



Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Language A (4EA1)  
Paper 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and  
Imaginative Writing

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## Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Paper 2 of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. This was the exceptional November series of the 'A' specification in IGCSE English Language 9-1, following the cancellation of the summer series in 2020.

The specification consists of three components: Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing - 60% (examination); Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (this examination) OR Unit 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing - 40% (non-examination assessment). Candidates may also be entered for the optional Spoken Language Endorsement (non-examination assessment).

Unit 2 for Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing is assessed through an examination lasting one hour and thirty minutes. The total number of marks available is 60. The reading and writing sections on this paper are loosely linked by the theme of the text from the Anthology which appears on the examination paper.

The focus of this component is:

**Section A – Poetry and Prose Texts:** study and analyse selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts.

Candidates should study the poetry and prose provided in Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* in preparation for responding to a given prose extract or poem in the examination.

The specification identifies that candidates:

'should be able to read substantial pieces of writing (extended texts) that make significant demands on them in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. Throughout the qualification, candidates should develop the skills of inference and analysis.'

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section A, and there will be one essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*, which will be made available in a booklet in the examination if it is a longer extract or will be in the Question Paper in the case of a poem.

Candidates will answer the question in this section and 30 marks are available. There are three bullet points to prompt the response and the third bullet always asks candidates to consider language and structure.

**Section B – Imaginative Writing:** explore and develop imaginative writing skills.

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section B. There are three writing tasks, to some extent linked by theme to the reading prose extract or poem. Candidates pick one question to respond to and the response is worth 30 marks. The format of the tasks remains the same for each series: Question 1 follows the format 'Write about a time when you, or someone you know...'; Question 2 follows the format 'Write a story with the title...' and Question 3 offers two images as a prompt for a response which is always 'Write a story that begins...' or 'Write a story that ends...'.

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

### **Section A: Reading**

#### **AO1:**

- read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives

#### **AO2:**

- understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.

### **Section B: Writing**

#### **AO4:**

- communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences

#### **AO5:**

- write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to the extract from the Anthology in the examination, and that most had studied it before. Some candidates had been taught the context of and background to the extract, such as itinerant workers and issues around immigration and leaving home.

Throughout the qualification, overall candidates had been prepared well and all had, at different levels, developed the skills required to answer the questions.

It was also clear that candidates used what they had studied in their reading to feed into their imaginative writing, which inspired them. As the specification identifies, the main aims for our candidates in this paper are:

- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Candidates had, pleasingly, been given the opportunity to practise their writing techniques and planning and proofreading skills.

The responses of candidates had some positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that many candidates had understood the content of and ideas in the extract
- evidence of coverage of the whole of the extract
- the successful, integrated use of the bullet points within the question
- coverage of the assessment objectives required for this paper
- the range of vocabulary for AO5

- writing that showed creative ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Less successful responses:

- demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the extract and/or lack of awareness of the ideas in the extract
- failed to reference the question, with candidates simply writing something about what happens in the first part of the extract
- rigidly followed the bullet points in the question so that language and structure points were almost an 'add-on' at the end
- had an insecure grasp of language and structure with a lack of understanding of how language and structure were used, feature-spotting or confusion of terms
- had limited comment on language and structure and relied heavily on description of ideas or events for Question 1
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence or used over-long quotations
- lacked organisation in their writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

It was clear that candidates had been able to find at least some information about the character of Lev and could comment on language and structural features. Imaginative writing was often interesting, engaging and enthusiastic and had a clear sense of purpose and audience in the voice and ideas used.

## **Question 1**

### **AO1**

The first two bullet points in the mark scheme relate to AO1 - read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives. The level of understanding of the text from the Anthology is assessed in the first bullet point, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives in the text in the second bullet point.

At the very basic level candidates tended to comment on what was being said about Lev in the first part of the extract, particularly the smoking motif. They were able to show some understanding of the opening part of the extract, but the understanding and focus was uneven. There was often limited selection and interpretation of information and ideas: for example, responses at the lowest levels often did not move past the opening section of the extract.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were at least able to identify some of the key ideas in the extract linked to Lev, although at this borderline grade there was often an imbalance where the focus was on identifying basic/valid ideas and information from the extract about Lev (for example, him having to leave home) rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels. For example, candidates at this borderline grade often had not considered more than broad ideas. There was a lack of 'drilling down' into the extract to examine the more nuanced ideas considered by candidates achieving higher marks.

Candidates at borderline Grade 7 were more direct in approach, as they were able to select the relevant ideas from the extract linked to Lev's thoughts and feelings in a detailed but succinct manner. Candidates at this borderline tended to cover the full extract, and offered detailed points including the contrast with the character of Lydia, the almost defiant attitude Lev has at the end of the extract and, as one candidate wrote: 'the struggle of immigration with themes such as loss and hope for the future.'

## **AO2**

The third bullet point in the mark scheme relates to AO2 - understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. There needs to be understanding of the language and structure used in the text, and the level of skill is also a discriminator. *Explain* is a mid-level skill, *comment* a lower level skill and *explore/analyse* higher-level skills, which gives candidates opportunities to achieve across the range.

At the lowest levels candidates often made reference to language and structure as a brief add-on at the end of the answer. Candidates here often identified and named devices, but did not demonstrate the skill or understanding to discuss their use, and did not link these to the question. At this level responses were characterised by writing without any explanations – candidates here were good at finding both language and structure features, but not as confident at explaining them. The responses were much more at a descriptive level, with limited and underdeveloped evidence.

Candidates at the Grade 4 borderline were at least commenting on both language and structure. At this borderline grade candidates were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. Candidates at Grade 4 borderline were able to pick out features in the extract, but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features. The majority at the borderline grade were able to comment clearly on, for example, repetition (for example of smoking or the stork), simile and metaphor, short sentences. Some explanations at this borderline grade were non-specific and unrelated to the question: 'The writer uses language and structure to engage the reader'.

Candidates at the Grade 7 borderline were commenting on both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. At this borderline grade candidates were exploring and analysing language and structure, with detailed and discriminating references. The majority at the borderline grade were able to explore less obvious features such as the tone of the extract, the use of 'flashbacks' as a structural feature, the meanings of the descriptions of the home, the parallel to Lydia created or the significance of the words that Lev is able to speak in English, alongside the features of borderline Grade 4. The examples of language and structure used at this borderline grade were much more considered and selected than at borderline Grade 4, showing a perceptive understanding of the viewpoint of the writer and the effect of details selected on the readers. Some examples of interesting language and structure points made by candidates are:

- "‘They ran out of trees’": this short sentence shows even nature gave up on Lev.'
- 'Intertwining 2 separate time frames, Lev's past and the present bus journey.'

The final bullet point in the mark scheme relates to selection and use of references from the text which has been studied for both AO1 and AO2. This is a very useful discriminator in this question. As previously mentioned, candidates were sometimes unable to consider references that supported different ideas and information (rather than many references which illustrated the same point) where candidates perhaps missed key elements that would have demonstrated apt, persuasive selection of information and ideas. Sometimes quotations were too long to be helpful, and one examiner noted:

'I did see quite a few responses that would benefit from using shorter embedded quotations in order to move the candidate to the analysis more quickly and give them a better chance of producing a sustained and thorough response.'

### Example 1

AS We see the writer uses many language and  
structure to explain Lev's thought and feelings  
about home, an Lev's thoughts and feelings ~  
about the future. ~~As we~~ We could say  
that Lev is ~~smoking~~ a person which ~~is~~  
doesn't stop smoking.

