

**A LEVEL**

Examiners' report

**ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE (EMC)**

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**H474**

For first teaching in 2015

**H474/03 Summer 2022 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper 3 series overview

The Paper 3 component, *Reading as a writer, writing as a reader* is a paper which invites candidates to apply their understanding of narrative construction to a set text, as well as to their own writing. Candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of their developing skills base across the English Language and Literature assessment objectives AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO5.

Successful work in this component is characterised by an understanding of how writers construct narrative: candidates consider how story can be manipulated and the impact this manipulation has on writing and its effects. Narrative is a broad area and is a discrete topic of study different from the integrated stylistic and literary analysis invited for Component 2. The exam board does not produce an exhaustive 'tick list' of narrative elements for study for this component and candidates must have thought carefully about the narrative construction of their chosen set text. Candidates should be ready to write about a very wide range of the choices narrators have made: elements including point of view, structural framing such as beginnings, endings, crisis and resolution, use of symbol, patterning and contrasts, and characterisation are the tools writers use to shape the meanings of their works. In studying how the writer of their set text has shaped meaning, they are also preparing themselves to write as readers, shaping their own short narrative for impact. Many centres are taking a theoretical approach to this study which is an entirely valid approach, however, strong and detailed understanding of the construction of their own set text is almost always more useful knowledge than conceptual frameworks of storytelling.

In Section A, there were candidates who demonstrated a convincing sense of narrative construction and a sharp focus on the aspect of narrative highlighted within their chosen question (AO1). The impact of writers' choices and the significance that these have on the whole text were thoroughly explored with the candidate offering a strong and supported understanding of how these choices conveyed meaning (AO2). Candidates also contextualised the significance of specific choices within the framework of the novel as a whole (AO3) but may have also offered consideration of relevant aspects of genre and social and/or historical context where this illuminated the impact of the narrative construction.

In Section B, there were candidates who made interesting decisions about the storyline prompts offered, to construct writing that was controlled, well-crafted and, above all, engaging (AO5). They went beyond simplistic re-telling or re-ordering of the storyline prompts without ignoring the core plot at the heart of their chosen storyline. They made decisions about aspects of narrative such as perspective, structure, style and patterning and chronology, for example, that re-presented the given story in an original way, demonstrating sound awareness of the impact of the writing (AO2).

There was a general sense that all candidates understood the overall demand of the paper and the very large majority of candidates tackled all three tasks fulsomely.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<p><b>Section A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understood the aspect of narrative foregrounded in their chosen task and shaped a response fully focused on their selected question</li> <li>considered the significance of the choices made within their set text through this narrative lens</li> <li>situated narrative choices within the wider novel as a whole to show strong whole text understanding</li> <li>supported their discussion with apposite and telling textual details which were explored in the light of the selected question</li> <li>used excellent broader contextual knowledge where it illuminated the discussion of narrative.</li> </ul> <p><b>Section B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>viewed the storyline prompt as a whole and responded to the prompt by writing an opening to the implied narrative whole</li> <li>wrote with subtlety and style</li> <li>understood that narrative crafting should be prioritised above descriptive writing</li> <li>allowed the commentary to be led by the writing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Section A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>did not understand the aspect of narrative they had chosen to consider</li> <li>wrote in generalised terms about their novel, downloading learned knowledge that was not focused on the set question</li> <li>struggled to see individual narrative choices as part of a wider web of meaning</li> <li>offered weak textual knowledge and understanding, writing about learned 'set pieces' rather than using the most telling details to support the specific question chosen</li> <li>converted contextual knowledge, particularly regarding genre, to soundbites without using depth of understanding to apply context appropriately.</li> </ul> <p><b>Section B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misunderstood the invitation to write a part of a wider narrative by using only one of the storyline prompt bullet points to craft a narrative that did not connect to or develop the initial storyline inferred</li> <li>employed clichéd horror tropes or focused too closely on genre conventions</li> <li>produced mere description which did not demonstrate manipulation of storytelling</li> <li>allowed the commentary to dictate the writing, employing tick list approaches to narrative content.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Section A invites candidates to consider the significance and impact of a particular aspect of narrative construction in the creation of meaning in their studied set text. Candidates select from two question options.

In this series, candidates almost always understood the narrative focus of this task and offered appropriate consideration of how one particular element of the narrative in their set text operated to shape meaning in the novel as a whole. Candidates usually understood that generic introductory comments were unhelpful. Those candidates who offered concise framing reflecting on the question topic, and the function it plays in the novel as a whole, set up purposeful discussions. Some candidates were able to offer insightful responses to their chosen question which demonstrated impressive exam preparation had been undertaken to really understand the shape and layering of the studied novel.

AO1 achievement was challenging at times for some candidates in this series. Some were unable to shape a cohesive discussion in relation to their chosen topic area, offering instead, list-like essays in which paragraphs dealing with example after example, seemed disconnected from one another. Discussions sometimes lacked 'control' with either lack of planning or proofing decisions leading to disjointed discussions, often with asterisked or inserted additions. These almost invariably detracted from, rather than enhanced the strength of the arguments being made and detracted from AO1 achievement as a result.

