

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC)

H474

For first teaching in 2015

H474/02 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

Paper 2 offers candidates two traditional literary forms, poetry and drama, and invites them to explore set texts in the light of questions which require analytical thinking. Candidates may take a mainly linguistic analysis approach or a mainly literary analysis approach or blend their approaches; there is no hierarchy within the Assessment Objectives.

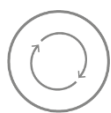
To be successful, candidates will have pursued a course of study which invites them to:

- develop and apply their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation
- develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of language
- use linguistic and literary approaches in their reading and interpretation of texts, showing how the two disciplines can relate to each other.

This paper is about close reading skills as described in AO1 and AO2. These Assessment Objectives are dominant and usually operate in tandem, with AO1 identifying methods and concepts, and AO2 exploring how they shape meaning. Of the two objectives, AO2 (the shaping of meaning) has the greatest weight in the assessment.

AO1 is not confined to rewarding the identification of methods and concepts used by the writer but is also used to reward fluency and writing and use of terminology.

Assessment for learning



'Terminology' is a small part of Assessment Objective 1. It is a positive thing to see particular linguistic or rhetorical terms being applied to language in texts and the effects of these terms being explored and analysed. By itself, without the exploration and analysis, terminology has little value. For example, labelling a word as a concrete noun or an abstract noun at this level doesn't have any value unless it is being used as part of an analysis of lexis more generally to establish an important effect. In general, it is better to see terminology as a tool in analysis rather than as an end.

Texts do not exist in isolation, so candidates should relate their responses to the wider contexts of production and reception. AO3 comprises the placement of texts within a genre, a historical, political and social background or in relation to other texts (either within poetry collections or across a drama text). The author's life is a legitimate source of contextual evidence, but one to be pursued with a very light touch. The text itself is usually the best hunting ground for contextual material: it rarely needs to be brought in from outside it. It isn't enough for AO3 context to be simply included; it must be adding something to the interpretation.

One aspect of candidates' work drew attention this year and this was the increased use of quotations from (and references to) critics. This is familiar from A Level English Literature (H472). It is not a requirement of H474. Where candidates quote from or refer to critics and criticism, if it is relevant to text and question, it will be rewarded with AO1 as 'methods and concepts'. The caveat is that the candidates' own ideas are of equal worth, and it may be a better use of time to cultivate analytical skills to tackle whatever poems and extracts are on the paper rather than spending time learning critical quotations.

Another area which could offer scope for improvement, especially in the work of less successful candidates, is paragraph openings. This year there were far more openings such as 'furthermore', 'to add on', 'moreover', 'going on', 'moving on', and sometimes these were used multiple times in the same response. The beginning of a paragraph is a chance to shift focus and to continue to hook the intellectual attention of the reader (the examiner). Any suggestion that what is written in a new paragraph is 'more of the same' should be avoided. Openings such as 'to go on' reinforce any suggestion that a response hasn't been carefully planned. It is a relatively easy win for candidates, to work on improving the sharpness and focus of paragraph openings.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused with thoroughness and detail on the poem and extract given had clear lines of argument based on the question and text, with evidence of clear planning foregrounded AO2 in their work so that the ways meaning is shaped were the core of the response only went outside the poem or extract for AO3 or AO4 (in Section A) to clarify or deepen analysis of the set poem or extract displayed both a thorough knowledge of the text and an engagement with text and question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided too little engagement with the set poem or extract inserted AO3 context or AO4 connections (In Section A) without sufficient relevance or justification were not able to display a confident knowledge and understanding of the set poem or extract did not shape their ideas and arguments effectively and clearly mismanaged their time so that responses ended suddenly, or, particularly in Section B there was evidence of incompleteness.

Section A overview

The poems chosen this year for Section A worked particularly well and there was plenty of evidence of enthusiasm, engagement and thoroughness of knowledge and understanding. The questions were appropriate, posing no additional difficulties for candidates as they were crafted to be central to the concerns of the respective poets and their collections of poetry. There was very high achievement at the top with some extraordinarily perceptive and analytical work, but the effectiveness of the paper lies in its ability to give the opportunity for achievement at every level. There were very few instances of limited work showing that almost the whole cohort had been prepared well for the examination.

The core of Section A is AO2 – ‘critical analysis of ways in which meanings are shaped in texts’. It is the mostly heavily weighted AO and is the essential skill required for success in Section A. Both linguistic and literary methods and concepts can be applied to analysis and there is no hierarchy or preference. Some methods and concepts work better for some poems and poets than others so judicious selection is a key requirement.

One aspect which has improved in the responses this year has been a more careful and effective approach to AO3 and AO4. A great deal of thought was apparent in the choices of poems to connect to the given poem (AO4) and there was evidence that advice in last year's report that there is no need to link to more than one or two poems has had an effect. In the time constraints of the exam, those who chose to link to just one poem had an advantage over those who linked to three or more. The same improvement has been seen in the use of contexts. There was a greater range of contexts addressed and they were tailored much more carefully to the text and question. When AO2 is the core assessment objective, there should be less focus on knowledge about the poem and more on analysing how the poem works. Poems tend to be their own best sources of context.

There were some occasions when the ‘terminology’ assessed as part of AO1 dominated responses unhelpfully. Identifying a part of speech, rhetorical device or aspect of rhyme or rhythm is a relatively unimportant aspect of the assessment if it isn't then used as part of analysis of the text (sometimes referred to as ‘feature spotting’). Candidates occasionally identify these features incorrectly or are unable to explain the function and effect of the features. It may work better for candidates to focus on explaining their reactions to these features and showing how they see them shaping meaning, without necessarily using complex terminology.