As we see Lev gives a very negative impact about him ~~at~~ home. As we see she can't smoke "no smoking allowed" as we could see ~~the~~ Lev loves smoking, the writer uses a metaphor to describe that the cigarette was Lev's companion "But even an unlit cigarette was a companion" This shows that the cigarettes are very ~~is~~ important for Lev, this means Lev feels desperate because she can't smoke.

From another part she was feeling fine because she only needed to sleep and talk with ~~her~~ him companion. "do now was to nod" Here is explaining that she was going to sleep. "Fifty hours or more, side by side with their separate aches and dreams, like a married a couple" As we see the writer uses a simile "like a married a couple" which show that Lev and ~~her~~<sup>him</sup> companion were sitting ~~is~~ together during the journey. Lev would feel very bad because she can't smoke constantly during the journey ~~is~~ only when the bus stops.



Lev was trying to prepare ~~himself~~ <sup>himself</sup> with this long journey that waits for him. "Lev knew this, had known it in advance, had tried to prepare himself ~~to~~ mentally for the long agony of it." The writer is explaining that Lev has done this on the past "knew". As we see the writer uses a comma for make a pause in the extract. As well the writer uses a little bit of exaggeration by using the word agony because he wants to emphasize that Lev can't stop smoking, and that incontrollable for him. Lev would feel depressed in that moment because she can't do what she likes in that instant moment. The reader would ~~be~~ feel surprised because Lev is conscient that she is not going to smoke during the journey.

Lev thinks that when she arrives to London she will separate from his companion. "When they finally arrived in London, they would probably separate with barely a word or a look, walk out into a rainy morning, each alone and beginning a new life." As we see Lev think that she will directly separate from his companion and continue her life. The writer uses "rainy morning" as a metaphor because she wants to make that as if it was a very bad day. As well the writer uses commas for make a pause. Lev thinks that she will not talk with his companion in all the journey.

We can conclude that Lev is addicted to smoke and she can't stop smoking. It is impossible for her. As well that Lev would have a very depressing journey because she would only be sleeping and not talking with his companion.

#### Examiner Comments:

This answer achieves a mark of 7 in Level 2.

There is definitely 'basic understanding of the text', Level 1: Lev does not stop smoking, he is desperate (could be interpreted as about leaving home as well as not being able to smoke), he is sitting with a companion, he had tried to prepare himself. The response is very reliant on smoking and does not move much past this (it is important that candidates study ALL of the texts in the Anthology - there is a sense that this candidate is not prepared to respond on this text). Selection and interpretation of information/ideas/perspectives is limited, but what is there is somewhat valid.

There is some basic identification and some limited understanding of the language and structure used by writers to achieve effects, so this is borderline Level 1/2. The comment on the metaphor of the cigarette is valid, as is the simile of the married couple (very little is done with either point), the comma to 'make a pause' is not really relevant, but the focus on 'agony' is valid. The use of 'rainy' has potential but does not go very far. The use of references is valid. All of Level 1 is met, and there is enough to just move into Level 2 as there is some comment on language and structure and some valid references (although basic, so never going to move past the lower end of the mark range in this level). The responses touches on these last two bullet points in the Level 2 mark scheme, but is not consistent, so only just moves into the level.

## Example 2

Lev loves his country, "that his heart remained ~~in his own~~ <sup>in his own</sup> country", but is moving to help benefit his daughter Maya. Lev believes that his home also carries darkness, in the seasons and because of his memories of the place. Lev also doesn't want to leave his home, "that leaving of my home was hard and bitter."

Lev is a troubled man and is presented as such. He relies on nicotine and alcohol to get by and is jobless. But he is trying to get better. Lydia helps him ~~resist~~ <sup>resist</sup> the urge for cigarettes by reading, which in turn causes Lev to focus on something else, "He envied Lydia, immersed in her English book."

All or most of Lev's thoughts towards his future begin to stem when he thinks about his deceased wife, Marina. Her death has made him unable to look at his own reflection out of guilt, "It was his own guilt at still being alive."

Lev claims that he'll make the English share their luck and country with him. He's also positive that moving their will be a good opportunity for him, "My time is coming."

### Examiner Comments:

This response meets the first bullet in Level 2 – there is some understanding of the text (there is not a sense that this is sound, so for this it does not border on Level 3).

Examples are that he loves his country but is moving for his daughter, he is troubled but trying to get better, he feels guilt about his wife, he hopes that he will share in English luck and find new opportunities. The second bullet point is met in Level 2 also as the selection and interpretation is valid, but not developed.

The third bullet point is more on the border of Level 1/2 as there is a lack of evidence that the candidate has more than basic/little understanding of language and structure. Some sense of language/structure is implied, but not identified. The selection of references is valid, but not developed. Level 2 is securely met, but this does not quite border on Level 3. A mark of 11 is achieved.

### Example 3

Levi's feelings about his home was were that he would miss it and it will always be his home. 'That his heart remained in his own country', this shows that even though he is travelling to <sup>England</sup> ~~Kanada~~ for a better life - he will always <sup>love</sup> ~~love~~ his home more. The only reason why he is travelling is for what he is leaving at home - his daughter. 'My daughter Maya needs clothes, shoes, books, toys, everything. England is my hope'. The use of a list emphasises the fact that he is travelling for his daughter because she needs all these items. 'England is my hope' references that he cannot live in his home as now the sawmill is closed he cannot expect to live there. He shows the pain he goes through from losing his wife when he ~~was~~ <sup>saw</sup> himself in the reflection. 'Since the death of Marina, he didn't like to catch sight of his own reflection, because what he always saw in it was his own guilt at still being alive'. ~~Thinking~~ Furthermore showing the grief he goes through

everyday thinking about home.

At His first thoughts of the future was his <sup>imagining</sup> ~~imagining~~ how he would set in London. 'He would hold himself apart from other people, find corners and shadows ~~in~~ which to sit and smoke, demonstrate that he didn't need to <sup>belong</sup> ~~belong~~'. His first impression are that he is going to be miserable, 'demonstrate that he didn't need to belong' shows that he <sup>wants</sup> ~~wants~~ people to think that he doesn't have to be there, <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ doesn't need to do his choice, when really he has to do this for his daughter.

Ler also envies Lydia as she already has a life planned out. 'I expect you understand what I mean?' shows that she believes that everyone that is travelling to England is having a plan - but Ler doesn't. This shows a difference in the two characters. Lydia never lost her job, she is travelling for change and as she knows she can get a better job. ~~Ler has~~ Ler lost his job so he has to travel so he can provide for his daughter.

The writer uses structure to present Ler through his change in hope. At the start of the extract Ler had no hope for London he was just travelling because he had to provide for his daughter and imagined a rubbish life for himself. However, at the end of the extract Ler starts reading a £20 note to test his English skills. He came <sup>across</sup> ~~across~~ on an angel next to an old man. He came to the conclusion ~~that~~ the angel meant that the British were lucky-

and he wanted some of that luck. This changes his hope, he <sup>went</sup> ~~went~~ from having no hope to <sup>lots</sup> ~~lots~~ of hope <sup>for</sup> that in England people are lucky and he will get some of that.

### Examiner Comments:

The response meets the first bullet point in Level 3. There is sound understanding of the text demonstrated throughout, for example he is moving for a better life for his daughter, he feels pain at losing his wife, Lev and Lydia's motives for moving are different. There is some personal interpretation, for example he will act as if he does not need to be in London, when in reality he has to be for his daughter, he starts out lacking hope but then changes. The second bullet point is also met in Level 3 as the selection and interpretation of information, ideas, perspectives is appropriate and relevant to the points being made.