AO2 achievement comes from the core focus on textual discussion and the depth with which candidates explore the meanings shaped by narrative decisions. Some candidates take a light touch approach to analysis, offering lots of examples in little depth, whereas more successful responses consider a smaller range of evidence but in greater detail. Developed analysis is critical to moving from Level 4 to Level 5. Cursory discussion that offers simplistic – and at times – pre-rehearsed discussion of the meanings of episodes or character without thinking afresh about these aspects of the novel in relation to the question focus, tend to offer only surface level discussion limiting AO2 achievement.

The necessity to relate their discussions to the wider generic and historic or social considerations that inform their set text is now very clearly understood by almost all candidates for AO3 achievement. Centres clearly teach wide-ranging contextual material and the breadth of evidence, be it the world of the Jazz Age, the roles of women, country house novels, ripostes to *Heart of Darkness* or Gothic conventions, demonstrate good and sometimes excellent understanding of these influences. Candidates can, however, tend to make absolute statements about how these factors condition the behaviour of the characters in their studied novels – and, indeed, of the real-world human behaviours on which they are based. Cultural and social forces in existence at any one time would not, of course, have determined exactly how each individual person behaved and candidates should work towards more subtle readings of character groupings. Not all wealthy people in 1920s New York were living lives of unalloyed pleasure-seeking and hedonism, nor was there a homogeneous tribe of working-class New Yorkers suffering a brutalised, joyless existence.

*The Great Gatsby*, *Things Fall Apart*, *Jane Eyre* and *Atonement* continue to be the favoured texts for this component and there is evidence across all texts of thoughtful engagement and depth of study.

## Assessment for learning



In constructing their responses, candidates may find it helpful to:

- reflect on the question topic before embarking on their response;
- define their understanding of terms or of the question topic, e.g.:
  - what are symbols and/or motifs?
  - what are the most significant symbols/motifs to this novel – and why?
  - what is meant by 'setting the narrative in motion'?
  - what are the parameters of the 'opening of the novel'?
- consider how this aspect of narrative may function in shaping the themes and ideas in their novel;
- determine which areas/aspects of the novel are going to be the most helpful in then exploring this question topic;
- use this framing to shape an overarching approach to the question topic which will create a cohesive argument.

## Question 1

### Section A – Reading as a writer

- 1 In what ways does the opening of the novel set the narrative in motion?

You should range across the text to explore how features such as character, setting and viewpoint are introduced during the early stages of the novel, the function the opening plays in the novel as a whole, and the broader generic context.

[32]

A number of candidates opted for Question 1, although it was the less popular question option in Section A. The framing of openings as 'setting the narrative in motion' was an invitation to consider the early developments of the novel and how these prompt, shape and reflect the events that follow. Examiners were alert to the broad ways candidates delineated 'opening': some candidates restricted themselves to an opening chapter but all 'early aspects' were deemed acceptable material where the spirit of the question was clearly in focus.

The question wording is always designed to guide candidates. Here, the follow-up instruction clearly guided candidates to consideration of the function of the novel *opening* – however broadly considered. However, there were some candidates who did not understand the implication of 'things being started' or stimulated to action. Some wrote about favoured or pre-prepared aspects of the novel across its chronology paying little attention to the question focus. Others made generic claims for all plot action as setting the narrative in motion in some way. Examiners were sympathetic where there was a sense of the novel *opening* as being significant to meaning creation, even where responses diverted to broader consideration of the novel. Indeed, it was important to relate the opening to the wider text to anchor its significance. However, in misunderstanding the question set, these responses demonstrated a fundamental lack of understanding of one of the core elements of narrative structuring, inevitably limiting AO1 and AO2 achievement.

Candidates offering *Jane Eyre* as their set text often dealt nimbly with Jane's early life at Gateshead Hall, understanding how the emotional life of the character is shaped by her early miseries and conflicts. Many were attracted to a Gothic reading of the Red Room sequence, although this was not always securely situated in terms of what it sets up later in the novel: generic understanding is helpful where it informs the wider project of the novel. Some candidates lean towards Gothic feature spotting in this text which does not help frame a discussion of narrative construction. While Jane's relationship with the Reeds offers much of interest in terms of its shaping of Jane's character and later behaviour, candidates did not need to limit themselves to Gateshead and many offered useful commentary on the shaping of Jane's spiritual life, the role models she finds at Lowood and the class divisions which inform much of the novel. It is the case for all set texts on this component that candidates should guard against converting learned context into 'gobbets'. Almost without exception, candidates can cite the bildungsroman genre in their discussion of *Jane Eyre* but fewer candidates engage thoughtfully with the implications of the educative nature of the work nor, as here in the opening, how Jane's lost childhood informs and shapes the transformation she undergoes. Terms that are merely dropped into the essay but that do not reveal depth of understanding are not especially useful.

