

# GCE English Language and Literature

## Unit F671 - Question 6 - High banded Candidate style answer

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### Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by senior OCR *Examiner's*, with the input of Chairs of *Examiner's*, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “medium” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

### Question 6

#### E M Forster: *A Room with a View*

Read Passage A, which is concerned with a place and the people who live there, and then complete the following task:

At the start of Chapter II, Forster comments: “The traveller who has gone to Italy to study the tactile values of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy, may return remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live under it.”

Examine Forster’s presentation of places and the people who live in them in *A Room with a View*.

In your answer you should:

- consider ways in which Forster’s narrative methods contribute to this presentation
- consider the influence on the novel of the context in which it was produced
- refer to Passage A for points of comparison and contrast.

**Passage A** is taken from a web-guide to travel in Italy.

Situated among the beautiful hills and set against a landscape spotted with gorgeous villas, is the medieval walled city of Lucca. It is comfortably located between the better-known and more frequently travelled cities of Florence and Pisa.

Lovely Lucca is a relatively unknown Tuscan gem with a wealthy past and proud rich present. Not yet overrun by tourists, Lucca has retained a mellow atmosphere, free of the hassle of long lines and hordes of travellers. On the contrary, Lucca makes for easy travelling. A city kind to weary tourists, one of the

nicest things about Lucca is its people, the *Lucchesi*. They seem to appreciate just how special their little city is, and treat it well. [30 Marks]

*Candidate style answer*

Passage A makes the city of Lucca sound like a person. It personifies the place as if it has feelings, saying it is *kind to tourists*. The people who live there are also described using positive lexical choices. They *appreciate* their city and *treat it well*. This sense of Lucca's value (an abstract concept) is developed using a concrete noun from the lexical field of jewels by calling it a *relatively unknown Tuscan gem*, which has connotations of being precious and rare.

Florence is described in the same passage as *better-known and more frequently travelled*. This was true in Forster's time too. At the start of *A Room with a View* there are plenty of other English visitors at the Bertolini, and Lucy wonders if it is really any different from being in London. There are two rows of English people at the dining table, and *heavily framed* pictures of Queen Victoria and the last Poet Laureate hanging behind them. Perhaps Forster is suggesting that English things are heavy and boring, like the pictures.

It was the fashion at the time for young ladies like Lucy to travel in Europe, but not alone. So she has her cousin Charlotte with her as a chaperone. Charlotte develops a friendship with Miss Lavish, who gives the impression of being an expert on what she calls *the true Italy*. But she is patronising to Italians, pointing out an *adorable wine-cart* and calling its driver a *dear, simple soul*. The Rev Mr Eager, the English chaplain, behaves in a similar way. He uses his ability to speak Italian to send away a photograph-seller who approaches *with a courteous smile*, and to be equally harsh to the carriage driver in Chapter Six. Forster contrasts the way Mr Eager speaks Italian (like *an acid whistling fountain*) with the way the natives speak *in a deep-voiced stream with unexpected cataracts*. This natural imagery of water is frequent in the novel and here connects the people with their

*Examiner's commentary*

- Immediate focus on authorial technique / narrative method
- Very good appreciation that contextual factors are central, but that they do not stand alone
- Detailed reference to specific events in the novel
- Accurate quotation, leading to exploration of language
- Neat summaries of the effect of narrative method punctuate the answer
- Imaginative exploration of the connotations of lexical choices in the passage
- Imaginative links with the novel to create interesting structure
- Some narrative re-telling, but it's skilfully done to illustrate complex relationships between different parts of the novel
- Developed explanation of aspects of the contexts of production and reception
- Well-judged comments about the society – at home and abroad – of the novel
- Conclusion which neatly summarises literary/linguistic approaches and re-connects to the initial question

countryside.

Cecil admires Italy and Italian people. He tells his mother that he wants to send any children he and Lucy have to Italy *for subtlety*. But in the same speech he says he would want their children to be brought up in the country like Lucy, which is hypocritical because he has been rude about some of the people Mrs Honeychurch made him socialise with at Summer Street. As for Mrs Vyse, Forster says *she was a nice woman but her personality had been swamped by London*. Places can have damaging effects on the people who live in them.

