

Literature in English (920)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

92 candidates sat for this subject in 2010 and 75% of them passed at principal level.

The percentage for each grade is as follows.

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Percentage	13.10	16.66	9.53	10.71	9.52	8.34	10.71	1.19	2.38	4.76	13.1

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

PAPER 920/1 (SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER BRITISH WRITERS)

General Comments

Generally, some candidates were able to provide outstanding answers with clear critical discussions which showed adequate knowledge of the texts. They were able to use their knowledge of the texts to support their arguments which was well expressed in idiomatic English. On the other hand, lower scorers showed an apparent inability to be critical in their answers, many of which were mere vague summaries which failed to answer the specific questions.

Comments on individual questions

SECTION A

For Section A, candidates are required to choose and answer only one question.

A good number of candidates seemed to have forgotten the 'critical appreciation' aspect of the questions in this section, and included, a full summary of the source text in their answers. They lost their focus on the relevant points required to answer the questions.

Question 1

- (a) This question requires candidates to summarise Hamlet's main argument in the passage given and comment on the metaphors used in the argument. Answers could have been better had candidates been able to assess the effectiveness of one or more metaphors besides just interpreting them. However, the candidates who attempted this question seemed to have forgotten this part of the question.
- (b) Candidates were required to analyse the elements in the passage that give the impression that the passage is about Hamlet's personal experience which also refers to what readers go through and think about. In order to answer this question well, candidates are required to look at both the personal and general aspects of the passage. The candidates who attempted this question presented a general impression of how the 'novel' (as some candidates identified genre of Shakespeare's play) relates to life in general, but made little effort in relating these experiences through a close analysis of the passage.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were required to explain how the passage sets the scene and provides background information for an audience. Answers should establish the forest setting as well as introduce the characters the Duke and Jaques.
- (b) This question requires candidates to discuss the similarities and differences in the views of Duke Senior and Jaques about life in the forest. Candidates would need to discuss that both Duke Senior and Jaques find lessons in the forest and that they both regret the need to hunt. As for differences, Duke Senior enjoys life in the forest despite the harsh physical conditions while Jaques perhaps does not enjoy life in the forest, yet may, in a perverse fashion, enjoy the opportunities for moralising and the grieving that it affords.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were required to show how Keats' selection of words create atmosphere in the poem. Points that could have been considered would be how the poem depicts an outer atmosphere of cold and desolate weather in contrast with the inner "landscape" (the "I" traveler's feelings and thoughts) and the use of adjectives, participles and verbs in the poem.
- (b) The question requires candidates to explain why the traveler (the "I" of the poem) is not too disturbed by the cold and bleak surroundings. Points that could have been considered would be the fact that the "I" was aware of the bleak surroundings but he can rise above them because he has found some inner resources of warmth from previous experiences. The "I" also has a definite pleasant destination to look forward to ('home's pleasant lair'). Answers given were generally summaries.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates were required to show how the persona's choice of words in the poem, *The Conformers*, conveys the irony and contrast pervading it. The words showed the contrast between the respectable but staid life as a married couple and the exciting but clandestine life as a courting couple. The main irony is that the couple will have to give up their more exciting life in order to gain a place in a respectable established society.
- (b) The question asks the poet's attitude towards marriage in the poem. Candidates should answer that the poet is critical of the institution of marriage and this is seen in how he contrasts the marriage state with the period of courtship. Though the persona seems to opt for marriage, the words and phrases he associates with it are uninteresting as compared to those he associates with courtship.

Question 5

- (a) Many candidates answered this question. Answers should point out that Jane is a dependant as compared to John who is the heir to the properties. Jane's position is inflected by gender and class differences; she has no voice in the metaphorical sense and is forced to hide her thirst of knowledge because of her subordinate position in the household. Good responses from candidates are well organized and well written in idiomatic English.
- (b) The question requires candidates to analyse John Reed's character with close reference to the passage given. Some of John Reed's characters that can be included are abusive, selfish, heartless, spoilt and class-conscious. Some answers brought in 'extraneous' elements from the novel that are not found in the excerpt.

Question 6

The quality of answers generally indicated that the candidates were not well prepared to answer questions on this text.