*The Great Gatsby* remains the most popular option for this component and this question proved popular for many studying this text. Candidates were ready to discuss the introduction of Nick's narration as being of significance to the reader's overall engagement with the eponymous character and more successful responses were able to link Nick's own heritage with the wider exploration Fitzgerald is making in the novel of the lost generation. There are many subtle details in this opening and those who knew their text well to select and unpick telling detail fared better than those who made sweeping statements about Nick's own journeying between Midwest and East and his relationship to Daisy. Some candidates also picked up on the moral intonation inferred in the novel's opening which, in turn, sets in motion Fitzgerald's portrait of the 'careless'. These candidates were also able to voice the manipulation of the reader response to *Gatsby* very effectively. Some candidates leapt somewhat swiftly to download what they knew about Nick and intradiegetic narration without always shaping this knowledge to the question: how is this opening introduction to Nick's character significant to the wider concerns and later developments of the novel?

Many candidates shaped their response around Nick, the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg and the first sight we glimpse of *Gatsby* reaching towards Daisy's dock. The latter of these were usually clearly understood as setting up the desires of the novel alongside the inevitable disappointments which Fitzgerald goes on to explore.

Question 1 was also a popular option for many candidates studying *Things Fall Apart*. Candidates were readily able to consider the driving factors behind Okonkwo's behaviour, both in terms of his surprising father, as well as the expectations of Igbo culture. The significance of Okonkwo's celebrity, his wives, the importance of his yams were often considered too, in relation to Achebe's construction of Okonkwo as a flawed hero doomed to self-destruct. Context can be well-handled by candidates studying this text and many saw Achebe's portrayal of Igbo culture as presenting individualised characters operating within social structures, albeit fragile and divided ones. Some candidates limited themselves to a handling of Okonkwo's early presentation while others also considered the introduction to Ikemefuna.

Candidates studying *Atonement* often read McEwan's discrete sections as a guide to determining the scope of the novel's opening. Those candidates who attempted to cover the whole of Section One in their response did not demonstrate good selection of material and were hampered by having to deal with an unmanageable collection of evidence for discussion. More successful responses were those where candidates narrowed their scope to Briony's characterisation and the early construction of her inner world, the introduction of her role as writer – and therefore the thematic concerns of fictionality – the play and its broader significance, and key elements such as the construction of class difference and family relationships.



## Question 2

### 2 In what ways does the writer of your text use symbols and motifs?

You should range across the text to explore how symbols and motifs are used, the function they play in the novel as a whole, and the broader generic context.

[32]

Question 2 was a popular choice irrespective of set text studied. Again, attention to the full framing in the question guided candidates to consider the use and function of symbol and motif across the novel as a whole. A surprising number of candidates struggled to frame a meaningful definition of symbol and motif and many candidates wrote in very generalised terms about entities standing for other entities in a loose understanding of symbolism. Had candidates been able to frame an understanding of the significance of motif to the patterning of their novel or of the significance of symbols which punctuate or reinforce the fictional world of those patterns, they may have marshalled stronger arguments.

Candidates studying *Jane Eyre* saw the recurrence of the motif of fire as significant to Jane's overall journey. Many handled the opposing ice – of the Reeds, of Rochester – alongside that and some candidates were able to use just this pairing to frame a detailed response full of examples to track their significance. The chestnut tree and the red room were similarly popular for consideration.

*The Great Gatsby* saw the very large majority of candidates consider the enormous significance of the green light and the layered meanings presented in the novel for this motif. These discussions often also explored colour more broadly with many candidates offering thoughtful consideration of green, white and yellow or gold. Settings such as the Valley of Ashes and East or West Egg were similarly popular, although the strongest candidates dealt with these in relation to the question as opposed to forming part of an essay on settings that had been diverted and re-worked. The eyes of TJ Eckleburg were as frequently selected as the green light by candidates. Other frequently cited examples for discussion were parties, alcohol, cars and poor driving and developing technology. The strong patterning in the novel lends itself to a question of this type, however, not all candidates were able to tie the threads between each example together. Those that did were also more readily able to consider these frequently studied aspects of the novel afresh in the light of the actual question posed.

*Things Fall Apart* was less well represented in Question 2 with candidates often preferring to tackle Question 1. However, the fire imagery present in 'Roaring Flame', the fables used by Umuofians, the yams and the locusts, both real and in missionary form, were strong candidates for discussion and most frequently selected by the candidature. As for *Things Fall Apart*, candidates offering *Atonement* also preferred the Question 1 option on balance. These responses mostly focused around 'The Trials of Arabella' and Uncle Clem's Vase.

As has been stated earlier, candidates can fall into list-like essays and this was especially the case for Question 2 where each new paragraph heralded 'another symbol...' for discussion. The guidance offered earlier to help candidates plan and frame their discussion would help enormously here: considering their response as a cohesive argument, as opposed to a list of examples, would lift the achievement of many. Candidates will produce more successful responses by linking paragraphs and ideas and developing analysis of the key significances behind writers' choices more thoroughly.

