

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in
English Literature

H472

For first teaching in 2015

H472/02 Summer 2025 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 responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

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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:
• read the unseen extract with care and focused on its key elements • kept contextual material to a minimum in the critical appreciation • divided their time evenly between the two questions, writing the same amount on each • chose two main texts for the comparative essay, referencing others more briefly as context • made accurate points about extra texts used for wider reference • made sure that their responses were clearly paragraphed and logically argued • considered the meaning of the question carefully and responded to its key terms • knew their primary texts very well, enabling accurate discussion and apt selection of quotations.	• read the unseen extract quickly and focused disproportionately on the first half • made a contextual reference for every analytical point in the critical appreciation • spent much longer on the comparative essay, often writing twice as much • incorporated a large number of the set texts in the comparative essay, missing the chance for detail and depth of comparison • made basic errors about extra texts, suggesting that they had not read them • unloaded prepared material without regard for relevance or for clear arrangement of material • wrote a prepared response without proper consideration of the question set • had a sketchy knowledge of the texts partly based on film/tv versions, resulting in errors in discussion and poorly chosen quotations.

Examiners were impressed by the level of engagement with texts and topics which they saw in work from many of the candidates this series. There was an interesting emergence of 'contemporary context', with references to Keir Starmer's remark about an 'island of strangers' in work on prejudice against immigrants and to Donald Trump's presidency in responses on the limitations of systems of government. Candidates were keen to demonstrate a breadth of reading and reference, but some were taking shortcuts and appeared to have knowledge of texts which they had not read (*Wuthering Heights* was a common example where references betrayed a degree of ignorance). There was perhaps a stronger tendency to stick to the perceived safety of prepared material which resulted in more bending of the question to fit pre-written essays than in previous years.

Candidates generally found the unseen passages to be accessible, especially where they made sensible use of the headnotes which were carefully written to help avoid potential pitfalls. As in other series, those who succeeded in the critical appreciation spent most of their time in analysis of form, structure and language and limited any contextual comment to what was most important and helpful in drawing out the

unseen material. Less successful responses to the Gothic passage in particular tended to follow each point from the passage with a link to another text ('This reminds me of...') which often felt quite automatic and unhelpful. Some candidates seemed to feel that it was safer to put in everything which occurred to them, whereas in fact selection of material is one of the most important skills in these responses. Use of technical terms was variable: the term 'oxymoron' is very popular among candidates and almost always misused. In this question paper, it could reasonably be applied to the 'soundless screams' in the Dystopia passage but otherwise it was generally out of place. The term 'unreliable narrator' also caused some problems, and it might be better to encourage candidates to use 'first person narrator' or 'limited narrator' instead. The term 'unreliable' can tempt them into suggesting that the narrator might be deliberately misleading the reader, and this can present obstacles to understanding the unseen passage.

Key technique for tackling the unseen passage

A careful initial read to arrive at an overview of the unseen passage is important. Those who dived straight in to writing often spent too long on the initial exposition (the Haskins's hard work or the Gothic setting) and missed or skimmed on more interesting material later in the passage (the glorious wheatfield or the strange 'dead watcher' in the graveyard).

The comparative essays were sometimes excellent but suffered more from problems with argument and structure this year. There was a determination from many candidates to pack their essays full of references to texts, contexts and criticism with the result that work was patched together from fragments of learned material, meaning that responses were often very long and disjointed without much thought for the reader. It may help candidates to know that the longest essays are rarely the best essays and that the best essays are never difficult to read. Markers found that introductions to essays were sometimes good indicators of overall quality and often showed how the candidate intended to approach the task.