- (a) Candidates are required to explain why the Savage was angry at “all the hundred and sixty-two” Deltas and whether his reactions are justified. For the first part of the question, candidates should point out why the Savage was angry and as for the second part, candidates are free to express their own opinion provided that their opinions are based only on the passage.
- (b) The question requires candidate to discuss how Huxley develops the Savage’s attitude towards the twins and their dependence on *soma*. Points to consider for this question are the use of words and phrases that develop a distasteful image of the Deltas and words and phrases that show how the Deltas are being treated by the Deputy Sub-Bursar and his men which make the Savage angry at the Deltas for allowing it to happen.

SECTION B

For Section B, candidates are required to choose and answer only one question.

Question 7

- (a) (i) Candidates were required to point out how Shakespeare uses language in the passage to indicate the setting for an Elizabethan audience. Many candidates are not familiar with the stage or performance aspect of Shakespeare to be able to answer this question. The physical aspects of the scene are described, like the location which is Denmark and outside a castle. The time is midnight and it is dark and cold. Candidates should point out the relevant phrases that could support their answers.
- (ii) Candidates are required to explain in what way the passage sets the tone for the rest of the play. Candidates should point out that the opening scene is pervaded by the sense of nervousness and of things not being quite right and give some details to support their answers such as the wrong guard issues the challenge – the relief challenges the one on duty rather than vice versa, Marcellus who apparently doesn’t know who is to keep watch with him and the bitter cold which suggests sterility and death.
- (b) (i) Candidates are required to explain what according to Jaques has inspired his desire to be a ‘fool’. Answers should include comments on Jaques’ meeting and conversation with Touchstone and how Jaques was so entertained and excited by what Touchstone had said that he gave a detailed account on it to Duke Senior.
- (ii) This question requires candidates to answer to what extent Jaques seems to function like another ‘fool’ in the play. Candidates should point out that although Jaques is known as the “melancholy” man in Duke Senior’s retinue and does not wear motley, as official fools (court jesters) do, he speaks his mind freely and provides entertainment by being critical of the Duke and his retinue for making fun of lovers. Almost all candidates who answered this question failed to point out the more ‘serious’ side of Jaques, which is the other ‘extent’ of his character.

Question 8

- (a) The question requires candidates to answer how much revenge plays a part in *Hamlet*. The two main characters in the play moved by revenge are Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet is asked by his

father's ghost to avenge his killing by his brother, Claudius. It takes a long time for Hamlet to do that because of his need to check the truth of the ghost's story. One can say that although Hamlet does not really get around to killing Claudius till near the end of the play, the action does move as a result of his intention of avenging his father's death, that is, he devises the play within a play which is to affect the course of the play's plot. Laertes is much more easily moved to act out his revenge when he hears that his father has been killed in the King's palace. But it is Claudius who manipulates Laertes and suggests what action he should take. Candidates are required to discuss the question with reference to the text.

- (b) The question requires candidates to state how far they agree with the statement "The end of the play sees harmony and order restored" with close reference to *As You Like It*. Order and harmony is restored when Duke Senior regains his dukedom and the banished courtiers return home. Oliver and Duke Frederick repent, and there were the reconciliations of two sets of brothers; Oliver and Orlando and Duke Senior and Duke Frederick. Two sets of father and daughter were reunited; Duke Senior and Rosalind and Duke Frederick and Celia and there were four marriages; Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, Silvius and Phebe and Touchstone and Audrey. Disguises were also removed; Rosalind and Celia return to their rightful social status and Rosalind revealed as a woman. Answers could have been better if points had been better organized and direct quotes used as supporting elements.

SECTION C

Question 9

The general impression on this section is that candidates cannot remember lines or simply lack the ability to memorise poems. They, therefore, resort to summaries, which very often do not answer the questions adequately or specifically. Some choice of poems selected by candidates were not appropriate for answering a question, or proved to be more difficult than some other more suitable ones, for example, selecting *To an unborn pauper child* or *Self unseeing* for question 10 (b) on Hardy. For the questions on Keats, the general performance indicates a lack of knowledge of the finer points in Keats' poetry, coupled with an inability to clearly communicate critical points.