## Exemplar 1

A	2	<p>In F Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novella, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>, symbols and motifs are repeatedly used/ utilised in a manner that both reflects the growing <del>of</del> presence of iconography in the time of writing and to assist the, sometimes unreliable or vague, plotpoints in conveying Fitzgerald's commentary on 1920s America.</p>
		<p>Likely the most well known symbol from <del>the</del> the novella is the "single green light" at the end of Daisy Buchanan's dock. This symbol holds key significance for the character of Gatsby and as it reflects his <del>thru</del> his love for Daisy in spite of how "minute and far away she is" following the first world war and the technological boom seen during</p>

the turn of the century, atheism in America was on the rise and Fitzgerald was concerned by people's decision to worship capitalism or the American dream instead. The green light is a perfect symbol of to represent this worship and use of iconography which Fitzgerald, coming from a protestant background would consider immoral or distasteful. \*Narrator Nick Carraway's reference to the green light as a "enchanted object" further emphasises its position representing something more powerful or spiritual than what it is. The green light Fitzgerald's decision to make Gatsby's "enchanted object" a "green light on a deck" is significant. The lamp which produces the light would have been powered by electricity or gas. Both of these products are great created through the growing industry that is responsible for the mountains of "gray dust" in the "valley of ashes". The colour "green" is also the colour associated with wealth particularly in America. Whilst this is a symbol of love the decision to stray away from traditionally romantic imagery such as red roses and hints at

Fitzgerald's commentary on the upper class and the idea that Gatsby may be more infatuated by Daisy's wealthy capitalistic lifestyle than her as a person.

The unnatural green of the light is one of the key indicators of this symbol and, in fact, the motif of colour is used throughout the novella to convey multiple important ideas. The green of Daisy's ~~fit~~ ~~The use of two significant colours~~ ~~to reflect the two~~ Fitzgerald uses two significant colours to reflect the old money and new money upper classes. The blue of Tom's car is ~~pair~~ paired with Daisy's hair which "lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek" to reflect old money drawing connotations for readers of the idea of blue blood. This is one of the reasons why "the eyes of T. J. Eckleburg" which are "blue and ~~ominous~~ <sup>gigantic</sup>" ~~is~~ is so significant as a symbol. Although they have "dimmed a little ~~was~~ by many painless days" (and thus less visible in the world of the American dream) the old money blue is still situated <sup>watching</sup> over the people living in the Valley of Ashes.

~~The~~ The capitalistic symbol of a billboard and the "enormous yellow spectacles" link this symbol to the new money upper class as well. The more traditional associated of gold with the wealth helps to indicate how the use of yellow by new money characters is more of a performance and as it plays into clichés, and allows Fitzgerald to subvert reader ideas about wealth. Gatsby's yellow car signifies him as new money whilst the green seats (a cool colour made by combining yellow and blue) symbolises his attempts to cross over into the old money society. This is emphasised with Gatsby wearing a pink suit (a colour seen in the "wine-coloured rugs" and "pink clouds" of the old money Buchanan residence) on the day where he pushes this transformation too far. Tom's expletive exclamatory remark "like hell he is!" followed by his simple declarative "he wears a pink suit" emphasises this as an outrageous move and a motif that readers should pay attention to.

Gatsby's "nice yellow" car is also in a colour associated with death. The "yellow" car hits Myrtle coming out of her "yellow" house whilst being driven by Daisy who wears "yellow" buttons. Fitzgerald does this to subvert the reader's view of a colour associated with wealth but also an item associated with wealth; the car. In chapter 3 a car is destroyed when it runs into a wall after Gatsby's driving. Author and critic John Green referred to this car motif in *The Great Gatsby* as the characters wanting "enough money to buy cars and enough alcohol to crash them". The motif of possession and destruction occurs throughout the novella which Gatsby is throwing around his "beautiful shirts", Tom breaking his mistress's nose in <sup>her</sup> the apartment <sup>which</sup> he owns, and the second car crash where Myrtle is killed. It is even present in Gatsby and Daisy's love story where Gatsby wants to possess Daisy and then destroy her current life ("she's leaving you", "I'll bring you never loved him"). In the initial car crash scene the use of simple sentences and colloquial phrases such as

		<p>"the wheel's off" suggest a lack of care given by the characters to the destruction of the car. <del>The</del> Fitzgerald's use of elision<sup>and ellipsis</sup> ("wonder if tell me where there's a gasline station") reflects sturred speech creating both an unflattering view of the upper classes and emphasizes the destructive power of alcho alcohol</p>
		<p>Fitzgerald's use of symbols allows him to convey the themes of his novella clearly whilst maintaining the naivety of Nick Carraway's narrative voice and not stating them in clear language. This adds to the air of mystery that surrounds the book as a whole as readers must pay close attention to deduce the social commentary.</p>

This exemplar considers the use of symbols and motifs in *The Great Gatsby* – by far the most popular question option and text choice on this paper. The candidate weaves subtle contextual knowledge into their discussion. Symbols and motifs are dealt with thoughtfully and intelligently – the selection of the green light to represent love, as opposed to red roses, shows the candidate thinking afresh in the exam room about the question posed and the significance of the writer's choices on meaning.

Selection of material is strong. Many candidates demonstrate lacking textual knowledge in their evidence and yet, here, the observational level with which the candidate has selected the comment about the 'dash of blue paint' shows how well the candidate had prepared. Candidates must not rely on the open book nature of this exam to replace thorough textual knowledge – indeed, many are hindered by the opportunity to select quotations almost at random. This essay is rich in telling evidence which is thoughtfully explored.

