



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Example Candidate Responses

Paper 1 Poetry

Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010



Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010, and to show how high level candidates performance relates to the subject's assessment objectives.

In this booklet, candidate responses are derived from the real scripts of candidates from the June 2017 series of Cambridge IGCSE Literature (English) 0486, which runs in parallel with Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010 (for examination from 2023).

For each question, the response is annotated with numbers which correspond to the examiner comments.

The full question papers and mark schemes used in this resource are Paper 1 from the June 2017 exam series for Cambridge IGCSE Literature (English) 0486 and can be downloaded in full from the School Support Hub: www.cambridgeinternational.org/support.

The relevant files are:

- June 2017 Question Paper 11
- June 2017 Question Paper 12
- June 2017 Paper 11 Mark Scheme
- June 2017 Paper 12 Mark Scheme

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Question 1

1. Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

For Heidi With Blue Hair by Fleur Adcock

How does Adcock's writing make this poem both amusing and serious?

In the poem 'For Heidi with Blue Hair' Adcock explores a serious topic of grief and death in a comedic setting. The conversational tone and amusing mockery of authority create a sense of ease which is jarred by the later revelation of the protagonist's bereavement.

One way Adcock makes this poem amusing is in the conversational tone that she creates and the subsequent sense of friendship and familiarity evoked. At the start of the poem the narrator immediately addresses Heidi saying 'when you died your hair blue' this use of the direct pronoun 'you' creates an intimate conversational tone which makes the poem seem casual. Furthermore the use of parentheses creates an idea of friendship and familiarity when the narrator suddenly shifts their opinion slightly and says '(or at least ultramarine ... with a crest of jet-black spikes on top)' the brackets here suggest an understanding and sense of familiarity which is amusing for the reader as it gives the impression of a shared joke.

In addition the enjambment and free-form style throughout the poem give a sense that it is a casual address, creating an amusing, but endearing sense of friendship and familiarity.

Another way in which Adcock makes this an amusing poem is because of the undermining and degradation of authority. The

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 The candidate focuses on the question.
- 2 A relevant but general comment.
- 3 It is unclear as yet what this means and how it is relevant, but this is just a brief introduction, so further comment may appear later.
- 4 The candidate needs to make it clear who this sense of friendship and familiarity refers to. Is it the poet and Heidi or the poet and the reader?
- 5 A brief comment on language but not linked to the previous point.
- 6 The candidate begins to see the point of the bracketed comments but needs to consider their meaning and relevance to the ideas of the poem. The word 'amusing' in the question is being addressed but more explanation is needed to show why they 'give the impression of a shared joke'. The sarcasm is not recognised.
- 7 The candidate mentions a technical term but does not use the text to support the point. The point about the sense of friendship and familiarity is repeated.
- 8 The candidate shows understanding of a theme of the poem and relates it to the question.

use of parentheses in the quotation '(You wiped your eyes also not in a school colour)' undermines the headmistress's arguments for why Heidi cannot have blue hair and gives an amusing impression of the authority in the school as pathetic and without real reason for their arguments. In addition the use of an end-stopped line here emphasises the fact the statement made adding to the blunt belittling of authority. The authority in the school is further amusingly undermined when 'the teachers twittered and gave in.' Here the verb 'twittered' connotes birds and gives the impression that the teachers talk in high-pitched voices without actually saying anything meaningful, a description which undermines their authority and makes them seem amusingly pathetic. Furthermore the use of the mock heroic style in the last stanza when 'The battle was already won' is amusing. The use of the word 'battle' connotes a conflict and uses the mock heroic to exaggerate the conflict between Heidi and the school's authority. This is amusing as the contrast between the exaggerated conflict and the reality is somewhat jarring creating a funny portrayal of the undermining of authority because Heidi and her supporters had 'won' this conflict.

However, despite the humorous atmosphere created throughout the poem, Adcock underpins this with a serious theme of death and bereavement. In the fifth stanza a shift in tone takes place in the fact that 'It would have been unfair to mention your mother's death.' By revealing this so late on in the poem, Adcock uses the structure to suddenly change the reader's opinion of Heidi because the reader suddenly feels sympathy for Heidi because of her loss, creating a shift in tone to a more serious one. This is echoed when this loss 'shimmered behind the argument.' The use of the word 'shimmered' gives Heidi's loss an ethereal quality, making it seem unmentionable and never explicitly mentioned by the teachers. This creates a more serious tone as Adcock explores how a loss can

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 9 The candidate needs to explore how this quotation undermines what the Headmistress says, and how it contributes to the tone of the poem.
- 10 This could be explored further, but the candidate is referring to the terms of the question.
- 11 It is not clear how this reference to an end-stopped line affects meaning.
- 12 There is some exploration of the bird imagery, but it could be developed. There is a relevant reference to the terms of the Question.
- 13 The candidate develops this language point more fully (AO4).
- 14 The candidate refers to the Question and shows understanding of the different tones of the poem. (AO2 and AO3)
- 15 The candidate comments on the poet's use of structure.
- 16 Relevant personal response.
- 17 This language point could be developed further. 'Ethereal' needs some explanation.

influence how people treat a person shown by the fact that the teachers subsequently 'gave in'. This implies that Heidi is able to get away with breaking the rules because of the loss of her mother and the sympathy in the authority this evokes. Therefore, despite the amusing tone, the serious theme of death and loss underpins this making for a more serious tone.