AO2 is the bullet point in the mark scheme not fully covered in Level 3. There is not much identified, other than the listing and the change in hope which could be interpreted as a structural point. This bullet point could be placed in Level 1: 'Basic identification and little understanding of the language and/or structure used by writers to achieve effects'. However, there is some sense of effect, and some very brief comment, so this bullet is met just in Level 2.

The selection of references is appropriate and relevant to the points being made. The answer does not meet the top of Level 3 due to the lack of focus on language and structure. A mark of 16 in Level 3 is achieved.

### Example 4

In 'Significant Cigarettes', Tremain humanises economic migrants by using Lev's thoughts and feelings about home and the future, and various literary techniques and structural elements <sup>in order to</sup> ~~present~~ presenting the character of Lev.

Tremain uses the cigarettes as symbolism for Lev's home in Russia. As he got further and further away from home, Lev's 'longing for a cigarette [grew] steadily' and 'his hands grew fidgety and he felt a tremor in his legs'. His anxiety for a cigarette is a parallel of his anxiety at leaving home; he finds it hard to be parted from both things. This anxiety is emphasised by Tremain's description of him in that moment. The adjective 'fidgety' and the noun 'tremor' connote nervousness.

Another way Tremain highlights how hard it is for Lev

to leave ~~the~~ home is by using contrasts between Lev and Lydia. Lydia 'became very tired of the view from [her] window' and therefore decided to leave, whereas Lev found comfort in the way 'darkness had always arrived in precisely the same way, from the same direction, above the same trees'. The <sup>repetition of the</sup> adjective 'same' emphasises Lev's liking of the monotony at home, as well as the fact he tells himself that 'in [his] heart, [that was how] darkness would always fall'.

Lev decides ~~how~~ on how he is going to act in England while on the bus. He was going to 'hold himself apart from other people' and find 'corners and shadows in which to sit and smoke'. By telling us that this is what Lev is going to do, Tremain highlights the marginalisation and isolation economic migrants experience (although in this case, Lev is mainly bringing it on himself).

However, near the end of the text, we also find out that Lev has some sense of determination to make things work. He ~~is~~ is thinking about British people and how he is going to 'make them share "their [infernal luck] with him'. By thinking of the British people as 'them' repetitively, Lev puts some distance between himself and them, still marginalising himself. In addition, the

adjective 'internal' is used to describe their luck, as if it were exile. Despite this, he is showing determination by ~~stating~~<sup>implying</sup> that he ~~wants~~<sup>wants</sup> to get lucky and do well.

Tremain uses pairs of nouns ~~in~~ when describing ~~the~~ the bus journey in order to present Lev's character as lonely. She uses the nouns 'aches and dreams', 'snores and sighs', and 'food and drink'. By doing this, Tremain makes it appear as if everything has a mate or partner except for Lev, highlighting his loneliness.

To conclude, Tremain presents ~~the~~ the character of Lev as lonely, isolated, determined, but also as a person struggling to leave home ~~the writer does~~, in order to humanise economic migrants. The writer does this by describing Lev's thoughts and feelings about home and the future, and through the use of literary techniques and structural elements.

#### Examiner Comments:

This response has a clear introduction and conclusion and shows their focus on the question in their introduction. While not necessary, this can focus candidates on making sure they are answering the question set.

This response is a good example of where there is sustained and thoughtful understanding of the text: Lev's longing for home, his anxiety, the contrast between Lev and Lydia (and the candidate explores this more than Example 3), the 'marginalisation and isolation' of 'economic migrants' (this could definitely be developed with more detail), the distance between Lev and the British people as he sees them, his determination and his loneliness. The second bullet point of the mark scheme is met in Level 4 in the main, as the selection and interpretation of information, ideas, perspectives is appropriate and fully supportive of the points being made, but we are left hoping for more detail to sit more securely towards the top of Level 4.



For AO2 there is thorough understanding and evidence of some exploration of language and structure and how these are used to achieve effects (Level 4 mostly met – we would like to see more detail to feel secure that the candidate has thorough understanding): the symbolism of the cigarettes, the connotations of and emphasis on nervousness, the use of ‘them’, use of ‘infernal’, pairs of nouns. The final bullet point in the mark scheme is again partly met in Level 4 – the selection of references is appropriate and fully supportive of the points being made, but they could be more detailed. The response achieves 22 marks in Level 4.

### Example 5

Lev's craving for a cigarette grew extremely strong to the extent his hands grew rigidly. journey  
summary

**SECTION A: Reading**

**Answer the question in this section.**

**You should spend about 45 minutes on this section.**

**Remind yourself of *Significant Cigarettes* (from *The Road Home*), taken from the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology, which is provided in the Extract Booklet.**

**1** How does the writer present the character of Lev in *Significant Cigarettes*?

In your answer, you should write about:

- Lev's thoughts and feelings about home
- Lev's thoughts and feelings about the future
- the use of language and structure.

"sad -> if only we were storks"  
"aching for nicotine and oblivion"  
"I am going to their country and I am going to make them share it with me"  
"Darkness always arrived in the same way"

You should support your answer with close reference to the extract, including brief quotations.

(30)

Rosa Tremain shows using Lev's eyes than present Lev as an economic migrant who has to go from Russia to England to find a job. By using his view and feeling, Tremain humanizes him and makes him a symbol of all the economic migrants.

~~Tremain shows how Lev has lost his job as he worked in a sawmill that had to close because no more trees were left. She also shows his memories in different sections of the bus journey, and how~~

Tremain shows Lev's feelings to humanize him and all the economic migrants to had to travel from eastern Europe to survive. She does this by showing Lev's "aching for the comfort of nicotine and oblivion". She uses this metaphor shows how "nicotine" symbolises his desire of relaxation

and comfort of forgetting ("oblivion") he is leaving his family ~~beh~~ and best friend behind and his wife's death. This symbolises how much he desires it by using strong vocabulary "aching" which makes the reader sympathise with him.

Tremain also shows Lev's process of grieving and negative tone to show his thoughts and feelings. By using a melancholic tone in Lev's thought and Marina (his wife) thought "If only we were storks" which shows his guilt of being the one alive. By using ~~its~~ repetition of his wife dream ~~he~~ makes the reader understand how much he loved her and his desire of being with her again. Tremain also uses a metaphor as storks are migrant birds emphasising and ~~reinforce~~ reinforcing the fact Lev is an economic migrant. Which makes the reader understand the fact that economic migrants are also humans which have their problems and tragedies.

Tremain compares Lev with Lydia to show the diversity among economic migrants and create uncertainty in the readers minds. She does this by describing how "Darkness always arrived in the same way." This shows how Lev measures the time in "darkness" and brightness set in hours which shows his little or none education compared with Lydia being a teacher. Also by using the word "same" Tremain shows ~~how~~ why Lydia wants to go, to live

a different life instead of being stuck in the same routine every day. This contrast with Lev's thought and comfort of routine and sadness for living Auntie's land where he has left his loved ones. This makes the reader sympathize with Lev.

Rose Tremain also uses hope in her story, with a parallelism with the bus journey by doing this she shows the journey throughout Lev's mind showing his change of attitude, being sad and melancholic at the start and hopeful at the end. This parallelism with the actual bus journey engages the reader. She shows this by making Lev feel he is "going to their country now and [he] is going to make them share it with [him]." This phrase is well known for being used by British explorers when conquering their colonies. This makes a sense of irony as he is the one going to Britain and the one who seeks for fortune, luck and fortune hope to find a new job. This makes the reader empathize with him.