The candidate offers a cohesive discussion. The interrelationship between symbols and motifs serves an argument that explores Fitzgerald's overarching project. This response received a mark in Level 6.

## Exemplar 2

2	A	<p>Charlotte Brontë uses the motifs of fire and ice to present respectively the conflict between passion and judgment. She also explores the use of the moon <del>and other parts of</del> and other parts of nature as well as the chestnut tree in the garden at Thornfield.</p> <p>The concept of fire and ice are first <del>introduced</del> explored extensively when Jane is a <del>young</del> student at Lowood School. The <del>words</del> 'contents of the ovens' are turned 'to ice' and contrasting to this the older girls gather round the 'heat of a blazing fire'. One interpretation of this is that at Lowood, girls are taught passive restraint and to control their feelings. This would have been typical of a Victorian <del>for</del> girls education where they were taught to control their feelings and become 'civilised'. They are then, in the process - 'turned to ice'. Another interpretation of the contrast between the ice and the fire <del>is</del> is an allusion to the girls' sexuality. The fact that the older girls are gathered closer to the fire represents that they are closer to maturity and becoming women. The symbolic link of ice and fire remain important throughout the novel and as Jane moves to Thornfield they become a distinct symbol of <del>the</del> judgment and feeling. Rochester and Jane meet over ice and it is significant that when she returns home there <del>are</del> <del>is</del> is a 'genial fire'. The word 'genial' connotes meanings of pleasant satisfaction and the reader can understand that a <del>the</del> pleasant fire of love has been set alight in Jane's heart. Fire, however, also gets out of control <del>is</del> at Thornfield and Bertha, who is a pyromaniac, is the instigator. This obsession with fire represents a raging passion and a lack of judgement in Bertha. This would have been a typical view at the time that lunatics were unable to think logically at all and their ailments were little understood - this is why Bertha is locked</p>
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		<p>up, interestingly at the end of the novel fire completely consumes Bertha, leaving Rochester open to Jane's love. This is interesting as Brontë <del>rep</del> presents their marriage being realised as a result of passion burning out of control. Perhaps she is indicating to the reader that Rochester had to be scarred by <del>breaking</del> his passion to enable him to overcome it and temper it.</p>
		<p>The constant war between ice and fire - first seen in Rochester (fire) vs Jane (ice) and then seen in St John (ice) &amp; vs Jane (fire) can be seen as a message that judgment and passion must be balanced. Indeed, structurally, <del>Jane spends</del> the novel is a rights of passage in which at every stage, Jane is trying to reach a balance between the fire in her and the ice needed to control that fire. Therefore, the motifs of ice and fire are central to the development <del>and</del> of Jane and her finding her own identity.</p>
		<p>Another less obvious symbol is the moon. The moon is seen <del>as</del> producing a 'white human form' which tells Jane to 'flee temptation' after Mrs Rochester has been revealed. The 'planet' and the 'milky way' are given a religious bearing in Chapter 28. The elements of nature are called upon to serve Jane as her moral counsellors and guide. Using the sublime elements of nature and linking them to a religious experience was a Romantic <del>is</del> feature in the 19<sup>th</sup> C, developed because the sublime could not be <del>experienced</del>, understood <del>as</del> on nature thought processes. <del>The</del> Nature provides Jane <del>with</del> to communicate with the supernatural and they are developed into a symbol of God's commands. <del>It</del> It is striking for the reader, that in the chapter where Mason is attacked by Mrs Rochester, there is a full moon. Contextually, this links the belief of the lunar <del>calendar</del> calendar with lunatic, of which Bertha is</p>

	<p>identified as. However the moon also is here as a reminder by Brontë that all actions are seen by God and the judgement of <del>at</del> Rochester's planned bigamy would not be tolerated. Bigamy in the 19thC was <del>as</del> a <del>big deal</del> as a woman became the property of her husband and therefore bigamy could destroy a wife's reputation. Therefore, by <del>presenting</del> <sup>symbolising</sup> the moon and other sublime elements of nature <del>as</del> as Jane's moral compass and guide, the reader can see that Jane is not alone and that what she maps she will sow.</p>
	<p>Another key symbol in <del>of</del> Jane Eyre is the Chestnut tree. It <del>we</del> provides the connection between <del>at</del> Rochester and Thornfield and also foreshadows good and bad events. The fact that it is 'struck by lightning ... and half of it split away' is an obvious bad omen <del>at</del> <del>us</del> and preshadows how Jane will have to split from Rochester. The starkness of that image is intensified because it ends a chapter and the reader is affected by the abrupt <del>ending</del> <del>finishing</del> to a romantic scene. The tree is scorched and this prefigures how Rochester will be scorched, however the roots are still connected at the base and from this the reader can suspect that Jane and Rochester's story has not ended and that finally <del>of</del> <del>the</del> fortune will bring them together again, obstructed by no legal impediments.</p>
	<p>To conclude, Brontë uses the motifs of fire and ice to represent the conflict between passion and judgement, as well as using sublime elements of nature to symbolise the presence of God and to guide Jane. The Chestnut tree is also symbolic of Rochester and Jane's relationship.</p>

This exemplar considers the use of symbols and motifs in *Jane Eyre*. The introduction is brief and doesn't really set up the essay beyond detailing which concepts are to be discussed. The candidate helpfully identifies that the motifs of fire and ice present the conflict between passion and judgement and could have outlined more fully what the significance of these are to the novel as a whole and how fire and ice therefore contribute more broadly to the construction of the novel. As stated elsewhere in this report, many candidates struggled to shape a purposeful introduction to this question.

