need to be protected and that women would find it hard to reach a decision. Earlier in the novel, Jem criticizes Scout for acting like a girl.

The **Ewells, although white, are almost as despised as the Negroes.** They live in poverty, removed from respectable society. Mayella, a girl ruled by an alcoholic and violent father, is offered help by a man who should be her inferior. Tom Robinson is possibly the only man who has ever shown her any respect and, misreading this, she makes inappropriate overtures. When this is discovered her father forces her to turn the situation to their advantage by accusing Tom of rape.

The prejudice leads both Jem and Scout to realise that life is not always fair, that good does not

always triumph over evil. As witnesses to the events surrounding Tom Robinson's trial they see a **miscarriage of justice**, with an innocent man condemned before he even enters the courtroom. The jury's willingness to believe what Atticus calls "the evil assumption . . . that all Negroes are basically immoral beings" leads them to convict an innocent man. They see men who are otherwise decent confront him in their determination to lynch his client. Boo Radley, unknown by a community who has not seen or heard from him in fifteen years, is similarly presumed to be a monster by the court of public opinion. It is such injustice and prejudice that commits the sin of **killing the harmless mockingbird**, whether Tom Robinson or Boo Radley.

In the events of *To Kill a Mockingbird* the whole town of Maycomb loses any prior semblance of innocence. In the opening pages of the book Scout describes the town as "an old town." Steeped in tradition and cocooned in the apparent safety of a network of social rules (written and unwritten), life seems predictable and unchanging. The alleged rape of Mayella Ewell begins a series of events which challenge the very fabric of the town. Old notions of right and wrong are challenged. The **town is exposed to the reader as being far from innocent, but rather a town riddled with bigotry, hatred and injustice.**

Lee seems to suggest that **children have a natural instinct for tolerance** and understanding; only as they grow older do they learn to react to differences with fear and disdain. As **Dolphus Raymond** tells Scout, "Things haven't caught up with that one's instinct yet. Let him get a little older and he won't get sick and cry."

Amongst all this loss of innocence and prejudice is the **presence of those who stand up for right**: Mr. Underwood who trains his gun on the lynch mob despite being racist, Judge Taylor who chooses Atticus to give Tom Robinson a fighting chance, and especially Atticus. They show Scout, Jem and others, including the reader, that there is good in every person and that the quest of justice is not a wasted effort. Tolerance comes from such people, most so from **Atticus who teaches his children to walk around in the skin of another in order to understand him.**

(b) **Courage and Cowardice**

All of the major players in the novel are called on to display their courage. Even **Mayella Ewell, who hides behind a lie to protect herself, shows a curious kind of courage in having the strength to face the public and the court and uphold her story.**

Atticus Finch does not allow his courage to waver. Atticus is a widower who does not falter in providing the children with a stable home life in a time where men are seen as providers and women as nurturers. Atticus has a highly developed **morality, with very strong convictions about wrong and right. He is prepared to stand up for what is right, regardless of the consequences. When he takes on Tom Robinson's case, he is determined to do all he can to defend him, even though he knows Tom's case is hopeless.** Atticus refuses to drop the case or to provide a token defence, because he is convinced both of Tom's innocence and of his right to a fair trial.

Atticus has the strength of character to recognise that there is both good and evil in every person, and the ability to admire that good. He **admires Mrs. Dubose for her strength in fighting her morphine addiction even while disagreeing with her intolerant views.** He is able to appreciate Aunt Alexandra's willingness to help him and his family, but will not agree to her request to dismiss Calpurnia.

The two victims of the book's key events – **Tom Robinson and Boo Radley** – **both show courage.** Prior to his arrest, Tom is willing to help Mayella with tasks such as chopping wood,

because he sees that she is woman in need. He is an intelligent man and aware that his help is taken for granted and could even be misconstrued. After his arrest, Tom continues to show courage. In court he is polite to all who address him and calm and measured in his responses, despite the enormous stress he is under. Even in his escape he shows courage – surely knowing that his escape attempt is unlikely to be successful, but thereby putting an end to the ongoing trauma to all involved.

Boo Radley too shows great courage. Regarded as a freak by the whole town, judged for his unwillingness or inability to join in with public life, Boo nonetheless has the courage to keep on living and to reach out to the children. He shows especial courage in rescuing Jem and Scout from the violent Bob Ewell and allowing Atticus and Heck Tate to decide the consequences.

In the same event **Jem** shows physical courage in protecting Scout, only stopping when his arm is broken. Jem shows courage throughout the book, marking his progress from childhood towards adulthood. Earlier in the book, the children have seen as courageous childish actions such as touching the Radley's house. As the novel has progressed they have had to find a deeper level of courage to face their fears and to overcome the prejudice levelled at them by the residents of Maycomb.

Mr. Underwood, the editor of The Maycomb Tribune, shows his willingness to **face down his own racist feelings and support what he knows is right**. He has his gun trained on the mob that comes to lynch Tom and attack Atticus despite the fact that he despises Negroes.

Heck Tate finally steps out of the shadows to do the right thing. He hadn't been able to do it in the Tom Robinson case, but he refuses to let an injustice occur again. Although he has to lie to protect Boo Radley, he knows that keeping his role in Bob Ewell's death a secret is the right thing to do: **he stolidly insists that Bob Ewell fell on his own knife and died**. "It's my decision and my responsibility," he avers and silences Atticus with, "Let the dead bury the dead."

Lastly, **Maycomb residents** also present some forms of courage, as in the scene **of the fire breaking out in Miss Maudie's home**. The people of Maycomb, in all codes of "dress and undress", and without hesitation, helped to shift furniture to a yard across her house. In spite of losing everything in the fire, **Miss Maudie does not complain**; in fact, she seems quite delighted at the prospect of building a smaller house. **Judge Taylor deliberately names Atticus as the defending lawyer**, giving Tom Robinson a chance at true representation, which he believes is the correct thing to do.

Cowardice is evinced by Bob Ewell who is an alcoholic, abusive father and probably beats his daughter on catching her in a compromising position with a Negro. Afraid to face the social consequences of a daughter trying to seduce a Negro, he takes the coward's way out and accuses Tom Robinson of rape. He then is base enough to threaten a helpless, lone widow and attack defenceless children. **Mayella**, although facing public embarrassment, cannot own up the situation was of her creation and permits an innocent man who was kind to her to die. **Cowardice is also in those who know a wrong is being committed but cannot take a stand against it**: the jury may have been out the longest for such a case but eventually gave a guilty verdict because a black man's word could not be accepted against a white man's, even if he spoke the truth.

Question 5

- (a) Explain what happened at the First Purchase African M.E. Church, when Scout and Jem went there with Calpurnia. [10]
- (b) Discuss what happened after the trial with Atticus Finch, Judge Taylor and Helen Robinson which showed that Bob Ewell was getting back at them. [10]

Comments of Examiners

- (a) The question demanded a detailed narration of the incident asked about. Most candidates answered the question well and scored well. However, some important details such as, calling out individual lapses by name as a distinguishing feature observed by Scout, were left out.
- (b) Candidates managed to write well in this question. Major points missed out were Bob Ewell harassing Helen Robinson (“chunked at her”).

Suggestions for teachers

- Incident-based questions are among the easiest to answer, being straightforward and completely text-based, especially if the question focuses on narration and asks for little no analysis. Teachers must read through incidents in novels and ensure their students get the sequence and key stages or detail that contribute to or comprise the incident / event correct.
- When studying a novel, seemingly minor characters and incidents too must be known since they contribute to the entire work in terms of theme, bringing out character and plot. Sketchy answers with insufficient points for marks allotted can be avoided by insisting on thorough study of text and written practice.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 5.

- (a) Calpurnia prepared the children thoroughly for the Sunday visit to the First Purchase African M.E. Church in Atticus’ absence. **Scout observed they were greeted by the warm smell of “clean Negro” and with respect by the men and women.** The men took off their hats and the women crossed their hands at the waist, and parted to create a pathway for the three. As they walked in, **a tall woman shouted out to Calpurnia.** She seemed seven feet high and stood with her weight on one leg and her left elbow in the curve of her hip. She wanted to know why Calpurnia was bringing white children to church. Calpurnia’s tone was contemptuous towards her but reassuring to the children. Lula pointed out that this church was meant for the blacks since the “white chillum” had their own church to visit. **Jem felt uncomfortable since she did not want them there but Calpurnia seemed amused.** When the children looked, they saw that Lula had vanished and her place had been taken by “a solid mass of coloured people.”

Zeebo, the garbage collector, reassured Jem not to worry about Lula who was a “troublemaker”, and that they were glad to welcome the Finches to their church. They were **greeted by Reverend Sykes who took them to the front pew**. Much to Jem’s discomfiture, **Calpurnia gave each of them a dime** saying they had come with her so they need not use their own. Reverend Sykes began the service by welcoming the Finches and making announcements: the first, about the meeting of the Missionary Society, followed **by the mention of Tom Robinson who was in trouble and to whose family the collection would go**. Scout started speaking but was hushed by Jem and Calpurnia.

The service was led by Zeebo with a battered hymn book, and Scout’s misgivings about not having hymn books were settled when **everyone followed him without books in “simple harmony”**. At the chorus, Zeebo closed the book to signal that the congregation should sing on without his help. Both the children were incredulous.

Reverend Sykes called upon the Lord to bless the sick and suffering and then in his sermon denounced sin, warning his flock against heady brews, gambling and strange women. **Scout felt the sermon was similar to what she heard every Sunday in their church, except the Reverend often referred to individual lapses by name**. After the sermon, there was a collection in which everyone dropped nickels and dimes into a black enamelled coffee can. To the children’s amazement, **Reverend Sykes counted the amount and declared they needed ten dollars**. The church was stuffy, as if Reverend Sykes wanted his congregation to sweat out the amount. He was insistent that everybody make sacrifices. After everyone contributed some more, the door opened and the service was over.

Scout was curious about why Helen Robinson needed help and why folks did not want to hire her. **She was indignant** at the reason because she recollected that the Ewells were “absolute trash”. Jem wanted to spend his money in buying hymn books but was told by Calpurnia that her **people could not read**. **The children were told how Calpurnia had learnt to read and how she had taught her son, Zeebo too**. Calpurnia explained how she had to lead a **“modest double life”**, behaving differently when with her people and when with the Finch household. Scout was so impressed that she asked if she could visit Calpurnia sometimes.