Passage A starts off by describing where Lucca is: *Situated among the beautiful hills and set against a landscape spotted with gorgeous villas*. This seems like a contradiction, because *spotted* usually carries negative connotations of being spoiled, while *gorgeous* suggests very beautiful. The word *villas* may remind us of the villas in Summer Street which are causing Sir Harry Otway so much trouble. Unlike the villas of Lucca, which seem to be a natural part of the topography, Cissie and Albert are seen as a 'blot' on the landscape of Surrey. Even their names suggest (to a modern reader, at least) that they are rather vulgar - certainly, in terms of social class, rather below the society in which the Honeychurches move. It is interesting that Forster uses the conversation about finding tenants to present many aspects of the local people and their surroundings, and to be satirical about some of them..

Summer Street and Windy Corner are clearly very different from Florence. Part Two of the novel starts with a description of Freddy and Mrs Honeychurch indoors on a beautiful day, which leaves the reader wondering why. We discover they are waiting to find out whether Lucy is going to accept Cecil's proposal of marriage at his third attempt.

When Cecil opens the curtains and comes into the room to tell them that Lucy has accepted him, he lets light in. He is irritated: *he couldn't bear the Honeychurch habit of sitting in the dark to save the furniture*. Forster at first

describes the scene outside in quite conventional terms; but then the description of the terrace is *transfigured by the view beyond ... the edge of a green magic carpet which hovered in the air*. There is a sense of something magical here, and it recalls the terrace on to which Lucy fell before George kissed her.

Cecil more or less orders Freddy and his mother out into the garden to talk to Lucy about *the great event*. Forster describes how Cecil imagines the three Honeychurches going past the shrubbery, the tennis lawn and the flower beds to the kitchen garden. This links Lucy, Freddy and their mother to an English garden and makes them almost seem part of the landscape, even if it is a man-made one. A similar thing happens in Italy when Lucy falls onto the violet-covered terrace and George kisses her. They are both described as if they are a part of nature. The violets are described using the lexis of water (*rivulets and streams and cataracts*) and George is *like a swimmer* about to dive in. Lucy's description is in a different lexical field: *Light and beauty enveloped her ... as one who had fallen out of heaven ... radiant joy in her face*.

Forster is quite critical about the way English people (and other nationalities) behave when they are abroad. He has Miss Lavish say that she would set an examination paper at Dover and not allow tourists to go abroad if they could not pass. Then he has Rev Eager re-telling the story of a cartoon in *Punch* (a satirical magazine) which makes fun of American tourists by suggesting they are narrow-minded and ignorant about the culture. As soon as he has said this, Miss Lavish criticises *the narrowness and superficiality of the Anglo-Saxon tourist*, and we know that Forster means us to see both her and Mr Eager as even more narrow-minded and ignorant than the people they criticise. Forster has managed to present this by just letting them talk and not even having to make any authorial comment.

Mr Eager's superior attitude to tourists

had been shown further when he said: *We residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little - handed about like a parcel of goods from Venice to Florence, from Florence to Rome, living herded together in pensions or hotels.* The semantic field of controlling animals is seen in *herded*; and *parcel of goods* is clearly a pejorative description.

So we see that English people who consider themselves superior by having lived abroad are nothing of the sort. Passage A is perhaps trying to appeal to the kind of people who think they are unlike 'ordinary' tourists and who might be drawn to a place which is *Not yet overrun by tourists* but has *retained a mellow atmosphere, free of the hassle of long lines and hordes of travellers.* The lexical choices here suggest that ordinary tourists are like vermin who overrun popular destinations. *Hordes* suggests a disorganised mob and has colonialist, even racist, overtones. For example: "*hordes of natives*" is a common collocation in stories of heroes of the British Empire which would still have been popular in Forster's time.

Forster himself avoids the negative connotations of the term *tourist* by using *traveller* in the quotation at the start of the question. His narrative voice seems to suggest an optimistic view by emphasising concrete nouns - *the blue sky and the men and women who live under it* - over the abstract (*the tactile values of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy*). The whole novel seems to endorse the importance of people and places, and the importance of appreciating them properly; and fittingly it ends with a pleasant exchange - *in tones as gentle* - between Lucy and an Italian cabman who *drove away singing*.