

AS LEVEL

Candidate Style Answers with commentary

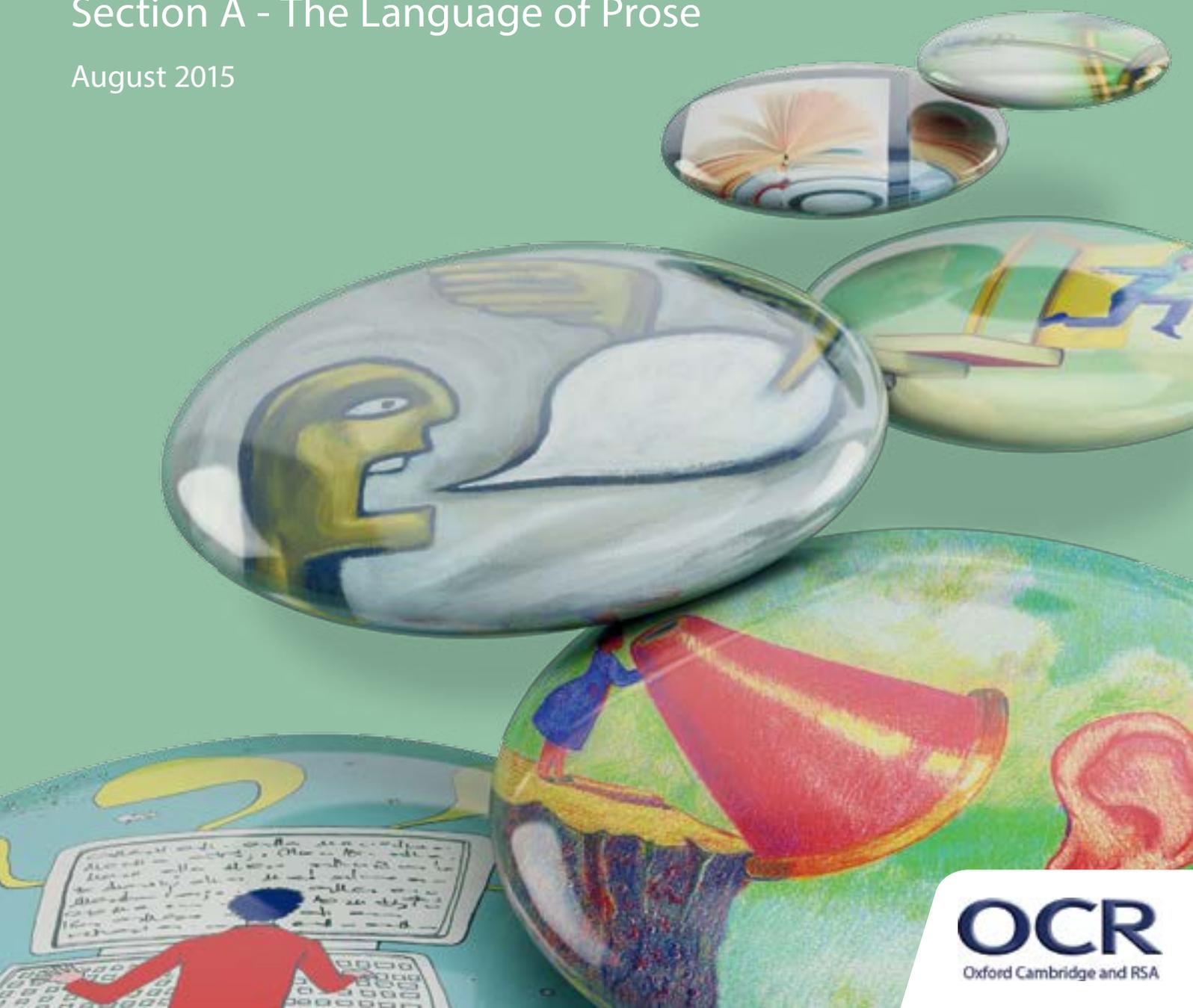
H074/02

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC)

The Language of Literary Texts

Section A - The Language of Prose

August 2015



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
QUESTION 1: CHARLOTTE BRONTË: <i>JANE EYRE</i>	4
QUESTION 2: F SCOTT FITZGERALD: <i>THE GREAT GATSBY</i>	6
QUESTION 3: CHINUA ACHEBE: <i>THINGS FALL APART</i>	8
QUESTION: 4 ARUNDHATI ROY: <i>THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS</i>	10
QUESTION 5: IAN MCEWAN: <i>ATONEMENT</i>	12
QUESTION 6: JHUMPA LAHIRI: <i>THE NAMESAKE</i>	14



We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

If you do not currently offer this OCR qualification but would like to do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Form which can be found here: www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the teaching of OCR specifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by the Board and the decision to use them lies with the individual teacher. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources.