- (b) The first thing Bob Ewell did to get back at Atticus was he stopped him at the post office corner, **spat in his face** and told him he would “get him” if it took the rest of his life.

Bob Ewell acquired and lost his job in a matter of days. He was unique in being dismissed from WPA for laziness but he **swore that Atticus was responsible and he made “obscure mutterings** that the bastards who thought they ran this town wouldn’t permit an honest man to make a living”.

The final straw was when he **attacked Scout and Jem** one night when they were returning from the school pageant. Scout got knocked down and she heard sounds of a scuffle. Jem was knocked unconscious and broke his arm. He had to be carried home. Scout later got to know that Boo had saved their lives since Bob Ewell had attacked them with a knife and intended to get his revenge on Atticus for humiliating him on the stand by stabbing his children.

Judge Taylor did not go to Church on Sunday night but spent the evening alone in the study of his big house while his wife went. One evening, he was distracted from his reading by **a scratching noise**. At first, he thought his dog was responsible for it so he asked her to be quiet. Then he realized the dog was not there and the noise was emanating **from the rear of the**

house. He went to the back door to let his dog out and **found the screen door open.** **A shadow in the corner of the house** caught his eye but that was all he saw of the intruder. Mrs. Taylor returned home to find her husband immersed in his reading but with a shotgun across his lap. **Maycomb suspected Bob Ewell had tried to burgle the house,** not knowing that Judge Taylor was inside.

Link Deas gave Helen Robinson a job since he felt the unfairness of what had happened to her husband. Helen had to walk a mile out of her way everyday to reach her place of work because **if she took the public road, the Ewells “chunked at her”.** When Link Deas got to know the reason for the detour, he asked her to come by his store one afternoon and then walked her home. On his way back, he warned Bob Ewell that if he bothered Helen, he would have Bob Ewell thrown in prison. The next day, although Helen used the public road, **when she was a few yards beyond the Ewell house, she saw Bob Ewell walking behind her. All the way to the house, he followed her softly “crooning foul words”.** When Link Deas came out, Ewell told him to leave him alone since he had done nothing to her. Link asked him to get off his property and leave his cook alone. **Bob Ewell claimed he was not going to touch any “nigger”.** Link Deas threatened him that if he even made her afraid he would prosecute him under the law. This frightened him enough for him to leave Helen alone after that.

Question 6

Write short notes on *any two* of the following characters:

[20]

- (a) Jerry Finch
- (b) Atticus Finch
- (c) Calpurnia

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Important aspects of character ignored by the candidates were that he was a “mockingbird”, the “roly poly” incident and what it shows about him. Some candidates ignored his nature as an elder brother.
- (b) Some candidates missed out on Atticus’ background as a lawyer and an upstanding member of the community.
- (c) Commonly missed out point was that Calpurnia is the bridge between the differing worlds of the coloured and the white folks. She is the one of the few “Negroes” who can read. Her physical description too escaped notice in several cases.

Suggestions for teachers

- All characters should be analysed in all their dimensions rather than with limited perspective. Their place in the novel and its impact must be discussed.
- Character trait or opinion mentioned must be backed by substantiation from the text.
- Growth or change in characters must be pointed out.
- Again, compressing key points of character to match the marks allotted is a skill that has to be taught with practice.

- Time management and managing the paper as a whole should be taught, and prioritizing to balance answers according to marks and weightage in the paper should be reinforced.
- While teaching, it may help to ask students to underline key points in text and have them put them down as a written answer of varied marks to ensure they get character studies right and can match content to marks and weightage.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 6.

(a) Jeremy Finch:

Four years older than his sister Scout, Jeremy "Jem" Finch seems to have a deeper understanding of the events during the three years of the novel, for his emotional reactions to them are stronger. As the story begins, Jem **is a quick-witted but fun-loving ten year old who spends a lot of time in creative play with Scout and Dill Harris**, a summer visitor to the neighbourhood. His games include enacting scenes from Boo Radley's life and taking dares to approach his porch. He is admonished by Atticus for his immaturity, and only later understands why Boo Radley stays away. Jem is frequently exasperated by his sister, and requires her to keep her distance during school hours. Nevertheless, for the most part Jem is **an understanding and encouraging older brother**, allowing Scout to join in his games and even dignifying her with an occasional fistfight. As **he approaches adolescence, however, Jem becomes quieter and more easily agitated**: he reacts angrily when Mrs. Dubose leaves him a small peace offering after her death.

He is **anxious to please his father, and hates to disappoint him**. When Jem loses his pants in the "raid" on the Radley house, he insists on returning for them during the middle of the night—not so much to avoid the pain of punishment, but because "Atticus ain't ever whipped me since I can remember. I wanta keep it that way." Concern for his father and some of the courage he seems to have inherited from him makes him decide **to follow – on a "feeling" - Atticus at ten o'clock at night** when Atticus goes to protect Tom Robinson at the jail house, for which Atticus massages his hair as a "gesture of affection".

Although more socially aware than Scout, he is aghast at Tom Robinson's guilty verdict. **"It was Jem's turn to cry"** at the injustice. The trial leaves Jem a little more withdrawn and less self-confident, and he spends much of the following fall concerned for his father's safety. **He suddenly loses the innocent and pure faith in good, and in that sense he is a mockingbird**, as he begins questioning Maycomb's people and the judicial system. His pain shows when he says, "I think I'm beginning to understand why Boo Radley's stayed shut up in

the house all this time... it's because he *wants* to stay inside."

He shows his maturity and that he has understood his father's principles when he prevents Scout from smashing the "roly-poly". He demonstrates his own courage when he protects his sister from the attack of Bob Ewell without regard for his own safety.

(b) **Atticus Finch:**

Atticus Finch, a widower, is a member of one of Maycomb County's oldest and most prominent families. Nevertheless, he refuses to use his background as an excuse to hold himself above others and instead is a model of tolerance and understanding. **He teaches his children the valuable lesson principle of tolerance that they try as they grow up to emulate: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view- ... -until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."** He also teaches them that **"it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."**

Atticus is a lawyer and also a member of the state legislature, elected by townspeople who respect his honesty even if they don't always approve of his actions. For example, when Atticus is appointed the defence attorney for Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman, the town disapproves because he aims to do the best job he can. He, according to Miss Maudie, is the only one who can keep a jury out for as long as he succeeds in doing in the Tom Robinson case. She speaks of him as the one the town looks to do the right thing, whether it is a racially motivated trial or eliminating the danger posed by a mad dog. Heck Tate does not think twice before turning to Atticus – **"One-Shot Finch"** – to shoot Tim Johnson quickly and painlessly.

As a father Atticus is affectionate with Jem and Scout, ready with a hug when they need comfort and available to spend time reading to them. Although he **allows his children freedom to play and explore, he is also a firm disciplinarian**, always teaching his children to think of how their actions affect others and devising punishments to teach his children valuable lessons. When Jem damages the camellia bushes of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose, a neighbour who scolds and insults the children, Atticus sentences him to read to her each day. As Jem reads, he and Scout witness the dying woman's battle against her morphine addiction and learn **the true meaning of courage: "it's when you know you're licked before you begin but you see it through no matter what,"** Atticus tells them. Atticus's own actions in arguing the Robinson case demonstrate this kind of courage, and his behaviour throughout embody values of dignity, integrity, determination, and tolerance.

He fosters virtues of justice, fair concerns for others and equality in his children. He treats his children as adults, takes time to explain the complications and intricacies of the adult world to them. He does not hide the harsher side of life from his children, and he answers Scout's questions on rape because, as he tells Uncle Jack, children can spot an "evasion" and that "muddles" them. He takes decisions which will ensure him the courage **to look his children in the eye at all times**. He teaches them to have moral courage and also, inspires them to see things from the other person's perspective as well, including Bob Ewell's despite the latter's open hostility.

(c) **Calpurnia:**

One of several **strong female figures** in the lives of the Finch children, Calpurnia is the family's **black housekeeper**. She has **helped to raise Jem and Scout since their mother's**

death four years ago. Like Atticus, Calpurnia is a **strict but loving teacher, particularly in regard to Scout**, whose enthusiasm sometimes makes her thoughtless. On Scout's first day of school, for example, Calpurnia scolds Scout for criticizing the table manners of Walter Cunningham Jr., whom the children have brought home as a lunch guest. That day after school, however, Calpurnia prepares Scout's favourite food, crackling bread, as a special treat. She comforts Scout and explains that Jem is growing up but offers her own company when Scout is "lonesome". Calpurnia marches right into the court house, worried for the children, and is indignant that they have sat through the trial. She **has Atticus's respect** as "a faithful member of this family" and he firmly disagrees with Aunt Alexandra about asking her to leave, especially since the children "love her".

Calpurnia also gives Scout her first awareness of the contrast between the worlds of black and white. During a visit to Calpurnia's church, her use of black dialect with her friends makes Scout realize that Calpurnia has a wider life outside the Finch household. Calpurnia also helps Scout understand how people can serve as a **bridge between these differing worlds**. Although the majority of parishioners welcome them during their church visit, one woman challenges the white children. Calpurnia responds by calling them her guests and saying "it's the same God, ain't it?" She is one of the few Negroes **who can read** and taught Zeebo to do so from the books she had.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN – *Arthur Miller*

Question 7

Discuss Arthur Miller's play, *Death of A Salesman* as a tragedy.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

Most candidates gave a mere narration of the 'story' of the play. Few made the attempt to link the events and characters to any concept of tragedy, whether Miller's or Classical. The contribution of failure to the tragedy was not adequately discussed in some cases.

Answers lacked quotes, despite the demands of the analysis.

Suggestions for teachers

- The genre of the play and its literary context should be taught. Parameters or concepts in that genre too need to be clearly explained to students.
- Students must be taught to discuss the play in the context of these concepts, whether in accordance with them or as a departure from them.
- Accurate and relevant quotes a must.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 7.