Question 1

1 William Blake

Explore how Blake presents ideas and feelings about the treatment of children in 'The Chimney Sweeper' (E) and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Blake's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

After 'The Tyger' from last year, 'The Chimney Sweeper' (E) may at first seem to provide less exalted and energetic subject matter, but many responses found much to discuss in this small and apparently unremarkable poem. Successful responses focused in on the voices in the poem. The opening is in the voice of an observer. This was described variously as Blake himself, an anonymous adult, a 'flâneur'. This voice describes the chimney sweeper and most successful responses made much of the language of that description. In a small and simple poem such as this, much must be made from little. The observer poses the question 'Where are thy father and mother? say?' and this question resonates through the rest of the poem. The child answers in the final line of the stanza, completing the couplet before taking up the response in alternate rhyme. It is so hard to explain the effect of rhyming patterns and examiners are experienced in crediting worthwhile attempts, but here the change in rhyme pattern could signify the child's voice taking over his own story in his own way. As one exceptional response explained, alternate rhyme suits narrative well, allowing space for the child to explain his story without the emphatic end stopping of couplets. The cruelty in the poem lies in that second stanza where the fronted conjunction 'Because' reveals the child's understanding of his parents' inhumanity. They were not content to see their child happy upon the heath or smiling among the snow, so took action. They clothed him in the clothes of death and taught him to sing the notes of woe. Those most successful responses identified this as active cruelty on the part of the parents – much worse than the passive cruelty of simply being absent in church. Successful responses spotted that 'clothed' and 'taught' are the duties of good parents which are here subverted and tainted. There is great poignancy in the final stanza where the child, having registered the true cruelty of his parents towards him, continues to show his wisdom in answering injustice through being happy, dancing and singing (a holy triad for Blake). The line 'They think they have done me no injury' shows the wisdom of the child who understands his parents far, far better than they understand him for all their dutiful church attendance. He conceals the injury they have done him but that last line packs a punch: 'Who make up a heaven out of our misery'. Many successful responses saw the antithesis between 'heaven' and 'misery' although there is ambiguity in the shaping of meaning. The plural possessive 'our' suggests the line is voiced on behalf of a generation of suffering children. Some candidates saw it as an attack on the Industrial Revolution with the wealth of society being based on the suffering of child labour; some candidates focused on the hypocrisy of religion in its established form of the Church of England, where its version of heaven excludes those in misery on Earth.

There were many responses to Blake – it was probably the most popular text in Section A. The only unsuccessful responses were those that did not dwell on the poem for long before analysing other poems. Perhaps the poem's brevity put some candidates off – what is there to say about such a short, small poem? Other less successful responses spent too long on outlining contextual matters when in fact almost all the essential context is within the poem itself. The truth is, that after reading many responses to it, it seems to become a huge poem worthy of full and detailed analysis and revealing more and more as it is thought about. Some other less successful responses were much more confident in identifying methods and concepts than they were in engaging with the heart of the poem – the child and his feelings.

There were connections with the obvious choices 'Chimney Sweeper I' and 'Holy Thursday' both I and E. 'Nurse's Song I' and 'Echoing Green' were also popular choices as voicing Blake's ideals of childhood.

Question 2

2 Emily Dickinson

Explore how Dickinson presents ideas and feelings about fear and menace in 'A narrow Fellow in the Grass' and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Dickinson's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

This was a text which had fewer takers than hitherto. There remain a few centres who tackle Dickinson and their students produce some magnificent work. Dickinson is difficult, but in ways which intrigue and entice. Ambiguity and obscurity underpin the 'ideas and feelings about fear and menace'. It is a question entirely suited to this poet. There were so few responses to the poem that it is difficult to give a full overview. As ever, there is no title to help or guide us, we are plunged into a kind of conversation and a declarative: 'A narrow Fellow in the Grass/Occasionally rides'. Most responses focused in on the familiarity and anthropomorphism indicated in the word 'Fellow' and the verb 'met'. (There were responses in which the writers did not recognise that this refers to a snake and that led some to struggle to answer the question effectively). The direct address 'You' involves the reader, and we are included as previous witnesses ourselves to the 'narrow fellow'. The inverted syntax of 'His notice sudden is' throws emphasis on the sibilance mimetic of a snake-like sound and momentarily captures the snake's perspective as the snake reacts to the human presence and departs such that the observer can't see the snake, just a 'spotted shaft' but sees the movement of the grass as it passes. The combination of two stanzas in the middle of the poem allows the speaker to expand on his knowledge of the snake and snakes. The maleness of the snake and of the speaker 'when a Boy and Barefoot...' led some responses to see a phallic resonance in the snake. Several responses did not comment on the fact that this is a male persona. There is familiarity and knowledge of the snake and what he likes and previous encounters with the snake, a 'Whip lash/unbraiding in the sun'. Oddly he stooped to 'secure it' but it 'wrinkled and was gone – '. Like so many things, it isn't explained why the boy wanted to 'secure it' but its rapid departure then mirrors the rapid departure in the opening stanza.

The almost complacent 'cordiality' towards 'Nature's People' (that anthropomorphism again), presumably the animal kingdom, seems to be part of a Thoreau-like bond with nature. Only the snake, 'this fellow', despite describing his attempt to 'secure it' lies outside this circle of cordiality, at least to some extent. At every encounter the breathing tightens, a physical reaction to fear. This revelation calls into question the familiarity and cordiality which has marked the persona's response to the snake up to this point. It makes the reader go back and look again at the tone and the detail where in phrases such as 'when a Boy and Barefoot' we see the vulnerability to a snake's venom or the sense of danger in 'then it closes at your feet', the phrase 'Whip lash'. Underneath, there has been an undercurrent of fear and menace concealed by the casual tone and friendly lexis. The final line of the poem is more frightening for being impenetrable: 'And Zero at the Bone – '.

There is certainly an interplay between attraction to or fascination with the snake and terror of it. This could (as some sophisticated responses explained) mirror Dickinson's problems with relating to the world, including with relating to people. The shift in persona, which was missed by several of the less

successful responses, is interesting, unusual and important. It shows Dickinson preparing 'a face to meet the faces that you meet'.

There were a number of poems which were used to link to 'A narrow Fellow': 'It was not Death for I stood up', 'I felt a Funeral in my Brain' were popular choices.

Question 3

3 Seamus Heaney

Explore how Heaney presents ideas about events from the past in 'A Kite for Michael and Christopher' and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Heaney's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

This is the last outing for Heaney as the poet is being retired from the specification after many years of faithful service. It is a poignant poem to end on and a reminder of what a wonderful craftsman Seamus Heaney was as a poet. It was relatively more popular this year as a choice of text and there were many outstanding responses to the poem and very few less successful ones. 'Ideas about events from the past' is a good open question and fits the notably reflective and philosophical poetry of Heaney.