© OCR 2015 – This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this message remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk



INTRODUCTION

These 'candidate style answers' have been written by subject experts to support teachers in interpreting the new OCR AS level Language and Literature (EMC) specification and sample assessment materials. These responses have been written to exemplify a good, or excellent, response to each question, but it is important to note that they were **not** written by AS level candidates. Exemplars of actual examination scripts and non-exam assessment tasks will be provided when they are available after the first examination series.

As these responses have not been through a full standardisation and moderation process, they have not been given a final mark or a grade. Instead they are presented as 'higher level' responses that clearly demonstrate features of a Level 5 and / or Level 6 response. Please also refer to the marking criteria in the AS level Language and Literature Sample Assessment Materials when reading these 'candidate style answers'.

Please note that this resource is provided as guidance only and does not constitute an indication of endorsed answers or grading.



QUESTION 1: CHARLOTTE BRONTË: *JANE EYRE*

Write about the ways in which Charlotte Brontë tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in the extract
- consider the extract in the context of the novel as a whole and its genre

This extract from *Jane Eyre* takes place towards the end of Jane's stay at Lowood. At the end of the previous chapter, the reader is told of the death of Jane's friend, Helen Burns and in the opening of Chapter 19, her mentor Miss Temple has been described leaving the school to marry. This change in circumstances and shift in Jane's surroundings is reflected in the extract by the change in mood of Jane herself. Here, she sees the 'hilly horizon' ahead of her as having been the limit of her existence to date, and questions how she can move beyond that horizon.

The first way Brontë tells the story in the extract is through the narrative voice that she creates. In the opening passage while the narrative is written in the past tense to reflect the autobiographical construction of the novel as a whole, the voice reflects the urgency and excitement which the speaker, Jane, feels, creating an immediacy which allows the reader to follow Jane's thoughts as they develop.¹ She describes firstly the view that she sees, "There were the two wings of the building; there was the garden", with the repetition of the adverb 'there' indicating powerfully the sense of place. **The reader is invited, therefore, to 'see' the landscape, 'there' as it is described, taking on Jane's eyeline as she surveys the 'home' that she is realising she has outgrown. Phrases that repeat how Jane "longed" to "surmount" the surrounding moors or "longed" to follow the gorge reinforce the desire for a new life that is beginning to overwhelm Jane. The fact that she "gasped" for liberty, further reinforces the strength of emotion of the character. The use of exclamatory utterances too, such as "How I longed to follow it farther!" and "How I wished sleep would silence her!" conveys vigour and passion in the voice that Brontë creates, shaping Jane's growing desire for change.**²

The change in focus in the narrative voice is also developed through the reflections of Jane's time at Lowood. The character 'recalls' her journey to the school and 'remembers' her arrival there.³ This summing up of her experiences of Lowood through flashbacks, signals to the reader that Jane's time at Lowood is ending and the character's reflections that she has remained unvisited by the Reed family, nor called for during vacations, reinforce the limited horizon she has been restricted to and also manipulate the reader to recognise the passing of eight years. **The time lapse that the narration is taking, therefore, is made apparent and Jane's voice takes on a more mature tone, to signal that the child of the previous chapter has been replaced by an eighteen year old reflecting in frustration that "School rules, school duties, school habits and notions" were, "what I knew of existence".**⁴

1. A03: Genre is considered.

2. A01/A02: Detailed consideration of narrative voice with appropriate textual detail.

3. A01/A02; Exploration of how lexis is used to create narrative voice.

4. A01/A02; Consideration of the significance of syntax in the telling of story.



At the end of the first paragraph in the extract, Jane frames a “humbler supplication” for “change, stimulus” and then her voice is represented in speech as she cries out to be granted “at least a new servitude!” The interruption in the narrative at this point of the school bell, reiterates the intrusion that her school life is now making on her emotional existence and the narrative break allows the reader to feel the frustration of the character herself, as she is unable to consider her own thoughts. **“A new servitude! There is something in that” and the tag ‘I soliloquized’, reminds the reader that what is being shared is an internal thought process, as an aside on stage.**⁵

The motif of imprisonment is a striking feature of the novel as a whole and is a prominent semantic field within this particular extract.⁶ Words such as “boundary”, “prison-ground”, “exile”, “limits”, “horizon” and “remote” connect Jane’s emotional imprisonment to the landscape around Lowood and begin a connection between Jane’s emotions and place which is continued through many of the settings and landscapes of the novel as a whole. As a setting, Lowood symbolises much in Jane’s childhood: a lack of warmth and nurturing and a sense of lovelessness or loss and it hints at the gothic nature of landscapes which will be fully realised through Thornfield. The extract highlights the stark nature of the “rock and heath” surrounding her and reiterates how trapped her childhood has been to her, offering little comfort or care. Similarly, the recollection of “the white road winding round the base of one mountain” foreshadows both the journey she is about to take away from Lowood as well as her eventual flight from Thornfield Hall. **As a character questing for love**⁷ and a place in the world, imagery connected to journeying is of significance.