Whether *Death of a Salesman* is a tragedy or not has been a **controversial** question among the critics. Some critics regard it as a social tragedy; some others say it is not a tragedy but a sentimental play. A few other critics say that it is a drama generis which cannot be labelled under any form of traditional drama. Aristotle defined tragedy as "The imitation of an action that is serious, (or noble, or important) *and* also, as having magnitude complete in itself: in language with pleasurable accessories in a dramatic not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions." At a later point in the same treatise, Poetics, Aristotle speaks of peripety (or reversal) and recognition or discovery as desirable elements in the tragedy.

Miller is sensitive, modern, and meant his play to be a tragedy. In some ways *Death of a Salesman* is a play written along the lines of the finest classical tragedy. It is the revelation of man's downfall, in destruction whose roots are entirely in his own soul. **But Miller's conception of tragedy is different.**

Miller rejects the Greek Tragedy and call it "archaic" "fit only for the very highly placed, the kings or the kingly."

According to Miller **the common man is apt subject for tragedy**, for exaltation of tragic action is a property of all man. The tragic feeling is aroused in us not by the stature of a hero but by his willingness **to lay down his life if need be to secure one thing—his sense of personal dignity.** He points out that "Tragedy, then, is the consequence of man's total compulsion to evaluate himself justly", or the individual attempting to place his 'rightful' positions in his society. The feeling of terror and fear can be aroused by man's fight against the environment too. The tragedy of monarchs and royal persons would not arouse much sympathy now as it did during the Elizabethan period. That tragedy implies more optimism in its author than does comedy, and that its final result ought to be the reinforcement of the onlooker's brightest opinion of the human animal. Tragedy takes place when a human being loses the grip of the forces of life. Tragedy is a manifestation of truth.

Arthur Miller also discusses the concept of 'the tragic victory'. He repudiates the idea that a man who sacrifices himself for a cause should make the audience feel some kind of elation. A man's death is a terrifying thing and 'should not bring joy to anyone'. **"But," he says, "in a great variety of ways even death, the ultimate negative, can be an assertion of bravery."** "Willy", he says, "has achieved a very powerful piece of knowledge, which is that he is loved by his son, and has been embraced by him and forgiven." In this he is given his existence, so to speak, his fatherhood, for which he has always striven and which until now he could not achieve. Why then, must he **commit suicide**? Miller's answer is that Willy has so far committed himself to the false coinage embodied in his idea of success that he can prove his existence only by bestowing "power" on his posterity, a power derived from the sale of his last asset for the price of his insurance policy.' His suicide can be described as "an assertion of bravery", but it is prompted by so obstinate a misunderstanding of what Biff has been saying that its stature is diminished.

Moreover, Willy has some sense of universality. His suffering is the suffering of the common man. Willy reflects the predicament of the modern man. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is a tragedy set in our times, played out on our own scene, by characters who, however we regard that quality of their thought, speak in our own languages and with our own peculiar accents.

The play is a fervent **query into the great competitive dream of success**, the American Dream, as it strips to the core a castaway from the race for recognition and money.

The little man as victim. The theme arouses pity but no terror. Man is here too little and too passive to play the tragic hero. (Eric Bentley)

It is not perhaps so very important to decide whether the play is a tragedy or not. Arthur Miller himself has said that it is “a slippery play to categorize.” “The play was always heroic to me,” he says, “and in later years the academy’s charge that Willy lacked the “stature” for the hero seemed incredible to me.” He explains, “I set out not to write a tragedy.” What matters is that the play has important things to say and does so movingly and dramatically.

[Depending on argument chosen by candidate a variety of quotes from the text were accepted – discussion could incorporate what is read from external responsible sources, but credit for quotes will be given for substantiating quotes from text]

Question 8

Assess Willy Loman’s role as a father in the play *Death of a Salesman*.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

This question was not attempted well by all candidates. It was a question requiring analytical reasoning. Even those who covered this aspect of Willy Loman well, left out important points not directly stated in play but to be inferred, such as the absence of a father in Willy’s growing up years and the search for a role model as contributing factors.

Quotes were found to be insufficient, or if there, not well placed.

Suggestions for teachers

- Thorough knowledge of the text and the discussion of impact of developments, as well as the influencing factors on character and relationships should be done in class.
- Insistence upon relevant, correct and well-placed quotes in class assignments, tests and school exams.
- This facet of Willy’s character to consider:
 - influence of his own childhood
 - values imparted to his sons (with examples)
 - impact of his upbringing on sons (with examples)
 - mistakes / guilt
 - sincere effort (illustrated)
 - loved by sons / idolized – yet fall from grace

MARKING SCHEME

Question 8.

Willy Loman is a 63-year-old travelling salesman from Brooklyn. The play presents Willy's struggle to maintain a foothold in the American middle class while combating his own doubts. When the play begins, Happy and Biff, are staying in their old rooms. Happy works as an assistant to the assistant buyer at a retail store, but he dreams of bigger things. Biff was once a high school football star, but he could never embrace Willy's concept of success. So he has just been drifting from one manual labour job to the next.

The roots of Willy's role as a father are in his own childhood, particularly in the absence of his **father in his life.** During the 'memory scene' between Willy and his brother Ben, the audience learns about his nomadic father and family roaming across the country in a wagon. According to Ben, their father was a great inventor, but all the audience knows of his creations are the hand-crafted flutes. Willy's father left the family when Willy was three years old. Ben, who seems at least 15 years older than Willy, departed in search of their father. Willy never hears from his father again. **His brother is his ideal.** Willy is **desperate for his brother Ben to extend his visit. He wants to make certain that his boys are being raised correctly.** Since Willy was deprived of affection as a child, he smothers his sons with love and oppresses them with his hopes for their success. He has no example to base his parenting on.

His insecurity does not allow him to see the inconsistencies of his beliefs and the lessons he teaches his boys. **In childhood, his sons idolize Willy. It is only once they have grown up that they realize his failure as a father since he does little to equip them for life or teach them correct values, in spite of his love for them.** He encourages competitive and even unlawful behaviour at times. The advice he offers his sons is questionable. He tells them

Just wanna be careful with those girls, Biff, that's all. Don't make any promises. No promises of any kind. Because a girl, y'know, they always believe what you tell 'em.

The boys take him seriously: Linda notes that Biff is "too rough with the girls." Happy grows up to become a womanizer who sleeps with women who are engaged to his managers. Several times during the play, Happy promises that he is going to get married -- but the credibility of the intention is suspect.

Willy also condones Biff's thievery. Biff, who eventually develops a compulsion to steal things, steals a football from his coach's locker room. Instead of disciplining his son about the theft, he laughs about the incident and says, "Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative!" Biff grows up with the compulsion to steal – basket balls, pens – unchecked, especially when he is around his father. In a confrontation with his father, Biff screams "I stole myself out of every good job since high school!"

One value he instils in his sons is the importance of personality, of being "well liked". Willy has always made the point to his sons that being popular and having contacts is the key to success. Above all things, Willy Loman believes that popularity and charisma will outdo hard work and innovation. When Biff comes home to say he made fun of his teacher's lisp, Willy is more concerned about what his classmates thought. **Willy's delusions and his misguided pursuit of the American Dream puts his sons, especially Biff, under tremendous strain.** Biff is pulled by two different dreams. One dream is his father's world of business, sales, and capitalism. His other dream involves nature, the great outdoors, and working with his hands.

Biff and Happy are not functional adults as a result of their upbringing. One major problem for the Loman boys was that they were always treated **as if they were infallible.** When asked if an old

boss will remember Biff, Willy says, "You know why he remembered you, don't you? Because you impressed him in those days." He also says, "There's fifty men in the City of New York who'd stake him." These two statements turn out to be completely false. Biff finally gains the courage to ask Bill Oliver for money after listening to his father. When he has to wait all day just to be embarrassed by Bill Oliver, Biff realizes that his father tends to make up what he wants to be true. These lies cause resentment towards his father. Biff says "I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody!"

Both sons inherit their father's dreams of greatness but have no idea how to reach them. Biff wants nothing more than to work outside with his hands but is not able to because it doesn't meet his father's definition of success. Happy has a job more acceptable to Willy, but there is no opportunity for growth. He is not satisfied with his life but never changes anything because all he wants to do is please his father. He has lived in the shadow of athletic Biff for his entire life. Happy feels that to receive attention he must constantly strive to impress his father. While Willy is bragging about Biff, Happy keeps reminding him how he's losing weight.

Willy's actions are worse than his words. To alleviate his loneliness, he has an affair with a woman that works at one of his client's offices. While Willy and the nameless woman rendezvous in a Boston hotel, Biff pays his father a surprise visit. Once Biff realizes that his father is a "phony little fake," Willy's son becomes ashamed and distant. **From here on, Willy is bedevilled by guilt not only as a husband but also as a father.** Somewhere along the way, Willy also feels guilty for his sons' lack of success. He knows that he has not raised them to be the best they could be, but he does not want to admit it. He also feels guilty about exaggerating his own accomplishments and encouraging his sons to disregard the law.

The way his sons' lives turn out and the collapse of the father-son relationship in this family are sadly ironic because **Willy wants nothing more than to be a perfect father.** Willy has tried so hard in his life to be the perfect father, yet his sons do not appreciate all that he does for them. The only way he can understand this is by claiming that his sons have been spiting him. Nearly everything he does can be traced back to somehow trying to give his sons a better life and be a good provider. Willy values his family more than anything else in the world and only wishes for his sons to be what he sees as successful. All of his struggles, sacrifices, and even final suicide are for his sons, not himself. Willy pawns his diamond watch, received as a gift from his beloved brother Ben, in order to pay for Biff's radio correspondence course. He believes that by bequeathing them \$20,000 in insurance money by committing suicide, he will provide conclusive proof of his immutable essence as a good father.

Despite his failures, **Willy is loved by his sons.** Both plan to cheer him up by promising to meet with a "big shot" business man, Bill Oliver. They plan to pitch a marketing idea. When they meet at the restaurant, Biff has bad news but Willy, blinded by the prospect of his son's success, does not want to hear it as a supportive father may be expected to do. Biff and Willy shout, shove, and argue. Finally, Biff bursts into tears and kisses his father. Willy is deeply touched, realizing that his son still loves him.

