

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472

For first teaching in 2015

H472/02 Summer 2024 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.

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Paper 2 series overview

H472/02, the Comparative and Contextual Study, is one of the three components which make up OCR's A-Level in English Literature. The examination requires candidates to choose one of five topics, firstly writing a critical appreciation of an unseen passage and secondly responding to a comparative essay question based on two set texts. This is a closed text examination.

Candidates are likely to perform well on the paper if they keep in mind the dominant Assessment Objective for each part: AO2 (the ways in which language, form and structure shape meaning) in the critical appreciation; AO3 (the significance and influence of contexts) in the comparative essay. They should also bear in mind the importance of AO1 throughout the exam, which includes coherent, accurate written expression.

| Candidates who did well on this paper generally: | Candidates who did less well on this paper generally: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> divided their time evenly between the two questions, writing a similar amount on each developed a clear argument written in clearly arranged paragraphs responded to the question with precision, developing a clear understanding of its terms selected critical quotations or approaches sparingly with a careful eye to relevance used contextual material selectively to illuminate literary discussion took time to read the unseen passage with care, ensuring they understood the whole text and engaged with it imaginatively chose two texts as the chief concern of their comparative essay, comparing them thoughtfully and referencing other texts more briefly as context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wrote up to twice as much on the comparative essay as on the unseen offered a large amount of material without providing a very clear route through it wrote down a large amount of material without properly considering its relevance included a large number of very brief critical quotations without concern as to relevance prioritised contextual material at the expense of literary discussion read the unseen passage quickly and started writing without fully understanding or appreciating it wrote about many of the set texts in a series of disjointed paragraphs, providing a wide range of material but missing opportunities for detailed and developed comparison. |

Examiners were generally impressed with the knowledge and engagement of candidates this year. Detailed knowledge of texts was especially encouraging to see and there was evidence of an enthusiasm for reading especially among some students of the Dystopia topic who were able to reference a range of novels from outside the specification (as long as such references were apt and did not develop to an unreasonable length, they formed a valuable part of the dystopian context). Increasingly, stronger candidates were responding to the interesting and unusual qualities of the unseen passages, not just trying to establish ways in which they are characteristic of their genre. Many scripts were well presented and written to a sensible length; there were still too many, however, which were overlong and chaotic and/or illegible in terms of presentation. Examiners were interested to see answers on most of the new texts for the paper which are now being examined, and for which support material is available on the Teach Cambridge website.

New texts for H472/02 now being examined

American Literature 1880-1940: Nella Larsen, *Passing*

The Gothic: Daphne Du Maurier, *Rebecca*

Dystopia: Octavia E Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

Women in Literature: Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other*

The Immigrant Experience: Samuel Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

The unseen passages proved to be accessible to most candidates this session. As always, the key to success in these questions was to prioritise analysis of AO2 effects in the passage and to address the AO3 requirement without allowing contextual material to dominate the answer. The best answers noticeably engaged with the passages at an imaginative level and analysed their most striking qualities, aiming to discuss what made them stand out in literary terms. To do this, careful preliminary reading was essential, and some candidates, maybe through nerves, missed out this step and rushed into writing. The result was in some cases that the passage tended to be overlooked in the answer in favour of prepared contextual material. In other cases, key elements of the passages were omitted, especially those occurring near the end: for example, the horrific drawing in the Gothic passage was sometimes entirely missed out of answers, and Janey's emotional response at the end of the Women in Literature passage was sometimes underplayed. Some candidates used frequent quotation to demonstrate that they were engaging with the passage, but quotations on their own cannot receive credit; there must also be analysis alongside the quotation.

The comparative essays tended to show candidates feeling more confident and in control, but this did not always work to their advantage. Some were inclined to twist the question so that they could incorporate familiar material, but their essays often suffered from issues with relevance as a result. There was a noticeable increase in candidates trying to incorporate a high number of the optional texts in their answers, to the extent that they did not appear to have chosen two 'main' texts for comparison. This approach was usually not helpful, since it supplied breadth but did not allow for the kind of depth and detail which is needed for the highest grades. The weakest examples just supplied a series of paragraphs on different texts without indicating points of connection or comparison. The more successful approach to the comparative essay was to choose two main texts for comparison and to introduce extra texts more briefly as part of AO3. More candidates are bringing in references to filmed versions of their novels, which works well if the films are recognised as a kind of AO5: that is, a view of the text, and not substituted for the text itself. There was also a growing tendency to incorporate a lot of very brief quotations from critics without engaging with them as part of the argument; in general, the best AO5 emerges from the argument of the essay, sometimes using apt critical quotations in support.