Overall Adcock creates an amusing, witty atmosphere in the poem by the use of the conversational tone and sense of friendship portrayed which allows for a witty undermining of authority. However, the shift that occurs later in the poem makes it more serious because Adcock explores the effects of bereavement on how people treat someone – introducing a more subdued, serious tone in an otherwise amusing poem.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 18 The candidate shows understanding of the implications.
- 19 The candidate asserts that the poem is 'witty' but does not explore language sufficiently to show how or why.
- 20 The candidate comes to a succinct conclusion referring back to the terms of the Question.

This is a response of medium standard.

The candidate shows a general understanding of the poem and some of its deeper implications, such as the way in which the poet undermines the authority of the school, and the way in which bereavement conditions the behaviour of those mentioned in the poem, including the teachers (AO1, AO2).

More might have been made of Heidi's responses and those of her father and black friend. The answer would have been improved by a more detailed exploration of aspects such as these.

The points made are relevant and supported with quotations, though the comments could have been developed in greater detail. For example, the poet's use of spoken comments given in parentheses was mentioned, but the sarcastic tone was only really hinted at. Other comments on language also lacked a close analysis of effects (AO3).

There was some personal response to Heidi's predicament, but more detailed exploration would have lifted the answer. There might have been reference, for example, to the outlandishness of the hairstyle, the tears in the kitchen, and so on (AO4).

Overall, there is some understanding of some implications and some response to language, but comments could have been developed and the coverage could have been wider to make this a high-quality response.

Question 2

2. Explore the ways in which Mew movingly writes about her feelings of loss in *The Trees Are Down*.

The Trees Are Down by Charlotte Mew

'*The Trees Are Down*' is a touching **1** poem in which Mew deals with the tragedy of arboricide. The poem significantly highlights the deep love that she feels for the trees as well as the immense grief **2** that she is forced to cope with when they are removed.

A manner in which Mew writes movingly **3** is by referring to the book of Revelataion. By using the biblical reference 'he cried with a loud voice', she alludes to the fact that this **4** angel who is grieving is also shocked by the chopping of the trees. Therefore, the removal of these trees is not only mourned by Mew but also by pure, heavenly creatures. The fact that the angel 'cried' is significant because the verb displays how sad he feels and that he also wants other people to be aware of his sorrow. Furthermore, Mew utilises the last book which could be referencing towards 'Judgement Day' and consequently suggests that this event involving the trees is almost apocalyptic **5** but for her is undoubtedly an end of an era. **6**

Furthermore, Mew writes touchingly by making clear from the very outset of the poem that the trees are 'down', which signifies that the horrific action is already complete and new in her poem, she will go on to portray the effects of this event. In turn, 'down' helps to emphasise the finality and harsh rapidity **7** of the action of the cutting of the trees and this helps us to sympathise with Mew and

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 The candidate immediately focuses on the Question, addressing the word 'movingly'.
- 2 This directly addresses the 'feelings of loss' in the Question. The candidate therefore offers a succinct and relevant introduction though, still at this point an overview.
- 3 The candidate has the Question firmly in mind.
- 4 The candidate makes a well-developed comment, showing understanding of the allusion to the Book of Revelation in the poem and also of its significance. The felling of the trees is not only a loss for her, but also for the angel, implying God or a higher power.
- 5 'Apocalyptic' is a very apt word to use, carrying on the biblical tone, and shows that the candidate is aware of the magnitude of what is happening.
- 6 The candidate might have gone further with this point and explained why it is the end of an era.
- 7 There is a developed comment on language here. The candidate not only explains the use of the word 'down' but also explores its effect on meaning and also on the reader's response.

understand her feelings of loss more easily. 8

Moreover, Mew movingly conveys her emotional loss by drawing a comparison between the rowdy men and the magnificence of the trees. 9 The sounds associated with the men are demeaning: the 'grate of the saw', and 'the swish of the branches'. The 'grate' and 'swish' both have onomatopoeic effect however the verb: 'grate' used in relation to the men is extremely unsettling and aids in highlighting the immense pain the men cause the trees 10 and consequently Mew. However, 'swish' is a rather calming and relaxing sound that allows us to create an image of trees as they are 11 swaying in the wind providing protection and shade. Additionally the 'common talk' and the 'common laughs of the men' highlight how insignificant and considerate these men truly are, whereas the trees are 'above it all'. In this way, Mew highlights the high respect and admiration for the trees, whilst simultaneously being shocked by the fact that the men 'laugh' 12 when they are committing this tragedy.

