

# ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022

## ENL315114 – ENGLISH LITERATURE

### ENL315114 English Literature 2022 Course

405 students were enrolled in this course at the beginning of 2022. 370 submitted an Independent Study (Module 4). Some students did not sit for the written exam for various reasons.

### INDEPENDENT STUDY

In 2022 the studies submitted for assessment represented a range of texts. The full range of ratings in the Marking Tool were used. All Independent Studies (Folios) were marked by two assessors independently from each other. Most folios demonstrated authentic engagement with the chosen texts and made good connections between the three pieces.

374 independent studies were submitted for assessment in 2022.

- 54% of candidates chose a prescribed novel as the focus of their Folio.
- 30% of candidates chose a prescribed film as the focus of their Folio.
- 15% of candidates chose a prescribed play as the focus of their Folio.
- 1% of candidates chose a prescribed poet novel as the focus of their Folio.

Students in 2023 must choose a prescribed text from Modules 2, 3 or 4 as the basis of their Independent Study. They must not choose a text that is taught at their school/college. In 2022:

- 16% of students chose a prescribed text for their Folio from Module 2.
- 55% of students chose a prescribed text for their Folio from Module 3.
- 29% of students chose a prescribed text for their Folio from Module 4.

Popular texts for the Independent Study attracting more than ten students were:

- *Emma* (32)
- *Boy Swallows Universe* (28)
- *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (23)
- *Dracula* (18)
- *Goodbye to Berlin* (18)
- *A Room with a View* (17)
- *Alien* (17)
- *The Color Purple* (17)
- *The King's Speech* (15)

- *A Doll's House* (13)
- *Arrival* (13)
- *Othello* (11)
- *Brooklyn* (11)
- *The Goldfinch* (11)
- *Black is the New White* (11)
- *Belle* (10)
- *Gallipoli* (10)
- *Unsheltered* (10)

Less popular texts were:

- *Billy Elliot* (7)
- *True History of the Kelly Gang* (7)
- *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (6)
- *God of Carnage* (6)
- *M Butterfly* (6)
- *Muriel's Wedding* (6)
- *Sweet Country* (6)
- *The Piano* (6)
- *For the Term of His Natural Life* (5)
- *Silas Marner* (4)
- *Daughter of Bad Times* (3)
- *Pygmalion* (3)
- *The Lieutenant* (3)
- *The Trojan Women* (3)
- *Brick Lane* (2)
- *The poetry of Elizabeth Bishop* (2)
- *New Boy* (2)
- *North and South* (2)
- *The Tempest* (2)
- *The Rover* (1)
- *The poetry of Gwen Harwood* (1)

Five prescribed texts (*King Charles III*, *Little Dorrit*, *My Brilliant Career*, and the poetry of Simon Armitage and Kenneth Slessor) attracted no candidates in 2022.

Students in 2023 are advised to pay close attention to meet the minimum overall word count. Examiners check the word counts on the cover page. It was unfortunate to note that there were many folios in 2022 which met the minimum word count for the Critical Response and the Imaginative Response, but when these totals were added – the overall minimum word count was not met. Folios that are less than 3,000 words (as well as folios that are over 3,300 words) were penalised a grade on Criterion 7.

## REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

This is not counted as part of folio's overall word count but must be between 450 and 600 words.

The purpose of the Reflective Statement is to justify their choice of inquiry focus and to outline the connections between the Critical Response and the Imaginative Response for the assessor. Students are encouraged to think of the reflective statement as an advocacy document that allows them to explain and justify some of the authorial choices in the Imaginative Response. Listing the texts disregarded is unnecessary before making the final choice.

The Reflective Statement can wisely be used to explain the intent of the Imaginative Response. This is essential because examiners need to be informed explicitly what the Imaginative Response is about and what it is trying to achieve, so they will be able to judge it as a distinctive response that relates to the world of the text. The following three examples did this well:

A genuine expression of the responder's engagement with the text is appreciated and rewarded. The Reflective Statement allows students to frame their study and address Criteria 6 and 7. Students are encouraged to view the Reflective Statement as a carefully crafted piece of writing that sets the folio's tone and standard.