Biff attempts to help his father see what has become of him. In the end, Biff decides that he must force his father to see the truth rather than his fanciful images, for his own good, regardless of its toll on his father. He bares his soul saying "Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop! Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it any more. I'm just what I am, that's all." At Willy's funeral, Biff states that "He had the wrong dreams...He never knew who he was." He realizes the error of what his father taught him and turns away from his father's beliefs.

Happy views his Uncle Ben as his role model rather than his father because Ben went to seek his fortune as a teenager and was rich by the age of 21. He repeatedly reminds Willy of this. In the end, he wants to continue with his father's dream: "It's the only dream you can have -- to come out No. 1 man."

Question 9

Comment on the following as used in Arthur Miller's play, *Death of A Salesman*:

[20]

- (a) The Stealing Motif.
- (b) The Time Motif.

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Not many candidates attempted this question, but those who did, answered it well. Most gave relevant incidents.
- (b) This was not handled well by many candidates. The importance of time in the play was either ignored or garbled. Most candidates referred to the shifting time frame and forgot the idea of time running out for Willy or the emphasis of Ben on his watch.

Suggestions for teachers

- All relevant examples to validate a point should be known.
- Teaching symbols and other components of the technique and style the writer employs is vital.
- Substantiation with textual reference or quotes is important.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 9.

- (a) Early in the play we hear Biff and Happy talking in their old room. In a moment of realization Biff wonders if Oliver still thinks that he stole a **carton of baseballs**. Thus, this motif begins with only a fleeting mention of the idea of stealing. Later it is revealed that Biff had **once taken a football from a locker**. Willy approved, even saying that the coach would "probably congratulate you on your initiative." Willy **encourages Biff to take answers from Bernard** on the final examinations because it is more important for Biff to be out practicing and mixing with people than it is to study math. The **idea of stealing or cheating is associated with Biff and that Willy seems to encourage both**.

In another flashback scene, we see Willy actually sending the boys to a construction job in order to **steal lumber**. Willy is very proud of the amount of lumber that the boys have brought home and he sends them so as to show Ben what "fearless characters" Biff and Happy are.

When Biff is waiting in Oliver's office for an interview, he suddenly takes over **Oliver's expensive fountain pen** and runs down eleven flights of stairs. He is still so filled with Willy's philosophy of self-importance that he cannot endure the embarrassment of having to wait for so long; therefore, he steals the fountain pen. When Biff tries to explain this to Willy, Willy simply says that it was a foolish thing to do, but otherwise **Willy closes his mind to any thought that Billy is actually a thief**. He doesn't even hear Biff's explanation that he stole the basketballs from Oliver a year ago. **All Willy can think of is that Biff had such personal attractiveness**.

Later at home, Biff tries to explain again that Willy filled him "so full of hot air" that he could

never stand taking orders from anyone, **and that he has stolen himself out of every job he has ever had since high school.** And for the last three months, Biff has been in a **jail in Kansas City for stealing a suit of clothes.**

The theft motif is thus a **comment on Willy's philosophy of life**; he overlooked a theft if it were performed by a person who was well- liked. The theft motif (as in the stealing of the fountain pen) **brings the drama to a climax** because it forces Biff to see himself and to try to explain himself to his father.

- (b) Willy tells both his boys that the "... woods are burning. I can't even drive a car." Ben becomes Willy's ideal as a man who had nothing and ended up rich once he walked into the jungle. The jungle becomes for Willy the woods. Thus, when Willy says that "the woods are burning", he means that life is closing in on him. Whereas Ben conquered the jungle, Willy can only be trapped by the burning woods. Consequently **the phrase, "the woods are burning," suggests that time is running out on Willy.**

This **concept of time hurrying past man is again emphasized by Ben.** Every time we see Ben, he has his watch out and keeps saying that he has only a few more minutes or that he has to catch a train. He is always on the move while Willy remains stagnantly still. What Ben stands for is captured in, "When I was seventeen, I walked into the jungle and when I was twenty-one I walked out ... and by God I was rich." Here was **a man who utilized time while time has simply passed Willy by.**

When Howard fires Willy, he has nowhere to turn. He must now rely upon his boys, but his boys are not reliable. So **when Biff tries to tell Willy the truth, Willy maintains that he is not interested in the past** "..... because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There's a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today."

Willy has thus spent his life "ringing up a zero", and now there is no place for him to go. Therefore, he conceives of a way out of his burning woods. This involves suicide. Through suicide he would be able to leave his sons twenty thousand dollars. To **Ben's frantic calling that it is "Time, William, time," Willy drives off to his own death.**

Years of Willy's life are encapsulated in a period of twenty four hours. The time frame repeatedly shifts, reflecting even in the stage directions and set where characters walk through wall lines, and Willy's entire life from being abandoned by his father in childhood, a career failing over the years, an extra marital affair, relationships changing over time is brought out.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN – Oscar Wilde

Question 10

Give a brief summary of the play *Lady Windermere's Fan*, highlighting the concept of [20] marriage, as portrayed in the play.

Comments of Examiners

Candidates who wrote a proper summary, neglected elaborating upon the theme of the play and vice versa. For some candidates, a brief summary of play proved more difficult than discussing the theme of marriage. In several cases, quotes, especially to support theme, were found to be insufficient.

Suggestions for teachers

- Give practice in identifying the key demands of the question; for example, in this one “summary” and “marriage”.
- Time management and fitting relevant matter to ensure significant points made to suit marks, with an eye on the clock, come with practice. Teachers must provide this practice by giving a mix of questions, varying the marks allotted from 10 - 20 and the time spent accordingly.
- Ability to make quick judgments and decisions on content comes from thorough study over a period of time and rigorous instruction and practice, which teachers have to ensure.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 10.

Lady Windermere’s Fan was Oscar Wilde’s first produced play, and it was an instant success on the London stage. As a comedy of errors the play presents a hilarious, weird, trivial, and mocking (satirical) instances among its main characters, but at the same time touches on serious matters that have to do with double dealings, double lives, mistakes, unveiling of truths, mistaken identity and marriage.

In the play, Lady Windermere considers leaving her husband of two years when she believes he’s been unfaithful with a woman—who turns out to be her own mother. Remarkably, it is the mother who sets her straight without ever revealing her identity.

The play opens in Lady Margaret Windermere’s home, where she is arranging roses for a party later that evening in celebration of her birthday. Lord Darlington visits, and Margaret chides him for flirting with her. He contends that a woman whose husband of two years is unfaithful has a right to “console herself.”

Lady Windermere fails to recognize his oblique reference to her husband, and calls herself a Puritan with “hard and fast rules” for fidelity. Lord Darlington continues to flirt with her, but she ignores him.

He leaves and the Duchess of Berwick and her daughter, Lady Agatha Carlisle, enter. The Duchess cattily reports that Lord Windermere has been spending time and money on a Mrs. Erlynne, whose social status is questionable. The Duchess admits that her own husband has had his “little

aberrations,” and assumes all men are immoral.

Yet the Duchess is anxious to marry off her daughter Agatha, saying “a mother who doesn’t part with a daughter every season has no real affection.”

After they depart, Lady Windermere looks through her husband’s desk and discovers payments to Mrs. Erlynne in his secret bankbook. When he comes in and finds her looking at it, he gets angry. He demands that his wife invite Mrs. Erlynne to their party in order to help the woman back into society. Lady Windermere flatly refuses.

He addresses an invitation to Mrs. Erlynne himself. Outraged, Lady Windermere threatens to hit the infamous woman with her new birthday fan when she arrives. Lord Windermere protests and she storms offstage.

As the curtain drops, he agonizes over what to do about the situation. Apparently there is something to his relationship with Mrs. Erlynne, for he groans “I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her.”

In the second act, at the Windermeres’, the guests are being announced. The Duchess of Berwick has advised Agatha to dance with Mr. Hopper of Australia, a prospective suitor.

Lord Augustus Lorton, brother of the Duchess, asks Lord Windermere how Mrs. Erlynne can gain respectability. It seems that Lorton hopes to marry her. He is reassured by her invitation to tonight’s ball, for it paves her way into “this demmed thing called society.”

Mrs. Erlynne appears and smoothly makes her way from guest to guest, especially the men. Their wives glare indignantly. In the meantime, Lady Windermere remains cold to her husband, and seeks comfort from Lord Darlington, who takes advantage of her mood by confessing his love and offering to take her away.

At first shocked, Margaret asks for time to see if her husband would return to her. Defeated, Lord Darlington announces that he will leave England the next day and bids her goodbye.

As the music stops and guests come back into the room, the Duchess of Berwick talks approvingly of Mrs. Erlynne to Margaret, yet advises her to get her husband away from the woman.

Agatha whispers to her mother that Mr. Hopper has proposed. The Duchess now takes full charge, insisting that the couple remain in London rather than return to Hopper’s home in Sydney.

Two gentlemen offer alternate views to Mrs. Erlynne’s presence at the ball: one says that Lady Windermere must have “common sense,” while the other credits Lord Windermere with cleverly hiding his indiscretion in the open.

Mrs. Erlynne informs Lord Windermere that Lord Lorton has proposed; in addition, he has asked for 2000 to 2500 pounds a year from him. Annoyed but compliant, Windermere exits with her to the terrace to discuss the details.

As the music strikes up again, Lady Windermere decides to run away with Lord Darlington and leave her husband. She leaves a farewell letter on her desk. Mrs. Erlynne enters and reads it. She lies to Windermere about the letter’s contents and calls for her carriage. Lord Augustus enters with a bouquet for Mrs. Erlynne and proposes. Without responding, she instructs him to take Windermere to his club until morning, and he complies.

In Act III alone in Lord Darlington’s room, Lady Windermere vacillates between staying and going

back to her husband. When Mrs. Erlynne arrives, Margaret recoils in contempt of her rival. Mrs. Erlynne pleads with her to return to her husband, denying any relationship with him.

Lady Windermere is moved when Mrs. Erlynne reminds her of her duty to her child. She tearfully decides to go home, but upon hearing voices, they both hide behind the curtains. Lord Augustus (“Tuppy” to his friends), Lord Darlington, Dumby, Cecil Graham, and Lord Windermere arrive, having been turned out of the club.