\*

In conclusion Tremain uses Lev's eyes to humanize economic migrants and by showing their feelings and emotions using metaphors, comparisons and emotive language

#### Examiner Comments:

This candidate begins with a plan, which is delivered in the answer, and there is a clear introduction and conclusion (not a requirement).

This response meets all of the bullet points of Level 4 and achieves a mark of 24, but it does not quite tip into Level 5. It is an example where the candidate does not present their ideas as clearly as they could, but what is there is worthy of Level 4 credit.

The candidate demonstrates sustained understanding of the text: Lev being an economic migrant, his feelings of discomfort, him leaving people behind, the process of grieving, the difference between Lev and Lydia, the sense of being in same routine every day, the idea of hope in the future. In this case the selection and interpretation of information/ideas/perspectives is appropriate, detailed and fully supports the points being made. The AO2 bullet point is met in Level 4, and there is more of a range of language and structure points made than in the previous example (metaphor, vocabulary, negative, melancholic tone, repetition, change in attitude and parallelism). The selection of references is detailed, appropriate and fully supports the points being made.

### Example 6

The writer presents the character through Lev's thoughts and feelings about home.

Lev 'wore a leather jacket and jeans and a leather cap' which shows that he lived a simplistic life back home. The use of polysyndeton ~~and~~ creates a vivid description of his clothes and allows readers to get an idea of his background, and also allows us to understand why he is leaving home to go to London to find work.

He was 'staring out at the land he was leaving', which has 'sun flowers scorched by the dry winds' and 'garlic growing green'. The ~~the~~ alliteration of 's' and 'g' in the two quotes respectively show ~~the~~ the semantic field of nature and the countryside view Lev had back home. He was 'staring out at the land', which shows that he felt sad about leaving, and was not ready to leave yet, and he had to look intensely at it all ~~the~~ one last time to take

at the scenery M.

Lev had slept on a rag rug beside his daughter's bed'. ~~with shoes~~ The alliteration of 'r' in 'rag rug' shows how poor they were, but he still did it out of love for his daughter.

He had also 'laid for five nights on an area of his lemming flooring no wider than his outstretched arm', which shows that he was a family man, allowing readers to understand how hard it must be for Lev to be leaving his family behind and venturing off on his own to find work. This engages sympathy in readers as well.

Moreover, Lev recalls his time with his wife, Marina. The repetition of 'if only we were storks' ~~shows that~~ is ironic now because he is indeed like a stork now because he's emigrating to a new country.

Also when Lydia helps Lev with his English, he said 'stork' and 'stork's nest'. The recurring mentions of storks show that Lev still thinks about his family all the time, and he even tries to ~~say~~ say it in English. This shows how much his family means to him and this is really heart warming for readers.

Lev explains why he is leaving to work in London, as he explained 'My daughter Maya needs clothes, shoes, books, toys, everything'. ~~The alliteration~~ Asylum here is used to list all the basic necessities his daughter needs but still lacks. This engages sympathy in readers, and

he hope that he does well in London. The word 'everything' is a hyperbole as her daughter surely does not need everything, but it ~~also~~ conveys how much they lack basic, essential items such as clothing and shoes. This also shows the reader how Lev is determined to succeed in London and to be able to make a living to help his family, and it shows how much he cares for them and he is quite self-sacrificial as well.

The writer ~~is~~ all- present Lev through writing about ~~his~~ his thoughts and feelings about the future.

Lev says that 'English is my hope'. The use of a metaphor here shows how much ~~he~~ hope he has in ~~English~~ England. He is hopeful that his future will be better for him and his family.

He also nows 'find corners and shadows to ~~hide~~ which to sit and smoke, demonstrate that he doesn't need to belong'. This imagery of 'corners and shadows' shows that Lev is ~~is~~ prepared for the ~~is~~ Xenophobia that will affect him, and he isn't bothered by it. He understands that he will be marginalised as the minority there but he still is very hopeful about London and is very confident that it does not bother him.

Lev ~~is~~ had also prepared himself for the future. He asks Lydia about ~~the~~ some English words he knows. He says 'Lovely, sorry, I am legal. How much future. Thank you. May you ~~is~~ help me.' These are ~~is~~ all very

basic, functional and monosyllabic words and phrases he knows, and this may also represent the limited opportunities he will be presented with. However, he still is trying to learn, which shows that he won't give up easily and a still hopes about his future.

We can also see that Lev is worried about his dark life in London. He says 'I am lost.' and 'Bee-and-bee', which shows that he is ready to ask for help ~~at~~ in London. When Lyza ~~was~~ his understander Lev and thought he meant 'to be, or not to be', it gives a contrast between them and how they have vastly different cultural background and literature knowledge. Lyza had ~~been~~ quoting Hamlet ~~and~~ contemplating ~~it~~ suicide, ~~but~~ but in reality Lev has just simply concerns about where he can live, ~~and~~ and the course of humanity.

Lev looks at the 'man' on the twenty-pounds note. He ~~can~~ recognize Elgar's song, the composer of ~~the~~ a famous nationalist song. This shows that he knows basic British history knowledge, and once again shows that his opportunities may be limited, but he is still hopeful and confident in the future, and he tries to recall knowledge he 'had been told in his English class'.

Moreover, the repetition of 'them' and 'there' in 'I'm going to that country now and I'm going to make them share it with me: that's my ~~best~~ luck.' shows that he is fully ~~aware~~ aware that he is going

to a place where he has no sense of belonging at all and he seems to be the alienating party. Although he knows that he will be marginalized, he still is very confident, ambitious and hopeful in himself that he will make it work, which is impressive to the readers.

He further elaborates and says 'I'm going to make them ~~to~~ share it with me', ~~and~~ ~~with~~ ~~them~~ with them that he will be forceful and determined to make things go his way and the people in London will just have to ~~obey~~ comply.

He ends his passage with 'my time is coming.' The use of present continuous verb as the last word of the passage shows that he will keep up this confident spirit of his and that ~~his~~ his future will be bright and hopeful, just as he believes it will be.

Lee also describes the 'man' on the twenty pound note that 'an angel' was 'blowing a trumpet above him and an other angel's radiance falling on him in vertical lines'. The use of religious imagery ~~is~~ here once again reinforces the fact that England is his hope and he sees it as this holy place and he is admiring ~~the~~ Elgar on the twenty pound note. England is ~~is~~ where he can have a better future and he is positive about the place ~~as he wishes~~  
^  
helping him as he wishes.



**Examiner Comments:**

This is a very good example of an answer that cannot be judged on handwriting. However, centres and candidates are reminded to ensure that responses can be read – examiners cannot reward what they cannot read!

Thankfully, this, when deciphered, shows perceptive understanding of the text. Ideas such as what Lev's clothing signifies, the symbolism of the natural world, the poverty he has lived in, the recurring idea of the stork, Lev's determination, his 'self-sacrificial' nature, his feelings of hope but also worries of xenophobia, his potential difficulty in finding opportunities – the list goes on! This selection is also persuasive in clarifying the points the candidate is making.

For AO2, there is perceptive understanding and analysis of language and structure and how these are used by writers to achieve effects, including use of vocabulary, sentence structure and other language features. There is a huge range covered in this response. The selection of references is discriminating and clarifies the points being made – the candidate has covered the text confidently and chosen their examples in a discriminating way. While difficult to read, the more it is read the more we see in it. A mark of 30 is deserved: all of the bullet points in Level 5 are met.