## CRITICAL RESPONSE

The Critical Response is assessed as part of C6 and C7.

The strongest Critical Responses began by crafting a succinct inquiry question that allowed the student to explore the ideas raised in their study. Complicated, long-winded, and multi-faceted questions often produced muddled responses with, occasionally, little to no examination of the compositional features of the chosen text. There were also several focus statements rather than inquiry questions that, once again, prevented students from fully using the structure of an analytical essay based on contention. The majority of responses used appropriate questions and strategically used resources to further critical readings.

Students should be reminded that the subject requires a literary focus that seeks to analyse "how" the text conveys its ideas. It is, therefore, essential to include an analysis of the text's compositional features beyond characterisation. Folio markers advise all students to use 'how' in their Inquiry Questions.

In 2022, like in previous years, some folios used the Critical Response to write a sociological essay with examples from the text as evidence, rather than a literary analysis with some reference to issues relevant to the context of reception. The following Inquiry Question illustrates this: "Prejudice in colonial

Some students relied too much on critical/scholarly interpretations but did not use them effectively to further their thesis topic. Stronger responses analysed the use of compositional features of the chosen text in relation to the chosen question and provided judicious textual evidence to support claims; however, many, to their detriment, did not.

Well-proposed Critical Responses developed, expanded and supported the student's argument. These responses drew on the critical ideas of others and provided evidence for the clearly established contention through reference to the composer's use of compositional features. Most students understood what they needed to do for the Critical Response and do it well. There were excellent Critical Responses that explored ideas and issues that had captivated previous students, and some that looked at the text in new ways. Weaker responses were reflective rather than critical and often did not cite critical ideas which had authority. Some explored their focus in relatively simplistic ways.

Using textual evidence in the Critical Response is paramount to support the student's discussion of their ideas. This is spelled out in one of the standards in C6:

- [student] evaluates the composer's ideas, values, and perspectives, supported by extensive evidence from the self-selected prescribed text

Students must not over-privilege the exploration of ideas or critical commentary over analysis of direct evidence from the text.

Where academic support is included, and this is encouraged, students are directed to use the critical ideas of others to extend their own contention rather than to summarise. Consider the critical ideas as an extension, or an enhancement, of the critical response's flavour (a "seasoning") rather than the focus.

The best responses saw students analyse the composer's ideas, values and perspectives by engaging with their own ideas, values and perspectives and acknowledging the influence of the chosen text on their own thinking. This was achieved partly by framing the Inquiry Question to include their own perspective.

## THE IMAGINATIVE RESPONSE

Many students needed to have identified the title and the form/media of their Imaginative Response on the front cover page of the folio as instructed. Do not use italics for either the title or the identification of the form/media.

### Incorrect

1. Word Count for the Critical Response:

- This must be between 1,500 and 1,800 words.
- Include the total Word Count in the shaded box below, which includes explanatory footnotes, quotations and references.
- Include the total Word Count in the clear box below, which excludes quotations and references. Use this Word Count for the Total Word count for your Independent Study.

2089	1778
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Include the focus question for your Critical Response below:

How does Brick Lane challenge me to consider that our futures are shaped by our own choices?

2. Word Count for your Imaginative Response:

1314	<i>This must be between 1,200 and 1,500 words Include a title for your Imaginative Response and identify its form/media.</i>
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3. Include the Total Word Count for your Independent Study by adding the Word Count for your Critical Response (excluding quotations and references) and your Imaginative Response:

3092
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## Correct

Include the focus question for your Critical Response below.

How does Donna Tartt explore trauma, alienation and identity through pivotal relationships in her acclaimed novel, *The Goldfinch*? How can this exploration, achieved through characterisation and the bildungsroman genre resonate with modern readers?

.....