The final lexical choice of note in the extract is Jane’s repeated use of “servitude”. In her consideration of her position she progresses from desiring “liberty”, “change, stimulus” and settles finally – with reduced aspiration – for servitude.⁸ Whilst Jane appears invigorated in the extract at the thought that she might find the opportunity to “serve”, the implications of imprisonment and obligation suggested by the idea of ‘servitude’ highlight the tragedy of her small existence. Bronte appears to be foreshadowing the on-going search for identity and self that Jane will pursue throughout the novel. Given that many might argue that marriage – particularly to Rochester – may itself represent a kind of trap or servitude, Jane’s aspirations to serve, appear to the reader as incredibly poignant.

Overall comment:

This is a strong response that fluently compares the two texts, and explores their audience and purpose; it makes thorough reference to language features of grammar and lexis and considers contextual factors.

5. Consideration of the use of internal monologue in the construction of the story.

6. A01/A02: Motif and semantic fields are explored in detail.

7. A03: Genre is implied.

8. A01/A02: Close consideration of the significance of lexis in the construction of the story.



QUESTION 2: F SCOTT FITZGERALD: *THE GREAT GATSBY*

Write about the ways in which F Scott Fitzgerald tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- Explore the narrative techniques used in this extract
- Consider the extract in the context of a novel as a whole and its genre

This extract comes at the end of the novel, and therefore, the plot lines are also being concluded: Nick is writing this two years after the death of Gatsby; he has “turned away” from Jordan, reached an understanding of what Tom and Daisy stand for, and is now disillusioned with the values and the people in the East of America, and has decided to move back to the West.¹

By Chapter 9 Nick recognises that the old money that Tom represents is no more meaningful than the new money which bought Gatsby’s house and lifestyle. The contrast is obvious then in comparison with Gatsby’s house in Chapter 3, with its blue gardens. **The lights that blazed like the “World’s Fair” in Chapter 5 are gone, as is the “inexplicable dust” that lay everywhere in Chapter 8, and without Gatsby, the house is truly “empty”. Fitzgerald has used the motif of the house to emphasise this sense of emotional emptiness.²**

Characteristically, the setting here has an analogical and symbolic function. Its analogical function is to show the moment when Nick truly perceives the truth about the superficiality of Gatsby’s persona.³

The first person narration of Nick allows the reader to see his subjectivity. Fitzgerald often seems to point towards the way in which Nick is making sense of things: this is not an objective factual account of events. This is a written account that has been recollected after two years. The words “perhaps” and “probably” in the extract demonstrate this partial understanding. Here, the phrase “perhaps he made a story about it all his own” suggests that any one of the characters could have made a different story from the one that Nick made. **It can be said that this novel is all about how to construct a story, about what to leave out and what to include. The image of the word “scrawled” on the step draws attention to this as Fitzgerald uses the verb “scrawled” to suggest the carelessness and the speed with which the word was written. The image also captures the idea that this novel is all about Nick writing a story of a life. Nick re-creates Gatsby’s life in words, as Gatsby re-creates his own, but we realise that he cannot re-create his past any more than he can repeat it. Significantly, in this image Nick “erases” the word with his shoe. The act of erasure is effortless. As if to emphasise the effortless nature of the words being written and Nick’s eradication of it, the verbs “scrawled” and “sprawled” are linked phonetically.⁴**

1. A03: Establishing paragraph, placing the passage in the context of the novel, and identifying the function of the passage.

2.A02: Analysis of the narrative techniques: identifying patterns and motifs within the novel, and demonstrating a detailed knowledge of the text.

3. A01/A02: Sustained analysis of narrative techniques of setting function, using accurate terminology.

4. A01/A02: Sustained and detailed analysis of the passage, linked fluently to the novel as a whole.



In this section, the focus moves onto one aspect of the history of America. It is clear that Fitzgerald does not adhere to the genre of tragedy at the end of this novel, where a new hero should take over from the one that has died. Instead, he creates almost a moral, instructional tone, or at least a reflective one.⁵ In this time of reflection, the focus moves away from Gatsby's house to a reflection on those settlers who first arrived in America with "wonder" and "dreams". In one of the early drafts of *The Great Gatsby*, this was originally in Chapter 1, but it was decided that the mournful tone would dictate how the reader approached the novel and so it was moved to the final chapter. The tone is predominantly created through two sets of adjectives that contrast with one another. The first set ("closed", "shadowy", "inessential") relate to the world of Nick's disillusion, and the second set relate to the hope that the settlers had ("fresh", "green", "new" "transitory enchanted").