Exemplar 1

		<p>Heaney presents ideas about the events from the past day as he begins the poem by reflecting on a memory. He begins the poem by looking into the past using man simple language, and the poem is made up of four stanzas and each stanza ^{grows} grows as the poem develops. This reflects growing memories as time goes on and the his two sons growing older. the This is one of Heaney's most personal poems as it comes directly from him to his boys: "I'd seen it... I'd tapped it... I'd tied it". The anaphoric use of the first person pronoun reflects how this memory is his and he writes it to immortalise the beauty of it. He is describing the making of the kite which is metaphoric for the creation of life referring to his personal participation in the making of his children that he now gets to watch them flourish higher into the sky like a kite. From the second stanza to the third stanza there is a shift in tense from past to present: "But now it was far up like a small black lark". the He shifts from his memory to present time which slightly contrasts with his usual structure where he begins with present and then digs into the past. This may reflect that he is coming to terms with the past and is ready to pass on live in the present</p>
		<p>and pass on his past legacy, metaphorically his pen or spade, to his children.</p>

Exemplar 1 This shows a strong candidate setting about establishing a focus on text and question.

The poem opens simply enough on 'that Sunday afternoon'. Many responses picked up on the way that the word 'that' determines a specific Sunday and announces the importance of the experience of that day. The repetition of 'Sunday' in the second line feels awkward but there were many interesting readings such as the emphasis it places on a family day or a religious day or a significant space in time for general reflection on family life. The 'tightened drumhead' and 'blown chaff' suggested to many the construction of the kite itself, stretched fabric and papers tied into the tail. Lurking beneath are faint echoes of militarism – the drums of the marching bands, the chaff used in air defence. So subtly done. Then the poem begins to focus in with a powerful use of anaphora to emphasise his personal, first-

person engagement in the making of the kite. The immediate visceral experience of the making 'grey and slippery' is so characteristically direct as is the 'tapped it when it dried out'. You learn things as an examiner and the way that some readings explored the imagery as relating to birth was totally convincing. The kite becomes attached by a string acting as a metaphor for the umbilical cord. The idea that 'the making' is of the kite and of the sons who are the dedicatees of the kite is a very convincing reading, bringing threads together is a most satisfying way. Then as the poem develops, the kite itself lifts. The image 'small black lark' gives precision to the sense of distance and smallness but the 'dragged', 'bellied', 'hauled' gives that sense of the forces in play despite the apparent smallness of the distant kite. A metaphor is gathering in the way the verbs work. The next stanza seems like a sudden break, a non sequitur: 'My friend says that the human soul is about the weight of a snipe' but it is Heaney's way of working himself into the core of the poem's meaning. That 'small black lark' is a metaphor for the human soul which 'sags and ascends' as it rides the buffeting of life. The metaphor develops so that before the kite/soul can 'plunge down' Heaney asks his two sons to take the strain. 'This line goes useless' is a delicately suggested death. The ruggedness of the language breathes a sense of pride: 'take in your two hands, boys and feel/the strumming, rooted long-tailed pull of grief'. This is wonderful poetry as the whole poem coalesces around the idea of handing on to the next generation the 'pull of grief'. So much is accomplished by those expertly chosen adjectives which have the power and impact of verbs. Few responses to the poem missed this key idea and many responded very perceptively to that idea of handing on life to one's children. The final three lines, almost a coda, give encouragement with a hint of forcefulness in the use of imperatives: 'Stand in here', 'take the strain'. This is great poetry, and it produced some very fine responses.

Less successful responses became too caught up in details of Heaney's life. Some declared that his son Michael had died, and the poem is an elegy for him. [It was his brother, Michael who died, the experience described in 'Mid-Term Break' and his son is named after his brother]. The sadness is that all the context you need to understand the poem in every respect is within the poem itself. Nothing more is necessary and is likely to simply pad out the response rather than give it sharper focus. A small number of responses did not engage deeply enough with the ideas and meanings in the poem and simply identified methods used without showing their impact and effect.

Popular linked poems were 'Anahorish', 'Death of a Naturalist' and 'Churning Day'.

Question 4

4 Eavan Boland

Explore how Boland presents ideas about responding to a piece of art in 'Degas's Laundresses' and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Boland's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

This is the last outing for Eavan Boland's poetry on this specification after providing candidates stimulus and engagement for several years. There were very few responses – just one or two centres appeared to have entered candidates and it is difficult to give an overview on such a small sample. The question about 'responding to a piece of art' is a grateful one for this poet and the poem is one of her finest. The poem is ekphrastic in that it animates or brings to life a work of art and is a profound response to it. The direct address 'You' announces the respect, almost devotion to the laundresses and what they represent to Boland. The opening phrase 'You rise, you/Dawn roll-sleeved Aphrodites' remembers the birth of Venus rising out of the sea. The imagery of fabrics and clothing 'roll-sleeved', 'camisole brine', 'linen pit', 'stiches', 'silking', 'fitted sheets' has a sibilant liquidity and texture. The wonderful second and third stanzas with their internal rhymes, consonance, assonance and propulsive rhythm and energy inhabits the thoughts of the women as they work. The stanzas show remarkable craft and a whole essay could be written on the effects used and the shaping of meaning. The volta arrives at that dramatic 'Wait.' The drama is intense, with the poet's protective stance for her beloved laundresses. The presence of a 'man' arouses suspicion 'why is he watching you?' 'He takes his ease/staking his easel so' the playfulness is obscured by the weaseliness of the sounds created and that 'slowly smiling' has a threat. The 'unbandaging his mind' is a wonderfully ironic phrase suggesting that as he relaxes his inner thoughts about and responses to the women are released. They are 'blind designs' with twists and that are characterised in the poem as malign and harmful producing one last piece of fabric – 'your winding sheet.' This is a very gender-aware poem and lots of responses picked up on the focus on the 'male gaze'. There are deeper ironies, of course, in that had Degas not painted the laundresses, there would be no ekphrastic work of art from Boland: it's an irony she was surely aware of.