Exemplar 1

2	c.	In both Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby' and Richard Wright's 'Native Son', the literary writings show societies which lack compassion through themes such as The American Dream, Social Class and Race. Typical of American literature in the at early/middle 1900's, both novels were set in major cities; New York and Chicago; however within both, the clear lack of compassion for societal divides is clear. It is clear that while Fitzgerald idealises this lack with is modernist writing, Wright addresses key societal issues through realism.
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This exemplar shows a candidate who seems to have predetermined the introduction to their essay on the lack of compassion in society. The response suggests that the lack of compassion will be shown through the themes of 'The American Dream, Social Class and Race' without making it clear how these themes are relevant to the question. At the end of the introduction, it is suggested that Fitzgerald 'idealises' lack of compassion through Modernist writing whereas Wright 'addresses social issues' through realism; again, this seems like a predetermined introduction, not least because 'idealising' a lack of compassion does not seem to make sense.

Exemplar 2

		In Dystopian fiction, there is often an oppressive force or external pressure at play. This can take the form of various regimes like in the <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> and <i>1984</i> or can just be the a dangerous environment in <i>The Road</i>. These forces often sow distrust between characters and, given Dystopia's fondness for plot twists or sharp turns, often characters experience betrayal. Betrayal is present in all of the previously mentioned texts in one form or another – in the plot and in the reader as their trust and hope in plans or characters are dashed by the overbearing cruelty displayed in dystopia. In this essay, I will frequently return to this quote by Foucault: 'full light and the eye of a supervisor capture better than the dark'. It marking describes a Panopticon (hypothetical jail where inmates are watched at all times) which aids in my explanation of sowing the seeds of distrust.
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This introduction is longer and more explanatory and makes a clear effort to explain the candidate's approach to an essay on limits to the trust between people. There is a clear outline of the nature of Dystopia: the candidate explains that the genre suggests 'an oppressive force or external pressure' which is likely to give rise to distrust. The introduction goes on to suggest that the genre often features 'plot twists or sharp turns', and that 'betrayal' is therefore a likely element in these texts and an integral part of the dystopian genre. The tone of the introduction is thoughtful and clear, and the explanation is helpful to the reader.

Candidates had often compiled an impressive array of contextual material which was helpful where used selectively. Although AO3 is the dominant objective in this part of the exam, candidates still need to be aware that it should never be included for its own sake and that the foreground of their responses should always be literary texts, not contexts. The most intrusive contextual discussion is often taken from authors' biographies and is sometimes quite speculative, for example regarding the sexual preferences of Bram Stoker or the marital problems of Angela Carter. This kind of writing is better avoided or at the least very carefully disciplined so that considerations of the text and the topic are not overshadowed.

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]

Many responses saw this passage as dividing into three parts: the backbreaking work of the early stages; the improving phase with the advice of Stephen Council; and the resulting richness represented by the field of wheat. Some spent too long on the first of these stages, quoting heavily from every sentence about the toughness of the life when a smaller selection would have been sufficient; these responses often had to miss out the middle phase or skimp on the ending. A small number of responses assumed that the family is African-American, seemingly based entirely on their struggles to survive. Comments on Council often noted his use of the vernacular, some referencing Naturalism or Regionalism as literary context. Most recognised the more lyrical style in the celebration of the wheat; some were (rightly) fearful on the family's behalf, detecting signs that there may be trouble ahead. The least successful responses came from candidates who wanted to look at gender relations and concluded that Nettie is oppressed by her husband and unwilling in her work; many of these suggested (incorrectly) that she is unnamed in the passage, or that she is only grudgingly named at the end when things are looking more successful. More successful responses perceived that the family works as a team, and did not try to identify victims and victimisers.

Question 2 (a)

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

'American literature emphasises the importance of second chances.'

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 attracted relatively few responses. Answers recognised *Gatsby* as someone who wants a second start in life as a wealthy man, also affording him the 'second chance' to fulfil his dream of a love relationship with Daisy. Myrtle also figured as a character who wants a second chance to move up the social scale on the basis of her relationship with Tom Buchanan. Answers on *Gatsby* were often inclined to take sides in relation to the characters: Tom always prompted disapproval and Myrtle was usually found to be more sympathetic, although some candidates disapproved of her treatment of George. *Gatsby* was generally treated by candidates with 'unaffected scorn'; only the most successful responses seemed to understand the appeal to Nick of his glamour and vitality. *Gatsby* was sometimes paired with *The Grapes of Wrath*, whose characters seek a second chance in California; with *Passing*, where Clare finds a new start as a wealthy white woman; and with *The Age of Innocence*, where Newland finally turns down his second chance at love in favour of adherence to the values of old New York.