**Examiner Comments:****Writing**

At the lowest grade boundary candidates tended to offer a basic response. They always had straightforward use of tone, style and register, with audience and purpose not always clear. At this level candidates tended to express but not always connect ideas and information, with limited use of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There were few responses that only achieved Level 1 and where they did this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

At the Grade 4 borderline candidates tended to at least have straightforward and at best appropriate use of tone, style and register, selecting material and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to connect, but not always develop, ideas and information, with some structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There was a tendency in the majority of responses marked at this borderline grade to set out a stronger description in the start of the extract and then focus more on plot towards the end where planning had let the candidates down. In some cases, the writing lacked development to move higher into the mark scheme for AO4. At this borderline grade the use of vocabulary and syntax tended to be appropriate but repetitive and at times limited to vague simile/metaphor, use of short sentences, questions and exclamations for effect. The level of AO6 at this borderline was appropriate but overall formulaic, where it appeared that candidates had been advised to include plenty of adjectives or similes in their writing and felt the need to include them at all times.

In the best responses, candidates tended to at least have successful and at best touches of subtle use of tone, style and register, managing ideas and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this borderline level candidates tended to manage, but not always manipulate, ideas and information, with a range of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. Responses at this level had some creative ideas, humour and withholding information to the end as a technique. The Grade 7 boundary tended to have some selective vocabulary used for specific effect rather than just to demonstrate knowledge of particular multi-syllabic words.

The assessment objectives for these tasks effectively discriminated the quality of responses. Advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short extract in the time available – they need to have a clear organisation and direction in mind, and to perhaps not ‘over-season’ the pieces with vocabulary and syntax.

The main areas that discriminated these responses were:

- whether candidates could meet both parts of the first part of bullet one in the mark scheme for AO5 – for example they often expressed ideas to achieve in Level 2, but these ideas lacked the order for the second part of that bullet. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them
- the success of tone, style and register in AO4
- the spelling of basic vocabulary in AO5
- the accuracy of punctuation and use of varied punctuation in AO5
- the use of a range of sentence structures for AO5.

Sentence structure was clearly an area centres had focussed on: varying the way sentences begin; more use of subordinate clauses to begin complex sentences; effective use of one-word sentences and one-sentence paragraphs to demonstrate conscious crafting. Some candidates attempted to use ambitious vocabulary while some seemed to steer away from ambitious vocabulary in order to maintain accuracy. A key message to centres is to focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task. This was a common weakness running through all but the very best answers. The more ‘pedestrian’ answers showed a lack of organisation and often demonstrated a lack of planning and direction.

Be ambitious in the structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original. It was clear that there was some excellent description.

In terms of register it was clear that the majority of the candidates knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were a few that produced responses more like an essay. Examiners noted that candidates need to manage their time better, as even responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the end. Examiners felt that candidates would benefit from planning beforehand so that their stories have cohesion.

Some comments from examiners include:

- '[excellent description] is clearly a teaching point – and a successful one – that story-telling benefits from detailed observation of the surroundings and the narrator's reaction to them'
- 'Sometimes students would benefit from being taught to stick to simpler narratives that are handled well'
- 'I saw quite a few candidates employing less obvious techniques, such as pathetic fallacy, to create the appropriate atmosphere'
- 'Nice to see a lot of challenging vocabulary being used by candidates'
- 'the biggest grammar problems that I saw were mixing verb tenses and not using paragraphs'.

**Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, went on a long journey.**

Examiners noted a wide range of responses being offered which allowed the full range of marks to be applied, since all candidates were able to offer ideas about going on a long journey. Candidates who simply wrote almost like a diary entry of a holiday or a move did not usually craft responses as well as candidates who crafted what appeared to be an imaginary story with an attempt to engage the reader and build suspense, for example.

Across responses the journey was interpreted loosely, for example in responses that covered getting up, going to the airport, on the plane, arriving, going to the hotel, going exploring, going home. One examiner commented that 'we were told of some truly monumental journeys'. Many candidates were able to describe going back to a parent's home country to visit for the first time. Some journeys showed fear and danger and one examiner commented that the 'starkness of the experience on some journeys was reflected in a sharpness in describing the emotions of the candidates which helped to lift responses'. There were also responses that developed the narrative into a metaphorical journey for the narrator.

### Example 1

Greg is going to Australia but he hates flying. He is going to Australia because he is visiting his Aunt Bella.

Greg never liked flying as a kid, he hated his ears popping and was scared the plane was going to crash. But what Greg didn't realise that this flight was going to be the worst flight ever!

Greg walked through the corridor but he fell over and scraped his chin on the ground. He got up and grabbed his stuff and walked onto the plane.

He put his bags in the overhead compartment and sat down and Greg accidentally sat on a thumbtack. He screamed "Och"!

He picked up the thumbtack and put it in the bin and sat back down.

It's been absolute chosa on the plane,

there is babys crying kids kicking the back of Gregs seat and there is someone snoring right next to Greg.

He thinks of calming thoughts and falls asleep and he wakes up and he walks out of the plane and the plane hasnt moved since it started

He says "Oh my god"!

And he thinks to himself I am just gonna go home, but he wakes up again and he's at Australia and he goes to his aunties house.

He goes to his ~~g~~ aunties and says hello he eats some cookies he falls asleep. The end.

#### **Examiner Comments:**

This response achieves marks of 7+4 (11 in total). In this response there is evidence of full Level 2 achievement. The response communicates in a broadly appropriate way, with some basic, but fairly appropriate ideas (this is where it borders on Level 3). There is some grasp of the purpose and the intended reader, although we never really get a clear sense of a long journey. There is very straightforward use of form, tone and register (not always securely Level 2).

For AO5 the candidate expresses and orders information and ideas – Greg hates flying, the reasons he hates flying, him falling over in the airport, sitting on a thumb tack, the chaos on the plane, falls asleep and wakes up, falls asleep and wakes up again, then says hello, eats some cookies and falls asleep again! Paragraphs are used and not a huge range of structural and grammatical features other than some direct speech (Level 2). In terms of vocabulary the candidate does meet Level 2 as there is use of some correctly spelt vocabulary, and some is quite varied, for example *corridor*, *overhead compartment*, *absolute*, alongside some basic vocabulary like 'gonna'. In terms of punctuation it is used with basic control (Level 1), and the sentence structures are quite repetitive although there is something of a range in the use of speech. Using 'best fit', this meets the top of Level 2 for AO5.

## Example 2

It was the day. I was going on a long journey, but where to I did not know.

I woke up around 7; which is extremely early for a teenager and ~~got up~~ getting heived myself out of bed. I brushed my Edward sissor hand's hair out and washed my face. I was ready to go within 35 minutes, which is a record for me.

I was going with my family, the 5 of us in one car. It couldn't get any worse or so I thought. Our parents w~~t~~ere taking us away for a week as it had been an extremely, exhausting year.

Piling into the car ~~with~~ ~~no~~ we took off ~~at~~ on an adventure. <sup>The weather</sup> It was an ocean blue sky with little cloud coverage and a bright yellow sun shining down on us. It couldn't be more perfect.

After 45 minutes of driving, my sisters and I had only argued <sup>a couple hundred</sup> ~~about~~ ~~several~~ times. That was definitely a record. ~~we~~ ~~the~~ Mum and dad had kept mostly quiet just listening to the radio and ~~ignoring~~ ~~us~~ our bickering. We had asked them several times where we were going and they just kept saying "It's a surprise!"