Too few scripts were seen to be able to comment on general trends but there were some less successful responses which gave scant analysis of the given poem and spent most of their time on discussion of connected poems. More successful responses were, above all, thorough and detailed and showed genuine relish of the energy in the language. There were a number of linked poems that were referenced by candidates, particularly 'From the *Painting Back From Market* by Chardin' and 'The Black Lace Fan My Mother Gave Me'.

Question 5

5 Carol Ann Duffy

Explore how Duffy presents ideas and feelings about the power of love in 'Rapture' and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Duffy's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

Duffy remains a very popular choice of text, rightly so as there is much that candidates find to discuss. This poem is a central one, 'eponymous' as many candidates put it. Interestingly there was regular discussion of the religious meaning of the word 'rapture' and a development of other religious elements in the poem and connected poems.

The most successful responses often focused with care and attention on the first line of the poem: 'Thought of by you all day, I think of you.' The parallelism of the syntax with the variation in tense of verb were often remarked upon and readings saw in this a sense of reciprocity of feeling balanced with a sense of separation. That was always a good starting point to work from and it illustrates how often careful attention to the opening lines of a poem where the poet's stall is set out is usually profitable. Given that the question was about the 'power of love' some candidates struggled a little with the negativity of mood and lexis in the first two quatrains and this led them into, perhaps too quickly, seeing the poem through the lens of later poems in the collection such as 'Wintering' or 'Over'. This meant that they sometimes missed the point being made about love here. It needed close attention to see that this mood of negativity is predicated on the idea of separation implicit in the opening line. The world described where 'birds sing in the shelter of a tree', with rain and above that, presumably not visible, 'unacred blue which is 'not paradise' and it 'goes nowhere endlessly'. There is a sense generated of constrained hopes and dreams, veiled by the rain. The mood develops and deepens into the question 'How does it happen that our lives can drift/Far from ourselves, while we stay trapped in time, queuing for death?' Some wonderful responses were made to this concerning the depressing quotidian nature of existence in the everyday where love is veiled. The mention of time gave many candidates the opportunity to connect to poems such as 'Hour' and discuss through drawing contrasts, the Shakespearean connection and tension between love and time. 'It seems nothing will shift the pattern of our days...' that word 'seems' bears a heavy weight, particularly for those candidates aware of the chance of a volta – that very characteristic shift and turn found in Shakespeare's sonnets. The word 'alter' appears and offers the faint suggestion of hope of a change. The phrase 'loss to assonance with bliss' produced some sensitive suggestions about the antithesis between 'loss' and 'bliss' with discussion of the metatextual reference to 'assonance' which doesn't describe the line it sits within which is dominated by consonance. One candidate wrote about this producing a dissonance in the meaning of the poem, a sense of things coming to a crisis. And then the turn. Without working through the creation of mood and feeling in the opening nine lines, the turn doesn't have its proper miraculous effect. Several less successful responses opened their analysis with the line 'Then love comes, like a sudden flight of birds' perhaps because that was the most obviously relevant expression of 'the power of love'. Patience and attention to detail and the shaping of meaning in the opening nine lines means that when the key line of the poem comes, its full impact is made. Everything changes. The birds are released from the 'shelter' of the tree, the 'rain' disappears. A remembered 'kiss' which is the catalyst for the volta 'unstrings like pearls, this chain of words' – presumably the depressed and constrained opening nine lines which are scattered. The 'unacred blue' becomes transformed into 'Huge skies' which 'connect us, joining here to there', obliterating the sense of distance with which the poem began. The effect of pushing in one direction and then reversing in every detail and to every extent is reminiscent in the use

of the volta of many of Shakespeare's greatest sonnets. The subtle truth is that the elements signifying the 'power of love' were all there in the first two quatrains – the thinking, the birds; the blue sky but all were constrained and were only released by the recollection of the kiss. The lovely concluding line, as many of the most successful responses commented, links back to the beginning of the poem through the verb 'thinking' which now fills the air with 'Desire' and 'passion' and overcomes the sense of separation and distance. A wholly satisfying conclusion where the end meets the beginning, but a full journey of thought and feeling has been made.

The most successful responses were methodical and thorough, and they made use of Duffy's adoption of the sonnet form to identify what expectations that form raises and how these are delivered in practice. They focused intently on how meanings are shaped. They paid detailed attention to shifts and changes in the poem and how these were achieved. Use of the text through quotation was a marker of some of the most successful responses, a technique that the report above attempts to model in some respects.

Less successful responses became too engrossed in the phrase 'power of love' in generalised and unanchored ways, sometimes seemingly writing their own paeans of praise to love rather than analysing the given poem in detail. There were some responses held back by attempting unsuccessfully to tie the poem to Duffy's biography. All the context necessary for understanding the poem is contained within it. A few spent too little time on the given poem and wrote far more about linked poems. Those who linked to more than two poems sometimes disadvantaged themselves by doing so to the detriment of close study of the given poem.

The most popular poems to link with were 'You' and 'Hour' – wise choices.

Question 6

6 Jacob Sam-La Rose

Explore how Sam-La Rose presents ideas about what music represents in 'Make Some Noise' and make connections with one or two other poems from your collection.

You should consider Sam-La Rose's use of poetic and stylistic techniques and significant literary or other relevant contexts.