Question 2 (b)

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

'Self-reliance is a key quality for characters in American literature.'

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 question had very few responses, possibly because most candidates who wrote on Steinbeck also wrote on Fitzgerald, and 'second chances' and 'compassion' seemed to them like more fruitful directions to take. Responses on *The Grapes of Wrath* praised the toughness of the Joads, in particular Ma Joad, during some of the testing experiences set out in the novel. Much as self-reliance was praised, responses often also pointed out that the Okies gain greater strength from relying on each other than simply on themselves. Candidates offered substantial contextual insights into the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl; once again the novel appeared to have made a significant impression on its readers. Self-reliance also appeared as a theme in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *My Ántonia* as a strength; in *Native Son* it emerged more as the quandary of having no one else to turn to.

Question 2 (c)

(c) 'American literature shows us a society which lacks compassion.'

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 by a long way the most popular question for this topic, although there were many candidates who were unclear about the meaning of 'compassion' or tried to shape their response to fit a different theme. Most of these deflected to social class and equality, which may be related to compassion but are not the same thing, and as a result these essays were often loosely or implicitly relevant but not directly so. Candidates with strong knowledge of the texts were able to find some interesting or unexpected references to aid discussion on compassion, such as the tears shed by Tom after Myrtle's death in *The Great Gatsby*. Many discussed *The Grapes of Wrath* alongside *Gatsby* and were able to select from a number of scenes where characters show compassion, such as Ma Joad feeding the hungry children or Rose of Sharon offering her breast to the starving man at the novel's conclusion; there were also pertinent quotations from the words of former preacher Jim Casy. *Passing*, an increasingly popular text, seemed to pose something of a challenge to some candidates responding to this question, who were sometimes reduced to suggesting that characters who disagree with each other, such as Irene and Brian, might be described as lacking compassion.

Question 3

The Gothic

3 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic. [30]

This was a very popular topic and candidates generally warmed to the Victorian Gothic passage they were offered. For higher marks, they needed to cover a number of ideas: the idea of the dream; the first person narration; the Gothic settings; the revenant who speaks at the end; and the legal story which evidently lies behind the haunting events. Some responses restricted themselves to discussing the settings, using frequent quotation and explaining how the scenes are characteristically Gothic, but doing little more. The idea of the dream was an interesting discriminator because relatively few candidates kept it in view throughout their reading; some of these suggested that the dream might arise partly from the narrator's anxieties about his day job. The narrator was sometimes assumed to be female, although the headnote makes it clear that he is a man, and his reliability was sometimes questioned for no clear reason. Less successful responses did not reach the end of the passage with the 'dead watcher'; better ones discussed him in detail, some indicating that his 'wistful, eager eyes' suggest vulnerability and give him an unexpected appeal. Only the highest scoring responses saw how the narrative might fit together, some suggesting that the 'dead watcher' might have information relating to the haunting of the house in the legal case; these responses showed a familiarity with the genre that appeared to come from wide reading.

Question 4 (a)

4 (a) Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

'Gothic narratives often feature a sense of impending disaster.'

Consider how far you agree with this statement by comparing *Dracula* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic. [30]

This question allowed candidates to write about suspense in Gothic texts, and especially in *Dracula*. For many, however, the 'impending disaster' lay outside the text rather than within it. Fear of the foreigner and 'reverse colonisation' was a popular topic for discussion, as was the rise of the 'New Woman'; candidates explained how these contemporary social fears are embodied as villains in Gothic narratives. In other texts the impending disaster was often located for candidates in discussions of context rather than text, which sometimes limited the literary interest of the response. Candidates continued to write well about *Beloved*, an interesting text for this question in that the disaster feels to be impending but is actually in the characters' pasts; here, text and context are more closely aligned than in *Dracula*. Texts such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Rebecca* also appeared for comparison, and others from outside the specification were often referenced, at times inaccurately.