The next 3 hours went by quickly as I fell asleep ~~as~~ only <sup>waking</sup> ~~waking~~ to the sound of food. We stopped and ate lunch at a barely holding together wooden table. ~~as~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ I looked as though someone had found the most desheveled pieces of wood and used super glue ~~to~~ stick it together. But it survived the 5 of us.

The sun was starting to set which meant we had ~~it~~ been driving for hours and hours. Mum and dad were talking quietly which meant something was up. We left it though knowing they would tell us if ~~that~~ ~~bad~~ something was wrong.

A few more hours past and the sky was close to pitch black. How long until we were there? ~~where~~ where was there?

~~But~~ we were surrounded by nothing fields upon fields and the only shops ~~shops~~ were back about 3 miles. It was clear 5~~3~~ minutes later that we were lost in ~~a~~ the middle of know where ~~a~~. There was no signal, no signs, no nothing just us and the silent night.

My dad decided to pull over ~~at~~ instead of driving mindlessly around and around. There was something calming and scary about the situation <sup>but</sup> what were we going to do. Just sit here, ~~ste~~ or even sleep here. Before any of us could start panicking we decided to try and find the shops we passed ages ago.

Luckily, after another two hours we found the shops. I was starving, cold and tired. The relief of seeing something other than trees was amazing. We all practically ran from the car all needing



the bathroom so badly. <sup>& AFTER</sup> We all headed into the shop and found an older woman at a till reading a knitting magazine. My parents asked her where our hotel was and after a minute she replied saying "I have no idea" she then went on explaining how she had lived here; ~~the~~ where ever here was for all her life.

We decided to book a room at the ~~B&B~~ B & B next door however they were full. Just our luck.

~~at~~ In the end we spent an ~~uncomfort~~ uncomfortable night in the car with no toilet, no heating and no bed. It was the worst journey ever. ~~and~~ I was never going on a long journey again to the Middle of Know Where. That was the last one for me.

#### Examiner Comments:

This is a secure example of Level 3 achievement. The response communicates clearly the idea of a family journey, the sense of teenagers bickering and the confusion and frustration of being lost. The story shows a clear sense of purpose (it is definitely a long journey) and has understanding of the expectations and requirements of the intended reader, with some flashes of humour in the ideas, for example teenagers not getting up early, taking a long time to get ready, siblings arguing and also, perhaps unintentionally, the 'older woman at a till reading a knitting magazine'. There is appropriate use of form, tone and register. Some description is simplistic but tries for effect, for example the

weather on the day, the wooden table. A mark of 11 at the top of Level 3 is appropriate here.

For AO5 the response develops and connects appropriate information and ideas. Structural and grammatical features (for example rule of three) and paragraphing make the meaning clear. The candidate strives to use a varied vocabulary and although the spelling is not always correct this is credited (*exhausting, bickering, dishevelled, mindlessly*). Varied punctuation is used, not always accurately, but again ambition is credited. There is evidence of adapting sentence structures as appropriate: 'Just our luck'. A mark at the top of Level 3 is awarded, 7 marks.

### Example 3

And there she was, standing next to the tracks, waiting for the train to open ~~the~~ doors to freedom. The large mechanical doors finally opened as everyone huddled to get a chair first. Chloe hardly found a way between all the crying babies, worried businessmen and <sup>all</sup> the other passengers who wanted to secure ~~themselves~~ a seat for themselves. Overwhelmed by the monstrous crowd, ~~Chloe~~ Chloe was swallowed into the train and stood next to a large family, who occupied the majority of space in the crowded compartment.

Her heart jumped when the driver <sup>spoke</sup> ~~blasted~~ ~~in~~ through ~~his~~ ~~whistle~~ in the speakers, ~~making~~ <sup>with</sup> a screeching voice, that the train would leave. The wheels starting clicking on the tracks in a way that did not comfort Chloe. After all, she had chosen the cheapest train, to the cheapest destination.

As the train sprinted through the countryside's fields and farms, Chloe thought about this morning. This morning when she decided to change her life forever. The night before Luke had come home from work, drunk again. Chloe

could not count how many times this had happened in the last year. Then, it all happened again. Luke got angry, pretending that his meal was too cold or that the house was not clean. The same meal that Chloe heated right when he came home, the same house that she had cleaned throughout the whole day. Any excuse was enough. Enough to hurt her precious cheeks, enough to belittle and bully her, enough to close their room's door, leaving Chloe captured sometimes for a couple of minutes, before Luke would find another excuse to come kick her down and leave these dark blue marks all over her body, and sometimes she could stay in there for hours, waiting for the beast to calm itself.

This morning, when the small stick indicated two faint lines, when Chloe realized her life would change forever she decided to leave. She could not keep her unborn child next to her demon. She took the last bit of money she had and left to go somewhere far away.

Chloe knows her travel will be long. She is aware that this world is particularly

cruel to girls like her. But she had to  
For her survival and her reconstruction. For  
her child's life.

A small tear rolled from her cheek; she  
was free.

### **Examiner Comments:**

This is an example of a response that meets all of Level 4 for AO4. In this case we would look to see if anything had been achieved in Level 5. The candidate communicates successfully and there is a secure realisation of purpose and the needs of the intended reader. The use of form, tone and register is effective, particularly in the sense of nervousness and fear created. The response does not move into Level 5 for AO4 as it could have more sharp focus on the long journey (we have interpreted that in not only the actual journey but the metaphorical journey as a mother). The ideas are perhaps not subtle in their presentation and could be developed further. The use of form, tone and register is effective rather than sophisticated. A mark of 15 is achieved.

For AO5, however, a mark was awarded in Level 5, reflecting the careful crafting that has gone into the response. The candidate does manage information and ideas, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text – for example the crying babies at the start and the large family on the train create a sense of what Chloe is going to have and what she will not have once she gives birth. There is a wide, selective vocabulary with only occasional spelling errors and a range of punctuation for clarity, managing sentence structures for deliberate effect. Level 4 is fully met, but given that the candidate attempts to manipulate the complex ideas of fear, power and escape (the movement of the train as it 'sprinted' reflects her escape, for example), the mark just moves into Level 5 with a mark of 11.

### **Question 3: Write a story with the title 'A New Start'.**

Candidates presented a range of material, and in some cases were similar to Question 2 where candidates were describing a physical journey that would end with a new start. This question seemed to lend itself well to more emotive language with narrators exploring their feelings about the past and hopes for the future. One examiner noted that this question 'was often handled sensitively at the higher end of the mark scheme with subtle suggestions and hints about what the future held'. Some candidates had the new start a matter of necessity, some demonstrating a determination to take advantage of new opportunities and, as with Question 2, there was often a feeling that examiners were reading real or readily imagined experiences.

### Example 1

A new start

My name is Zoey. I had nothing, for so long, but when I met them, my world turned upside down. My new start finally arrived.

I, as many other teenagers and children did not have any parents. I was an orphan. "Why?" people

always ask. Well, for the only and good reason that they did not want me, so like ~~and~~ in a movie I was left at the ~~sp~~ steps of a hospital where they took care of me until I could go to someone else. And this is when the constant changing and moving began, I would go to one family, to another, and another, and another, it was my life. Always tossing and turning.

And it wasn't always easy.

Between the ~~poor~~ parents who just wanted money and ~~the ones you~~ the ones who took you in, cherished you, loved you and sent you to ~~and~~ another home, saying "it was time".