[32]

As with all the Section A questions, this is central to the poet's work and offers no unnecessary barrier to writing a successful response. Jacob Sam-La Rose is increasingly popular as a choice of text. The question concerns how the poet 'presents ideas about what music represents' in 'Make Some Noise'. Many responses linked 'Make Some Noise' with the collection's title *Breaking Silence* as almost parallel phrases with very similar meanings. The epigraph usefully introduces the idea of 'cycles' and many responses showed deep knowledge of the ways in which music cycles and re-cycles in modern culture. The idea that music helps to define culture is key to the poem but there is a problem in that the music can be culturally and temporally specific, making it difficult for preceding and succeeding generations to share a musical culture. Hence, the opening line 'Our mothers said that hip-hop wasn't music'. The plural personal possessive 'our' and plural 'mothers' establishes that this is a cultural clash not a personal one. It is personal for Sam-La Rose in that his own mother refers to his music as 'hard noise'. All 'those rappers did was talk'. She has her own musical culture which is connected to music and dance. Music must 'hold a waltz, tango or samba'. That word 'hold' is significant in that for Sam-La Rose's mother music has almost a physical entity, a 'hand' which can be held. It provokes through its 'beaten steel' a 'movement in the hips'. Music and dance are inseparable for her as it is not for Jacob Sam-La Rose. The

phrase 'one night in 1953 at Tipperary Hall' is precisely deictic of time and place where the love of music and dance was 'begat' in her. The precision is a testimony of the importance of that moment as is the fact that she has told her son of this moment for him to record in the poem. The litany of names from her past 'Kitchener and Sparrow, Ella, /Harry Belafonte...Nat King Cole' comprises her past musical idols and Jacob Sam-La Rose loves and respects his mother sufficiently to record them in his poem. Sam-La Rose's choice of epigraph suggests that he is respectful of these artists too. He quotes from a Nat King Cole song 'they try to tell us we're too young' which shows (as one candidate pointed out) that inter-generational conflict and misunderstanding is not a recent thing. Some of the most successful links were to 'Speechless I' to explore the mother's perspective on the same intergenerational conflict with her own father. This is an example of where making a connection provides invaluable insight into the given poem. The imagery of the breaking of the guitar in Speechless I 'it's broken wood, tangled nylon, / a few snagged keys' links to the 'honesty of sculpted wood and steel/ or nylon strung'. That word 'honesty' stands as a kind of accusation against the rappers which offer only 'talk' and 'hard noise'. Music of his mother's generation 'was lyric, hot and sly' full of sensuality all 'work[ed] up /through simple instruments, piano, bass, / guitar and drum' and 'strung to spirituals and hymns'. That gives a very clear idea of what music represents to Jacob Sam-La Rose's mother but the final lines saying her music 'grew to something large/and grand, a synonym for mass' seems to Sam-La Rose's own words and summary of his mother's music. It is full of respect and admiration. The word 'mass' was read in many ways, as, perhaps most popularly, a religious term linking to the 'spirituals and hymns' as a term in physics – music has the physicality and force to shape lives. It is something you could hold in your hand during a dance or as an instrument you can beat or strum.

The most successful responses gave a thorough and detailed analysis of the poem and made connections to other poems for specific reasons. For example, to explore Sam La-Rose's mother's conflict with her father over music in 'Speechless I' or 'After Lazerdrome, McDonalds, Peckham Rye' to explore the religious and spiritual effect that music has for Jacob Sam-La Rose and his generation.

Less successful responses didn't pay close enough attention to the details in the poem. The absence of things was sometimes commented on 'there are no stanzas', 'there is no rhyme', 'there is no rhythm' (that last is certainly not true) instead of analysing what is there.

Section B overview

The improvement in the focus on the extract noted in last year's report has continued in this year's work. There is greater thoroughness and a more methodical approach. The responses gave a better sense of the extract rather than focusing exclusively on small parts of the extract. They were helped in this by the excellent selection of extracts. Each one was self-contained and had a very strong focus which was perfect for analysis. More was seen of some linguistic analysis of the discourse which often works well in drama (which is a kind of stylised speech). At its best this type of analysis can reveal aspects of the power relationships among and between speakers which underpins the sense of drama.

A reminder that candidates do not have to make connections (AO4) in Section B although many do so. They often give a context of the extract by making connections to surrounding scenes. They will also make connections to other parts of the text. This is credited with AO3. One word of warning: candidates should not spend too much time on other parts of the play as there is enough to do on the extract given.

There was a more even spread of choice among the texts although *A Streetcar Named Desire* remains the dominant text. There was a rise in the number of centres studying *The Importance of Being Earnest* and, in particular *Jerusalem*. Just a few responses were seen on *Translations* and none to my knowledge on *Our Country's Good*.

Question 7

7 William Shakespeare: *Othello*

Explore how Shakespeare presents the conversation between Roderigo, Iago and Brabantio in this extract from *Othello*.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

This was a popular choice and produced some outstanding work. There were almost no responses that showed lack of knowledge or familiarity with the extract. It helps that it comes from the first scene, in that work in class will inevitably focus on this moment of the play. Successful candidates established and used several concepts: that we haven't met Othello or Desdemona at this point; that the scene takes place in darkness and therefore that this is an establishing scene where we can look to see ideas which will go on to dominate the play. The question asks for discussion of 'the conversation between Roderigo, Iago and Brabantio' and successful responses discussed the presentation of all three characters, not just Roderigo and Iago. The differences between Roderigo and Iago in their exclamatives were often well explored. Roderigo's higher social status can be read from his greater politeness and sense of respect towards Brabantio with whom he already has a chequered history: 'Signior Brabantio', 'good sir', 'Most grave Brabantio'. Modes of address are useful in pinpointing relationships here. Iago foregoes any mode of address and several successful responses compared how Iago speaks to Roderigo at the beginning of the extract 'with like timorous accent...by night and negligence.' with how much more directly and forcefully he shouts to Brabantio: 'Awake! What ho!, Brabantio! Thieves, thieves/ Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!' No polite mode of address and no elaborate low frequency lexis. Iago's two-facedness is displayed in his language. He has no respect for authority. Several excellent responses looked at that triple of 'your house, your daughter, and your bags' to investigate how the daughter is presented as a kind of precious possession rather than one loved for herself. Contextual discussion of the value of marriageable daughters in Venetian (English) society was welcome at this point. Iago's