Question 4 (b)

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

'Although Gothic tales depend on fantasy, they can tell us deep truths about human nature.'

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 the most popular question for this topic. Some candidates understood the opposition set up between 'fantasy', or invention, and 'deep truths', or reality. However, there were many who overlooked the term 'fantasy' entirely and jumped straight to 'human nature', which they tended to see as rooted in social context. There were many responses, therefore, which concentrated on familiar territory relating to feminism and gender roles and bypassed 'fantasy' altogether. Some responses read 'fantasy' with its sexualised meaning, leading into a number of Carter stories which deal with sexual material and thence often to the Brides and the vampiric Lucy Westenra in *Dracula*. *Frankenstein* often appeared in responses, offering the fantastic figure of the Creature alongside challenging truths about the overreach of humanity; as usual, candidates often found this text to be a rewarding choice. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was another helpful text, although it was only the more successful candidates who identified the mechanism of Basil Hallward's portrait as the novel's element of 'fantasy'.

Question 4 (c)

(c) 'The most important feature of Gothic writing is its entertainment value.'

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 not a popular choice for candidates, who instead tended to suggest that the Gothic is a channel for serious social messages rather than a genre delivering sensation and excitement to an avid readership. There were some responses which did not engage with the question at all, simply disagreeing with the premise and moving on to an alternative 'important feature', often to do with gender roles. Most went for a more balanced response, where they suggested that entertainment value and social messages achieve a kind of balance in the Gothic. *Beloved* proved to be a helpful choice here, as a Gothic text which clearly sets out to deal with very sobering historical material in a genre which does not usually tackle such serious subjects; a comparison with a more sensational text like *Dracula* gave candidates a useful contrast for their discussion.

Question 5

Dystopia

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

Candidates generally found this passage to be accessible and open to discussion. The majority of responses identified George Sanford as the first person narrator and many suggested he is a kind of everyman, relating him to Winston Smith from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Offred from *The Handmaid's Tale*. George's gift of empathy was identified by good candidates as a skilful narrative method since it allows insights which would not otherwise be available to the reader; one candidate suggested that 'George can quite literally be every man', since he can even access the experiences of characters hidden behind closed doors. The sequence which presumably describes a 'brainwipe', where the hidden character regresses through childhood memories, was effectively analysed by many, who often suggested that a feeling of nostalgia emerges through the cherry and cinnamon details. Many candidates were familiar with the story of *A Clockwork Orange* and made appropriate contextual references to Alex's experiences in that novel. The behaviour of the uniformed intern and his insistence on official (euphemistic) language featured in most responses. All drew on contexts relating to authoritarian states; sometimes, discussion of Orwell and Atwood was allowed to dominate at the expense of AO2 analysis.

Question 6 (a)

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

'Dystopian writing shows the limitations of human systems of government.'

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 question was read in two different ways by candidates: some understood it to mean that the systems of government are flawed or lacking in power; others understood the 'limitations' to be the restrictions imposed on citizens by the government. Those taking the second route tended to offer a list of examples of the bad things which can happen to people under totalitarian rule; this allowed candidates to walk some very familiar territory but did not allow for a strong literary argument. Those who examined the systems themselves for their weaknesses had more interesting things to say. Most compared *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, and often suggested that Orwell's 'Party' is the more thorough and far-reaching system of the two, and ultimately appears to enjoy absolute exercise of power. Some suggested that the shabby, damaged living conditions of places like 'Victory Mansions' and the astonishing level of vigilance required by the state amounted to evidence of limitations, however. Discussion of *The Handmaid's Tale* suggested that there is more wriggle room in this regime, and that the hypocrisy of characters like the Commander leaves gaps in the system which others can also exploit.

Question 6 (b)

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

'Dystopian regimes contain the seeds of their own downfall.'