The verb "brooding" also relays to the reader the melancholic nature of Nick's thoughts, and his **unsettled state of mind is reflected in the way that his thoughts unfold in a disjointed, non-chronological way. He moves from the moment he left Gatsby's house, to the time he spend in New York, back to an unspecific time when he heard a car approach, to the last night again, to thoughts on the original settlers, to thoughts about Gatsby, and finally to a reflection on the human condition.**⁶

This moment has been anticipated throughout the novel from Chapter 1, where Gatsby stretches his arms across the dark water, to Chapter 5, where he finally stands with Daisy, looking across the sound at the green light. Fitzgerald, himself, recognised that *The Great Gatsby* was intricately patterned, and the symbol of the green light that represents hope, appears at the start, directly at the centre, and at the close of the novel.

In the final two paragraphs, there is a change. The past tense of Gatsby who "believed" in the green light, moves to the present tense. For the first time in the novel, Fitzgerald uses the first person plural pronoun "we" and it seems as though Nick is addressing the reader directly. The use of the hyphens and the ellipses increase the sense that this is the spoken voice. Perhaps the reader judged Gatsby throughout the novel and found him naïve in his pursuit of a dream, but now Fitzgerald repeats the verb "stretch" and this time it is the reader who is the agent. There is no answer to this endless desire to dream, the unfinished elliptical sentence "And one fine morning –" suggests. However, the verb "beat" connotes hard work, and the adverb "ceaselessly" implies that humankind will endure this forever.⁷

Overall comment:

This is a higher level response that demonstrates an ability to use linguistic and literary concepts and terminology, in what is a coherent and fluently expressed answer. There is detailed analysis of the ways in which the author uses narrative technique, in an exploration of non-linear narrative, the first person narrative voice, and the function of setting, for example. While this answer does not examine the significance of the genre, the passage is placed accurately in the context of the novel as a whole, and its function is clearly explained.

5. A03: Attempt to explain the way in which the text evades the label of the genre of tragedy.

6. A02: Clear exploration of the ways in which the author uses the technique of non-linear narrative - with an explanation of the reason for the author's choice of that technique.

7. A01: Detailed analysis of the language used to tell the story, demonstrating a wide vocabulary and a sound understanding of linguistic concepts and terminology.



QUESTION 3: CHINUA ACHEBE: *THINGS FALL APART*

Write about the ways in which Chinua Achebe tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- Explore the narrative techniques used in this extract
- Consider the extract in the context of a novel as a whole and its genre

Chinua Achebe establishes his narrative early in the novel with an omniscient narrator who appears to tell the story from the perspective of the Umuofia clan. The choice of perspective allows the reader to establish a sympathetic perspective towards Okonkwo and his people. This extract comes very early in the novel and follows Chapter 1, where the history of Okonkwo's unsuccessful father is briefly related, immediately establishing the significance of family and tradition to Okonkwo. Early in Chapter 2, from which this extract comes, therefore, the narrative of Okonkwo's own relation with his first born son, and the introduction of Ikemefuna, (the son he would rather have had), take on additional significance, as it is made clear that Okonkwo does not want to repeat the mistakes of the past.¹

The style of the third person narration is apparent throughout this extract, which establishes that "Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand". The syntax is typical of the novel throughout, as simple and compound sentences predominate.² The nature of this narration is to offer little judgement or assessment within the narrative voice - things are as they are. Thus, when Ikemefuna is "brought... home that day" and that Okonkwo merely "called his most senior wife and handed him over to her", the reader is expected to either know or accept that Okonkwo might have a 'senior' wife, that a husband might command his wife in this way and expect not to be questioned, and that no emotional support might be offered to a young boy brought without explanation from his home to a household of strangers. Achebe either privileges the reader with assumed knowledge or chooses not to take the colonialist perspective that everything non-Western must in some way be 'other', and must, therefore, demand explanation.³

Another notable feature of the narrative voice is that it takes on the tone of the storyteller. Given that storytelling was a significant tradition to the Ibo people, Achebe's deployment of this method seems to create a sense that Okonkwo's story, whilst personal, is also more universal, taking on as it does the symbolism of the struggle between tradition and change that was faced by the African tribes under European colonisation. Told as a story might be told, as allegory, to teach and to educate, Achebe's tale reveals universal truths about colonisation and creates, for the first time, an African perspective, written in English, that could be read by the West and the former European colonisers. The West becomes, therefore, not only implicated in the story but incorporated into it, through the storytelling framework.⁴

1. A01/A02: Narrative voice and perspective is established.

2.A03: The extract is clearly placed in context and its significance to the text as a whole is considered.

3.A01/A02: Close attention to syntax and the construction of narrative voice.