bestial and sexual imagery is a key factor in the scene, not just because of what it tells us about Iago's devil-may-care willingness to speak the unspeakable, but also what it tells us about attitudes to 'othered' races in aristocratic society. Several responses pointed out that Iago's words 'Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tupping your white ewe...' are necessarily lies as the play makes clear that Othello's marriage is not consummated because of the eruption of war and the journey to Cyprus. But lies don't matter, just the force with which they can be communicated: 'Even now, now, very now', with that insistent, urgent, immediacy of the little word 'now'. Fear of inter-racial marriage and the introduction of racial impurity is urged in Iago's 'nephews [will] neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins, and jennets for Germans' with Othello's 'Barbary horse' introducing alien genetics into the supposed purity of a noble Venetian household. What is striking is the auditory ugliness and cacophony in Iago's language which projects the ugliness of his thought. Several responses commented on the way in which Iago is never interrupted by either Roderigo or Brabantio, but Roderigo's weakness is revealed by the fact that Iago pushes him aside at the beginning and Brabantio interrupts him continually. These methods are used to establish Roderigo as Iago's gull. The final exchange with its mirrored syntax: 'Thou art a villain'. 'You are a senator' produced some lively discussion. The second declarative is obviously true and the first is equally so. The 'Thou' (from high status addressing low) is reflected in 'you' (from low status addressing high). It captures in language a kind of frozen moment when we see relations in their true nature. Several responses commented that this is the moment where Iago's role is cemented in the audience's imagination. Brabantio is not a particularly insightful character but his ability to identify what kind of a creature Iago is simply by the language he uses shows a kind of native wisdom.

There were some excellent responses, and many used the extract to show how Shakespeare uses the extract to establish ideas which are developed later in the play. This was good quality AO3.

Less successful responses had among them those that made much of Iago speaking in prose and what this indicated about him. Writing too much about other parts of the play as a means of exploring prolepsis left some candidates with too little time to be thorough and analytical on the extract.

Question 8

8 Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Explore how Wilde presents the ending of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in this extract.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

This was a fine choice of extract – the final minutes of the play. One very effective response took a long look at the themes and motifs present in this final scene and showed how they had changed since the ideas were first established. The relationship between Jack and Algernon was briefly tracked showing how it is begun and how it changes leading up to the blossoming into true brotherhood in the extract. The same treatment was meted out to the handbag with discussion of its introduction earlier in the play up to its apotheosis as the key to unlock the mystery of Jack's true identity. A similar approach was taken with Cecily and Gwendolen who began with 'unfortunate entanglements' but ended in joyous unity. It illustrated Algernon's dour pronouncement that 'women only call each other sister when they have called each other a lot of things first.' This response concluded by tracing the origin of the obsession over the name 'Earnest' and its conclusion in the extract. An approach such as this could go wrong if it leads to too much exploration of parts of the play outside the extract but in this case, it proved a revelatory method of approach because it showed exactly the methods and concepts of Wilde's

construction. Each thread had been rooted earlier in the text and was allowed to grow until it produced its fruit in this final scene. There was some excellent focus in other scripts on Wilde's wit: 'The general was essentially a man of peace except in his domestic life' defies analysis as to why it is so funny, but it has something to do with reversal of expectations. That same sense of comedy arising from inversion was detected in the contradictory 'Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?'. Candidates picked out tiny details such as the comic presence of the word 'marriage' in 'He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.'

The balletic, mirrored embracing at the conclusion was seen as artificial, and several responses used that to show a deeper inversion involving the avoidance of deep feeling and the extreme expression of shallow feeling in the extract. Several successful responses traced the effectiveness of the stage directions through the extract to show how the dramatic presentation underpins the effectiveness of the dialogue. The most successful responses looked at the ways in which the extract satirised several aspects of Victorian sensibility and taste especially in the tiny details such as the sideswipe at marriage in the quotation above. The obsession with status in Victorian high society was seen to be satirised in the obsession over the name Earnest which exposes the meaninglessness of labels in judging social worth. The most successful responses clearly relished the wit and gaiety of the text without losing sight of undercurrents of serious social commentary.

Less successful approaches struggled to select effectively to give a range of different ways in which the ending is presented and became 'one note' in their response.

Question 9

9 Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Explore how Williams presents the conversation between Blanche and the Young Man in this extract from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

This remains the most popular drama text by a wide margin. It generates some excellent work and justifies its place on the specification because it offers so much for candidates to engage with. Some of the flaws of past years where responses leant too heavily on AO3 context of doubtful relevance and use or spent far too long on relating the extract to the play as whole leaving little thoroughness in the response to the extract, were not evident with this question - and long may that continue. This was helped by the choice of extract which works well as a stand-alone episode from the play. Some of the most successful responses gave a reading of it as emblematic, almost symbolising Blanche's most profound struggles. There was an increase in the use of linguistic approaches, using concepts such as politeness principles, discourse analysis including modes of address, dominance of the floor, variety of sentence types and lexical analysis. There was also a pleasing degree of focus in many or most responses to staging, in particular stage directions and explicit or implicit proxemics. All this produced a style of approach which led to successful analysis.

Those responses that began at the beginning and provided analysis of the Young Man's encounter with the Negro Woman were often very successful.

Exemplar 2

		<p>Williams opens the extract by establishing a sense of threat and tension. This can be seen in the stage direction, "(There is a little glimmer of lightning)", the noun "lightning" is associated with danger and destruction thus creating a tone of threat. Moreover the stage direction, "cackling hysterically, swaying drunkenly", creates an uncomfortable setting, almost foreshadowing the untoward behaviour about to happen. Plus, it links to the high levels of poverty and desperation in New Orleans during the postwar American.</p>
		<p>Williams introducing Blanche into the extract by establishing her insecurity and thus sets up the conversation between her and the young man. This can be seen in the stage directions, "(Blanche puts down the mirror)". The concrete noun "mirror" illustrates her vanity and obsession with being desirable. The preposition "puts down"</p>
		<p>highlights her insecurity in the moment and sets up the idea of desperation to be desired and that the danger the young man may be in. This links to the importance of appearance and desirability for women in late 1940s America.</p>

Exemplar 2 starts near the beginning of the extract and uses details there to establish a firm basis for the following ideas.

The 'glimmer of lightning' was identified by many as creating a tense and gothic-influenced setting. The drunkenness of the Negro Woman was linked to Blanche's alcoholism and helped candidates to see her as a distorted projection of Blanche's behaviour and predicament. Her attention-seeking 'Hey! Sugar!' was usefully compared to Blanche's 'honey lamb'. The stage direction '*The Negro Woman snaps her finger before his belt*' was often interpreted as a signifier of her sexual invitation, probably made explicit in the '*indistinguishable word*'. The Young Man's reaction of '*shakes his head*' was compared to his persistent attempts to exit the scene and his shutting down of Blanche's invitations to speak through the

scene. One candidate used the phrase the 'Young Man avoided the frying pan but landed in the fire'. The opening establishes the sexual allure of youthfulness itself which is a key theme for Blanche's character.