Question 1

American Literature 1880–1940

- 1 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of American Literature 1880–1940. [30]

Candidates readily grasped Porter's use of contrast between the Hallorans and the McCorkerys, often using pairs of quotations to show how the struggling couple is placed against the prosperous couple. The 'cold-water walk-up flat' was found by many to be a telling expression of the Hallorans' disappointments in life. Most had a good grasp of the important context of the Great Depression and could chart Halloran's disastrous loss of work and ensuing poverty against the backdrop of the American economy. The best answers picked up hints that McCorkery (known for 'standing in with the right men and never missing a trick') is no doubt on the take, using his political position for personal advantage. An overdependence on *The Great Gatsby* for context sometimes created confusion, leading some candidates to suppose that the partying McCorkerys must be living in the Jazz Age or else that they are members of the upper classes, enjoying the advantages of 'old money'. Some answers focused disproportionately on the women, one stating that the passage's purpose is the portrayal of 'the life of two women and how they align to gender ideals.' A surprising number suggested that one or other of the female characters should be seen as a 'New Woman', Lacey because she speaks her mind to her husband and Rosie because she takes a drink.

Question 2 (a)

2

- (a) F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

'American literature shows us that the most attractive characters are also the most dangerous.'

By comparing *The Great Gatsby* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

This question proved very popular with candidates who were also studying Nella Larsen's *Passing*, the most popular of the new texts on the paper. Some of the best answers showed how Clare Kendry embodies a tempting dream of glamour and success for Irene, thereby threatening Irene's hard-fought security in her middle-class existence. Comparisons were sometimes made with Daisy Buchanan, Gatsby's siren, or with Gatsby himself, who is a figure of fascination for Nick Carraway. Discussion of Nick sometimes brought in his treatment in a psychiatric hospital as depicted in the Baz Luhrmann film, which was mistakenly taken in some answers to represent what 'really happened' to Nick and given in evidence accordingly. Less successful answers tended to stick with the characters they had planned to write about anyway and to assert their attractiveness without necessarily justifying their choices, so that unlikely characters like Myrtle Wilson were picked out as being dangerously attractive. The danger represented by attractive characters was discussed in different ways, and several answers concluded that exciting, glamorous characters like Clare Kendry and Jay Gatsby are ultimately most dangerous to themselves, courting their own tragic conclusions.

Exemplar 1

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | <p>description of a "brute". Unlike the 'The Great Gatsby', the affair between Archer and Ellen in 'The Age of Innocence' does not feature violence. In a different way, their affair endangers the whole of New York society of whom Wharton is fond yet critical of. This affair threatens the "tribal bonds of the elites", as put by Herzberg. Due to his current engagement to May and Ellen's Ellen more fitting with "the Bohemians", considered as more of a foreigner to old New York society, it would be highly frowned upon and forbidden. As said by Quach, this brings "tensions between social convention and individual desire". Mr Archer, as a "product of social convention" (Ammon) is faced with a difficult decision of whether to follow his</p> |
| 2 | a | <p>heart or to abide by the "strict set of rules" and ensure the safety from scandal for the Aristocracy.</p> |

This short Exemplar 1 answer to Question 2 (a) includes brief quotations from three named critics. It would be better for the candidate to express their own ideas more fluently, perhaps including one more sustained critical reference to round out their argument.

Question 2 (b)

(b) John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

'American literature suggests that equality will always be a distant dream.'