I thought all hope was gone...

But, then I met them. My saviors, Anna and Elia, they were a newly married couple, and did not want the burden to ~~raise a young child~~ so have the chance to have a child of their own so they chose me, picked me, loved me.

I was officially adopted a year later and since then, since my new start, I have never been happier.

**Examiner Comments:**

This is a secure example of Level 3 achievement. The response communicates clearly the idea of being left as a child, the constant change of foster parents and then the official adoption. The story shows a clear sense of purpose (there is a new start) and has understanding of the expectations and requirements of the intended reader. There is appropriate use of form, tone and register, for example in the way the response starts and ends with the new start. Some use of idiom is slightly out of place, for example 'tossing and turning', but the idea is clear enough. A mark of 10 in Level 3 is appropriate here. The ideas are not clearly communicated enough to move to the top of the level here.

For AO5 the response develops and connects appropriate information and ideas. Structural and grammatical features (for example rule of three in 'cherished you, loved you and sent you to another home') and paragraphing make the meaning clear. The candidate does not use as varied a vocabulary as Example 2 for Question 2, but spelling is more accurate. 'Best-fit' is important here. Varied and accurate punctuation is used. There is evidence of adapting sentence structures as appropriate: 'I thought all hope was gone...'. A mark of 7 at the top of Level 3 is awarded.

## Example 2

### A New Start

I wake up safe, shut away in a place amongst my kind. My tired eyes slowly <sup>open</sup> ~~open~~ as ~~I see~~ blurred rays of sun pour <sup>into</sup> ~~into~~ them. My pupils widen, not from light but the hope I feel. I lay for another moment on the warm rock as my <sup>maybe</sup> ~~maybe~~ soaks up the sun. This is the first day of ~~the rest of~~ a <sup>New Start</sup> ~~new safe life~~. With a roar I leapt of the golden rock ready to explore this (at first sight) vast new ~~territory~~ <sup>territory</sup>...

I run round, until I stop in the shade of <sup>an</sup> ~~an~~ old savana tree. Burnt, orange leaves fall down from the sky onto <sup>my</sup> ~~my~~ nose and fill the air with a ~~no other~~ ~~spicy~~ ~~smell~~ Summer smell. I scatter to the small patch of long grass to hunt for prey? ~~or~~ I soon realise <sup>there</sup> ~~there~~ is none. The grass is just grass! With this disappointment I catch a glimmer of ~~the~~ light out the corner of my eye. With a single turn it ~~falls~~ <sup>transforms</sup> into a ~~hole~~ glittering portal. I run towards it and as I get closer I see humans stand with their small noses squish up against the portal that soon turns to a clear wall blocking my escape...

Once more I run the perimeter of this new land and before I know <sup>heart</sup> it im back where I started! ~~once more~~... I'm back again. My <sup>heart</sup> pumping in my chest got quicker and quicker. No food, no escape, no life!

Days pass, and each one is the same from start to finish. Trapped in the



same four walls being <sup>stared</sup> ~~stared~~ at and only being fed when my captives see  
it. This once magical new start is my hell. No freedom! And No Choice! Is  
this where I will live the rest of my life. Each day the sun felt <sup>colder</sup> ~~colder~~  
, the sky seemed dimmer, the space seemed smaller, I grew older. Time escaped  
me...

Had it been months? Years? I spend each day pondering when my sentence  
ends. This feels like a prison. <sup>a home</sup> ~~not a home~~. With time passing, anger <sup>grew</sup> ~~grew~~. Every  
step my feet paw felt heavier until I <sup>had</sup> ~~had~~ no <sup>strength</sup> ~~strength~~ to get up. I think  
about the life I <sup>loved</sup> ~~loved~~ and for a second a glimmer of light warms my ~~heart~~  
heart, but it <sup>passes</sup> ~~passes~~. My golden <sup>fur</sup> ~~fur~~ is now dull and lifeless. This new, old  
start is awful. My fire is dim.

My roar is no more...

### Examiner Comments:

This is a fairly brief response (the handwriting is small) but it meets all of Level 3. The response communicates successfully and there is a secure realisation of purpose and the needs of the intended reader. The persona of the animal (a lion?) being caged, potentially in a zoo, is sustained. The use of form, tone and register is effective, particularly in the sense of freedom moving to captivity, although this is sometimes almost too subtle to be evident. The use of form, tone and register is effective rather than sophisticated. It meets all of Level 3 for AO4, achieving a mark of 15. For AO5 Level 3 is fully met, and there is just enough to move into Level 4 as the candidate is managing their information and ideas, with some cohesive and deliberate use of structural features. The response does not move higher in this level given the errors. A mark of 9 in Level 4 is awarded.

### Example 3

#### 'A NEW START'

Rain. ~~Heavy rain~~ Heavy rain. I stared out ~~at the~~ through the shabby, broken window of the classroom, watching the little devil start to slowly crawl to this building, this education block, this 'place of learning' ~~as~~ (as the Head ~~was to call~~ loves to call it, not that I know much.)

I know, I know. I ~~should~~ shouldn't be this miserable, after all, it's a new start for me. First day of teaching at yet another school. 'Be more hopeful, God!' One part of my brain shouts at another.

~~I~~ I just can't.

I heaved another sigh, watching the clock slowly tick by every second. Then, the knell rings. I summoned all of my courage, ~~sat up straight~~ <sup>straightened</sup> ~~straightened~~ my back, and went through my meticulous lesson plan once again.

The kids started rushing in, like a tropical storm had just hit me. They chattered away, not even giving me ~~one~~ one glance. I look at the rain outside and ~~they~~ <sup>aggressively</sup> pattered on the glass, as if to say 'you will suck! it will never change!'

I glared intensely at the 40 pupils in front of me, assuming ~~they would~~ the noise would die down. But it did not. They ~~continued~~ continued to read their

picture files magazines that ~~burst~~ bombard them with  
excessive information, chew ~~the~~ loudly on their  
bright pink gum, and throwing broken erasers  
at one another.

I yelled ~~with all the~~ with all the confidence  
I could muster - ~~at the~~ The lesson is beginning!  
Pines, gum, magazines - all away, now!

They quieted down for one split second, and  
~~the~~ my heart leapt. maybe... I'm not as bad as I think  
after all?

well, I was wrong.

They immediately burst ~~out~~ out into laughter,  
and one said 'How about no?!' my eyes ~~started~~ started getting  
blurry, clouded with tears and ~~tears~~ streaming down my face.

I glanced at the window, my ~~last~~ only chance of escape,  
but the droplets of spit seemed to be mocking me too.

I tried again. (stuck to the glass) 'If you do not  
quiet down, I will call the Head this instance.'

Then came a reply. 'Okay. MJS - whatever. your-  
name-is. I bet the Head ~~will~~ will fire you once he  
sees how incompetent you are. Imagine, being fired  
on the first day, ~~how~~ truly embarrassing!'

I hate that they were right. I hate how  
~~it is not simply~~ ~~complicated~~ ~~when~~ my parents told me to  
be a teacher. I hate how I simply complied and  
got an education degree. I need a new start. A

completely ~~was not in my thoughts~~ fresh one. Not  
just finding a new school to teacher. ~~No~~ No, I am  
going to walk down an ~~a~~ entirely new path. Yes.  
That is what I shall ~~do~~ do. I felt like a huge  
cloud has been lifted from my chest, I could breathe  
again!