The stage directions are a key source of information in this extract and several successful responses used them to structure their analysis. The positioning of the extract as taking place in proximity to the '*the door between the two rooms*' makes it, as some candidates expressed it, a 'liminal space' – a zone where perhaps Blanche believes that rules are suspended, and her own reality can dominate. Blanche's predatory nature can be read from the stage directions, perhaps using tricks she honed while in Laurel. Asking for a light brings the Young Man close to her. Her persistent interrogatives engage him and keep conversation moving so that there isn't a natural break which the Young Man can exploit to escape. His naivety and innocence mean that he is bound by politeness to respond, even if he does so briefly and reluctantly. Her status as a 'Southern Belle' still holds some sway so that he addresses her as 'Ma'am'. It is presented as a well-practiced routine which Blanche can conduct without real thought. One of the ironies of the scene is that the audience can read the Young Man's mind with absolute clarity but Blanche either is indifferent to his reluctance or even aroused by it. That is where her behaviour can be seen as most predatory and menacing.

Good selection of focus was common to very many scripts. These almost always picked out the lexical choices in 'Don't you just love these long rainy afternoons in New Orleans when an hour isn't just an hour – but a little bit of Eternity dropped in your hands – and who knows what to do with it?' This is characteristic of the rhapsodic style that Blanche uses intermittently throughout the play. She is shown to have a love of romantic and expressive language which opens out her imagination into an alternative world where things are possible which aren't in the here and now. This moment in time with this Young Man 'who knows what to do with it?' The cruel irony is that he knows what he wants to do with it – carry on collecting his newspaper subs and he has little interest in what she wants to do with it. The Young Man displays the ultimate in disinterest despite all she can throw at him. The sentence 'You make my mouth water' in relation to 'A cherry soda!' was spotted as an attempt to turn something innocent such as a sugary drink into something salacious. His reply confirms his youthful innocence – it was clear earlier when he refused the drink Blanche improperly offered him. Is it his youthfulness that makes her mouth water? Is it the flavour of cherry, or cherry as a sexual symbol? Is it his unattainability? Is it his innocence? Candidates explored all avenues very productively. Finally, the kiss. It was seen by many as proleptic of Blanche's rape. The roles of Blanche/The Young Man and Stanley/Blanche are reversed, the victim and predator switch positions but both are acts of violence albeit of different degrees of harm.

When discussing the 'upshot' or final impression of the extract, candidates differed widely in their interpretation. For many, Blanche's actions in the extract were those of a woman suffering from psychological damage incurred years before with the death of her husband. The 'Young Man' becomes Alan Grey re-embodied and her attraction to him is also an attraction to her own innocent past. For others, Blanche is little better than Stanley in her willingness to bend others to her will and to predate on those too weak to resist. The line that the latter group of candidates often quoted was 'Run along now! It would be nice to keep you, but I've got to be good and keep my hands off children. Adios!' They questioned how she could 'keep him', and why she patronises him with the maternal 'Run along now!' when moments before she was almost literally salivating over him.

There, in a nutshell, is the reason this text works so well in this specification. It always divides opinions and has rich layers of contradiction and ambiguity which give ample scope for candidates to explore and find their own readings.

There were very few less successful responses, almost all found interesting things to say. Very occasionally irrelevant AO3 intruded without contributing anything very telling to the discussion. The AO3

which was interesting was based on queer theory and Williams' own attraction to young men which makes sense of the scene when it is recalled that Williams identified with Blanche.

Question 10

10 Brian Friel: *Translations*

Explore how Friel presents Manus in this extract from *Translations*.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

This is the final sitting for Friel's *Translations*. It has been a favoured text by several centres over the years and affection for it and skill in delivering it to candidates has been noted. There were only a few centres preparing candidates for this text this year and so it is difficult to give anything but a broad sense of what was found in the responses.

Manus holds the floor at the beginning, with Owen's sparse responses indicative of a reluctance to speak indicating his disagreement with Manus' actions. Manus, meanwhile, is busy organising things as a kind of displacement activity in the light of his intense feelings of guilt over Yolland's fate. He has a job offer, but Owen doesn't understand why Manus is set on leaving. Owen is in the dark and Manus is seemingly unable to tell him. Manus is set on practicalities: 'Will you do that for me?' which is emphatically repeated, but Owen pleads trying to dissuade Manus. His speech 'Wait a couple of days' is full of poignant irony as Owen has no idea what has happened. At that moment, with intense drama, Manus shares what is on his mind: 'I had a stone in my hand when I went out looking for him – I was going to fell him. The lame scholar turned violent.' Jealousy had forced him to seek out Yolland to kill him but instead sees his beloved Maire and Yolland in an embrace. The frustration of language barrier which is a key theme of the play means that when Manus yells at Yolland it was 'The wrong gesture in the wrong language' and Yolland, not understanding, was left saying 'Sorry-sorry?' Owen's concern is for Manus to make it clear to the authorities that he had no part in Yolland's disappearance, but Manus' focus is on leaving, getting away.

He ignores Owen's questions throughout and dominates the floor to give instructions as to what Owen now has to do to look after their father. That is his final focus, not on himself but on his father. There is poignant detail in the list of instructions which several responses commented on because it shows the detail of Manus' grip on the daily running of the household which no-one else has. His loss to his family, and to those who depend on him such as Sarah, will be incalculable. Manus emerges as a man who was fundamentally good and was happy to help others and sacrifice his own needs for those of others until he becomes caught up in the struggle between the native Irish and the British colonisers, which has crushed and killed the life he had including his love for Maire. The greatest irony is that Sarah, whose ability to speak has been nurtured by Manus and who sits almost silent witnessing this scene, was how Manus finds out about the love between Yolland and Maire, so yet another of Manus' good deeds returns to bite him.

Successful responses had a good knowledge of the context of the scene such as is given above. They were able to explore the relationship between Owen and Manus using various methods and concepts especially the dominance of the floor. The successful responses looked at the lack of communication within the communication here between the brothers and saw that as emblematic of the play.