In addition, Mew compassionately conveys her loss by including a grotesque image that provides a comparison to her beloved trees. The 'dead rat in the mud of the drive' is important because it signifies the way that Mew believes even rats that are filthy and abhorred animals should be alive in Spring. This very distinct contrast portrays how strongly 13 Mew adores nature and believes that each and every living creature should be allowed to live. In turn, this idea is intensified as she refers to a rat as a 'god-forsaken thing', which helps to emphasise that even divine powers have the same belief as Mew. 14 This also insinuates that only 'god' has the right to destroy the nature that he has so lovingly created, which aids in highlighting Mew's significant loss.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 8 The candidate refers back to the Question.
- 9 There is a critical understanding here; in exploring the comparison, the candidate shows an awareness of the writer's method.
- 10 There is a detailed and developed commentary here on the use of sound imagery. The candidate first identifies it, then notes the technical term for it, then explores the effect on the poet and on the reader.
- 11 This comment on the sound that the trees make is not so developed. It gives only a general effect 'calming and relaxing' and the answer would have been enhanced by more analysis here.
- 12 This is a further well-made point about the difference between the 'insignificance' of the men and the 'high respect' that the trees command, but more could have been said about the coarseness of the men and Mew's attitude to them, for example by distancing herself from them by referring to them as 'the men', and by describing them as 'common'.
- 13 The candidate shows sound understanding of the purpose of the anecdote of the rat, which again shows a critical understanding but could have explored the significance of 'in spring' more thoroughly.
- 14 This comment could be clearer. The link between 'god-forsaken' and the poet's belief needs further comment though the candidate develops the point that only God has the right to destroy nature which he created. This is a sensitive personal response.

Moreover, Mew provides a vivid and graphic description of an almost desolate landscape as a result of the arboricide. The fact that there is 'just one bough', implies that all the other trees have been cut down and this one little bud that remains on the 'roped bole' is a constant visual reminder of Mew's loss. **15** Therefore even if Mew attempts to forget the pain she has gone through, she will always be reminded of it. Furthermore, the 'roped bole' suggests **16** that this final tree stump is being held captive by the men who commit the atrocity **17** that Mew despises. In addition, Mew successfully uses pathetic fallacy when she refers to 'the fine grey rain.' Although it is a description of the rain, the phrase could be alluding to her tears that she cries due to misery and loss she feels so deeply. This description of the weather is fitting because it provides a bleak image that consists of a **18** singular, lonely tree stump that is merely accompanied by sorrowful droplets of rain and this intensifies her loss. **19**

Furthermore, Mew writes movingly by suggesting that this single event marks the end of an era or almost a reversal. The fact that the trees being cut 'unmake the Spring' is suggesting that this tragedy almost reverses an entire **20** season and this is an overwhelming idea. This highlights how we generally associate Spring with rebirth, nature and also when the trees are fully grown and look their best. Mew emphasises just how important the trees are for Spring to exist as a season and now she has come to accept that with their chopping an entire season is sorrowfully undone and this compassionately conveys her loss.

Additionally, Mew's admiration and respect for the trees even in the last minutes before they are chopped helps to highlight her loss. the trees are a 'whispering loneliness' immediately creates an immensely beautiful image but also acts as a subtle collective noun for the trees.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 15 There is sound understanding and engagement with the visual qualities of the poem here.
- 16 There is awareness of the implications for the poet.
- 17 This response to language goes beyond simple explanation and shows personal interpretation.
- 18 There is a developed response to the use of pathetic fallacy here.
- 19 Again the candidate refers back to the Question and shows that s/he has it in mind throughout.
- 20 There is a thoughtful response to the phrase 'unmake the spring'. The idea is developed and related closely to the Question.

The 'whispering' suggests **21** that the leaves do have leaves and branches and so maybe Mew is describing them in Spring, the period where she considers them to be most beautiful. In turn, Mew suggests that the leaves are rustling and the trees are communicating with each other. However the 'loneliness' implies the beauty of the trees and is moving because it creates a memorable image whilst highlighting Mew's fondness for the trees. **22**

Even though Mew uses no rigid structure, she uses rhyme to emphasise certain words that makes them stand out. The 'dying', 'flying', 'lying' and 'crying' used in the last stanza is rather beautiful and provides an almost **23** elegaic and admirable tone. Furthermore, the free verse could be suggestive of Mew's immense love for the trees as well as the inhumane and brutal manner in which the men chop them down. **24**

To conclude, Mew writes movingly and convincingly about her feelings of loss by alluding to God and angels but also by emphasising the magnificent and admirable role that trees have in nature. **25** In the poem, Mew touchingly exhibits her emotions of her loss by highlighting how she is completely overcome and how the felling of 'the great plane trees' **26** is ending an era and cutting her off from her past. **27**

EXAMINER COMMENTS

21 This point is not entirely clear, though it is developed in the reference to the trees communicating with each other.

22 There is another clear reference back to the terms of the Question.

23 This is a good point which would have been enhanced by a little more detail and development. The candidate does consider the tone created, however.