4. A03: Implications of the generic codes employed to tell the story are thoroughly explored.



The extract further tells the story through the juxtaposition of the stories of Okonkwo/Unoka and Nwoye/Ikemefuna. The extract reminds the reader of what they learned in Chapter 1, that Okonkwo will hate “everything that his father loved” and that this included “idleness”. Achebe then reveals that Okonkwo’s first son, Nwoye “was already causing his father great anxiety for his incipient laziness”. It is clear that in Okonkwo’s mind the son and the father are joined. The “heavy hand” at the start of the extract is explained through Okonkwo’s disappointment. A disappointment that will not be necessary for his adoptive son as he finds in Ikemefuna the son he wishes he had. However, in the narrative Ikemefuna is revealed to be “terribly afraid” by his removal to Okonkwo’s village, and understandably so. Okonkwo perhaps has more patience with Ikemefuna because he is not related to his failure as a father and his behaviour will not reflect in the same way on Okonkwo’s own character **The narrative also appears more sympathetic to Ikemefuna’s viewpoint as it briefly presents his own perspective through the free indirect speech that reveals, “He could not understand what was happening to him or what he had done”. The narrative never presents Nwoye’s views.**⁵

Achebe often embeds Ibo lexis into the narrative.⁶ Here, the narrator explains the concept of agbala so that the reader is absolutely clear about the significant implication of the concept of womanhood. However, at times, words such as “ndichie” which Okonkwo uses here to criticise his first wife, are embedded without explanation. This seems to connect with the knowledge conferred on the reader but also implies that Achebe is making an even more significant point about language, comprehension and power. Here, unusual lexis, (palm-wine, kola nut, clan), is interwoven into the English language narrative and supported with the occasional Ibo lexical choices too. This merging of languages may be intended to discomfort the European reader.

Status is also one of the key motifs revealed in Okonkwo’s story and in the narrative. Achebe connects Okonkwo’s status to his power as a warrior and the “fiery temper” that he possesses.⁷ Anger is Okonkwo’s accepted form of communication and so the narrator signals early on in the novel the significance of this emotion to Okonkwo. It is partly because of this temper that he subsequently loses his status within his fatherland. Achebe reveals how status is measured through the “visible” prosperity of his farm and he is careful to connect the yam to this idea as they “stood out prosperously” in Okonkwo’s barn. Umuofia is still very much an agricultural community where status is measured by the success of the crop and the farmer - Okonkwo’s inability to produce a masculine son, therefore, highlights one of the issues that he faces with his own ‘crop’.

Overall comment:

This is a higher level response that explores a range of narrative techniques, effectively employing appropriate terminology to present a detailed analysis of how technique is used to construct story. The response places the extract in the novel as a whole and considers its significance close to the beginning of the text. Interesting comments are made regarding the significance of genre and how the genre of storytelling is used to ‘write back’ or re-present colonial narrative.

5. Juxtaposition and narrative voice are explored in relation to characterisation.

6. A01/A02: Detailed exploration of the significance of lexis in the construction of the story.

7. A01/A02: The use of motif is explored.



QUESTION 4: ARUNDHATI ROY: *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

Write about the ways in which Arundhati Roy tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in this extract
- consider the extract in the context of a novel as a whole and its genre

This moment in the novel is the moment at which Estha is 'returned', a moment which the novel has alluded to on many occasions but only now, as the narrative reaches its denouement, is this event fully revealed to the reader. By this point, the reader has been introduced to Estha's adult self and is aware of the enormous damaging impact that the events of these two weeks has had on him. Estha's being 'returned' comes immediately after the shocking events of the Terror and the terrorising of the small boy himself in being forced by Baby Kochamma to give evidence against Velutha. **The preceding police brutality, throws into sharp relief the terrible loneliness that the little boy feels as he is forced to say goodbye to his mother and twin at the station; an innocent carrying the weight of blame for an appalling crime.**¹

The first way the writer tells the story in this extract is through her use of narrative voice. Estha himself is the main focaliser of the narrative here, with his voice emerging clearly through the description of the train station. "Every First Class train thing was green. The floor green. The chains green. Darkgreen Lightgreen", demonstrates the sentence fragments of thought that the reader recognises as Estha and Rahel's thought patterns and the lexis that they share.²

The playful patterning of the "Darkgreen Lightgreen", reflects patterns that the twins have played with constantly elsewhere in the novel, most significantly for Estha with the 'Orangedrink Lemondrink' man, so the free indirect speech of the male twin is very prominent here. This allows the reader poignant access to the boy's thought processes as he struggles to understand what is happening to him.

The writer's use of direct speech, further allows the reader access to Estha's point of view, while interweaving his mother's voice into the narrative.³ The repeated questioning, "When eggzackly?" and "When Ammu? When will you come?" is used by Roy to reveal Estha's utter incomprehension at what is happening and his simplistic childlike method of rationalising and measuring. The childish process of quantifying in small units of time, with "Month-after-next?" representing the outer limits of future time that he is capable of comprehending.