By comparing *The Grapes of Wrath* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

This was a popular question, and many candidates pressed into service their excellent contextual understanding of the combined disasters of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression for the Joad family, and others like them. The novel's socialist credentials were discussed, as were Steinbeck's avowed intentions to use his art to right wrongs and to expose the scandalous exploitation of the Okies in California. *The Great Gatsby* was often chosen for comparison and here answers generally focused on the unfairness of social prejudice against 'new money' and the hopelessness for Gatsby of overcoming his status as 'Mr Nobody from Nowhere'; however, attempts to characterise Fitzgerald as a socialist campaigner were unconvincing. Several answers understood 'equality' to refer to 'gender equality' and sometimes ended up viewing Daisy Buchanan as a helpless victim of sexism and Ma Joad as a woman occupying a powerful role, which was a difficult position to support in argument. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* brought in race as well as class to the discussion and worked very well for candidates.

Question 2 (c)

(c) 'American literature shows us characters who need something to believe in.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *The Great Gatsby* and/or *The Grapes of Wrath*. [30]

This was the most popular of the three questions and most responses again featured Fitzgerald and Steinbeck, showing how the hopes of the Joads are poignantly modest compared with Gatsby's elevated dreams. There were interesting responses on other novels too, including *Native Son*, *The Age of Innocence* and *My Ántonia*. Answers on Richard Wright discussed how Bigger Thomas understands from the beginning that he is in no position to nurse hopes or beliefs, as is shown vividly in the scene where he talks to Gus about his futile wish to fly a plane; many suggested that being deprived of such beliefs is the cause of his downfall. He was sometimes compared with characters like Tom and Daisy Buchanan who were seen as too privileged to have any need of 'something to believe in'. *My Ántonia*, as so often, proved very successful as a comparator to Gatsby, placing Jim in the Nick Carraway role, looking on and believing in Ántonia where Nick believes in Gatsby.

Question 3

The Gothic

- 3 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic.

[30]

Candidates responded very well to this passage. There were several elements which they needed to embrace to achieve excellence, so those who adopted a methodical approach were at an advantage. Better answers gave time to consideration of the narrator, the Catholic priest, and generally characterised him as a reliable rational presence who guides the reader's response. Some also commented on the anonymity of the piece, suggesting it might be part of a tradition of 'found texts' which purport to be authentic reports of real-life events. Many compared the remembered 'beauty of youth' of the prisoner and compared it to the phantom-like vision he presents in the dungeon, indicating a terrible fall from grace. The contrasting pictures drew discussions of duality in the Gothic, often supported by references to Jekyll and Hyde or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. These apposite textual links provided more effective context than the more general material about 'waves' of Gothic or the erroneous 'Victorian' dating which appeared in weaker scripts. The image of the decapitated human body in the final paragraph was sometimes overlooked or otherwise misunderstood by those who did not read with care: some thought an actual body was present in the dungeon, not just a drawing. Better answers often suggested that the tension in the earlier part of the passage corresponds to Ann Radcliffe's 'terror', and that the horrific drawing represents the more visceral 'horror' of the Gothic.

Question 4 (a)

4

- (a) Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

'Gothic writing explores both the attraction and the fear of taking risks.'

Consider how far you agree with this statement by comparing *Dracula* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

This was the least popular option of the comparative essays on the Gothic. Answers often focused on Jonathan Harker's experiences early in the novel as Dracula's guest, discussing his fearful exploration of the castle and focusing on his guilt and helplessness at the hands of the three vampiresses. Comparisons were made with the title story of *The Bloody Chamber*, which also involves the fear and fascination of forbidden exploration, and with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where Victor's obsessive overreaching spans the extremes of attraction and fear. Every year candidates seem to find study of this novel especially rewarding. Filmed versions of novels like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are a valuable source of material for study of the topic, particularly in helping candidates to appreciate that popular entertainment has always been a key element of the genre; it is important, however, for candidates to distinguish between the novels and the film versions and to understand that the novels are their primary texts.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**

'Gothic writing often depends on the idea of being trapped in a situation from which there seems to be no escape.'