- (a) Candidates are required to discuss the statement "The poetry of Keats depends wholly on the realm of the Romantic Imagination to succeed" with close reference to at least three poems. Candidates who selected this question should have background knowledge of the Romantic imagination or at least the many sweeping ideas about the cultural movement which began in Europe from the late 18th century onwards. Most answers generally summarized two or more of Keats' odes and did not specifically answer the question.
- (b) Candidates should have pointed out that Keats' poetry record many instances of everyday human problems such as poverty, illness, abuse of power, the clash of social classes, etc. He did not simply escape into a world of the Imagination. Instead, he imaginatively evoked both the beauty and squalor of the human existence. Candidates' answers generally represent summaries of Keats' poems or odes.

Question 10

- (a) "No man can change the common lot to rare." is taken from Hardy's *To an unborn pauper child*. Hardy's poems generally portray man's constant struggle against a somewhat malevolent fate. Candidates should show this point in their discussion of relevant poems. However, apart from presenting summaries in lieu of a critical analysis, some candidates also chose unsuitable poems to analyse the points in question.

- (b) Candidates are required to discuss how memories of past joys deepen the sense of present sorrow in some of Hardy's poems with close reference to three such poems. Some of the poems candidates could choose are *Song to an Old Burden*, *in the Small Hours*, *Shut Out That Moon*, *At Castle Boterel* and *Where the Picnic Was*. In *At Castle Boterel*, the poem recall meaningful, happy times with the persona's long-dead young beloved which intensifies his sense of loss. In *Song to an Old Burden*, the poem recalling the memories of dancing and singing to music made by friends long gone make the persona feel the meaninglessness of further merry-making. In *Where the Picnic Was*, the poem recalling a remembrance of a picnic with three friends strengthens the sense of loss because two of them have left for the city and the third has died.

Question 11

- (a) Candidates are required to compare and contrast the education that Jane Eyre and Adele Verens received. Both Jane and Adele are orphans but they receive different kinds of education due to their status and economic background. Excellent and above average answers were those that had a strong sense of organisation and relevant textual support in the answer.
- (b) For this question, candidates are required to describe how landscape and weather mirror Jane's emotions at a significant moment. Candidates need to describe Jane's first view of Milcote; prosperous looking and different from the village near Lowood which suggests that Jane is entering a new phase of her life, in the same way that she is entering a new environment. The weather and landscape as Jane's relationship with Rochester develops; initially, the weather is fresh and spring-like, the thunderstorm which destroys the tree which indicates presentiment of disaster and when she runs away from Thornfield; she struggled to walk across the natural landscape which reflects her own suffering. Finally, the contrast between the softer landscape of the area around Thornfield and the harsher landscape of the River's home mirrors her feelings towards St. John and Rochester.

Question 12

- (a) Candidates are required to discuss the statement "Huxley's futuristic tale as portrayed in *Brave New World* warns us about the dangers of scientific progress and raises doubts about what it means to be human" with close reference to *Brave New World*. Answers given were vague attempts at summaries and not quite answering the questions about what could go wrong in a so-called ideal world like the *Brave New World*. Some points to consider for this question are the warning about the dangers of scientific progress, the raised doubts about what it means to be human and also the accidental imperfection of Bernard that cannot be tolerated.
- (b) For this question, candidates are required to discuss what can go 'wrong' with the ideal world of the novel with close reference to three characters in *Brave New World*. The suggested characters would be Bernard Marx, Linda and also Helmholtz. Bernard Marx is alienated in the *Brave New World* because of his general appearance. For an Alpha Plus, Bernard was unusually short and ugly. Fanny suggests that Bernard's condition resulted from an error when he was still in a bottle; the workers "thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood surrogate." Bernard does not fit in the structured order of the *Brave New World* and is therefore shunned by most others. Linda was decanted and conditioned a Beta and then forced by circumstances to spend some twenty years on the Reservation. At the Reservation she is not accepted because her values and beliefs are those of the Other Place. When she returns to London, people find her repulsive and ignore her because she is fat, old-looking and unattractive. Helmholtz was regarded with some suspicion by his associates because he is too perfect. Like Bernard, he

questions the conformity of life in the World State and the values it teaches, but, unlike Bernard, his dissatisfaction stems from his feeling that there must be more to life than mere physical existence. Although not as important to the development of the novel as Bernard, Helmholtz is in many ways a more admirable character because, instead of simply talking about what he believes, he acts.