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 question was the least popular of the three. In discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, candidates often quoted Margaret Atwood's point about optimism in the novel: 'the note on Newspeak at the end of 1984 is written in standard English in the past tense, which tells us that Newspeak did not persist. It did not win.' There was often a feeling nevertheless that there seems to be more room for optimism at the end of *The Handmaid's Tale* where Offred steps up, 'into the darkness within; or else the light.' There were some helpful references to Atwood's sequel, *The Testaments*, in some responses, indicating that the Sons of Jacob regime does in fact fall. There were less helpful references, however, to the Hulu television dramatisation, and these were particularly problematic where candidates used it to substitute for the set text, for example by referencing named characters who do not appear in the novel. Most responses identified resistance movements such as the Brotherhood in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Mayday in *The Handmaid's Tale* as the 'seeds of downfall' and were able to discuss and exemplify these effectively.

Question 6 (c)

(c) 'Dystopian writing shows that there are limits to the trust between people.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this view.

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

[30]

This was the most popular question and again candidates tended to select the two headline texts, although there were also responses engaging with *The Road*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Brave New World*. Answers on *Brave New World* always stand out because of the nature of the contrast between texts, since Huxley's approach (which he described as 'negative utopia') is very different in style from the brutal totalitarian states of the other novels. The best responses focused on the relationships between people, as presented in the question, and good responses often referred to the human need for trust and connection which drives the characters. Many responses spent a lot of time on surveillance, which provided relevant support but could not always carry the whole argument in relation to trust. Some high-scoring responses focused on the importance of trust and betrayal, the other side of the coin, in this genre; some of the most interesting focused on the twists and turns of the relationship between Winston and O'Brien and were able to provide detailed support from the novel for their discussion.

Question 7

Women in Literature

- 7 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature. [30]

Many candidates broke down this passage about a pregnancy by dividing it into three characters: the mother (Lottie), the father (Ralph), and the grandmother (Mrs Bascomb). Some found the unsympathetic presentation of Lottie challenging, and many candidates attempted to support her as an expectant mother. These responses took at face value Lottie's fears of losing her health and good looks, and possibly her life, and took against the narrator and the other characters for the failure to support her, even comparing her plight to that of the woman in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' as the victim of hostile carers. Mrs Bascomb, with her 'venomous' sewing, was often criticised in this way; by contrast, most recognised that Ralph is fairly helpless but some still blamed him for lack of support for his wife. There were excellent responses which pointed out that both Lottie and Mrs Bascomb have strong feelings but that, where Lottie's are all expressed, her mother-in-law remains 'grimly silent'. They were often interested in the power relationships within the passage, recognising that Mrs Bascomb holds the economic power but has little say when it comes to making decisions.

Question 8 (a)

- 8 (a) Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

'Female characters are preoccupied by the search for a secure situation in life.'

By comparing *Sense and Sensibility* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case. [30]

This was not a popular question but was generally well done where it was attempted. Candidates were well informed about the misfortunes of the Dashwood women and their progress to the married state; most pointed out that Marianne initially scorns the search for security but ultimately buys into it, and often suggested that Elinor is, if anything, too preoccupied with taking the most sensible course. Lucy Steele often featured in responses too, with many suggesting that she should not be blamed for her scheming ways, since society has manoeuvred her into a place where she has few choices. A few chose *Mrs Dalloway*, the other headline text, for comparison, suggesting that Clarissa found her secure situation when she married Richard Dalloway, and that the novel creates a kind of review of her decision and its consequences. More chose *The Bell Jar* as a partner text, focusing on Esther's struggle to decide about her future. Work on *Jane Eyre* was interesting, sometimes featuring a hostility towards both St John Rivers and Mr Rochester. Candidates often seemed to be disappointed that Jane marries Rochester at the end and even tried to argue that she is coerced in some way, despite the legacy she receives which grants her independence.

Question 8 (b)

(b) Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

'Female characters in literature often underestimate themselves.'