Throughout, the analysis is developed, going beyond Level 4 into Level 5 discussion of narrative. There are places where the discussion leaves gaps for further insight – the gathering maturity of the girls at Lowood, for example, is commented on but not developed in relation to the significance of growth and maturity in the novel as a whole. But there is always a sense of alternative interpretations and tentative claims are made.

The candidate also deals with the significance of the chestnut tree, although this feels somewhat tacked onto the end of the essay but the consideration of the moon is thoughtful and demonstrates the value of strong textual knowledge where the candidate has been able to select precisely from their text to illustrate points that are well made.

This response received a high Level 5 mark.

## Section B overview

Question 3 invites candidates to exploit their learning about narrative construction by producing a short piece of original writing. Candidates are given the bare outline of a complete or partial story arc and are invited to craft a short section of prose narrative of this particular story arc. In doing so, they should demonstrate their understanding of narrative construction through the interesting choices they make regarding elements such as point of view, style, narrative structure, time and place, patterns and contrasts and characterisation. Question 4 requires candidates to reflect on the effect of the choices they have made in their writing piece and comment on meaning creation.

## Question 3

### Section B – Writing as a reader

3 Choose **one** of the storylines below to develop as the opening of a narrative.

Write your narrative, making your own choices and the story's starting point and linguistic techniques. You are writing the **opening** to a narrative, and can use any one of the bullet points as the beginning of your story. You are not expected to write the full story and you are not required to use all six bullet points.

You should write approximately 500 words.

[18]

**Either**

#### Storyline 1

- The dinghy beached at low-tide.
- English summer days are long, so we knew we had plenty of time to get ashore, including all the children.
- Fifteen of us got out, splashing on the shingle.
- As I had suspected, the Coastguard were waiting: three burly figures in high-viz jackets.
- I had come a long way, parted with a lot of money, and spoke very good English.
- I was ready with my answer when one of them asked me, 'What are you doing in England?'

**Or**

#### Storyline 2

- All day long the old woman struggles with her house and the objects in it.
- The doors will not shut.
- The plaster walls dampen with rain.
- She finds dead insects everywhere.
- In desperation she exhausts herself sweeping, dusting, mending.
- At night she sinks into bed. The house has a life of its own.

[Lydia Davis, *Collected Stories* (2011), p. 709, abridged.]

In Question 3, few candidates are unable to lift their writing beyond Level 2 achievement with many offering impressive responses given the constraints of producing creative writing in timed conditions.

Question 3 invites candidates to engage with the inferred storyline in their chosen prompt. Many candidates, however, veered off the given narrative, after using one or two prompts – and some diverted very widely indeed. There is clearly some degree of flexibility in terms of the story that individuals see reflected in the overall prompt, but examiners are alert to candidates who choose to ignore or sideline the prompt given, because this necessarily limits the manipulation of *this narrative*. And it is that which is credited in this exam for AO5.

There is no expectation that candidates should write a complete story in 500 words in the given time, but the invitation in the question wording to produce a partial narrative is not an invitation to ignore the storyline prompt and construct an entirely different story using one bullet point, one phrase or one word from the given storyline. Candidates who ignore the prompts entirely cannot be lifted above Level 2 achievement however strong the writing may be independently from the task, because the writing does not sufficiently represent manipulation and crafting of the given prompt. This is an area that has been addressed in previous examiner reports and it is important that centres encourage candidates to understand this requirement.

Some candidates offered pieces which may have been written and polished before being squeezed into the chosen storyline prompt. This is an unhelpful route to AO5 achievement and such pieces are almost always self-penalising because of the weak and forced way they address the given narrative. Similarly unhelpful was the artificial use of techniques to gain credit: writing should cohere and be driven by the narrative process, not the need to list techniques employed in a follow-up commentary. Some use of vocabulary was studied and wordy, further leading to a sense of artificiality.

More successful responses were natural in tone, had a clear and purposeful direction, with a distinctive voice. It is probably a good rule to write a piece from the heart, rather than the ticklist – or where feasible and the prompt allows, to write from personal experience. Micro-observation, delineation of identifiable and everyday experience, wry humour, kindness and sensitivity are qualities that are much more desirable in life – and in student writing – than manufactured conflict and aggression. Often, the most successful writing seen by examiners is that which handles humour and humanity in a knowing way. Horror tropes and conventions are popular beyond their use for this task and are generally to be avoided. Candidates should be wary of too much genre-convention writing – this approach can often be at odds with rich character development, unexpected turns of event, subtlety or creative thinking.

Planning would help candidates to shape a response to the given storyline and maintain adherence to the prompts. Few writers are able to shape narrative without considering the shape of the plot – even where only a story fragment is required. While it does not detract from narrative construction, poor spelling does betray a lack of experience with the printed text. Candidates often consider sentence construction and variety – less secure is their use of paragraphing. Control of whole text structuring is a vital element to this task and lack of paragraphing is necessarily limiting to achievement.