By comparing *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories** with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

This was a more popular question for the Gothic topic and many candidates drew successfully from the Carter collection, enjoying success with stories such as 'The Bloody Chamber', 'The Lady of the House of Love' and 'The Erl-King', all of which involve characters who are trapped in some sense. Other helpful texts included *Frankenstein*, again, where both Victor and his Creature can be understood to be trapped in their situations and relationships, and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, one of the newly added texts, where the new Mrs de Winter can be seen to represent the archetypal trapped Gothic heroine. *Dracula* was the most popular comparator, and again Jonathan Harker was a favourite choice for a 'trapped' character, held by many to be something of a feminised figure. There were some fewer interesting essays on this text which focused on female characters being trapped in their traditional gender roles, an approach which was not as conducive to engaging imaginatively with the Gothic context.

Question 4 (c)

(c) 'Violence, either implied or explicit, is a key ingredient of Gothic fiction.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Dracula* and/or *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**. [30]

This was probably the most popular question and attracted some of the liveliest writing, although few candidates acknowledged that an important reason for violence in the Gothic is for its pure entertainment value. Answers on Angela Carter generally wrote successfully about the title story, 'The Bloody Chamber', and many candidates were still relying on 'The Snow Child' to extend their range in the collection, although fewer wrote well about it. *Dracula* was very popular too, especially the scene featuring the staking of Lucy Westenra, and examiners were pleased to see some candidates engaging with more of the text and featuring 'forgotten' characters like Renfield in their answers. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared in some answers, in particular the murder of Basil, and *Beloved* constituted a more sobering source of violent episodes for candidates' essays. Answers were often highly readable and interesting and entered into the imaginative qualities of the Gothic, which was pleasing to see in a topic where candidates often end up hyper-focused on contexts at the expense of the literary qualities of texts.

Question 5

Dystopia

- 5 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of dystopian literature. [30]

Some candidates found the Dystopia unseen passage quite challenging, apparently because it is not dependent on a totalitarian government; a few responses posited such a government in the background, without finding evidence to justify it. Successful responses made much of the atmosphere in the deserted mall and entered imaginatively into the experience of exploring it; some of the best pointed out that the crusted coins in the empty fountain are particularly poignant because they represent the defunct wishes of visitors to the mall who may by now have succumbed to the virus. Some (persuasively) saw sinister possibilities in the role of Bob, disliking his presumptions of leadership. Most noted the parts of the text presented all in capitals, suggesting that it characterises capitalist interests and points to desperate consumerist behaviour during 'the End'; one answer suggested that the setting is 'haunted by the spectre of capitalism'. The raid on the gum-ball machines featured in all answers: some suggested it amounted to nostalgia and innocent regression; more subtle answers described it as a kind of satirical recreation of the consumerist obsessions which had possibly led society to this disastrous situation. The 'hurtling' of the bouncy balls, hitting the characters from all sides, was seen in some imaginative answers as possibly foreshadowing violence later in the novel. Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* functioned well as literary context for this extract; many also referenced the COVID-19 pandemic which was to follow quite closely after the publication of *Severance*. Context for the passage went better for those who had a broad sense of the Dystopia genre which did not necessarily require a totalitarian state.

Exemplar 2

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | Candace and her companions, explore the |
| | | facility and become invested in childlike activities |
| | | Such as "the gum ball machines" "still filled |
| | | with an assortment of candies and mini |
| | | party-favour toys.' Todd invested his the |
| | | "calcified Silver coins" and in return |
| | | "yielded a blue gum ball" in which he |
| | | "popped it the into his mouth and chewed." |
| | | This was followed by and then Candace's reaction |
| | | of "Gross" as "they probably haven't been changed |
| | | in over six months' Here, Ling Ma highlights the |
| | | excitement of such little activities that society |
| | | has lost touch with since the 'End,' as well as |
| | | showing the technological advancements of the |
| | | 21 st century where machines at with such activities |
| | | were introduced. Hereafter, "the tension broke" |
| | | and "the mood brightened" as "they" hadn't had |
| | | candy like this in forever? The lists of the |

Exemplar 2 shows part of an answer to Question 5 which uses quotations but stops short of analysis.

Question 6 (a)

6

(a) George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

'Dystopian writing often points the way to a better world.'