PAPER 920/2 (NEW LITERATURE IN ENGLISH)

General comments

A significant observation this year was that the majority of candidates fell in the average to weak category, in that they addressed some aspects of the questions and provided some textual evidence but the arguments were marred by language errors and lacked critical depth. It appears that there is a decline in those who had committed themselves to reading and understanding with critical awareness and passion for the subject. Only a few candidates demonstrated that they were well read and advanced in terms of being able to give detailed examples from the selected texts and were able to draw out key words and phrases that stood as literary devices. Candidates should be made aware of the necessity to pay attention to details in their answers. This is especially important in Section A, as they have a lot of samples that they can extract from the excerpts to emphasise their points. This would make for a more critically aware answer. Thus, apart from merely pointing out the general view of character traits or thematic elements, candidates need to be able to point out details from the text. For instance, examples of words, adjectives, images that explicate their views (when answering section A) and the reference to particular images, metaphors, that emphasise their points or show evidence of some knowledge of cultural issues. Candidates who merely paraphrase the content and link it to the question often fall under the average category. Another point to consider is that candidates that normally fall within the good or excellent categories are those who are able to sustain a discussion of the text with attention to details of plot, character development, cultural or gender issues. These show that the candidates have really engaged with the texts at a deeper level, rather than a superficial reading of the text. Candidates who reveal such deep engagement are able to picture relevant scenes and connect the relevance to the question at hand. These are the significant factors that demarcate the excellent or good answers from the average.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates are required to discuss the conflicts experienced by Mother in the excerpt. The excerpt given clearly demonstrated elements that were the focus of the question. Candidates who attempted this question managed to address the nature of some of the conflicts experienced by the character. Answers that would qualify for the excellent category highlighted the drawing of character portraits through facial expressions and tone that worked to emphasise the conflict, for instance the expression of being “vexed”, “looked more and more guilty”, that Mother hesitated before saying that she wouldn’t feed the children anymore, though it is obvious that she has a conflict with the humanitarian issue, for she is aware that the children do not have much to eat at home. Candidates should be able to draw out details in the passage.

- (b) The question requires candidates to discuss First Auntie’s character portrayal. The majority of candidates who attempted question 1 preferred this question to (a) as it appeared to be more straightforward. Excellent answers focus on the details of what First Auntie says that emphasised her rather hypocritical character. For instance, making mention of the kinds of harsh words she uses to demean Fifth Auntie, likening her to a “poisonous spider”, cursing her and the use of violent imagery to further emphasise her disdain. However, candidates should also note that in the beginning of the passage, we learn that First Auntie has come to “make amends”, thus alluding to a conflict that she has had with Mother, and that First Auntie is thus an opportunist as she obviously has an agenda, with regards to the will. Therefore, apart from merely pointing out the character traits, candidates should point out the examples of words, adjectives and images that explicate their views.

Question 2

- (a) The question requires candidates to discuss how the snake is regarded in three different cultural practices and how these practices are viewed by the poet. Candidates were able to point out the different viewpoints of the snake by the various cultures. However, there was no deeper engagement with the particular use of words, adjectives and literary devices when portraying the snake which would have shown deeper critical awareness. In western culture, the snake is considered with respect and not to be feared. The snake is also regarded as part of nature and not to be harmed. According to Chinese culture, the snake is considered as god’s gastronomical gift to humans. It is seen as having medicinal qualities and it is considered disrespectful not to eat the snake. Lastly, in Hopi Indian culture, the snake is considered holy and used specifically for religious rituals. Similarly to western culture, Hopi Indians also believe that snakes are not to be harmed.
- (b) The question requires candidates to find out how the title reflects the content and structure of the poem. Candidates should state that the title reflects four different perspectives towards the treatment of snakes. Each stanza deals with one perspective and it moves from one perspective to another. It also moves from interpersonal to personal to textual observation and back to the individual perspective. The poem deals with the idea that there could be multiple perspectives towards the same thing.