The men speak cynically of women and society as they settle into a game of cards. This scene displays Wilde’s wit as the men banter back and forth. Then Cecil sees Lady Windermere’s fan on a table. He shows it to Tuppy for a chuckle at Darlington, who has been moralizing, for apparently he has a woman in his rooms.

Windermere’s reaction to seeing his wife’s fan, however, is dramatic. He threatens to search Darlington’s rooms. Darlington refuses. Only the sudden appearance of Mrs. Erlynne, stepping out from behind the curtain, stops a probable fight. She pretends to having taken Lady Windermere’s fan by mistake. The men respond variously with contempt, astonishment, and mockery, as the curtain falls.

In the final act, back at home, Lady Windermere lies on a sofa, wondering why Mrs. Erlynne disgraced herself to save her reputation. Lord Windermere comes in and sympathetically suggests a visit to the country. He also expresses a change of heart about Mrs. Erlynne, whom he now considers “as bad as a woman can be.”

His wife defends her and insists on seeing her once more before they depart. Lady Windermere almost confesses the truth, but Parker interrupts them. He is carrying Lady Windermere’s lost fan and Mrs. Erlynne’s card on a tray. Margaret tells Parker to invite her up, in spite of her husband’s protest.

Mrs. Erlynne enters, and apologizes for taking the fan. She announces that she is leaving England and wants a photograph of Margaret with her child. While Lady Windermere goes upstairs to find one, Lord Windermere confronts Mrs. Erlynne for causing his first quarrel with his wife, and for misrepresenting herself. It is revealed to the audience that Mrs. Erlynne is Margaret’s long-lost mother.

It is true that Mrs. Erlynne had been extorting money from him, but she has had a change of heart, too. She fails to convince him of her new sincerity, but revels in her new relationship with her daughter—who never learns that Mrs. Erlynne is her mother.

Before leaving, Mrs. Erlynne offers Lady Windermere a piece of advice: not to tell Arthur of nearly leaving him. Lord Augustus arrives and accepts Mrs. Erlynne’s explanation that she was only looking for him at Darlington’s home. He proposes to her again. Margaret comments that he is, indeed, “marrying a very good woman.”

In *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, marriage is perceived from more than one perspective. Lady Windermere and Lord Windermere are a young, aristocratic and rich couple who presumably **married for love** and not for the sake of securing rank, fortunes, or social standing. The **typical Victorian marriage was expected to be superficial, if not beneficial for all parties involved. Yet, women would still be considered second class citizens and men took the lead in most everything.**

The Duchess conveys the information about Lord Windermere giving attention to another woman to Lady Windermere and warns her how this is **a very typical condition of men, that men often tire of their wives immediately after marriage, and that just by going abroad she can just help him "distract" from the mistress. The play thus explores satirically adultery and hypocrisy in the institution.** In the play, marriage is susceptible to gossip and the **lack of trust** between husband and

wife, even in a seemingly loving couple like the Windermers, is shown.

On the other hand, Lord Windermere is very specific in that his wife had no business being jealous, checking his finances for his money, and he demanded that she not only accepted Mrs. Erlynne, but that she also invites her to other visits. **Even against her will, Lady Windermere does as she is told, and grudgingly goes to seek the attentions of her admirer, Lord Darlington.**

Finally, from Mrs Erlynne's perspective we see the typical woman who needs to acquire money to be worthy of **marrying an aristocrat and save her reputation- after all, just by acquiring the rank would make her past magically disappear.**

Therefore, the views of marriage in Lady Windermere fan are stereotypical of a Victorian, superficial and shallow marriage which can be weakened by the machinations of society at any given time.

Marriage is seen to undergo four stages: **courting, early marriage, later years of marriage and marriage as a bond or trap from which to escape.** The Duchess of Berwick trying to find a match for her daughter stands for the typical Victorian pragmatic or mercenary approach to marriage, where **courtship is forced upon young people for reasons other than romance.** The **scheming** and manipulations are evident. The **two-year marriage of the Windermers is a loving one, without infidelity and secrets,** yet is shaken by gossip. At the end, the couple is together but this time they have secrets, showing even the best marriages **involve deception.** **Mrs. Erlynne as a young woman saw her marriage as a trap and ran away** from both matrimony and motherhood. Her return makes her choose a second **marriage to attain respectability and social acceptance.**

Other characters reflect society's views on marriage – Lady Plymdale speaks about how the world is suspicious of a happy marriage, even as she wishes her annoying devoted husband is ensnared by Mrs. Erlynne. Cecil Graham calls marriage a “game” and his inability to recount the number of marriages Tuppy has had **trivializes** the institution.

Question 11

How far do you agree with Lady Windermere's assertion that Mrs. Erlynne is “a very good woman”? Substantiate your opinion with close reference to how this character emerges in the play. [20]

Comments of Examiners

This question was reasonably well attempted by many, although the analysis of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ was not effective. Points were repeated.

Some candidates wrote the answer as a character sketch of Mrs. Erlynne, without linking it to the idea of the “good woman”. Reference to this was slight in the narration of her role or had to be inferred and extracted by the examiner.

Question demanded accurate quoting from the text which was not done.

Suggestions for teachers

- Clear opinion and complete substantiation from texts, using a mix of explanation and quotes, must be inculcated.
- Clear content is necessary – it does not help to increase length by repeating points.
- Teach candidates to address the question.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 11.

Mrs. Erlynne is a cynical adventuress with a past, a woman with light morals: a dandified fallen woman. Twenty years ago she abandoned her husband and one-year old daughter and eloped with a lover. Deserted by that lover, she led the life of social ostracism. She learns that her grown-up daughter has married a rich and titled gentleman. From the continent she lands in London and gets in touch with her son-in-law, Lord Windermere. She has charmed the elderly Lord Augustus, who wants to marry her.

The play explores the reactions of the beautiful Puritan and aristocrat Lady Windermere when she believes her husband is having an affair with this alluring adventuress Mrs. Erlynne. Mrs. Erlynne is her mother, who blackmails Lord Windermere for the money she needs to re-establish herself in society, and to marry Lord Augustus. If he does not supply her with the needed funds, she will reveal to Lady Windermere the relationship between him and herself. Frightened of destroying his wife's ideals, Lord Windermere accedes to Mrs. Erlynne's demands.

Mrs. Erlynne manages to wrangle an invitation from Lord Windermere for the twenty-first birthday of her daughter, Lady Windermere. The dandy Lord Darlington takes advantage of the perceived humiliation and betrayal of Lady Windermere and induces her to elope with him. Lady Windermere writes a letter to her husband and decides to go to Lord Darlington.

Mrs. Erlynne's aplomb vanishes when she discovers this letter. Full of anguish, she hides the letter after reading it: "The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father". Her motherly instincts, for the first time in twenty years, are thoroughly aroused. She is determined to save her daughter from the fate that overtook her. Making a dash to Lord Darlington's apartments, Mrs. Erlynne appeals to her as a wife to get back to her innocent husband. When this appeal does not work, she appeals to her as a mother to get back to her baby daughter. This second appeal, made with all the vehemence at her command, succeeds. It is during this appeal that she passionately speaks of the one mistake that can cause one

to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at--to be
an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by
hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped
from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible
laughter of the world

The men, including Lord Windermere, Lord Darlington and her elderly suitor, Lord Augustus are heard coming in. Very resourcefully, Mrs. Erlynne manages to get her daughter away unnoticed. Then to avert suspicion that would blight her daughter's life, she emerges from her hiding place and herself faces humiliation. Referring to Lady Windermere's fan, lying on the sofa, she tells them that she took Lady Windermere's fan by mistake for her own. She realises that she has made a terrible mistake in entering her daughter's life. She mollifies her elderly suitor and explains away her presence at that time of the night in Lord Darlington's rooms. He will marry her, and together, they will leave England for good.

Before she leaves, she extracts a promise from each one of them. Lady Windermere is never to spoil her husband's love by confessing to him how close she came to deserting him and eloping. Lord Windermere is never to reveal to his wife her identity. She also takes away as a gift that momentous fan of Lady Windermere. She admits she found what she thought she lacked – her heart – but she does not wish to stay on as a mother and break her daughter's illusions. She rejects "repentance".

Mrs. Erlynne is not as good as Lady Windermere supposes. She has been a hardened sinner, and

blackmails her son-in-law without a touch of maternal instinct until she sees her daughter about to fall. **She is mainly wickedly fallen, but an impulse of natural generosity is still surviving:** she has got some redeeming qualities as a 'fallen woman'.

However, women such as she are better than the women in civilised society because they sacrifice much not just to help themselves but to also help others. They sacrifice their own well being and second chance at life in order to save another. Both Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne have 'good' prefixed to their names. The seemingly 'good' woman is puritanical, priggish, conformist and rigid. She is 'good' enough to "bore" as Cecil Graham says of good women. She boasts that brought up by her Aunt Julia, she is aware of

the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

In fact, Mrs. Erlynne wants her approval to re-establish herself in society because she is "a good woman". This 'good' woman comes to the brink of elopement. She talks of love and sacrifice, yet when she leaves her husband it is the woman who does not conform to her strict moral standards who shows her love and sacrifices her reputation. The puritanical 'good' woman lacks the wit and courage of the so called fallen woman. Mrs. Erlynne in the end therefore turns out to be good as well as clever and Lord Windermere acknowledges that to the groom-to-be, old Lord Augustus, "Well, you are certainly marrying a clever woman."

It is only later that Lady Windermere realises that the distinction between good and bad is hardly clear cut. She wonders about Mrs. Erlynne

She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson!

Lord Darlington, the dandy, thinks it is "absurd" to divide people into good or bad and replaces moral categories with aesthetic ones. After the narrow escape in Lord Darlington's rooms, Lady Windermere discovers

How securely one thinks one lives - out of reach of temptation, sin, folly. And then suddenly - Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

When Lord Windermere condemns Mrs. Erlynne, Lady Windermere expresses her anguished lesson

I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman - I know she's not.