24 This comment takes us back to the beginning of the answer, giving a sense of shape and organisation to it.

25 This is a new point and, had there been time, it would have been useful to develop it.

26 Another new point which appears to be something of an afterthought, but focus on the Question remains clear.

27 An effective conclusion to the answer.

This is a fluent and engaged response. The candidate shows knowledge and understanding of the poem and of the external references. There is a detailed exploration of some of the language and imagery and furthermore the responses are personal to the candidate, rather than being learned. The answer is thoughtful, relevant and engaged. Individuality and insight is demonstrated. There were some gaps, for example the poet's feelings about and attitude to the men, and some points that could have been developed further, as indicated in the annotations, but this was a well-shaped and lengthy response, that communicated a strong personal enjoyment of the poem.

Question 2

2. In what ways does Nichols use imagery to memorable effect in Praise Song For My Mother ?

Praise Song For My Mother by Grace Nichols

The poem, 'Praise song for my Mother,' is written by Grace Nichols in honour of her Mother. A praise song is a traditional African form of art which is usually used to list the attributes of a person. Nichols emphasizes the important role her mother played in her life through effective imagery. She uses repetition, pays attention to diction and uses the power of nature to express her gratitude towards her mother.

The poet connects nature with what her mother meant to her. In every stanza, except the last, the poet uses metaphors which incorporate an aspect of nature. She begins each stanza 'you were' and then follows with a part of nature. The third stanza begins, 'You were sunrise to me.' The repetition of 'you were' emphasizes that the mother has passed and that this poem was written to honour her death. The use of 'you were', for every stanza suggests there were endless attributes that the daughter could list which she found irreplaceable. To describe someone as a 'sunrise' suggests they give you new life; That they give you a chance to start fresh, just as the sun does with each sunrise. This implies the mother provided her with hope and new perspectives. By connecting nature, with her mother, Nichols is emphasizing the strength of their connection and her appreciation for her mother as nature has more power than anything else in the world. For example she states, 'you were moon's eye to me.' This is associated with the gravitational strength of the

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 A sound general introduction, showing understanding of the poem's genre and referring to the terms of the Question.
- 2 A clearly made point, which is expanded and developed through this paragraph.
- 3 This shows understanding of the reason for the poem and places it in the context of the mother's death.
- 4 This shows an understanding of the effect of the poet's use of language.
- 5 The candidate explains the image of sunrise and shows its effect. (AO3 & AO4)

moon to stay attached to the earth. Using nature to describe her mother's attributes makes this poem especially memorable as there is nothing more painful and beautiful as nature; leading to powerful and beautiful imagery.

Moreover, the poet ends each stanza with three descriptions of the mother. Although the descriptions can be quite ambiguous, they always place emphasis on the importance of the mother to Nichols. The use of gerunds such as, 'fathoming', and, 'replenishing' suggests the mother was always important and vital to Nichols. Her vitality is also prevalent in the first stanza when she states, 'You were water to me'. The reader knows no one can live without water. 'Replenishing' gives into this concept, similar to that of the sunrise, that the mother gave her life, which in essence she did, but it's more that one gave her the strength and will to want to live. 'Fathoming' on the other hand is quite ambiguous and slightly confusing but what it suggests is that the mother always had personality. The reader's descriptions are especially effective because of the length of the poem. The poet chose her diction wisely as the poem is short and the reason the descriptions could be seen as ambiguous is because the poet may want one word to say a lot of things. Without saying much, the reader there are so many things the mother was to her. The poet also doesn't use punctuation and uses enjambment to emphasise this never ending list of things, because she was everything to the daughter. She could be anything because she was everything to the daughter. This links to the connotation of nature, as without nature we are nothing and without nature we don't have anything. The use of consistent descriptions as well as gerunds allows the reader to feel Nichols' opinions of her mother on a personal level creating a memorable sense of empathy as well as vivid imagery.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 6 The candidate explores the image of 'the moon's eye' in literal terms, indicating the strong attraction between mother and daughter. The point would have been more effective if the word 'eye' had been explored to suggest how her mother watches over and possibly protects the poet.
- 7 The candidate is focused on the Question.
- 8 The candidate seems somewhat tentative here as it is not clear why the imagery is ambiguous.
- 9 The candidate selects suitable words to comment on but merely quotes them at this point. They need further exploration. The comments are not as clear and well developed as in the first part of the answer.
- 10 This shows understanding of the image of 'replenishing'.
- 11 The candidate takes up the word 'replenishing' again, but does not convey its precise meaning in the context of the poem.
- 12 The comment on 'fathoming' is somewhat vague. The literal meanings might have been considered in the first instance as it is not quite clear why it is ambiguous.
- 13 This paragraph becomes increasingly general and assertive.