Question 3

- (a) The question requires candidates to discuss how features of modern life reduce the persona to a state of corruption and helplessness. In their answers, candidates should explain how the persona is reduced to the state of corruption and helplessness. They should highlight the features of modern life in their answers for example, media and commercialism, the need to conform, hypocrisy, delusion and the vicious cycle perpetuating existing practices. They also need to describe how these features contribute to the persona’s feelings of corruption and helplessness.
- (b) The question requires candidates to discuss the poet’s portrayal of social responsibility in the relationship between the individual and society. Candidates should give the definition of social responsibility. Candidates should discuss social responsibility, or the lack of it in individuals or society in relation to media and commercialism, the need to conform, hypocrisy, delusion and the vicious cycle perpetuating existing practices. In addition, candidates should also discuss the role of the individuals and society in determining human destiny.

Question 4

- (a) The question requires candidates to state the portrayal of Mr Mason in the extract. Candidates' answers were mainly of surface level. Candidates tend to paraphrase the sequence of Mr Mason's actions. In their answers, candidates should point out precise words and images that are used in the extract. They should also be able to point out the engagement between characters that reveal insights into Mr Mason (for instance with Christophine or Myra and the words he uses to describe the community). In many ways, Mr. Mason is representative of the white community. He does not understand the native communities inhabiting the place. He is cautioned by Aunt Cora as to what he should say in front of Myra and is clueless about the racial tensions simmering beneath the daily surface of life there. He still practices English ways on the island as exemplified in the food he insists on eating, "We ate English food now" and the way his family lives. He is also seen as someone who has saved Annette and her family from deprivation and despair but just like the black and creole communities, on many levels, he still does not seem to understand his wife and daughter. He is portrayed as an outsider. He seems to have preconceived perceptions of the natives and their way of life. He is portrayed as someone who has power and is judgmental of the native society.
- (b) The question requires the candidates to analyse the narrator's state of mind as depicted in the passage. Candidates should discuss that the narrator is torn between two cultural communities, i.e. the whites and the natives. As she eats the "English food", she says she "missed the taste of Christophine's cooking". She leans towards the native community. The narrator's inability to identify completely with either the British or native community adds to her confused state of mind. She feels displaced, dislocated despite the newfound status for her mother and herself. When the narrator looks longingly at her favorite picture of *The Miller's Daughter*, there is the strong suggestion that she longs to be English, "with brown curls and blue eyes" and so free from the conflicts of identity and belonging which plague her. The narrator is conscious of her hybrid background.

Question 5

- (a) The task requires candidates to discuss the conflict faced by Kehinde in the extract given. Candidates should be able to point out precise words, images, metaphors that are used in the extract that reveal Kehinde's conflict: words like "ominous", "eel of suspicion" that can be used to exemplify the conflict she feels, as these reveal her negative feelings. Candidates need to be able to pay attention to details and to show knowledge of literary devices used. These are factors that demarcate the good answers from the average. Candidates with a good knowledge of the text should be able to draw out the conflict faced by Kehinde. Some of them are the issues of returning to Nigeria, being excluded in the plans to return, being jealous of having to share Albert with his sisters, suspicious of the content of the letter and fear of leaving behind the comforts of London and her lifestyle. Kehinde feels that Albert's family undermines her importance and role and only keep Albert in esteem. This upsets her and threatens her sense of self.
- (b) Candidates are required to comment on Albert's actions in this extract and what they reveal of his character. Many candidates merely paraphrased rather than discussed the implications of Albert's actions. Albert is portrayed as secretive, deceptive, manipulative and a strict father figure. He seems to enjoy a secret delight in momentarily keeping the news to himself. This suggests that he seems to feel that Kehinde will not share his delight and so he wants to savour the news alone. It is stated that he "nonchalantly [put] on a big show for his watching family

to demonstrate that he did not care very much” for what the letter said. This shows that he knows Kehinde is not happy but he has his own plans which he keeps to himself to maintain the peace. He knows his wife but he has his own ideas for the future.