A further way the narrative techniques represent Estha's childish thought patterns is through the way he plays with words. The horror of the 'Never', which Estha voices but which is taken up by the girl sitting in the carriage with him is unpicked silently in Estha's head, as he works out how the word is constructed: "For Never they just took the O and T out of Not Ever". Just as he and Rahel have played with language all through the text, the language itself, which once held such fascination for him, becomes Estha's jailor. In unpicking the separate words, to their constituent parts, it is as though the meaning detaches from the signifier altogether. For Estha, however much he comprehends 'Never' as a series of graphemes, he cannot connect with the sum total of 'never-ness' that those graphemes signify. He cannot comprehend that he might 'never' see his mother again. And it is a thought which he cannot let go of with Roy using the repetition of 'never' many times over to reiterate the tragic nature of his situation to the reader.⁴

1. A01/A02: Close consideration of the significance of structure to the construction of the story.

2. A01/A02: Close consideration of the construction of narrative voice through syntax and lexis.

3. A01/A02: Exploration of how story is created through a range of narrative constructions including direct speech and syntax.

4. A01/A02: Very detailed exploration of the significance of lexical patterning to create story, with accurate terminology throughout.



Another pattern which Roy employs throughout the narrative of *The God of Small Things* is the capitalisation of words and phrases which belong in the adult world. Their separation from the text in this way reinforces the strangeness which Estha and Rahel feel about adult language. In this extract, the reader sees through Estha's eyes again, that he is being sent somewhere to Jolly Well Behave and the capitalisation of the phrase serves to connect the words together and to signify their significance to Estha. **This phrase also belongs to the language of the English colonisers and as a novel dealing with the Indian experience after partition, separation or discomfort with language is a key idea.**⁵

5. A03: Implied consideration of genre.

While much of the extract is viewed from Estha's point of view, the 3rd person omniscient narrator interrupts Estha's experience at the train station to comment that "It took the twins years to understand Ammu's part in what had happened"⁶ This short section in the extract returns the reader briefly to the 'present' of the narrative, taking them out of past time to reflect obliquely on how this particular event would remain with the twins, and with Estha more specifically, before returning to that past time to record his dialogue with his mother at the station. It is also a reminder to the reader that the novel has still not revealed all of its secrets - the narrative of what actually passed between Ammu and Velutha forms the actual ending of the novel.

6. A01/A02: The range of narrative voices within the extract is considered.

The reminder of Ammu and Velutha's crime in these final scenes is a sharp reminder that this novel of Indian experience reflects the negative experience of the caste system which is the horror at the centre of the novel's story.⁷ For all that Estha can speak English very "nicely", he is still the son of a woman who loved outside of the caste system. His own optimism that Ammu will be in a position to provide him with affordable schooling, "Free bus rides. Free funerals", is naive, given that the spectre of 'The Government', to which he himself alludes moments earlier, dictates a way of living which demands conformity.

7. A01/A02: The significance of structuring in the novel as a whole is considered.

Overall comment:

This is a higher level response that pays very close attention to a number of ways that the narrative is constructed. The construction and significance of Estha's narrative voice is detailed with close reference to textual detail and the significance of structure, lexis and patterning across the novel as a whole, as well as here in this extract is made very clear. Terminology is precise and accurately employed in a fluently expressed discussion. Genre is considered implicitly through the idea of colonial experience.



QUESTION 5: IAN MCEWAN: ATONEMENT

Write about the ways in which Ian McEwan tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in this extract
- consider the extract in the context of a novel as a whole and its genre

This extract, coming early in chapter 1 of the novel, introduces the reader to the character of Briony and outlines how the longed-for performance of her play, *The Trials of Arabella*, goes astray.¹ Briony's cousins have only just arrived and this is the first point in the text where their characters are revealed. This extract also illuminates Briony's vivid imagination and outlines events through her thirteen year old perspective.

The play itself is a significant motif in the novel as a whole, representing as it does the world of fantasy and fiction and connecting, therefore, with the exploration of truth which McEwan is developing through the text.² **The fact that Briony has chosen to write a melodrama**³ is telling as she has a tendency to over-dramatize and over-react. However, the play also acts as a framing device for the novel as a whole because it appears here in the opening of the text in rehearsal but is not actually performed until the denouement of the novel, when it is performed for Briony's birthday. The overly neat happy ending that Briony had given to her play underlines the difference between reality and fiction. **A difference that McEwan manipulates when he tasks Briony at the end of the novel with re-writing history, or reality, by constructing a happy ending for Cecilia and Robbie.**⁴

The play also introduces some of the plot ideas of Briony's novel and suggests the notion of the trials that she eventually puts Robbie through herself. Here, in this extract, Briony takes on the role of playwright and director of the play which is enormously important to the text as a whole. The role she plays in constructing truth or fiction and directing how others' lives are affected in reality or in the narrative construction that she produces to atone for her 'mis-direction', is a direct reflection of her impact as the writer of the play and as the 'writer' of the events that occur to Cecilia and Robbie. **In *Atonement* as a whole, Briony is shown to both re-write reality, through her vivid imagination, and to craft a fictive alternative narrative for her 'characters.'**⁵

This extract is in **third person narration focalised through Briony,**⁶ "avoiding Lola's gaze," as she is nervous about the response to her play. The narrative voice is that of third person but we now know that it is a narrative constructed by Briony's older self to re-present her younger self. The voice demonstrates, therefore a young thirteen year old response, mediated by an adult viewpoint, but it is the thirteen year old voice that predominates here. The reader is allowed to share the power of Briony's disappointment as the narrative develops into **free indirect speech**⁷ The repetition of "But she had said no", and the coordinating conjunction, 'But' here, operates as Briony's childlike voice revealing her inner petulant response which politeness dictates she may not voice. Her childlike horror is then further revealed with the question "Too?" the brevity of which demonstrates her shock. Her response is summed up in the narrative description of "The misery of the inevitable" now "clouding her thoughts".