The end of the poem concludes with the line, 'Go to your wide futures, you said.' The poem consists of three, three lined stanzas and one four lined stanza and then concludes with a single line. What the poet is stating is that, her mum gave her one of the greatest gifts of all, freedom. Not only did her mother give her everything else in the world, she told the daughter, 'go to your wide futures.' 'Wide futures' creates this image of endless opportunities because The mother had faith in The daughter and believed she could do anything. This line is especially memorable, not just because its on its own as a single line but because its something personal to the poet. Instead of beginning the stanza with 'you' she ends it with 'you said', as if she is never finished saying goodbye. It's The one Thing That was most important to the poet, That her mother provided her with and This is evident by her choice of structure. The poet purposely places it at The end because There is so much emphasis on it, it makes it memorable without any description.

In conclusion, Nichols use of imagery creates an especially memorable effect as she uses metaphorical images of nature, lists of adjectives, gerunds, repetition and structure. The poem was written to honour Nichols mother and she has placed great emphasis on the incredible amount of importance her mother always had to her and that in the end she gave her everything, even freedom.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 14 The point about freedom has relevant support and shows a clear understanding.
- 15 The point is well developed.
- 16 The point is related to the terms of the question.
- 17 The candidate comments on the form of the poem and makes a personal judgement about the ending of the poem. (AO5)
- 18 A general conclusion, restating some earlier ideas.

This response is an example of a response towards the top of the middle range.

The candidate shows a clear understanding of the poem and its implications, and keeps the question in sight throughout (AO1, AO2). On the whole, this is a well-developed response, though the third paragraph is sometimes vague; this would have benefited from a closer exploration of the words selected for comment in the response (AO3).

Though the candidate works through this relatively short poem systematically, the fourth stanza is not explored in detail. There is consideration of the effect of the word 'replenishing', but additional probing of other images in this stanza would have lifted the response (AO3).

There is, however, evidence of development in the personal response to imagery, particularly in the first part of the answer, with understanding shown of what the mother means to her daughter. (AO4)

Overall, this is a well-developed answer, showing a clear understanding and supported by relevant textual references. The response might have reached a high standard if there had been a more probing analysis of specific effects achieved by the poet.

Question 2

2. In what ways does Nichols use imagery to memorable effect in Praise Song For My Mother ?

Praise Song For My Mother by Grace Nichols

In the poem 'Praise Song for My Mother', Grace Nichols uses imagery to compare the voice's mother with diverse maternal elements in a memorable way, portraying the close relationship between the persona and her mother.

Firstly, the speaker compares her mother to water in the metaphor 'you were / water to me', to depict mother's essentiality. In the same way in which water is indispensable for human life and is a source of life, mother is also essential in the voice's youth. In addition, water is clear, pure and transparent and these qualities picture the mother as a frank, candid and pure-hearted person. In the line 'deep and bold and fathoming', the poet uses polysyndeton to make each of the mother's features stand out, illustrating a brave and understanding who is not superficial.

The writer draws a comparison between the persona's mother and the moon, and this is yet another way in which the author uses imagery to create a memorable effect. The moon is a reliable source, since it is always present in the sky regardless of whether it is visible just like a mother is always protecting her child. Not only is mother an on-going source of reliability but she is also a woman who will support her child throughout hard times; similar to the moon, which shimmers in the darkness of the night. Moreover, in the

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 A general but focused introduction.
- 2 The candidate comments on one of the poem's images, explains its significance and relates it to the question.
- 3 The comment on imagery is extended to explore how it shows the qualities of the mother.
- 4 The candidate continues to develop the point but might explore in detail the individual 'features' of the mother given in the poem.
- 5 The candidate sustains focus on the task.
- 6 The comment on 'source of reliability' is valid, but there is more to say. It is not clear how this connects with the idea of protection.
- 7 The candidate comments on the supportiveness of the mother but it is not clear how the moon 'which shimmers in the darkness of the night' offers support. The ideas need linking more clearly.

list 'pull and grained and mantling', the use of polysyndeton highlights mother's numerous qualities: she gently and soothingly drew her daughter towards her in the same way in which the moon controls the tide. The choice of the adjective 'grained' further heightens the idea of mother being a source of life as a grain gives birth to a plant, as well as the adjective 'mantling' conveys a sense of protection.

In the third stanza, the author compares the mother to sunrise. In the lines 'you were / sunrise to me', Nichols depicts the voice's mother in a compelling manner. Dawn is the coming of light after darkness, it is the beginning of a new day, bringing about hope, just like a mother does. Furthermore, the sun is also a reliable guiding light, further enhancing mother's reliability. The list of three adjectives, 'rise and warm and steaming' portray mother as nurturing, uplifting and picture her as a constant source of reliability. The use of polysyndeton creates a cumulative effect as well as it highlights each of mother's unique and important characteristics.