What many candidates did not understand in this series was that long, atmospheric description does not contribute significantly to AO5 achievement where narrative crafting is foregrounded in the task. The objective is to move a story along for those 500 words available. Many candidates rely on retrospective elements and foreshadowing, as well as cyclical structures to do this for them: such complex structures are challenging to achieve in a short composition, especially where such structuring is worked on artificially at the expense of a good plot.

**Storyline 1**

This was clearly an immigration prompt. Examiners were alert to the different ways this narrative could be shaped and recognised creativity where it was evident. Many candidates wrote movingly in response to this prompt, showing sensitivity and depth of thought. The current world climate informed many of the backstories that were created with Ukraine and the Calais jungle featuring frequently in candidates' imagined worlds. There was clearly a general political feeling in these answers of sympathy and understanding for the stateless.

Those candidates who were able to go beyond descriptions of a sea journey to plot either the past worlds of their characters – often in war-torn home countries – or to infer their future beyond the high vis jackets did better, as did those who actually gave life to the jacketed men and who dared to imagine the moments beyond the question posed in the storyline prompt. Many entered imaginatively into the feeling of being cold, wet and frightened. Candidates should remember that merely re-presenting the narrative of the prompts themselves is limiting as it does not demonstrate manipulation of story. There does need to be a sense of the story that these prompts infer.

**Storyline 2**

This storyline was much more popular. Successful responses to this prompt thought imaginatively about the world of the woman, the reasoning behind her circumstances and there were one or two creative responses which handled obsessive compulsive behaviour and dementia. The most successful responses on this prompt came from those who stayed closest to reality and sincere emotion.

This prompt, however, saw a lot of weak writing, much of which was dominated by Gothic and/or horror tropes. Some went too far into gruesome details which are rarely well-handled and can be tasteless. Such writing should be avoided. A lot of this writing also relied too heavily on description as opposed to narrative construction. Candidates struggle to avoid stereotyping around age and the elderly and would do well rehearsing what is and is not cliché around this, as well as other social concerns. There is also still a trend to reinscribe women as the other, as the downtrodden and – often – as subjected to cruel, controlling husbands who frequently return to haunt them.

There were attempts to write from different perspectives for this storyline – neighbours and weary families appeared often and sometimes usefully. Less helpful were those candidates who wrote from the perspective of the spiders or of the house, as these tended to feel artificial and were limiting in terms of the backstory that could be created.

## Erratum notice

Turn to **page 4** of the **question paper** and look at **question 3**.

Go to the **first** sentence of the **second** paragraph.

After the word 'choices' cross out the word 'and' and insert the word 'about'.

The first sentence of the second paragraph should now read:

Write your narrative, making your own choices about the story's starting point and linguistic techniques.

## Question 4

4 Outline the key narrative and linguistic techniques you have used in your writing for Question 3.

You should write approximately 250 words.

[14]

Examiners were greatly pleased to see that candidates are now recognising the value of the 14 marks available for this task. While there are still some who offer brief and undeveloped short paragraphs, many candidates this series really showed their understanding of the connection between this task and Section A. The best commentaries are reflective on the processes of producing the original writing and many candidates wrote sensitively on the effects of their writing. There was a strong sense that many candidates had understood not to merely list features they had used.

Commentaries should follow the narrative rather than drive it. It can be tempting to decide on what effects are going to be discussed in the commentary ahead of writing the narrative and some candidates list techniques in rough planning at the start of their response to Question 3. But this approach can only ever feel artificial and restrictive in terms of the creative process of narrative production. Merely including pathetic fallacy and onomatopoeia because they appear on a list of techniques makes writing insincere and leads to commentaries which are formulaic and unconvincing. It is impossible to convince an examiner of the value in a feature of the writing if it was inserted as part of a box-ticking exercise.

Less successful commentaries often make claims which are not supported by the writing evidence and which offer rehearsed claims regarding language features, i.e. pathetic fallacy always creates a moody atmosphere; first person narrative always reveals a character's mindset. Commentaries are necessarily limited by the quality of the writing in Question 3: examiners mark both pieces separately and always award a mark to Question 3 before marking the accompanying commentary. But where the writing has been constructed through a 'painting-by-numbers' methodology, the commentary cannot offer persuasive claims.