In the first act, Lord Windermere evokes Mrs. Erlynne's qualities as a fallen woman: once "honoured, loved and respected" but she "lost everything – threw it away". She is the fallen woman who falls because of one impulsive act and pays over and over again for her lapse. Mrs. Erlynne's reinstatement depends on the charity, position and standing of the Windermeres and of Lord Augustus. At the end of the play, because of her noble action in saving Lady Windermere, she has lost the sympathy of even Lord Windermere who once thought she was "more sinned against than sinning" and who thought she wanted to become 'good' again. Even after convincing Lord Augustus of her propriety, she has to live outside England – the fallen woman will never find acceptance in society.

Question 12

With reference to Oscar Wilde's play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, write short notes on the following : [20]

- (a) Hypocrisy
- (b) Mrs. Erlynne - the bad mother

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Candidates did not score well in this question because they failed to mention the role and convention of hypocrisy in the social world of Wilde's time. Most answers were based mainly on illustrations of characters who behaved in a hypocritical manner. Even here, most concentrated on the Duchess of Berwick and ignored the others. Illustrations in the form of quotes were missing in many answers.
- (b) There was duplication of points and examples in the two parts of this question. Several candidates made no attempt to focus on the 'bad mother' aspect.

Suggestions for teachers

- The concept in the question – here, hypocrisy – must be brought out through the conversation and actions of characters. Students must be taught to recognize these patterns and analyse them.
- Accurate and relevant quotes are a must – especially in a play by a writer like Wilde known for his use of wit and language to convey themes and concerns.
- Teach the students the characteristic features of the writer being studied.
- Context and opinion / conventions that form background to the play need to be taught. The image of the 'woman' in Victorian society must be clear.
- Mrs. Erlynne should be taught both as 'good woman / bad woman' and 'bad mother / good mother'.
- Quotes from text to support opinion must be insisted upon.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 12.

Short notes:

- (a) Most of the characters in Wilde's play accept **hypocrisy as a necessary component of their social world. Lies are a necessary tool to avoid conflict.** For example, Dumbly agrees with Mrs. Stutfield that the season has been "delightful," and in the next breath agrees with the Duchess of Berwick that it has been "dreadfully dull." Likewise, the **Duchess of Berwick** tells Lady Windermere that her nieces never gossip, then later declares that they always gossip.

People in high society must pretend, must conform to the social norm in order to maintain their position. Hypocrisy is the glue that holds together a complex web of relationships; if the truth were to come out, these relationships would fall apart. **It affects even marriage, as Lady Plymdale brings out when she says she wishes Mrs. Erlynne would take her husband off her hands and that a happy marriage is reason for suspicion.**

Hypocrisy is distinguished from virtuous lies, which are told to protect someone else. To ease the comfort of others—even though this might require lying—was part of the upper class code of conduct. Encouraged by Tuppy's remark that women with a past are "demmed interesting to talk to," Lord Windermere withholds the truth of Mrs. Erlynne's past in order to protect his friend from a truth that would ruin his marriage plans.

Mrs. Erlynne rises above hypocrisy when she sacrifices her own reputation for her daughter's. Although she has lived a life of hypocrisy, and she is desperately trying to get back into the society that once rejected her, she throws it away out of love. In the opening of the play, **Lady Windermere** is self-righteous and seems to be "good", but by the end her prudish condemnation of Mrs. Erlynne and her own conduct shows how hollow her claim to goodness is.

- (b) This play was written during the pinnacle of First Wave Feminism as women fought for suffrage. **Women who wanted to "leave home" were often portrayed as evil,** abandoning their families for realms that were "rightfully" male. **The "bad mother" is Erlynne in Wilde's play, who leaves to pursue her own life. The role of women was changing in Victorian society.** Women were seeking greater independence, and they were entering the workforce in increasing numbers. The suffragist movement attracted many supporters, as women petitioned for the rights to vote and to own property.

This greater independence for women was opposed on all fronts: politically, socially, and culturally. Soon, the independent woman was being portrayed as a bad wife and a bad mother.

Wilde's play is **unusual for its time in allowing the "bad mother," Mrs. Erlynne, to make peace with her daughter (although without recognition of her motherhood) and to pursue her own life.** The concepts of a "fallen" and a "good" woman and true virtue against hypocrisy and shallow prudishness are brought out when this seemingly "bad mother" sacrifices her reputation for her daughter, even as the daughter was on her way to becoming a "bad mother" herself by leaving her infant. She jeopardises her own chance at gaining respectability through marriage by permitting herself to be found in another man's rooms, and although she wins back Lord Augustus' favour, she has to live in exile. She accepts

this to save her daughter's reputation and marriage. **Her prim daughter would be horrified to have her image of a saintly dead mother broken** by the knowledge that the mother was alive, a social pariah and a blackmailer. So the "bad mother" saves her this shame and does not permit the secret that she is the mother to be disclosed.

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY VERSE – *edited by Chris Woodhead*

Question 13

Attempt a critical appreciation of William Blake's poem, *The Tiger*, bringing out the similarity [20] and the sharp contrast with his poem *The Lamb*.

Comments of Examiners

The similarity and the contrast was not brought out clearly by most candidates. In cases where the question was fairly attempted, the contrast was better while the similarity was inadequately discussed.

'Critical appreciation' centred more or less around paraphrase and limited explanation of the theme of one poem (*The Lamb*) with little discussion of style and technique.

Suggestions for teachers

- Identifying key requirements of question is a skill that should be taught.
- Teachers must also teach how to do a critical appreciation, teaching content as well as elements of style and literary devices such as stanza pattern, rhyme scheme, figures of speech, allusion and symbols, images, name of metre used, paradox and so on.
- The poet's background and influencing factors on his creative thought must also be taught.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 13.

That William Blake envisioned all reality as a **duality** of light and dark, peace and violence, good and evil, and innocence and experience is indicated by the full title of the volume in which "The Tiger" appeared: *Songs of Innocence and of Experience, showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*. According to Blake's private mythology, the **ideal is an artistically and imaginatively unified humanity (or cosmos) harmonizing the contraries**, which, in this volume of his poetry, are split into psychological realms of innocence and of experience (a fallen world of suffering, evil, and division). Thus, instead of an integrated primal human being, there is in this volume a poem of innocence entitled "The Lamb" juxtaposed to its contrary, "The Tiger".

The poem begins with a **speaker directly addressing a tiger and receiving no answers to repeated questions** about its creation. The first three quatrains describe the beast in terms of a frightening

beauty: The tiger is a fiery, luminescent intrusion in the dark forests of the world of experience; it is paradoxically frightening and well-proportioned; its eyes burn ferociously; its heart smoulders with pent-up energy; and its feet evoke dread. The poem asks how a being of divine might (“hand”) and divine design (“eye”) could create this terrible beauty. What kind of strength (“shoulder”), artistry (“art”), and force (“hand”) moulded the dreadful beauty into existence?

The fourth quatrain depicts the Creator as an omnipotent blacksmith keeping the beast under rein with a “chain” as the Creator fashioned its mind and yet remained supremely impervious to its terror. The fifth quatrain is the most difficult to decipher and continues to stress the being’s transcendent omnipotence through an obscure reference to God’s victory over the rebellious angels in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667). The defeated rebel angels become transmuted into stars surrendering their spears in shower-producing tears. The all-powerful being paradoxically created this evil and destroyed it, in the same way that this being made the lamb and its opposite, the tiger.

The final quatrain repeats the first quatrain with haunting effect to deny readers an easy answer to this question, yet it suggests that the creation of evil by the Creator of goodness is true and beautiful, even if the divine paradox is beyond human comprehension.

“The Tiger”, a short **lyric** poem, consists of six quatrains, each with couplet rhymes and a rapid singsong meter of three trochaics and one stressed sound in every line (“Tiger! Tiger! burning bright”). **Consonance** and **assonance** are pronounced, especially in the repetition of *s* and long *i* sounds throughout the poem. The complex sound system has the **incantatory effect** of a visionary nursery rhyme, with a childlike speaker probing very adult questions about the ultimate meaning of what remains the mystery of reality. “The Tiger” uses metaphor, image, word usage, and symbol.

Compressed metaphors equate the Creator to a blacksmith and create the image of a smithy and anvil, and equate the creation of the tiger to the reckless daring of archetypal rebels such as Satan and Daedalus, who stormed the heavens on wings, or Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods to give light and warmth to the human race. Compressed word usage generates the double meaning of a Creator fashioning a heart out of twisted sinew and knotting up the heart to produce pent-up energy in the tiger. Blake’s ellipsis pervades the description of the tiger’s traits and the Creator’s attributes. Compressed **allusions** to Milton’s conquered rebel angels, to the Genesis account of primordial Creation, and to Blake’s “The Lamb” occur in the fifth quatrain to underscore the paradoxical omnipotence of the Creator.

Finally, the tiger itself is a famous example of an evocative **symbol**. Blake was a painter-engraver who added coloured pictures to accompany the texts of many of the poems in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Since “The Tiger” included a small painted representation of a four-footed “symmetrical” animal, a reader’s contemplation of the tiger symbol involved both reading and seeing it. The visual and printed symbol of the tiger has an immense complexity of meaning. **The tiger signifies more than evil; it also suggests a mysterious, passionate, and violent beauty** at odds with the pat, peaceful innocence of its contrary, the symbol of the lamb in Blake’s complementary poem. At the time of the French Revolution, the tiger was popularly conceived as a symbol of revolution. Blake welcomed the French Revolution and might have intended his tiger to be a symbol of something more than repellent evil. The tiger is, although terrifying, part of God’s all-beautiful creation, beyond the human ability to comprehend completely.