2. Word Count for your Imaginative Response:

"Behind the Green Door" – a narrative, set 20 years before the beginning of the novel, describing how Ilobie overcame his alienation when he first met Welty.

3. Include the Total Word Count for your Independent Study by adding the Word Count for your Critical Response (excluding quotations and references) and your Imaginative Response:

It is recommended that you use the MLA9 Referencing System or another appropriate referencing system consistently throughout your Independent Study as a way of demonstrating Academic Integrity.

To do well (achieve an A for C5) in this compulsory section of the Folio, the learner must compose and craft a distinctive and engaging Imaginative Response that is print-based. This imaginative response, which could be in any mode as long as it is print-based, is not merely a creative response conjured from the student's imagination but must be in response to a prescribed text and must exist in the world of the text. The imaginative response can exist in the world of the text, or it can be a type of prequel or a sequel to the text you are exploring. For instance, if you are writing about Austen's *Emma*, you could:

- explore the plight of a minor character, such as Mr Martin's sister (the present world of the text)
- recreate a pivotal moment in the lives of Mr Woodhouse and his wife (prequel)
- write of Jane Fairfax's future success as a concert pianist and how this impacts her marriage to Frank (sequel)

No matter the mode of your imaginative response, it must:

- skilfully integrate stylistic features, structures, and literary techniques to achieve intent, i.e., engage intended audience/s
- communicates highly developed ideas appropriate to the piece's intention and form in a refined manner relate to the critical response clearly and meaningfully.

The Reflective Statement is invaluable to help understand the intentions of the Imaginative Response. Students should devote some of the Reflective Statement to justify why the form has been chosen and why they believe that it is an effective medium to explore their intentions. The connection between the Critical Response and the Imaginative Response must be justified. Experienced teachers of literature recommend that students develop the Imaginative and Critical Responses in tandem, so the nexus between the two is transparent in their minds. Any choices made in crafting the Imaginative Response must be clearly identified and justified in the Reflective Statement. Use the Reflective Statement to guide the examiner to the intention of the Imaginative Response and emphasise the connection between this piece and the Critical Response.

Weaker Imaginative Responses retold the narrative without adding much to what is already known. One of the challenges of the Imaginative Response can be to use the composer's style to extend an understanding of an idea. Weaker responses did not shed further light on the ideas identified in the Inquiry Question. These made little attempt at language authenticity and often relied upon retelling.

## REFERENCING AND FORMATTING

The strongest responses saw students using nuanced and sophisticated language and adapting the voice across the pieces to suit the pieces they were creating. Some students did this effectively, while others were less successful. Sometimes an imprecise word choice had severe consequences for meaning. The Independent Study is marked as three polished pieces of writing, each of which has been carefully drafted. Careful attention to proofreading and assiduous editing will help with simple punctuation errors caused by adding quotations and references. One of the disappointing aspects of some Critical Responses was the lack of attention to detail (consistency of referencing, line space and other formatting aspects).

The folio guidelines recommend that MLA9 is used, however students can choose to use another appropriate referencing system. The referencing system must be used consistently. Successful folios saw students handle MLA9 referencing skilfully. In most of the folios, referencing was precise, accurate and detailed. It is unfortunate when a student uses odd conventions that are not part of a recognised style or switches between styles. This has an impact on the ratings awarded for Criterion 7.

While most students presented polished pieces of work that had been carefully proofread, many Imaginative Responses were marred by mixed tense use.

## WRITTEN EXAM

Some data about the candidature in 2022.

### MODULE 1

56 students studied Loss Poetry, and 315 students Love poetry.