By comparing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

This was the least popular of the comparative essay questions for this topic. Some answers took issue with the question, pointing out that the worlds presented in dystopian fiction are in no way 'better'. Others suggested that in some texts there had maybe been an intention to create a better world which had gone badly wrong (the Commander's words in *The Handmaid's Tale* formed a valuable quotation here, 'Better never means better for everyone... It always means worse, for some'). Most, however, picked up the expression 'points the way to' and understood it to refer to a didactic purpose in the genre, which can act as a warning to readers of possible disaster ahead. All approaches were admissible, and marks depended on the quality of argument and illustration. Most wrote on Atwood and Orwell, but there were also answers on a range of other texts including Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*

'Dystopian writing expresses the worst fears of the age in which it was written.'

By comparing *The Handmaid's Tale* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

This was the most popular question for the Dystopia topic and gave an opportunity for candidates to relate their chosen texts to the historical contexts in which they were created. Some more straightforward essays developed a list-like structure where the main concern was to introduce as much contextual detail as possible; such answers sometimes neglected to provide connections and comparisons between texts. The most successful candidates created a more interesting argument, often suggesting that the greatest dystopian texts are relevant for their own time but also for all times, showing how they may link to a range of different contexts and allowing for connections and comparisons to be made with other texts. The most popular pairing was, again, Orwell and Atwood, but there was interesting work on some other texts, in particular Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. Links were often also made to a range of popular contemporary texts like *The Maze Runner* and *The Hunger Games*.

Question 6 (c)

- (c) 'Dystopian fiction demonstrates the experiences of ordinary people under extraordinary pressure.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and/or *The Handmaid's Tale*.

[30]

This was a popular question which again tended to attract answers on the two headline texts by Orwell and Atwood. Answers focused on Winston Smith and Offred, showing how their weaknesses make them into an everyman and an everywoman, inviting readers to imagine themselves similarly situated. The question opened an interesting opportunity for those studying the new text Olivia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, since Lauren Olamina is living in ordinary circumstances but is herself anything but ordinary, finding remarkable leadership qualities within herself and developing her own scripture and a new religious faith alongside her more practical journey of survival. The political and environmental challenges presented in this novel gave plenty of material for candidates to engage with and the unusual qualities of the heroine generated interesting comparisons with the more familiar Winston or Offred.

Question 7

Women in Literature

- 7 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature.

[30]

Candidates found this passage to be accessible and interesting, although some answers were inclined to retell the story in a way which missed opportunities for analysis. Alert readers focused on narrative method, noting the first sentence which identifies the incident as one which is to be life-defining for Janey. These responses pointed out that events are viewed from Janey's perspective, and one or two fairly noted that the viewpoint of the extremely unsympathetic Mr Rosendale is not pursued. The most sensitive readings picked up on the description of the station looking 'so ghastly in the desertion of the night', suggesting that it could stand as a metaphor for the Rosendale marriage. The disquieting choices of verb for Rosendale ('pushed' and 'forced') were foregrounded by many, who also sometimes associated these actions with his 'unrestrained...lovemaking', referenced later in the passage. Janey's emotional thankfulness at the end was oddly underplayed in many answers, possibly because candidates worked through the passage in order and ran short of time. Contexts were found everywhere in other studied texts and in previously set unseen passages such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*.

Question 8 (a)

8

(a) Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

'Female characters cannot escape the pressures of family relationships.'

By comparing *Sense and Sensibility* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

This was the least popular question for this topic in this session. Answers explored the Dashwood family, showing how formal relationships within families affect the Dashwood women via the entail but also how care and concern draw the women in, especially Elinor, who is the most inclined to take responsibility for herself and others. Arguments developed further by suggesting that men, too, could come under family pressure, usually choosing Edward Ferrars as an example but sometimes exploring Colonel Brandon's past as well; some also argued that the family can be a source of support and happiness as well as pressure. Comparisons were generally drawn with *Mrs Dalloway*, where Clarissa's challenges facing a life post-menopause with a grown daughter came under discussion.

Question 8 (b)

(b) Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

'Even privileged women have limited choices.'

By comparing *Mrs Dalloway* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

This question was a little more popular and allowed candidates to consider social class alongside gender in their answers. Clarissa's 'limited choices' were generally associated with her choice of marriage partner and the limited satisfaction she can take from life in late middle age as a result. Answers tended to agree that Clarissa's choices are limited, but often found her to be more comfortably placed than the less prosperous characters, Rezia and Miss Kilman. Comparisons were often drawn with *The Bell Jar*, an increasingly popular choice of text, and candidates managed an impressive degree of precision in their judgements concerning Esther's status. There were occasional brief references to the new text for this topic, Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*, but no examiners reported seeing it featured as one of the main texts in an answer.