“The Tiger” is **about the divinity and mysterious beauty of all creation** and its transcendence of the limited human perspective of good and evil that the miseries of human experience condition one to

assume. Divine creation occurs outside time and place through a being who is, by definition, inscrutable and worthy of the childlike wonder expressed by the poem's speaker. Humans see contraries and find evil awful; **God created the contraries and pronounced them both beautiful.**

"The Tiger" is a Blakean song of experience that is to be contrasted with its contrary song of innocence, entitled "The Lamb." **Questions also recur in "The Lamb": "Little Lamb, who made thee?/ Dost thou know who made thee?"** That poem, however, answers the questions it poses with a simple affirmation that the Lamb of God—the Poet-Christ of the realm of innocence—became an innocent to make all humanity innocent in His own image and thereby made all those who are meek and mild worthy of God's blessing:

He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

By contrast, **"The Tiger" contains no explicit answers** to ultimate questions, although some answers are implicit precisely because of the absence of answers. The mystery of reality does not lend itself to simple, pat formulations of everyday statements. **If the poem "The Lamb" excludes all terror and complexity from life and finds only gentleness and mildness, then "The Tiger" rejects such simplicity and opposes a duality under a Creator of mercy and aggressiveness, peace and violence, and good and evil, all of which are subsumed in a divine beauty** beyond limited human power to grasp fully as a unity. The very concept of the tiger's **"fearful symmetry" is a paradox** of terrifying richness and terrible beauty that is difficult for the human imagination to apprehend—but not for the divine imagination to create.

The poems 'The Tiger' and 'The Lamb' are 'two aspects of God and two states of man.' Blake's two poems are meditations on the dualistic nature of God. By contrasting the **violent and destructive energy of the tiger with the passive, gentle nature of the lamb**, Blake presents what appears to be irreconcilable opposing qualities that are present in the universe. In these two poems, **Blake is defining the nature of a God which can embody both the terrible strength and beauty of the tiger and the submissive, peaceful nature of the lamb.**

The essence of Blake's entire poetic output, including *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, is a kind of spiritual philosophical inquiry into and defence of the dual nature of Man's existence: part physical and part mental. "The Lamb" and "The Tiger" represent the two sides of both these areas—how can there be such beauty and such terror in the same universe? How do we reconcile God's will and God's benevolence at the same time? Through addressing each animals' characteristics and posing further questions, the speaker of "The Tiger" Blake wonders at the fearful construction of "The Tiger" and even references "The Lamb" poem asking:

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

"The Tiger" and "The Lamb" feature animals that are practically opposites; one is a fearsome predator and the other, a gentle, innocent animal. The tones of "The Lamb" and "The Tiger" are strikingly different; **Blake uses dark, powerful imagery to create an awed tone in "The Tiger" whereas the tone of "The Lamb" is gentle and crooning.**

The organization of "The Tiger" and "The Lamb" is different as well. **For "The Tiger" Blake**

employs quatrains and rhymed couplets which perfectly suggest the rhythmic hammering of the smithy, lending the poem a sense of urgency and power. "The Lamb" uses rhymed couplets as well, but instead of dividing the lines into quatrains, Blake groups them into two large stanzas of five couplets each; this **structure complements the message and flow of the poem, giving it a flowing, lyrical quality**.

"The Tiger" and "The Lamb" both have many similarities and differences in terms of themes, messages, tone, and organization. The Lamb and the Tiger represent two rather contrary aspects of divinity and also of the human soul itself, as hinted by the sub-title of Songs of Innocence and Experience.

The speaker explicitly identifies both himself and **the lamb he addresses with the figure of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of the Passover, showing how they symbolise their creator's innocence and purity**.

The speaker of the poem (The Tiger) is struggling to understand how the creator of the lamb could also have made the tiger:

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Thus it is that these two poems approach big **questions regarding the dual nature of God**. On the one hand, God is characterised by benevolence and goodness, as shown through his creation of the lamb. However, much more disturbingly, God is also the creator of the tiger, a ruthless killer and a dangerous predator. Can God be the source of both good and evil, and why does God allow evil if he is good?

These two poems can also be applied to the dual nature of humanity, characterised by innocence and experience. **The speaker in "The Lamb" is an innocent child, whereas the speaker in "The Tiger" is an adult with full awareness of the complexity of the world and the big questions that have no easy answers. The first speaker represents the state of innocence where we are able to accept simple answers; the second sees that when we reach a stage of experience there are no answers to such complex questions.** William Blake's 'The Lamb' is one of the Poems of Innocence.

This poem is useful for thinking of the effects of simple diction and repetition in creating tone and meaning. The childlike diction reinforces the simplicity of the speaker and the listener and emphasizes through connotation that the poem's theme or major idea is the portrayal of a Creator with loving and mild attributes. The first stanza asks the poem's central question four times: "who made thee?" The diction implies an answer; words like lamb, delight, softest, woolly tender, and rejoice suggest a loving and cherishing Creator. The second stanza answers the question, equating God with both the lamb and the child. The gentle and sweet tone of the poem reflects a sense of childhood innocence, where there is wonderment and pure inquiry. This is reflected in the opening lines where there is questioning about "who made thee." The childlike timbre of the poem is continued in the "softest" "clothing of delight," and the lamb's "tender voice." The poem seeks to provide an answer to the question of "who made thee." The answer provided is that a merciful and benevolent God created the lamb and its sense of purity. The speaker seeks to share in the same childhood innocence and life force that emanates in the lamb in the concluding lines of the poem.

Both poems may deal with the contraries of human and divine nature, but they **both explore divinity**

and creation and the creator. Both employ symbols and a distinct metrical pattern, different though they may be in each poem. Both employ a series of **questions**.

Question 14

Analyse Seamus Heaney's poem, *At a Potato Digging* as a reflection of his desire to make [20] connections between the past and the present, in context of his own roots.

Comments of Examiners

Those who attempted this question did a reasonably good job, connecting the past and present and using quotes. The few mistakes that were made included not being clear about the famine and the fact that the poem talks of two harvests.

Suggestion for teachers

- Background and relevant context must be clearly taught.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 14.

Heaney's desire to make connections between the past and present is very important to the poem – a link is made between events more than a century apart. **The poet is concerned with Irish history and his heritage, that of hailing from an Irish farming family. Looming over the scene depicted is the spectre of the potato famine that afflicted Ireland from 1845-49.** The potato crop, staple for the Irish, failed, with cataclysmic results. About half the population of three million died, while a million people emigrated.

The poem deals with **two different potato harvests.** One is the harvest from the present day that goes successfully and which delivers a rich crop. The second potato harvest looks back to the famine of 1845 when the crop failed and many people starved. Whilst the famine is no longer a threat, its ongoing fear remains and this can be seen in the use of religious language and imagery throughout the poem.

The **first section** of the poem is written in alternately rhymed quatrains that describe a rural scene of potato digging that is clearly in progress. Heaney describes a “mechanical digger” that “wrecks the drill”. Humans “swarm in behind”, having to “stoop to fill / Wicker creels”. People seem obeisant to the mechanical digger and their baskets are the traditional containers for the crop, linking them with the potato diggers of the past. An ominous atmosphere is established - inhospitable weather makes “Fingers go dead in the cold”.

Having likened the potato gatherers to insects, Heaney goes on in stanza two to say they are “Like crows attacking crow-black fields”. This conjures the idea of carrion feeders as well as suggesting an omen. The people are in a “higgledy line” and ragged ranks. The work is back breaking because the workers may only “stand / Tall for a moment but soon stumble back / to fish a new load from the crumbled surf”. Their subservience to machine, soil and crop is made clear through further details such as “Heads bow, trunks bend, hands fumble...” Their activity is described as “Processional stooping”, which has a religious connotation. The fact that this is presented as happening “mindlessly as autumn” is both disparaging and indicative of the idea that there is an unquestioning rhythm. The crop being gathered in the poem's present is garnered with the spectre of the past blight behind it. Heaney concludes the first part of the poem with overt references to the potato famine. The religious quality

that was hinted at is now explicit in “homage”, “famine god”, “humbled” and “seasonal altar”. The ground becomes the locus of worship each year as those harvesting are only too aware that such largesse in nature cannot be taken for granted. There is a primitive, pagan dimension to the description.

Part II of the poem concentrates specifically on the potato itself. Potatoes seem to be “petrified hearts of drills”. The potatoes are presented as having turned to stone, having been described previously as “inflated pebbles”. “Petrified” is associated with fear, and the trepidation with which each harvest is approached is suggested. Heaney goes on to say that these potatoes are “Split / by the spade” communicating both a very straightforward process but also suggesting that those digging in the time of the potato blight would have their own hearts metaphorically split by the act of cutting into a rotten crop. Those in the present “show white as cream”. Also, there is no rot in them; they are “knots” with a “solid feel”. There is both gratitude and horror. The potatoes are “piled in pits” and are described as “live skulls” which reminds us of victims of atrocity as well as conveying the arresting visual metaphor that convinces us that a potato can look like a skull. The fact that they are “blind-eyed” suggests that they are utterly unaware of the way in which they have, in the past, been intimately involved in a pivotal event in Irish history. The “live skulls image” prepares for its repetition in Part III that modulates from a metaphorical description of a potato to a shocking depiction of what human beings literally become as they are reduced to skeletal beings by hunger. Part II closes with a sestet rather than a quatrain. This lends weight to the relief and importance associated with the success of the potato crop, something that is to be celebrated as a “clean birth”.

Part III is a much more direct and graphic contemplation upon the reality and impact of the Irish potato famine. Heaney opens with the image of starving people as “Live skulls, blind-eyed, balanced on / wild higgledy skeletons...” We are transported back to the mid nineteenth century where people could be “wild” with hunger. The word “higgledy” reminds us of the “higgledy line” of diggers described in Part I. This links the centuries and shows that the activity is the same and that, as humans, we are enslaved to the vicissitudes and unpredictability of nature. People were so hungry that they would eat rotten potatoes, and these poisoned them.

The “clay pit” suggests a place of human burial as well as the trench where potatoes rot. The line, “Millions rotted along with it” refers to potatoes and points out the effect of this was to result in the death of many hundreds of people, so dependant were they upon their staple crop.

The third stanza of Part III depicts the effects of starvation on a human body: “Mouths tightened in, eyes died hard”. The image of “a plucked bird” suggests nakedness and death. The bird imagery is extended at the end of a stanza as Heaney presents the metaphor of “beaks of famine” that “snipped at guts”. The people’s dwelling, “wicker huts” stand for privation, whereas the “wicker creels” in Part I are containers of plenty.