1. A03: The extract is clearly placed in context; its significance is briefly outlined.

2.A01/A02: Motif is explored in detail and its significance is connected to the text as a whole.

3.A03: Consideration of the generic significance of Briony's play.

4.A01: Considers the overall textual construction – hints at post-modern genre without making explicit.

5. A03: Extract is connected to the broader purpose of the writer in constructing metanarrative.

6. A01/A02: Analysis of narrative technique using appropriate concepts.

7. A01: Appropriate narrative techniques are identified.



Lola is presented from the outset in the language of the text as manipulative and sexualised: a foil to Briony's innocence, although herself only just awakening to the sexual possibilities around her. The detail that "Lola uncrossed her legs" and "smoothed her dress", portrays her as a physically aware girl, who imitates – knowingly or unknowingly - the behaviour of a sexually mature female, in stark contrast to Briony who remains naïve about adult sexual relations. The narrative tells us that Lola speaks "sweetly" to Briony, a modifier which hints at Lola's being aware of seeking influence. The challenge between Briony and Lola is thereafter presented through the metaphor of game-playing with Lola pressing home "her advantage" to secure the role because she has experience of illness and ultimately playing "her final card, the unrefuseable ace". While Lola may well come from a broken home and be potentially vulnerable, the semantic field of game-playing only serves to present her as a young woman very much in charge of the situation and employing advantage over Briony as a result.⁸

The nightmare of thirteen year old Briony's misery is represented through complex imagery and the lexis of "self-annihilating compliance", "vile piquancy" and "branching consequences" suggest language more suited to the older Briony: something that would not be apparent when first reading the novel. This image then appears to merge again with the thirteen year old's immediate experience of disappointment.⁹ Briony constructs an elaborate response to her trauma with "her reasonable response" being to run away. Here, the plot details of eating berries, living under hedges and the character of the "bearded woodsman" slips into the genre of fairy tale.¹⁰

The fairy tale genre that Briony's narrative constructs also acts to foreshadow the disappearance of the twins in Part 1, a disappearance which becomes a key catalyst within the plot as all the adults head out into the dark cover of the night to search for them, leading as this does to the rape of Lola and accusation of Robbie.¹¹ Foreshadowing is also employed by McEwan to hint at the "point before the destruction began". In this extract, Briony desires to go back and re-imagine how she lost control of the play, but the narration here reminds us too of the 'branching consequences' of her actions in the novel as a whole and the destruction she eventually causes Robbie and her sister.

Overall comment:

This is a higher level response that tackles the complexity of narrative voice within the novel fully. There is a sound sense of McEwan's overall purpose and of the significance of the key ideas presented in this extract to the text as a whole. Whilst this discussion focuses on narrative voice to a large degree, other aspects of narrative construction are considered. The characterisation of Lola is fully explored, consideration of lexis and foreshadowing are sound and the response clearly demonstrates an awareness of generic conventions.

8. A01/A02: Explores lexical choices and imagery to explore how the story is told and how character is created.

9. A01/A02: Discussion of lexis is detailed and appropriate.

10. A03: Apt connection to the significance of generic convention.

11. A01/A02: Analysis of foreshadowing.



QUESTION 6: JHUMPA LAHIRI: *THE NAMESAKE*

Write about the ways in which Jhumpra Lahiri tells the story in this extract.

In your answer you should:

- explore the narrative techniques used in this extract
- consider the extract in the context of a novel as a whole and its genre

This extract is from the centre of the novel, during the period of Gogol's intense relationship with Maxine. This relationship will end after the death of Gogol's father, when he returns to his family, but at this stage in his young adulthood Gogol has distanced himself from his parents; he seems ashamed, almost angry with them. This extract reveals his critical thoughts, and preference for Maxine's life, and the lake house in New Hampshire, which 'appeals to Gogol deeply'.¹

Gogol is now Nikhil, his name being a central concern of the novel, as he struggles to create his identity as an Indian American, born and raised in the USA by Bengali parents. **It is interesting that the narrator still refers to him as 'Gogol', despite his change of name. For the narrator, he is 'Gogol' throughout the novel, and the reader feels this tension between the naming of him, and the fact that Maxine and her parents only know him as Nikhil. He remembers Maxine's response to his 'other name', revealing a discord between them that foreshadows the break up to come.²** This 'essential fact about his life slipping from her mind', as she has no empathy with his suffering. The reader feels shocked by her casual words, 'that's the cutest thing', having witnessed the shame and misery Gogol feels as he grows up with his name.