Less successful responses tended to pick just a few lines of text and offer discussion about those without linking ideas across the extract. They also used only a narrow range of methods and concepts to analyse the extract.

Question 11

11 Timberlake Wertenbaker: *Our Country's Good*

Explore how Wertenbaker presents the preparations for Liz Morden's hanging in this extract from *Our Country's Good*.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

There were no responses reported to this text. It bows out at this sitting after several years of low uptake among centres.

Question 12

12 Jez Butterworth: *Jerusalem*

Explore how Butterworth presents the conversation between Johnny and Troy in this extract from *Jerusalem*.

You should consider the use of dramatic and stylistic techniques in the extract, its significance within the play and any relevant dramatic or other contexts.

[32]

There has been an upturn in numbers of candidates for this text after a drop last year. The question continues the pattern of open and accessible questions on well-selected, self-contained extracts. Again, there were some very engaged and enthusiastic responses to this question.

Many responses began with how differently Johnny reacts in this extract to elsewhere in the play so far. He adopts politeness, openness and friendliness to this intruder in stark contrast to his reception of the Kennet and Avon Council in the opening of the play. The use of the term of address 'mate' and words such as 'Welcome' sound strange in Johnny's mouth. Many candidates felt that something was amiss. Is this friendliness genuine? What tricks is Johnny up to? Lee's comic 'What?' expresses the surprise of the audience alongside his own. Johnny's characteristic dominance over Lee in his imperatives 'Get up', indicates that he hasn't undergone any transformation. Most readings suggested that Johnny's behaviour is tactical. The elaborate (for Johnny) mode of address 'Mr Whitworth' seems straightforwardly respectful, but is it? The cooperation in exchange soon begins to break down when Johnny asks, 'You win anything yet?' is answered 'You having a party then?' The flouting of Grice's Maxim of relevance was noted by many as was the beginnings of Troy's assertion of his own agenda rather than conforming to Johnny's. Johnny's hospitable fussing over Troy's seat is rebutted with Troy's repeated 'I ain't staying', 'I said, I ain't staying.' The first sense of threat is announced in that emphatic 'I said'. Hostility breaks out into the open with "You deaf, gyppo? I ain't sitting with you". Johnny's discourse has been an elaborately friendly one with evident care for Troy's comfort and wellbeing and this is thrust back in his face with the racial taunt and face-threatening emphasis on 'you' which reinforces the racism and offensive particularity. This should be like a red rag to a bull, but mysteriously Johnny is not provoked and changes subject without changing the friendly and engaging tone.

The shift comes with Troy's blunt monosyllabic 'Where is she?'. Suddenly there is an explanation for Troy's presence and for the façade Johnny erects of hospitality and friendliness. Johnny knows what

Troy is there for and he knows where Phaedra is. As many responses pointed out, Johnny is playing with Troy. To return the earlier bull metaphor, Johnny is using language and linguistic codes as a matador uses the red cloak to taunt and antagonise the bull. There follows a delightful moment of acting on Johnny's part when Troy repeats 'Where is she? Where's Phaedra?' There is a 'beat', a moment for Johnny to pause and think about how to continue to taunt Troy. He chooses 'Which one's she?' which has its own faint offensiveness. He succeeds in goading Troy as evident in the repeated 'Don't try me'. Then Johnny takes the floor, indicating through this that he is not intimidated. 'I can't tell these rats apart, Troy'. Several responses linked this to the 'Pied Piper' image used by Troy at the end, but the way Johnny refers to the young people gathered in the Green Wood worried several candidates. Is he simply trying to offend Troy? How deeply does Johnny feel for his tribe of youngsters? At the second 'beat' he recalls her, and in thorough detail down to the freckle and her tears. It's Johnny's way of indicating to Troy that all he is doing is goading him.

There is an ominous pause while Johnny waits to see how Troy will react. His move is to order Johnny to clear the stage: 'This is between you and me'. The intricate verbal teasing and sparring has succeeded in bringing Troy to violence. Johnny doesn't swerve from his tactic of apparent camaraderie 'There's no need to break up the party. Thought we were mates'. He appears to try to win Troy over through referencing his time with Troy's brothers, 'They're good lads. I don't have no beef with the Whitworths.' This would maybe work if Troy's anger was over a small matter, but Johnny knows full well that, as several candidates pointed out, Troy has come with murderous intent to take back his stepdaughter. He won't be swayed, just as Johnny won't be swayed.

One very successful response explained that Johnny's 'What say we bury the hatchet?' is chosen by Butterworth for Johnny to say entirely deliberately to set up Troy's heavy-footed response: 'We'll bury the hatchet all right. Right in your fuckin' skull, pikey'. The effect is of teasing and rubbing a boil or carbuncle until it bursts. This language is the offensive filth, the equivalent of poisonous matter erupting. The problem for Troy is that his outburst, rather than being awe-inspiring or fear-inducing is just (leaving aside the offensiveness of the language) very funny. He has fallen right into Johnny's trap. That is not to say that there isn't a heavy threat left in the air. As several perceptive candidates pointed out, Johnny is storing up trouble for himself ahead and will pay a heavy price for his verbal triumph here.

In the upshot of the extract, the final summing up of its importance, many responses divided, as surely Butterworth intended. The question is, which of the verbal combatants has the moral authority? Troy is the stepfather of a daughter who is lost, and he strongly suspects she is being sheltered by a ne'er-do-well tramp in the woods and is possibly being abused by him. On the other hand, as Johnny states after the extract (numbers of responses quoted this) 'Bet it's hard to sleep with her right next door. She in your dreams, boy? She in your dreams?' Johnny suspects that Phaedra has every reason to hide in the woods away from her abusive stepfather and he will use all his guile and verbal trickery to keep her safe. It was always interesting to see how candidates presented their case, with some perceptive responses sitting on the fence by saying that Butterworth doesn't make us choose.

There were very many successful responses and rather few less successful ones. Those less successful ones gave only a partial view of the extract and didn't choose the moments wisely to focus on. Some opened somewhere in the middle of the extract and missed that sense of the shape of the build-up.

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