

SECTION A (POETRY)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

While the 'story' of the poem is important, poems are more than stories and thus a close line-by-line reading of the poems is also necessary if candidates are to answer questions adequately.

Candidates' attention must be drawn to the fact that lines referred to are the lines to focus on for that question or series of questions.

QUESTION 1:

Candidates handled this question particularly well, which attests to sound teaching of the poetry section. However, candidates often did not get the second mark in a two-mark question because they did not read the question properly, or because they did not make note of the mark allocation. For example, in Question 1.2.2 candidates were required to show a change, which would require a comment on both options given to them.

QUESTION 2:

This question was very poorly answered and many candidates chose this poem. Many candidates seemed to produce prepared answers which they tried to adapt to the questions. Many candidates knew only the 'story' of the poem and when questioned about their understanding of the poem they resorted to flippant comments about love. For example, in Question 2.3 the question referred to a metaphor in the quoted lines. Notwithstanding, many candidates gave answers based on the next two lines and ignored the comparison between the star and love. In other cases, candidates gave glib answers about love guiding a person as a star might a ship. These kinds of answers do not focus on the requirements of the question.

QUESTIONS 3 AND 4:

These questions were adequately answered and, in some cases, really well answered.

SECTION B (DRAMA)

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Candidates were confident about the play of their choice, which attested to much sound teaching
- Candidates often did not refer to lines quoted for them or to the text, even if specifically asked to do so.
- Essay answers were much better this year.
- Contextual questions were often treated as textual questions.

QUESTIONS 5 AND 7:

On the whole Shakespeare did not seem as daunting as usual to the candidates. Questions were confidently tackled. However, many candidates do not seem to realise that the contextual question is primarily based on the text provided. Many candidates gave answers from elsewhere in the play when advised to refer to specific lines. For example, Question 5.3 refers candidates to specific lines, yet candidates gave answers from other parts of the play.

QUESTIONS 6 AND 8:

The essays were often well handled by candidates. However, there were still many candidates trying to insert their prepared answer into a response. This meant that an essay on Hamlet's life story was given as an answer to Question 6 or an essay on the evil Iago was given in answer to Question 8. Those candidates who responded correctly to the question, wrote a well structured essays with a logical argument.

SECTION C (NOVEL)

GENERAL COMMENTS

There was some misreading of the novel where candidates saw the presence of the coloniser as a benign force civilising a grateful populous. This kind of approach is at odds with the very clear message Achebe gives.

QUESTION 9

This question was confidently tackled, but many candidates were penalised because their understanding of the role of the coloniser and the missionary presence was skewed. Again many candidates treated this question as a textual question and did not refer to the given text for their answers.

QUESTION 10

This essay question, like the other essay questions, was well handled by many candidates. In good responses candidates engaged with the question and relished giving their own view of Okonkwo, with wide-ranging textual support.