The setting is used to demonstrate how Maxine and her family are totally at ease in their world, they 'own the moon that floats over the lake, and the sun and the clouds'. The syndetic listing here reflecting their complete sense of ownership and belonging.³ Whereas, Gogol reflects that his parents 'would have felt lonely in this setting, remarking that they were the only Indians'. He doesn't imagine them complaining, just 'remarking'; their sense of not fully belonging is simply part of their lives. Unlike Gogol, they only go on vacation with 'Bengali families' and to visit 'Bengali friends'.

The extract is narrated in the third person, present tense, and focalised entirely through Gogol.⁴ His responses to the new experience of being at the house by the lake are interweaved with his thoughts and memories of his childhood. The house, where 'Anyone could walk in', prompts Gogol's critical comparison with his parents, as 'He thinks of the alarm system now installed in his parents' house.

His lack of empathy, as he 'wonders why they cannot relax about their physical surroundings in the same way' is related to the coming of age genre, as the reader follows Gogol through his life from birth to adulthood. At this central point of the novel Gogol rejects his parents and his past, in an attempt to grow into his own identity.⁵ The extract opens with repetition of 'He grows... ' and 'He grows... ' in the two opening sentences, highlighting the focus on Gogol changing. The present tense gives the extract an immediacy and brings the reader closer to Gogol's subjective experiences.

1. A03: Succinct and accurate placing of the extract in the context of the novel as a whole.

2. A02: Clear focus on narrative point of view and its effect on the reader.

3. A02/A01: Literary and linguistic concepts used accurately to discuss how meanings are shaped.

4. A01: Confident use of literary and linguistic terminology to develop an analysis of how the story is told.

5. A03: Relevant understanding of the generic context to develop the analysis.



The narrative is omniscient, telling us that he feels 'no nostalgia' for the vacations with his family. His memories of these 'disorientating expeditions' to 'places they did not belong' emphasise the parallels and contrasts with Maxine's family's annual return to their house by the lake, and the recurring themes of belonging and alienation. The narrative moves into the past tense as Gogol recalls, 'They had stayed in motels, slept whole families to a single room, swum in pools that could be seen from the road.' These anonymous motel pools provide a revealing contrast to the 'water of this particular lake' which for Maxine 'is an essential part of her'. Maxine speaks 'reverently' of her summers by the lake and the extract ends with Gogol's vision of her 'teaching her children to swim in the lake, leading them with two hands into the water'. The motif of water throughout the extract creates a strong sense of place and belonging.⁶ But it seems significant that Gogol does not appear in his imagined future for Maxine. Lahiri reveals that Maxine's past and her future are estranged from Gogol, but Gogol himself will not come to realise this until after his father's death.

The novel opens with Gogol's mother pregnant in America, trying to recreate the food of her childhood in India. The connection between food and identity is explored throughout the novel, and the semantic field of food in this extract highlights the contrasts between Gogol's former life and his new life with Maxine's family. Gogol reflects that his parents 'would not care to cook with the fresh basil that grows rampant in Gerald's garden or to spend a whole day boiling blueberries for jam.' The modal verb 'would' places his parents in the setting, as Gogol imagines how out of place they would be in the house by the lake. The basil which 'grows rampant' perhaps symbolises a sense of freedom and lack of restraint that his parents do not share.⁷ Gogol recalls 'plastic tubs of aloo dum and cold flattened luchis wrapped in foil, fried the day before'. The preparation and provision of food is a significant ritual for Ashima and her Bengali friends, maintaining their connection with their Indian culture. Food is planned, cooked, and prepared well in advance for feasts and journeys, contrasting with the spontaneous approach to food Gogol experiences with Maxine, Gerald and Lydia.

This extract is significant in that it explores the central concern of Lahiri's post-colonial novel:⁸ the evolving Indian American identity over two generations, and the clashes of culture both within the Ganguli family and with others. By telling this part of the story focalised through Gogol's perspective, the reader understands the challenges of the migrant experience, and feels deeply involved in his coming of age story.

Overall comment:

This response provides a fully developed, critical analysis of ways in which the story is told and meanings are shaped. A range of concepts from integrated linguistic and literary study are applied, using apt terminology. Written expression is fluent, and the discussion is developed with perceptive understanding of the significance of contexts.

6. A02/A01: Well developed critical analysis of how meanings are shaped, supported by secure application of integrated linguistic and literary methods.

7. A02/A01: Sustained analysis of language, supported by application of relevant linguistic and literary concepts.

8. A03: Understanding of the significance of genre.



OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk



For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.

©OCR 2015 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England. Registered office 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.