### MODULE 2

Six out of a possible 10 choices were studied by students in 2022 from the prescribed text list. These were:

- *The Tempest* (237)
- *Dracula* (78)
- *Emma* (24)
- *The Trojan Women* (18)
- *A Doll's House* (9)
- *The Rover* (4)

## MODULE 3

Five out of a possible 10 pairings were studied by students in 2022 from the prescribed text list. These were:

- *The Lieutenant* and *Arrival* (168)
- *Boy Swallows Universe* and *Billy Elliot* (100)
- *King Charles III* and *The King's Speech* (54)
- *Pygmalion* and *Muriel's Wedding* (52)
- *A Room With a View* and *The Piano* (4)

English Literature is the study of different forms of texts. Over the course of their study, students also develop the skills of responding to texts in different modes of writing. This includes the mastery of analytical essays. A feature of this text type is the introduction of a thesis in response to the essay question posed. The English Literature exam aims to assess what students know about texts and how well they can think, plan, and adapt what they know, under time constraints, to a specific question. Students must tackle all nominated components, including literary language and conventions, structures, and stylistic features.. Students must respond to all aspects of a set question to achieve in the A range. Excellent essays in 2022 demonstrated a genuine engagement with the ideas of the text and used all the components of the question to showcase original thinking within the timeframe provided.

Students cannot be rewarded when their response is a pre-prepared essay that might have been completed as part of their coursework. Often in such cases, there is little attempt to tackle the set exam questions.

## SECTION A

To successfully address Criterion 2, there needs to be a synthesis between understanding the significant events of the time period of production and the features of the texts.

Both questions 1a and 1b were accessible to students. Students must integrate their knowledge of the importance of historical and socio-cultural context with their analysis of the poems instead of including a snapshot of historical and social contexts which does not arise from the discussion of the poem itself. Comments about the various aspects of historical and social contexts without relating these to an analysis of the poems is not enough. To be awarded an A, students must interrogate aspects of the socio-cultural and historical context of poems and how these have influenced the construction of a specific poem. In 2022, strong responses to both questions 1a and 1b deconstructed the poetic techniques used and connected these literary features to the attitudes towards Love or Loss in the period of the poem's production.

Stronger responses were characterised by a balanced approach to analysing the poems concerning their historical and cultural contexts, the central idea (Loss/Love) and close literary analysis of each poem. Appreciation was evident in these essays' tone through the choice of language, understanding of context and close textual analysis in relation to the topic of Loss or Love. Strong responses connected the poet's

historical context to the choice of poetic techniques and form. Students and teachers are reminded that historical context needs to be relevant to the essay question and the poem.

Areas for students to improve when writing on texts in context:

- Identify relevant literary movements, such as Modernism or Romanticism and comment on the attitudes and values of this movement as part of your analysis.
- Focus on distinctive features of the form (novel, play, film).
- Use detailed textual evidence that is linked to a cogent thesis and relevant to the set question.
- Sustain a skilful control of language and ideas – even though spelling is not a distinct criterion in its own right in this course, spellings errors and grammatical problems are an intrinsic component of a skilful response.
- Specifically, address the question using its phrasing extensively and directly.
- Include a discussion of attitudes, beliefs and values of the era – not just historical events.
- Do not use the Critical interpretation of others in this section of the exam because this takes the focus away from analysing the poetic techniques used.
- Use double quotation marks for the title of poems (Question 1) and underline the titles of novels, plays and films (Questions 2 and 3).

## QUESTION 1

202 students attempted this question. 40 students wrote on the poetry of Loss, and 162 students wrote on the poetry of Love.

### Loss

The naming of a poem for this question evidently threw many students. For those who had either planned on discussing “These Days I Think of Aunty Doreen” or who had prepared for the possibility of having to discuss a poem that was not their preferred, responses were, on the whole, strong, with most of these falling within the A range. The context discussion was knowledgeable, although some students must be wary of writing paragraphs focusing solely on context (even though relevant) without drawing connections to the poem being discussed. The insightful exploration of context should always arise out of the analysis of the poem. Analysis of the poems showed a sound understanding of structure, style and literary conventions. Textual evidence was well used, and students are encouraged to evaluate the examples they provide.