SECTION B

Question 6

- (a) Among the stories that can be chosen are *Ibrahim Something*, *Journey*, *The Matsumoto Light Horse Artillery*, *Pak De Samad’s Cinema*, *Common Story* and *Heroes*. Most candidates were able to highlight the challenges of growing up in Malaysia. However, candidates paraphrased the sequence of events rather than engaged with the stories on a deeper level. Excellent answers referred to the use of literary devices and symbols as a reflection of challenges. In *Ibrahim Something*, the young boy is faced with the challenge of understanding the friendship of two men of different races at the hospital; how they appear to be uncouth and unsympathetic on the outside, but are actually firm friends who go beyond race in their love for each other. Meanwhile, in *Journey*, the young girl’s challenge is of being caught in a vicious cycle – the girl realises that her fate will be no different from her mother’s – trapped to marriage and children, with little outlet for respite from the drudgeries of womanhood. The young girl is also challenged by circumstances at home – sickly mother, irresponsible father, cramped conditions. She is challenged to grow up before her time. In *Matsumoto Light Horse Artillery*, the boy is challenged by the conditions of war, learning to accommodate to the cultural differences of the coloniser. The boy learns about loss of a companion. Finally, in *Heroes*, the challenge is of coming to terms with a shattered ideal and living up to social expectations and the father’s weaknesses.
- (b) The question requires the candidates to discuss how the writers often use elements of irony to reveal human weaknesses in *Spirit of the Keris* with reference to at least three short stories. The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to only engage with the second half of the question on human weaknesses. Candidates were not able to point out the use of irony by the authors to reveal human weaknesses. It shows that candidates are not well-versed in literary terms and are only able to engage with the more common literary devices such as plot, theme and characterisation. Three stories that can be used are *Victor’s Last Wish*, *Heroes* and *The Inheritance*. In *Victor’s Last Wish*, Victor is so adamant to be “white” and to get his promotion. His relentless sense of ambition and his hurt pride make him behave in ways that gets him into trouble and even to cheat the company he is working for. Finally he has a terrible accident; he falls into a tank of acid which turns his skin white. In *Heroes*, The narrator’s daughter venerates her father as a hero but he has behaved shamefully in the past: he has been cowardly and had racist sentiments. Now his daughter has married a Chinese and he cannot share his supposedly “heroic” memories with her even though she keeps asking him about his past. Finally, in *The Inheritance*, Tajuddeen is greedy and believes his reserved, well-cultivated demeanor will get him a large share of his father-in-law’s inheritance but he realises at the end of the story that there are other male heirs to the fortune. Other stories which could be considered are *Mariah*, *The Good Old Days*, *A Common Story*, and *Ollie’s Search for Golden Hope*.

Question 7

- (a) The question requires candidates to discuss how setting contributes to the theme of at least three poems. Setting contributes to the theme of the poems when it depicts land which indicates a sense of belonging as in *Spirit of the Keris, Final* and *How the hills are distant*; when it depicts family which also indicates the sense of belonging as in *Family Reunion* and *Eclipse*; and finally, when it depicts scenes that are significant to the speaker or persona and indicates the sense of identity as in *Malaysian Sun Misbehaves, A Quarrel Between Day and Night*, and *Offering*.
- (b) The question requires candidates to discuss the ways in which the past is a central concern to many Malaysian writers and how this has been addressed. Many candidates paraphrased events and were unable to engage on a deeper level. The possible issues or concerns regarding the concept of the past which have been addressed are colonial experience and post colonial concerns as in *May 13*, personal and communal conflicts as in *May 13, What Men Never Do* and *My Clever Pupils*, self and society as in *Midnight Satay-Vendor* and hybridity as in *Malaysian Sun Misbehaves*.