In the fourth stanza, Nichols' choice of imagery illustrate the mother's essence in a striking way. In the metaphor 'you were / the fishes red gill to me', the author stresses the concept of mother being indispensable in life as the gills allow the fish to breathe. Furthermore, in the olfactory image 'the crab's leg / the fried plantain smell', the author vividly captures how a smell can take one back to memories and places. The poet's gyanese roots are clearly captured in this image as she refers to the delicious aromas of her youth to build up an positive portrayal of her mother. In a nutshell, the writer summarises all of mother's qualities in by iterating the word 'replenishing, replenishing' to illustrate mother as nourishing and as an on-going source of support.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 8 The candidate identifies a technical term (polysyndeton) and explores the individual words in some detail conveying a clear understanding. (AO3)
- 9 The candidate has demonstrated understanding of how mother's qualities are conveyed in the image of sunrise but has lost sight of why the imagery is memorable. AO2
- 10 The candidate uses the term 'polysyndeton' again but gives only a general comment on its effect. The recognition of literary devices is not of value unless the reasons for their use and the effects they create are explored.
- 11 This is a more direct response to the imagery and the candidate explains the image of the 'gills' and its relevance.
- 12 This comment shows understanding of the way in which memories are triggered by aromas. It is clearer about the effect of the imagery. (AO4)
- 13 This is a well developed point.

Last, but not least, Nichol's choice of direct speech in the final line of the poem provides the poem with a memorable ending. In the line 'Go to your wide futures, you said', the writer pictures mother as an open-minded woman who allows her daughter to move on to a whole new world of innumerable possibilities, since she has raised her daughter in a way that she is not completely dependent of her. In addition, the anaphoric phrase 'you were', at the beginning of the first four stanzas denotes that the speaker is looking back on to her childhood memories of her mother's influence as well as the fact that the gerund at the end of these four stanzas implies that mother is always doing things; she is active to capture mother's personality in a vivid way.

To conclude, the author draws a comparison between diverse natural elements and her mother in a memorable way to capture mother's versatility since she can be all sort of different elements according to the situation. The poet also pictures the importance and indispensability of a mother in a child's youth by portraying all of her essential qualities through the use of powerful imagery.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 14 The question is addressed and the comment on the effect of the use of direct speech is valid. (AO5)
- 15 This comment shows understanding of the relationship and of the mother and explores the implications.
- 16 The candidate comments on the use of language and its effect: the 'mother is always doing things'.
- 17 'Versatility' seems to be an understatement of the mother's effect on her daughter.
- 18 This comment neatly sums up the poem.

This response is an example of a response towards the top of the middle range.

The candidate has clear understanding of the poem and its deeper implications, giving a range of examples of the way in which the qualities of the mother affect the daughter (AO1, AO2).

The response explores language and imagery, though occasionally the comments are overly general and insufficiently analytical (AO3). To be considered as a high-standard response, there would need to be a sharper focus on the way the poet creates a 'memorable effect', for example, by a more explicit analysis of the effects of the use of imagery. The section in which the candidate comments on the aromas associated with the poet's childhood might have been expanded to consider other sensuous qualities of the writing (AO3, AO4).

Overall, this well-developed answer shows a clear understanding, supported by relevant references to the poem. A more sustained and closer exploration of the poet's effects would have lifted the answer to a high standard.

Question 4

4. Explore how Jones uses words and images to striking effect in Tiger in the Menagerie.

Tiger in the Menagerie by Emma Jones

In this poem, written by Emma Jones, she uses words and images to striking effect in *Tiger in The Menagerie*.

To begin with, The first stanza starts by introducing that 'no one could say how the tiger got into the menagerie'. This may stand to represent the opposition between the tiger and the menagerie. This contradiction can be explained since nobody expects a strong fierceful, powerful image, as the tiger, to be in a menagerie, a place of confinement, reducing its power. Also, there is a defamiliarization of the tiger since the tiger in this stanza is associated with the colour 'blue' and that is not the normal colour we, relate with a tiger. This defamiliarization can also be used to explain that the tiger in the menagerie is not showing who it really is, his real identity, and maybe because of that reason he is compared with a 'painting'. A painting, therefore would suggest that is destination is for exhibit, not letting it be what it really is, producing a striking effect on readers.

Furthermore, there is a personification of the bars of the cage, and the stripes of the tiger, when they 'looked into each other so long'. This personification is also used to foreground the idea of fusion between these two. In addition, the fact that this happens 'at night' may suggest a revelation from the tiger wanting to walk away, to be free.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 A useful simple introduction repeating the terms of the question.
- 2 A relevant point: the candidate tries to communicate the element of surprise in the image of the tiger in the menagerie.
- 3 A relevant point: the candidate responds to the use of 'blue' to describe the tiger and comments engagingly on the way in which it 'defamiliarises' the animal.
- 4 The colour is connected to the idea of a painting and the candidate shows why this is striking though could develop the idea with some further comment on why the descriptions are unrealistic. There is some personal interpretation and the Question is being addressed.
- 5 The image of the bars is identified and shown as representing a fusion between the tiger and the cage, but the idea needs developing further. What is the effect of this fusion, and why is it striking?
- 6 This is a somewhat tentative comment about the tiger wanting to be free.