By comparing *Mrs Dalloway* 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. Candidates discussed a range of female characters from *Mrs Dalloway*, including Clarissa, her daughter Elizabeth and Miss Kilman; Rezia was also considered, and there were thoughtful references to Lady Bruton, who moves in the highest circles but lacks the confidence to write to *The Times* ('she used to feel the futility of her own womanhood as she felt it on no other occasion'). *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was a popular choice for comparison, both here and elsewhere, and candidates enjoyed showing how Janie grows in power and confidence throughout the text.

Question 8 (c)

(c) 'Female characters are often vulnerable to exploitation or mistreatment.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this claim.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Sense and Sensibility* and/or *Mrs Dalloway*. [30]

This was the most popular question for the topic, attracting a large number of responses. Candidates often found that relatively minor characters were helpful for inclusion, such as the two Elizas from *Sense and Sensibility*, Miss Kilman and Rezia from *Mrs Dalloway* and Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre*. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was a popular text for discussion and responses offered plenty of material by way of exploitation and mistreatment of Tess from this novel; one or two excellent responses also discussed the other poor girls from the dairy who fall unhappily for Angel Clare. The most successful responses were prepared to offer more than just a catalogue of horrible experiences, showing how some female characters are resilient and principled, like Jane Eyre, or grow in terms of maturity and independence, like Janie Stark from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. For the first time, examiners reported seeing some responses on Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*, which offered an excellent range of material for this or either of the other questions. The best of these ensured inclusion of two or three strands from the novel and did not try to make one part do duty for the whole.

Question 9

The Immigrant Experience

- 9 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience. [30]

As in other sessions, examiners saw relatively little on this topic. The unseen passage seemed to be accessible to candidates, who generally warmed to the young couple in the story and criticised the prejudice displayed by Ted's mother. Some examiners noted a tendency to treat the characters as real people and found that some candidates even offered advice. Most candidates picked out the mixed messages from Mrs Jordan, such as the warm squeeze of Rose's hand coupled with the failure to meet her eye, and discussed the older woman's racist language and attitudes. Responses were completely satisfied that there was nothing mixed about her warning to Rose to keep away from her son. Interestingly, only the better responses saw how this Romeo-and-Juliet-style adversity creates a false basis for the marriage, laying the ground for their later divorce; one successful response explained that the relationship is depicted as 'an orientalist fantasy rather than an equal partnership.' Less successful responses insisted on the triumph of the young people and seemed to have missed the information about their break-up given in the headnote.

Question 10 (a)

- 10 (a) Henry Roth: *Call It Sleep*

'The literature of immigration is frequently characterised by hope.'

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

There was little or no work seen in response to this question.

Question 10 (b)

(b) Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

'The immigrant experience often involves encounters with prejudice.'

By comparing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* 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 this topic, attracting responses from almost all the candidates who had chosen this thematic strand. Work on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* showed it to be a good choice as ever; candidates were ready to discuss the form as well as the content of this text, and they seemed to enjoy an opportunity to explain how the allegorical features of the text related to their question. Here as elsewhere there was a tendency to stick to a well-worn path of incidents and quotations, and candidates who knew the whole text well stood out as producing work which was fresher and more effective. Responses could demonstrate how Changez seems to flourish as long as he is prepared to stay in his assigned lane of high-achieving immigrant, but how he encounters difficulties once he steps outside of it. Comparisons were almost always drawn with Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, and again the novel's form was of interest to candidates, many of whom referred to the different voices which are used in the text. There was plenty of energetic contextual discussion about the prejudice faced by the Windrush generation.

Question 10 (c)

(c) 'Hard work is generally a key feature of the immigrant experience.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

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

There were very few responses reported to this question, again generally choosing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Small Island* for comparison and often taking an interest in the different kinds of 'hard work' which feature in the two novels, one at the top of the social scale and the other at a much lower level. The strong contrast between the texts sometimes made it difficult to get them to work together in a response. Examiners reported that some responses tended not to focus on particular employment or occupation but argued that being an immigrant is hard work in itself, and this offered a successful route through the question.

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Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

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 the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

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](#).

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 the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

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?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

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.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



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Our resources do not represent any teaching method we expect you to use. We cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in our resources.