I looked outside and the rain and <sup>the</sup> dark, heavy  
clouds ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> cleared up. The sun was beginning to ~~see~~ peek  
out from behind the white, beautiful clouds. The corner of  
my mouth lifted up, and I said calmly to my students  
(whom I shall never meet again) 'Goodbye.'

Then, as if timed perfectly, the bell rang.

~~Then~~

I then left, making my way to a new start. One  
that I thought I would never get. I can truly be ~~what I want to be~~  
what I want to be now: a doctor.

### Examiner Comments:

This response just moves into Level 5 for AO4, achieving 16 marks. It is another well-crafted piece and in this case is sophisticated in places. It is sharply focused – it has the idea of a false 'new start' that leads to another 'new start'. The response meets all of Level 4, and there is some subtlety in the ideas and sense of sharp (and quite sophisticated) focus on the feelings of a disenchanted teacher and his/her disenchanted pupils to just move into Level 5. The interaction between teacher and pupils is handled in a very effective way, and the use of the rain to reflect feelings is quite sophisticated (alongside the pupils coming in like a 'tropical storm').

For AO5 the response achieves 11 marks. The candidate manages information and ideas, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text (Level 4). There is also evidence of the candidate utilising a range of structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion, for example in the opening (Level 5). A wide, selective vocabulary is used with only occasional spelling errors (Level 4), and the candidate punctuates writing with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision, using a range of sentence structures accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects (Level 5). A mark of 11 is 'best-fit' here.

**Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that begins 'I tried to see what he was reading.'**

This question was attempted by fewer candidates than Questions 2 and 3. Examiners saw responses which successfully evoked and sustained a sense of intrigue and one examiner said: 'A lot of these responses left me on a cliff-hanger!' Many candidates were able to use a range of language and structural techniques to build up the tension as the main protagonist made their move to see what was being read, but often did not reveal what was in the paper or on the screen. This was sometimes more effective than candidates who revealed something over-dramatic and created a complicated plot for themselves. One examiner noted:

'Again, some excellent responses to this question with some very imaginative ways they were trying to look. One that springs to mind is a girl on a train trying to see what the pale looking man next to her was reading - she eventually found out he was reading his own obituary.'

**Example 1**

I tried to see what he was reading. The old man sitting beside me was reading a massive newspaper which is quite uncommon to see in this ~~twenty 21st~~ ~~cent~~ twenty first centuries. The letters in the newspapers were extremely tiny to read but I keep tried to read the letters. I brought myself close to him. Suddenly the old man folded his newspapers in half and glanced at me. I felt an embarrassment overwhelmed me like a sudden storm. My face turned red like a riped tomatoes in summer.

I quickly looked back at my phone and pretended like I was doing something else. ~~even though~~ ~~I knew already~~ ~~knew~~ I opened my snapchat and texted my sister.  
'What's up?'

No reply.

\*Damn.\* I sighed and the moment I

was about to call her, I felt a weird sense from the side where the old man was. He was looking at the screen of my phone like I was looking at his newspaper. Should I turn ~~off~~ off my phone and give <sup>back</sup> ~~him~~ ~~that~~ the dirty look he gave me? Why not? Hold on, you're the nicest person in the world. & Just continue doing your stuff. <sup>s</sup> debate ~~between~~ <sup>was caused</sup> between my million thoughts. The man looked extremely curious and interested about my smart phone. His eyes even looked like puppy eyes.

#### Examiner Comments:

For AO4 the candidate uses Image 1 and meets all of the bullet points in Level 2. Communication is broadly appropriate with some sense of the purpose and reader. The form, tone and register are straightforward. For this AO the response achieves 7 marks. In AO5 the candidate just moves into Level 3, given some adaptation of sentence structures for effect – the crafting is evident here. The first two bullet points in the mark scheme are met in Level 2, but there is just enough to move to Level 3 for the third, for example 'Should I turn off my phone and give back the dirty look he gave me? Why not?' A mark of 5 is achieved.

## Example 2

I tried to see what he was reading underneath his desk, folded and crumpled so to avoid our teacher from catching him in the act. He looked back at me and stared with hard, anguished eyes as to tell me, what his mouth could not, to mind my own business.

The exam we were taking, a brutal 4 hour math test, was full of incomprehensible equations, and because of it, my mind layed in disarray.

How dare he! I thought, looking straight back at him. For a moment, I thought about scussing him or bringing his disregard for the security of the test to the teacher, but I knew better, or at least I thought I did.

When he saw me look back at him again a few minutes later, he didn't scold me with his eyes and instead nodded his head and with some hesitation folded the densely-written on paper back into his pocket.

I, who wasn't a particularly beloved kid by my peers, was in shock, I could not believe I actually forced the most popular student in our class to do what I thought was right. However, I had little time to waste gloating over my perceived victory as the pendulum was nearing the hour and I hadn't yet finished.

"Times up," said the teacher halfway through her yawn a while later.

I turned in my paper, and triumphantly marched past him on my way out so to show to him that cheating is a fool's gambit.

Suddenly, as I was halfway out the door a few students started laughing at me. I didn't understand and nor did the teacher who had seized the opportunity to scold them seconds later.

They were all staring and pointing at my desk where I noticed a small paper with fine printed symbols. The teacher approached and lifted up the paper for the whole class to see. That moment I knew what he, the pupil in front of me, had done but before I had the chance to salvage my reputation and explain the misunderstanding and how the cheat sheet had ended up on my desk the teacher swiftly took my test and ripped it wide in the most melodramatic way.

"Zero!" she yelled

The class giggled, I started blushing and even if I accused my comrade in front of me of misplacing his cheat sheet, it would have made little difference at this point.

I stormed out.

### Examiner Comments:

This response moves into Level 5 for AO4, with a mark of 16. It is another well-crafted piece and is sophisticated in places. It is sharply focused – it has the idea of the supercilious, unpopular student who has the 'tables turned' on them at the end. The response meets all of Level 4. There is also some subtlety in the ideas and sense of sharp (and quite sophisticated) focus on the feelings of the student during and after the examination, before the entrapment: the idea of having 'little time to waste gloating over my perceived victory' foreshadowing what will come and the idea that cheating 'is a fool's gambit'.

For AO5 the response achieves a mark of 11. The candidate manages information and ideas, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text (Level 4). Quite extensive vocabulary is used with rare spelling errors, for example *anguished*, *pendulum*, *gambit*, *melodramatic* (Level 5), and the candidate positions a reasonable range of punctuation for clarity, managing sentence structures for deliberate effect (Level 4). A mark of 11 is 'best-fit' here.



## Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure you have studied the poetry and prose texts in the Anthology fully and use the examination time to remind yourself of the text, not re-read it.
- When a long extract is used, consider what the key points to pick up on are, linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make you are covering pertinent points from the whole extract from beginning to end in order to meet AO1 in the higher levels.
- Read the question carefully and make sure you are answering **this** question, not telling the examiner what you know about the text you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case the character of Lev.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure you are offering ideas about how language and structure are used. Many of you were able to give examples, but sometimes you did not offer points about how the examples were used.
- For AO2 try to cover points on both language and structure, commenting on the different techniques that have been used by the writer and how they link to the overall topic of the question, in this case the character of Lev.
- When you are writing, always think about your reader, what information and ideas you want to develop and how you want the reader to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects.
- Think carefully about how you will begin to write so that it is engaging for your reader from the very start.
- As you begin to write, know where you will end. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar
- In writing, focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task.
- Be ambitious in your structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original. We are often incredibly impressed with your creativity and ability to write in such an imaginative way in the time given.