What is more, the fourth stanza is fullfilled with visual images, showing the transformation between nighttime and daytime as it makes reference to 'dreams'. The sibilan sound of the vowel 'O' in the phrases 'so long', 'long colonade', 'walked together' may suggest this long, neverending dreams, maybe the tiger's dreams of getting out the menagerie of imagining a world full of freedom and happiness.

Another fact that should be tossed into the equation is that now the tiger has 'one clear orange eye'. This shows familiarization of the tiger since is now portrayed with the colour 'orange' that is more associated with the portrait of the tiger. Also the visual image that it 'walked in the menagerie' shows irony since his desire was to be free, however it returns to this conceived peace, surrounded by bars. This shows a very contradicting, confusing image to readers since we cannot understand his course of actions, and the first verse in the sixth stanza, 'The tiger got out in the menagerie' is used to convey this feeling.

However, the menagery and the aviary start recognising the tiger for who it is. This is shown when 'if the menagerie could it would say "tiger"' portraying identifying now his strength and power. For that same reason if the aviary could it would 'lock it's door' as it now it is not only a tiger, but a threat.

One last important thing that is worth mentioning is that the alliteration of the avieri's heart 'began to beat' shows fear produced because of this new portrayed tiger. Also, the phrase 'rising birds' convey a sense of freedom since they are always flying, not entrapped like the tiger. So there is also a contradiction between these two types of animals since birds may stand as weak but free,

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 7 The candidate focuses on language here and comments usefully on the effect of the sounds of the words and how they are 'striking'.
- 8 The word 'may' indicates an attempt at personal interpretation here; the candidate is beginning to develop a personal response. (AO5)
- 9 This point is not very clearly expressed, but seems to indicate that the colour orange is more natural for the tiger (than blue).
- 10 Though not explicitly described as 'striking', this comment shows the effect of the tiger walking into the menagerie. (AO3)
- 11 The candidate gives a relevant personal response here to the 'confusing image'.
- 12 The candidate gives a personal response here, with some support from the text.

and tigers exactly the opposite. In the ending of the poem, there is another visual image, 'The tiger came inside to wait.' In my opinion, the tiger in this moment is overload with anger and ready to attack, showing his more violent side, showing it, as a real powerful threatening tiger, producing a striking effect.

In conclusion, a lot of words and images accompanied by many literary devices such as alliteration, personification, irony are used. Through this, Emma Jones creates a striking effect in tiger in the menagerie.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 13 There is a relevant comment on language here (AO3) though this could be further developed.
- 14 The candidate gives a valid personal interpretation.
- 15 The candidate refers back to the Question, showing consistent focus on it.
- 16 The candidate gives a conclusion which does not add anything to what has already been said. The listing of literary devices, does not contribute anything.

This response is an example of a response towards the top of the middle range.

The question does not ask for an explanation of the meaning of the poem, but rather how the words and images are used to striking effect. The candidate rightly focuses on this and works through the poem systematically, looking at the effects of various words and images (AO3). Though the word 'striking' is rarely used in the answer, there is an implicit response to it throughout.

The answer could, however, have been improved if 'striking' had been addressed more directly. The candidate responds directly to some of the imagery and attempts personal interpretation (AO3, AO4), which could have been developed. Some of the comments are not entirely clear and the answer would have been improved by further development: for example, the significance and implications of the tiger fusing with the bars of the cage could have been explored in greater detail (AO2). There might also have been some consideration of the effect of the poem's final stanza.

The answer is relevant and generally well developed. There is careful and detailed reference to the poem and understanding of some of the implications of some of the imagery.

Overall, this well-developed answer shows a clear understanding, supported by relevant references to the poem. A more sustained and closer exploration of the poet's effects would have lifted the answer to a high standard.

Question 5

5. Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

Miracle on St David's Day by Gillian Clarke

How does Clarke movingly convey the impact of her experience in this poem?

In the poem 'Miracle on St David's Day' Gillian Clarke vividly illustrates her visit to a home for the insane. Throughout the poem, Clarke creates powerful images through themes such as the power of nature, which is created by the daffodils. **1**

In the first verse, Clarke sets an idyllic scene. **2** She describes the 'country house' with 'guests strolling' and 'the rumps of gardeners' in the shrubs. 'Strolling' conveys a relaxed action of the guests as they walk in the gardens of the country house. **3** By describing the 'rumps' of 'gardeners' Clarke creates a jovial **4** atmosphere around the poem. The first line describes the daffodils as 'open-mouthed'. This use of personification effectively depicts the shape of the flower head. **5** By beginning with the description of daffodils, she is creating a beautiful scene of bright flowers in a calm setting. However, this is juxtaposed by the following stanza. **6**

The first verse of the second stanza says 'I am reading poetry to the insane'. This is a very blunt and obvious statement. It brings attention to it by putting 'insane' at the end. This creates an impactful opening line. **7** Clarke describes a woman in a 'cage' of 'sun'. 'Cage' is quite vivid and makes the woman seem dangerous or harmful to others. However, it could be interpreted, that she is trapped within her own body as she sits 'not listening, not seeing, not feeling'. **8** The use of