The cultural collective of “A people hungering from birth” takes on a political dimension as well as purely descriptive one. The degradation of having to grub “like plants” makes people feel that their land is “the bitch earth”. The famine only results in a grafting to “sorrow”, when “Hope rotted like a marrow”, rather than a more joyous planting for fresh life. The images of decay, rot and stench - “Stinking”, “fouled” “pus”, “filthy” and “running sore”- remind that although the famine is over, it lives on in the memory of the people. In writing the poem itself Heaney is keeping such memory alive.

In Part IV although the workers in the field are “Dead-beat” they are not dying but are exhausted from their work. There is a “gay flotilla of gulls” which is a far cry from the ominous crows, plucked bird and the vulture-like spectre earlier in the poem. Although “The rhythm deadens” inevitably links in the reader’s mind to the death already mentioned earlier in the poem, there is now a new mood of

optimism. The workers eat “Brown bread” and drink “tea in bright canfuls”. In their tiredness they are able to “take their fill” in the way that their ancestors could not. The “timeless fasts” are broken here unlike in the past. As the workers stretch out in their rest, they are described lying on “faithless ground”. This reminds us of the fact that nature can set its face flint-like against humanity. Although the ground is faithless, a pagan image of an offering to the “bitch earth” of Part III is striking as the workers “spill / Libations of cold tea, scatter crusts.”

The **rhythm of the poem** changes in the third section of the poem. This is well suited to the changing subject matter of this part of the poem. **Connections are established between each of the sections** – the potatoes that are compared to skulls in section two, link to the literal skeletons of section three. The use of **religious imagery** in the poem is a means of helping the reader to understand the importance of the potato harvest to the people of Ireland. Even in the parts of the poem that deal with the present when food is plentiful, there are suggestions of the past famine. For example, the fingers that go ‘dead in the cold’. The poem abounds in **images** and natural **metaphors** such as those of rock and stone, bodies, animals. **Alliterative** effects are everywhere - “grubbing” and “grafted” or “pits” and “pus” - as well as like onomatopoeia. Vivid **language** is used throughout the poem and this is in order for the reader to visualize the situation. For instance, the language of the third section helps the reader to understand the negative impact of the famine through words such as ‘blighted’, ‘putrefied’, ‘rotted’ and ‘stinking’.

The poem deals with the natural world and the different aspects of nature can be seen in the **reference to the earth** as the ‘black mother’ that gives life and also the ‘bitch earth’ that is capable of inflicting great suffering. The **suffering** of the people of Ireland is described in detail and we understand the extent of the misery that was caused by the famine. In this poem Heaney looks at **man's relationship with the land** - the cultivation of the potato is a way into Ireland's social history. As a result of the past, Heaney suggests that the Irish labourers have a **superstitious or pagan fear of a nature god** (the “famine god”) whom they must appease with their offerings. The **folk memory** of the great famine makes them ready for almost any hardship in pursuit of full stomachs. The first and last of the four sections depict the digging and gathering in of the potato crop today. The second section looks more closely at the potato, and the third is an account of the great Potato Famine of 1845-1850.

[While explanation of poem can be understanding based on compilation – since basic explanation of poem will be the same - the analysis on connections asked in the question and the use of the explanation of lines to justify this must reflect critical thinking and comprehension of candidate]

Question 15

‘*Snow in the Suburbs*’ is a powerful evidence of Thomas Hardy’s descriptive prowess and the use of imagery’. Discuss. [20]

Comments of Examiners

This question was fairly well attempted, although some candidates did not bring out how the description and imagery contributes to the theme. It was a question that asked for discussion and all connected aspects should have been incorporated.

Suggestions for teachers

- How to attempt a question given the cue words such as ‘discuss’, ‘analyse’ and so on must be made clear to students.
- Students should be taught that length of answer is secondary to full explanation and a complete addressing of question.
- Hardy as a poet of descriptive prowess and his view of nature should be taught in greater depth.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 15.

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century most poetry tended to concentrate on countryside scenes, even though the industrial revolution had heavily concentrated the British population in cities. Hardy is one of the first important poets to deal with city scenes, but he still showed an interest in natural phenomena - though now as they appear in an urban environment.

The poem creates a powerful **image of a snow-covered suburban area**. Hardy uses **form** and **rhythm** as well as **chooses his words** carefully to create the desired impact. The poem opens by **describing a tree with snow-laden branches: every branch is “big with it” and every twig “bent” with it.** The word ‘snow’ does not appear in the opening lines yet the weight of it on the branches and the volume of it is clear merely by use of the word “big” with its association with pregnancy. The **simile “like a white web-foot” for the fork** immediately conveys the spread of snow in the fork as well as the whiteness on the tree.

The **silence and stillness** of that whiteness is clear since **all streets and pavements are “mute”** and there is **“no waft of wind”**. In an image that rests on **personification, the snowflakes gently falling, bouncing up** and then **falling back down are figures that “have lost their way”, groping “back upward”** and on **“Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.”** The alliteration establishes the gentleness and the softness that is reinforced by the metaphor, the **“fleecy fall”**. **The palings of the fence** are indistinguishable, the snow on them having **“glued”** them together like a wall.

Having established the silent, still, tranquil and pure white scene, Hardy shifts his attention to a **sparrow** that **“enters a tree”** rather than **just perches on it**. Immediately, **a lump of snow “thrice his own slight size” falls upon him, showering him** all over. **The lump hitting the sparrow can be imagined.** The shower **“overturns” the sparrow, nearly “inurns him”** and **settles lightly upon a twig below**. The moment it does that, it **starts of “a volley” of other lumps that rush down**. The lightness of the sparrow, the contrasting force and movement of the snow highlight the former’s predicament and lead to Hardy’s major concern about the **indifference of nature**, for all its beauty and tranquillity, towards the weaker creatures. The archaic “inurns” shows how the sparrow is virtually

smothered as the volley of snow showers it and proceeds below.

In the last stanza, the steps cannot be seen like the palings of the fence. They are a “**blanched slope**”, again a choice of phrase that brings out their shape and colour. **A black cat, hungry and gaunt, comes up “with feeble hope” and is “taken in” by the speaker’s family.** Thus, the final image of the poem is **optimistic**, ending with compassion, refuge even among indifferent and uncaring nature, and human kindness. The image is created so powerfully that the reader can almost feel the door closing behind the cat as it enters the warmth of the house, away from white coldness that is outside and to which the sparrow has been subject.

The main part of *Snow in the Suburbs* shows how a snowfall in a residential area is partly like and partly unlike a snowfall in the countryside. In the suburb the snow cakes on tree branches (as it would in a copse) and also on park railings. Birds are bewildered and discomfited by the snow, but in Hardy's poem the bird is an urban sparrow.

For a contemporary reader a poem like this would have invited them to think about how urban living was similar to country living, and also how it was different. Since most of Hardy's readers were first or second generation city dwellers, it would have both fascinated and reassured them to consider what was different, and what still the same.

Hardy's descriptive power and imagery are evident in what the poem says and in how it says it. Apart from the figures of speech and careful use of words, there is a certain pleasure that Hardy seems to feel in using that language the way he does. The form too follows the mood and this is more apparent if the two eight-line stanzas and the concluding short four-lined stanza are read aloud.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

(a) Topics found difficult by candidates in the Question Paper:

Question 7 – discussion of the play as a tragedy where the concept of tragedy was not clear to candidates

Question 8 – candidates have been unable to discuss Willy Loman as a father and get a grasp on all that made him the father he became and the impact of this on his sons.

Question 9 - analysis of the time motif not clear

Question 12 – the concept of Mrs. Erlynne as a “bad mother” did not come through as a clearly understood aspect of her character; (a) and (b) as conceptual notions not handled well.

Question 13 – critical appreciation is a skill candidates lack

(b) Concepts in which candidates got confused:

Wuthering Heights: Catherine Linton nee Earnshaw and her daughter Catherine Heathcliff / Earnshaw nee Linton

Death of a Salesman: Miller's use of time and chronology in the play

Lady Windermere's Fan: the concept of marriage in Victorian times as shown in Wilde's play; summary and theme of marriage in the same answer had the candidates confused on what and how much to write.

Poetry: the idea of showing similarity between (comparing) two poems

(c) Suggestions for candidates:

- Read texts thoroughly over a period of time along with background information that has a bearing on the writer and the work – do not rely on general overviews, summaries and irresponsible critical sources / websites.
- Read and find out more about similar works and / or other works by the same writer.
- Do regular written practice of various kinds of questions giving varying weightage to aspects to be studied.
- Films should be used only to reinforce what has been read – as an audio visual aid to enhance the impact – study cannot be based on their viewing.
- Be clear on literary concepts and how they apply to the books being read – genre, theme, character, characterization, figures of speech, symbols and images and so on – critical appreciation / analysis is a skill that needs to be worked upon.
- Learn to quote from text – quotes should be accurate, relevant and placed well in the answer. Focus on quotes from texts rather than random quotes from various (often nondescript ‘critics’) – do not misquote or cook up quotes.
- Do not ‘over’ quote, i.e. have a series of quotes or a preponderance of quotes, without the balancing factor of analysis, explanation, description or narration. Also, there is no need to repeat the same quote at different points in the same answer or identically in different answers.
- Judge the requirements of the question by identifying key words so that the answer addresses the question fully – plan the answer in the reading time.
- Do not rush into an answer – what looks simple for you may not be your strongest point; likewise what looks short, incomplete or difficult may be a strength.
- Write relevant introductions and conclusions or in some way make it clear that you are addressing the question. However, avoid long, flowery introductions at the cost of the main answer.
- Do not ramble, repeat for the sake of length or rely on general answers, expecting the examiner to infer and draw his / her own conclusions – be clear and make it easy for the examiner to understand your point
- Support analysis and point with illustration from text (including quotes)
- Be particular about handwriting and writing in paragraphs – do not number answers incorrectly (or forget to number them). If main question has sub-parts either number (a), (b) or within statement of question, address all parts.
- Correct grammar, spelling and usage of words is a MUST. Expression is important, but it is more important to be correct and simple rather than embellish and jumble syntax. The most common areas of concern are flawed sentence construction, often compromising sense, and inconsistency of tense. Informal language, colloquialisms and slang must be avoided, unless part of quoted lines from texts; hence, words such as ‘kids’ and ‘dad’ should not be used.