Question 8 (c)

(c) 'All female characters struggle to have their voices heard.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Sense and Sensibility* and/or *Mrs Dalloway*.

[30]

This was easily the most popular question for this topic. Those answering on Austen often pointed out that Marianne's mistake lies in speaking out, for which she suffers at the hands of a restrictive social environment; Elinor's silence was seen as more politically astute and ultimately, through good fortune, rewarded, but candidates tended to see the price she pays as being too high. In *Mrs Dalloway*, various female characters were discussed in terms of their ability to speak out, in particular Lady Bruton who, despite her active role in matters of social importance, needs to ask Richard to advise her and Hugh to write for her when she wants to send a letter to the *Times*. *Jane Eyre* was a popular text choice, and candidates once again were inclined to feel disappointed that Jane chooses marriage at the end of the novel. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* continues to work well for candidates, especially since Janie grows in confidence and independence throughout the novel, a message which has great appeal for many candidates. *The Bell Jar* was often in evidence again, Esther's mental health challenges providing evidence for the 'struggle' in the question.

Question 9

The Immigrant Experience

9 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience.

[30]

This passage proved unexpectedly challenging in terms of comprehension for some of the candidates, who assumed that there were a number of immigrants on the bus, not just the narrator. Despite these difficulties, many candidates wrote perceptively on the complex social interplay described on the bus. A range of narrative methods were explored to elucidate the rising tension, which were then linked to prominent tropes of the Immigrant Experience such as racial discrimination, attempts to integrate, and underlying, inherent anger. Candidates wrote perceptively about the bus as a symbol of both social mixing as well as progress (or, ironically, lack of progress) in society. A few candidates referenced Rosa Parks to good effect and explored the complex interplay of tension within the various characters. Narrative perspective featured usefully and helped to shape thoughtful responses.

Question 10 (b)

(b) Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

'Homesickness is a necessary part of the immigrant experience.'

By comparing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. [30]

Thoughtful responses linked the sense of homesickness to notions of hybridity and debated to what extent homesickness was a 'necessary' part of the immigrant experience. Candidates considered how the initial encounters with the new country might be more beguiling, before immigrants experienced prejudice and discrimination. Changez from *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a case in point – initially enthused by the promises of the American Dream, before disenchantment sets in as symbolised by his fraught relationship with Erica and Underwood Samson, both representing the host country. Similarly, Hortense and Gilbert are keen to leave Jamaica for the promised streets of London which are supposedly covered with 'blankets of gold'. Successful responses employed thoughtful contexts to support analysis, as well as charting apt plot details that led to characters' turning back from their new country and longing for the old.

Question 10 (c)

(c) 'By moving to a new country, immigrants discover what they truly believe.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Call It Sleep* and/or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. [30]

This was the most popular choice of essay for this topic. Answers focused on how Changez from *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and David from *Call it Sleep* break free from the shackles of capitalism and his father's dominating presence to discover what they truly believe. There was thoughtful discussion about the impact of 9/11 for the characters of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and consideration of David's friendship with Leo in *Call it Sleep* where David learns to reappraise his own religion. Much thoughtful contextual detail underpinned discussion of the new country, and there was some excellent consideration of character development (often linked to precise quotations) in response to the question. Successful essays charted that sense of 'discovery' as well as interrogating the phrase 'truly believe'.

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Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

[ExamBuilder](#) is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an [Interchange](#) account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

[Find out more](#).

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find available courses for your subject under Assessment - NEA/Coursework - Online courses. Click on the blue arrow to start the course.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators
- the principles and methods of standardisation
- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence
- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Need to get in touch?


If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk


For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **facebook.com/ocrexams**

 **twitter.com/ocrexams**

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We really value your feedback

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OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource in your centre, in line with any specific restrictions detailed in the resource. Resources intended for teacher use should not be shared with students. Resources should not be published on social media platforms or other websites.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.