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 1 A brief but relevant introduction showing knowledge of context.
- 2 The candidate shows understanding and responds to atmosphere.
- 3 The comment on atmosphere is developed.
- 4 The response to atmosphere is made more precise.
- 5 The significance of the flowers might be explored in more detail. Why daffodils and why is the shape of the flower heads important?
- 6 The candidate notes a shift in mood and tone.
- 7 The tone is noted and a clear point is made about the use of language and its effect.
- 8 The candidate explores the different meanings of the word 'cage' and relates them to the question.

the rule of three makes her condition more impactful as it vividly displays how unwell this woman is. **9** By saying the 'cage' is the 'sun', it softens the image as the sun is usually seen as bright, hopeful and happy. It also effectively illustrates the pattern of the window against the woman; the shadows are bars. This verse movingly conveys the impact of Clarke's experience as it strikingly depicts the woman's condition and the power of nature that is made to seem as if its trapping her. **10**

Over the next few stanzas, Clarke describes a man as 'big' and 'dumb'. These plosive verbs effectively convey his size as they are more impactful as you read them. They are simple descriptions, so they could be used to mimic his mental state as simple. Overall, they illustrate the man effectively as large. This is contrasted by how is described to be 'rock'(ing). Rocking is usually a comforting action used to calm babies for sleep. It implies this man is, again, simple. This contrast emphasizes **11** the man's size in comparison to his mental state.

The next stanza tells us about how Clarke is reading the poem 'Daffodils', when 'suddenly, standing, silently, the large man is standing and reciting the poem. The sibilance and use of the rule of 3 draws attention the shock of these actions, **12** further conveying the impact Clarke's visit has on the man. **13** Clarke describes his speech like 'slow movement of spring water or the first bird of the year in the breaking darkness'. These images reinforce the power of nature as it brings parallels to his speech. **14** By describing the man's recital in these ways, Clarke vividly portrays his voice as small, like the spring or the first bird. It implies that there is more to come, **15** like a spring becoming a river or a bird being joined by a flock. It romantizes the scene. The 'breaking' of 'darkness'

EXAMINER COMMENTS

- 9 The mention of 'the rule of three' is useful but the point might be developed. The word 'impactful' is somewhat imprecise.
- 10 The candidate works quite thoroughly through the details but this final comment is not completely clear. Isn't the point that the woman's illness is trapping her?
- 11 There is detailed reference to the poem and the mention of significant words, but the candidate does not make the point that the man is mute and has been so for forty years. There is understanding of his simplicity but his size is only one aspect of it. The word 'impactful' is used again but the reasons why the man's appearance makes an impact are not explored fully.
- 12 A valid comment on the effect of language.
- 13 The Question is more about the effect of the visit on the poet 'her experience'.
- 14 A good point, though the 'parallels' might be explained more thoroughly.
- 15 The candidate sees the implications for the future.

illustrates his state as 'dark' but now the words have brought him light, which signify hope for the future. **16** This movingly conveys Clarke's visit as impactful as it portrays her words and the power of nature as bringing light and hope back into the patients life. **17**

The next stanza describes how the 'patients seem to listen.' This further elevates to the moment and reinforces how impactful it is. This is because the patients were previously described as 'absent', yet his voice has caught their attention and kept it. **18**

In the final stanza, Clarke brings the focus back to nature. She ends the poem by illustrating a scene of a 'thrush' singing and how the 'daffodils' are 'flame'. Clarke brings the focus back to nature and how powerful it is. **19** By displaying the daffodils as 'flame', it conveys a strength and natural force. I think this also brings a reminder to the first line that said the daffodils were 'open-mouthed'. I think Clarke may have subliminally called them 'open-mouthed' as a way of telling us what was to come; that the power of the daffodils **20** and nature, gave the man his ability to speak again.

To conclude, Clarke movingly conveys the impact of her experience through the theme of the power of nature and the description of the patients. She effectively displays the effect that nature has on the patients by bringing them hope. **21**

EXAMINER COMMENTS

16 The candidate sees the implications for the man here too.

17 Strong focus on the question.

18 A perceptive comment with support.

19 The candidate addresses the structure of the poem (critical understanding).

20 The candidate gives a relevant personal response.

21 A neat conclusion, but it does not consider the effect of poetry on the man. There is surely significance in the reference to Wordsworth's poem.

The candidate shows a good understanding of the poem and gives a sensitive and detailed reading of it. The candidate shows critical understanding of the way in which the poem is constructed and of the mood and tone that is created and she makes some perceptive comments. The candidate does not consider the poet's own response to the situation but interprets the terms of the question as referring to the impact on the man and on the natural surroundings. The candidate does explore what makes the poem moving and keeps a tight focus on the question. The answer could have had some more precise comments on the effect of language as indicated in the annotations. Some significant elements of the poem are not considered, for example the fact that the man has been mute for forty years and the significance to him of the poetry, and the contrast between the beauty of the surroundings and the fact that the house is a mental hospital is not fully explored. It is a clear and well developed response.

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