Exemplar 3

B 3	①	Storyline ①
		<p>I remember that night, like yesterday even though it's been years since. My head resting on the tough plastic hide of a bursting <del>off</del> inflatable dinghy. I heard the terse whisper of caution, the low, melodious rush in the wind and the dip, dip, dip of the oars. <sup>The oars,</sup> <del>they</del> they kept rhythm to a beating heart, <del>XIS</del> beating hearts - full of hope and full of dread. <del>They were surprised they were still beating!</del></p>
66		<p>To be honest I was surprised they were still beating! It was only <del>years</del> a week ago that mother had wrenched me, screaming, to the ground, as the thud and whistle of bullet skimmed, snakily, screeching through the air above <sup>us</sup> <del>us</del>. Most kids would n't have heard the sound of a machine gun. The rather tat tat tat - kept rhythm to a pounding heart, a nation of pounding hearts - full of hope, full of <del>despair</del> despair.</p>
72		<p><del>But</del> I have a newspaper <sup>cutting</sup> next to <sup>me</sup> <del>be</del>. <del>Its</del> <sup>the</sup> headline reads 'what are you doing in England?' <sup>I smile and search for answers in my head.</sup> <del>But all I can see is an image, <del>clearly</del></del></p>
		<p>An image that I saw that night, leaning back. A arch of black, with speers of grey and white and working up in lighter hues to nature's white disc, glowing through the gloom, the moon. And lulled by gentle rocking back and forth, my head <del>rest</del> &amp; turned sideways and took my breath away. The black and blue expanse of waves, called ocean. Fragments of white foam, <del>and</del> dissolved <del>and</del> dissolved again, like the constant <sup>ly</sup> <del>of</del> of breath - like life, <del>like</del> like England!</p>
rep		

	<p>Mother had told me that England was life. I remember. We were sitting underneath a broken iron roof, I clutched a dirtied, browned blanket, shivered until mothers arm came around my frame and pulled me close. She talked of hope, &amp; of blue skies undimmed by smoke and soot and a bird which sang <del>unaccompanied</del> <del>by the sea</del> unaccompanied by <del>the sea</del> <del>repeating</del> <del>footsteps</del> and scattered screams of panic. It was all <del>impressive</del> <del>to</del> impressive to my mazed mind but incomprehensible - all I knew was that England was hope and England was life.</p>
	<p>And still that ocean went on, <del>and</del> <del>the</del> <del>ocean</del> <del>kept</del> <del>on</del> <del>and</del> <del>on</del> <del>and</del> <del>on</del> I wondered temporarily how many <sup>cups</sup> <del>beakers</del> it would take to empty. Whether when one cup emptied another one would fill, or whether if I was there for long enough and stuck at the job, I could drain this thing called ocean to a <del>deez</del> <del>sert</del> <del>deat</del>.</p>
	<p>But suddenly we leached, <del>recessed</del> and rolled and stopped. As I snapped from <sup>the</sup> sublime and was pulled from that <del>beating</del> dinghy side I and felt the shingle around my feet, I sense the question coming.</p>
	<p><del>I write and reading the title again.</del></p> <p>Still the newspaper cutting lies there and still the title demands 'what are you doing in England?'</p>
	<p>As I splash up the shingle, 'I am looking for life, I am looking for hope'.</p>

④	B	<p>one of the <del>the</del> and linguistic narrative techniques I have used in my story opening <del>the</del> was.</p> <p>the use and manipulation of time. This is a refugees retrospective story of his/<sup>her</sup> journey to England told years after it happened. the narrative explains the innocent wonder of a child at the expansive beauty of the nature around him/her - somewhat innocent of the danger of the situation. As the narrative switches between the journey and the life in the war torn origin country - the speaker contrasts the expansive and free realm of nature with the cruel and constricting nature of war. I have created an image of a child trying to understand the <del>or</del> measure of the 'ocean' as a symbol of <del>know</del><sup>man</sup> trying to understand the meaning of life. essentially this is arrived <del>at</del> by the question 'what are you doing in England?' and the answer that he/she is looking for 'life' and 'hope' - therefore the meaning of life is true life and that is the beauty of existence.</p> <p>Zooming in closer the first 2 paragraphs have a structure which reflects each other and the use of onomatopoeia in 'dip' and 'tatta tatta' help the reader to contrast the two scenes. This contrast is merge together in the 5th paragraph where the speaker directly compares his hopes with reality. 'scattered screams!' is one example of the use of phonology &amp; sibilance to create a harsh tone.</p> <p>The style also switches from journalistic to figurative to display the mix of emotion and constricting scenes. The similes used 'like the constancy of breath' is abstract and aims to impress the reader with the sublime and incomprehensible <del>with</del> features of nature. Patos is also achieved through the phrase 'most kids' and also through the scene of mother and child emphasising the pity of what a refugee child has to go through.</p>
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This response to the storyline demonstrates how to combine strong descriptive writing with narrative crafting. The writing is controlled and the use of language is at times impressive. There are slight awkwardnesses here – the x15 hearts beating, for example – but candidates do not need to reach perfection to achieve high marks.

What really lifts this piece to Level 6 is the use of the headline which has been taken from the prompt and become the critical voice of tabloid journalism that informs so much of the narrative around immigration in the media. This is thoughtful narrative crafting, which considers the wider story beyond the life of the prompts and crafts something original and impressive. The crafting is light touch and not over-laboured.

The companion commentary is strong but not in the same level as the writing. The opening paragraph sincerely reflects on the narrative and feels like an honest summation of the crafting. The candidate then moves into claims regarding specific features of the writing – these are better-handled than many manage, but comments about the use of the different onomatopoeia creating contrast are not entirely convincing. The reflection on the contrast between journalistic and figurative writing is an interesting angle to attempt. While the candidate was clearly referencing their understanding of journalism about immigration in their writing, their actual piece itself does not reflect a journalistic style. The commentary achieved a mark in Level 5.

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