SECTION C

Question 8

- (a) Candidates are required to discuss Ezekiel's use of animals to highlight his concerns about humanity in any three poems. The poems that can be chosen are *The Worm, Squirrel* and *Death of a Hen*. In *The Worm*, Ezekiel presents a conflict within the persona as the result of his observing a worm. The persona is envious of the worm for all its innocence, purity, determination and resilience and shows the contrasts between him and the worm. The persona's resentment against the worm leads to his killing of it. In *Squirrel*, the persona presents a dramatic situation where a child has set a bait for a squirrel. The squirrel's fast movement and its indifference to the bait is described. The persona suggests that despite the lure of the sun and leaves, the squirrel will eventually fall for the bait. A sense of fate is again raised in the poem – the writer compares the squirrel's coming to the bait to that of a thought coming to a mind – slowly but eventually. Words like “caressed” seem to imply that he may not harm the creature though the squirrel fears the fingers. Finally, in *Death of a Hen*, the persona describes the witnessing of a hen being killed by a car. The persona considers how one creature's death is a celebration for another (the crows). The persona is affected by his inability to accept the “indifference” of fate. Other poems that can be discussed are *My cat, The fisherman* and *Sparrows*.
- (b) The question requires candidates to discuss the statement “Nissim Ezekiel's poetry reveal issues that concern the common man” with reference to at least three poems. Candidates should address the question based on the following issues; violence and racial conflicts, overpopulation, forced birth control, moral degradation, alcohol abuse, political unrest, poverty, western influence and human frailty.

Question 9

- (a) There were two categories to the answers; some candidates merely pointed out the kinds of animal imagery in the novel, and they were able to draw out the significance of such animal imagery, with critical engagement of thematic issues, Antoinette's animal-like behaviour in Part III, and Annette's wild behaviour depicts Antoinette's descent into madness. The dead horse, white cockroach, dead parrot, burning parrot, and flies foreshadows fate and death. The mobs

acting like packs of wolves when they surround the house show strained relations between whites and blacks. It shows society in chaos with loss of direction and self worth.

- (b) Candidates are required to examine Antoinette's relationship with West Indian Africans with close reference to *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In their answers, candidates had to show how the West Indian Africans are seen favourably and unfavourably. Christophine, Sass and Godfrey are portrayed as kind, honourable people whose bond with the family remains despite the family's hardship. Christophine, for example, mothers Antoinette, and provides love and companionship. But like other human beings, the West Indian Africans are not all good. Amelie, Daniel Cosway and Tia are examples of West Indian Africans who are trapped in their own misery and poverty. They find ways to make life difficult for Antoinette. The love Antoinette feels for Christophine and Tia, serves to show her feelings for the West Indian Africans. There are no white or black criteria; the West Indian Africans in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are as complex as the circumstances that mould their experiences.

Question 10

- (a) Candidates were able to show the various kinds of oppression. Many chose to focus on only Kehinde and they were only able to paraphrase answers with references to sequence of actions of oppression. Candidates who included Kehinde and all the other women in the novel, for example, Mary Elikwu, Fatima Ifeyinwa, the young girl who aborted the baby, Rike and Moriammo showed a deeper knowledge of the text and also of the different sides to oppression. Other than oppression by men, racism and class discrimination, women also are being condemned by their own gender. Candidates should make references to at least one event as an example for each category of oppression. For example, oppression by one's own gender: in the earlier part of the story, Kehinde and her best friend, Moriammo look down on single mothers, especially those who leave their husbands.
- (b) Many candidates focused on Albert and Kehinde. There were a number of candidates who were able to speak of other characters and these were apparently candidates who were more well versed with and had a deeper knowledge of the novel. For Kehinde, even in England she abides by traditional norms and gives due respect to her husband even though he earns less. Kehinde however calls him by name, a practice she adopts due to norms in London. She is subjected to the polygamous relationship of her husband and is expected to condone and expect it. Kehinde has to decide between the cultural and social norms of her native society and her own sense of identity and freedom and in the process pay the heavy price of losing her husband, family and friends. On the other hand, Albert is not happy with his lot in London where he has to face the ignominy of living on his wife's earning. He is also unhappy with the equal status he has with Kehinde. He finds the London lifestyle demeaning to the lifestyle Nigerian males enjoy at home. He is completely at ease in the patriarchal society in Nigeria and has no problems with the male-female role and relationship in Nigerian society. Candidates may also discuss Rike, Ifeyinwa, Mary Elikwu, Bimpe and Joshua, and Moriammo.