For students who were less prepared for Harkin’s poem, a strong response was still evident from those who had perhaps done some revision of all poems or had engaged well with the set poem during the module teaching. These students could write confidently on their chosen poem and the context of Harkin’s poem. Their discussion of structure, style and literary conventions was sound for their chosen poem, but less so for the set poem, where specific textual evidence was harder to find. However, these

students could use Harkin’s structure and style, such as the typography and the spaces, as textual evidence convincingly.

Students who were not at all prepared for the naming of a poem were primarily able to discuss their chosen poem satisfactorily and make some allusions, with varying degrees of accuracy, to the set poem. Some students only identified “These Days” as a poem fondly remembering a lost family member, with no discussion of Harkin’s poetry and its engagement with postcolonialism and its effects.

## Love

Students tended to write quite minimally on this question (1-2 pages). Once again, they managed to split the contextual information from the discussion of the poems and need to be reminded again to interweave the two, using contextual information to further develop an understanding of the poem and using evidence from the poem to support and show where the influences of the context can be found.

The requirement of the question to discuss ‘Rings’ was an obvious impediment to some students whose responses were considerably better in their comparative poem. The Marvell and Duffy pairing allowed students to contrast love as immediate gratification with love as a long-lasting commitment. Ironically, in the era of ‘hook-up’ culture, most students argued that Duffy’s poem reflected the 21st-century perspective on love as an eternal commitment. No one took the opportunity to suggest that Marvell or Shakespeare presented a more 21st-century outlook on relationships. The best answers managed to weave context, meaning and technical features together to create their comparison. Some missed the requirement to ‘compare and contrast’, and many had insufficient textual evidence and scant quotation from the poems.

A focus on one poem characterised weaker responses at the expense of the second, a distinct lack of literary analysis and exploration of their effect and limited historical and contextual detail. Students may have listed poetic devices at the expense of exploring how they contribute to meaning. Many love poetry responses touched only briefly on poetic form, if at all and the weaker responses made little or no attempt to connect the use of form to a cultural context, which is essential even for a C rating on C2. Again, there was the issue of students knowing only one poem well, so the discussion on the two poems was disproportionate. Weaker responses tended to assume a connection between identifying a compositional feature form of stylistic feature (describing); more sophisticated responses analysed how a particular compositional choice shaped/invited a particular perspective.

## QUESTION 2

105 students attempted this question.

This question was challenging, requiring the selection of two characters, a discussion of the way gender hindered or enhanced their experiences and how this was conveyed through compositional features and then, further, the influence of context on the ideas presented. The gender element clearly suited some texts more than others where gender (particularly the experiences of women) was revealed in key characters, and a feminist reading position was suggested (*Trojan Women*, *Dracula*, *The Rover*, *Emma*). It was significantly less applicable to *The Tempest*, with only one minor female character. More successful

students writing on *The Tempest* grappled with the question's requirements: Prospero's authoritarian attitude and wielding of power as a specifically masculine trait; Miranda as a pawn or tool in Prospero's project, reflective of dynastic marriages. One answer cleverly suggested that gender was less critical to the experiences of Caliban than his depiction as being less than human. While students made good points about Claribel and Sycorax, it was something of a long bow to suggest that either was a 'character' in the play.

The chosen characters in *Dracula* consisted, almost uniformly, of Lucy and Mina and their relationship to the idea of the 'New Woman'. The same argument was generally deployed in these responses in which Mina and Lucy represented different aspects of Victorian womanhood and the 'New Woman' idea. The chosen characters for *Trojan Women* were usually Hecuba and Menelaus, but Hecuba and Andromache and Hecuba and Cassandra were also explored. Better answers looked at the specific context of the Peloponnesian War and also examined the 'seclusion' to the oikos of ancient Greek women.

Some students had trouble connecting their discussion to the question or discussing more than two characters, which meant that the depth of discussion was a little lost. Students are reminded that using the critical interpretations of others in Section A takes away from their time to demonstrate their understanding of context.

Weaker responses lacked strong essay structure, and needed to figure out how to go about answering the question. This was more evident in responses to *The Tempest*. There were clearly elements of the text (and characters) that students wanted to discuss but were unsure how to connect this to the question focus. Critical aspects of relevant context were often omitted.

It is perhaps important to note that generalised statements about life for women being worse 'back then' are insufficient in examining the context's impact. The tendency of students to provide general assumptions that women from earlier periods had zero agency led them to hyperbole and misrepresentation. The ability to examine the nuances in the portrayal of the female characters and to allow that their experiences were not uniformly negative was a feature of the better responses.

### QUESTION 3

44 students attempted this question.

This question was straightforward and asked students to compare and contrast how a character from each of the paired texts challenges societal values and norms. Only a handful of characters chose to answer on a minor character from the two texts. The strongest responses chose a character that did challenge values and norms and compared this character with another who did not. Some excellent responses were on *Arrival* and *The Lieutenant*. Some responses to *Billy Elliot* and *Boy Swallows Universe* became muddled regarding societal values. These responses, alongside the ones on *Pygmalion* and *Muriel's Wedding*, were very sketchy on how the historical and cultural contexts of the chosen authors influence the ideas of their substantial text.

Some students did not pay close attention to the singular article 'a' and tried to explore more than one character from each text. Typically, they spent valuable time contrasting Slim and Eli (from Dalton's text).

Many students treated this question as a comparative character analysis without explicitly commenting/evaluating the influence of relevant features of historical contexts on texts.

More students could comment on the relationship between texts, society and culture in the paired texts, while stronger responses evaluated how the two characters under scrutiny could best be understood and appreciated within the ethos of their respective societies.

A couple of students answered this question using *The Tempest* (Module 2), and some used the poems from Module 1 (Module 1). This was an unwise decision.

## SECTION B

Students must present a cohesive and explicit response to the set question using the question's phrasing to formulate a strong thesis. Often material presented, although terrific in nature, often ignored the question. This was more pronounced in Q5.

As in previous years, it is necessary to underline the titles of published works in Modules 2 and 3. If you have permission to type, these must be in italics.

Areas for students in 2023 to improve in this section:

- Refer to the phrasing of the set question explicitly and develop a cogent thesis that uses the keywords as part of it.
- Demonstrate a critical and informed understanding of the text that is not a mirror image of the responses of other students in your class.
- Use more detailed textual analysis and select your textual support more judiciously.
- Appraise the meritorious nature of the prescribed text.
- Integrate values in your evaluation of the text but there is no need to mention your personal context, as you do in the folio.
- (For *The Tempest*) evaluate dramatic techniques rather than focusing purely on character. Also, skilfully explore the influence of the Elizabethan context on Shakespeare's work, and move beyond a generalised discussion of characters to focus on features of form.
- (For *Emma*) demonstrate an understanding of Austen's aesthetic as a reflection of her criticisms of the restrictive nature of the Regency Period in England.
- (For *Dracula*) explore how Stoker's ideology may have been critical of his Victorian context.

A problem that continued to challenge students in 2022 in Section B of the exam was drawing upon the interpretation of others. Placing the surname of a critic at the end of a sentence in quotation marks does not demonstrate how a particular interpretation has enriched your understanding and appreciation of a specific text.

The interpretations of others must be integrated into a student's understanding and appreciation of the text/s' central ideas. One of the most effective ways of doing this is by using an appropriate reporting verb and perhaps identifying the critic by their full name and credentials. If you refer to this critic subsequently, it is acceptable to only use their surname.

It was disappointing to observe in 2022 that the application of critical perspectives meant that some students struggled to come to grips with the texts' central ideas. While applying a critical 'lens' is a valid way to address the critical ideas of others, often the constraints of these lenses make it difficult for students to adapt their understanding of the text/s to answer the given questions. A student answering about personal choice may apply a feminist reading to *The Tempest* by discussing the lack of agency/choice that the minor character of Miranda is allowed, for example. Strong essays made 'own ideas' the focus and occasionally reinforced their own insights with those of others.

#### QUESTION 4

136 students attempted this question.

This question's requirement to look at major and minor characters confused many students who routinely failed to identify which characters were major and which ones were minor. Students tended to answer by looking at historically and culturally significant ideas and beliefs such as the Great Chain of Being, colonialism, the rights and agency of women (in all texts), class issues (in *Emma*), Christianity and love and marriage (in Ibsen and Austen). The strongest answers considered characterisation but also integrated other compositional features into their responses, including genre, structure and setting. Weaker responses simply retold occasions of interaction between two characters.

To do well in this question (or Q5), students must have demonstrated a perceptive and excellent understanding and appreciation of the central ideas in the prescribed text in Module 2. In some cases, the central ideas are identified in the question, or a qualifier is included about such ideas that could be relevant, powerful or (in the case of 2022) typical of the context of the text.

No matter the question, students should communicate a critical understanding of the prescribed text. This critical or evaluative understanding must be supported by appropriate textual evidence and refer to a range of/critical interpretations of others. Increasingly, students are not memorising numerous essential quotations from their text and, thereby, are not including appropriate evidence to support their claims.

The evaluation of a text's aesthetic and artistic qualities can also be considered a component of a perceptive response, and students who wish to achieve in the A range should do this.

#### QUESTION 5

57 students attempted this question.

Question 5 directed students to examine symbolism and another compositional technique in examining how these features explore the notion that an individual can undergo growth as a consequence of both positive and negative experiences. This 'double-barrel' question was very demanding, and many students favoured Q4.

Many students did not identify symbolism as a compositional technique, choosing instead to comment on how different characters are used symbolically.

Weaker responses focused on one part of the topic (or one part more than the other); for example, not exploring the wider implications of personal choice. Most students chose characterisation as their second compositional technique, but some also used the importance of genre and structure as well.

## QUESTION 6

108 students attempted this question.

This popular question invited a range of approaches. Most sound answers in the C and lower B range explored the protagonists' main moral attributes, showing where and how these attributes appear in the texts and then arguing that the protagonists represent humanity and, therefore, their strengths reflect humanity's strengths. This approach worked well and enabled those students to show a sound understanding of the texts with reference to the question. For some students, the link to humanity's strengths was tacked on at the end of the paragraph to link back to the question – a good practice that would have more impact if this line of argument continued throughout the paragraph. Some interesting answers contrasted the weak and strong attributes of the protagonists. Some answers simply relabelled themes in their chosen texts as strengths or weaknesses of humanity, which was not so convincing for Criterion 4.

Stronger answers contrasted the individual strengths of the protagonists, representing the better aspects of humanity, against the weaknesses of the societies they were a part of, represented by secondary characters and other compositional features. For example, some very good responses to *Arrival* and *The Lieutenant* explored the supposed strength of British Imperialism represented as a weakness or failing of humanity as a deliberate strategy by the composers. Other good answers gave resistant readings to the protagonists, arguing that what is intended as a strength is actually a weakness, conforming to social norms.

Overall, Question 6 was a broad question that enabled students of all abilities to successfully address a fundamental principle of the English Literature course: that the spectrum of humanity is explored and articulated in great literary works.

## QUESTION 7

46 students attempted this question.

This question invited students to choose to discuss micro elements of the texts such as dialogue, symbols or motifs or macro elements such as character types, plot events etc.

Responses in the C range tended to examine the way that themes or ideas were returned to or repeated in the texts, and the result became a thematic study rather than a focus on the spirit of the question, which was repetition and/or contrast.

Stronger responses identified and analysed the use of motifs, symbols, etc., to develop particular themes or ideas selected by the student. Responses that engaged with the endings of the texts to explain how the repeated or contrasting elements built towards a final statement or understanding in the text were more powerful in showing the student's interpretation and the composers' purposes.

Responses that clearly identified compositional features of a film, a play or a novel were particularly successful as they showed an understanding of how the composer had used the repeated or contrasting elements particular to the textual genres, such as music, lighting and colour, dialogue, etc. to develop their ideas.