

Analysis of Sample Response to Poetry (Question 1)

This Essay represents a high quality exam response for the following reasons:

Content

- The idea of "emotional turmoil" is considered in multiple ways (Psychological states, suffering caused by social constructs and suffering caused by the human condition)
- Poets are compared throughout the text using words like "similarly" or "in contrast" to introduce new techniques
- The essay makes reference to the quote from Charles Bukowski
- The question is explicitly addressed in the thesis statement, in the conclusion and throughout the essay
- the essay demonstrates knowledge of the context from which the poets were writing from
- the essay focuses on the effect that certain techniques have on readers
- the essay identifies and discusses a wide variety of poetic techniques
- The conclusion doesn't just re-state the introduction; it moves past it, however, it does not introduce too much new information

Structure:

- Two poets are compared for each of the three "points" of the argument
 - . Psychological states- Leonard Cohen and Robert Frost
 - . Social constructs- Les Murray and Jennifer Strauss
 - . Human experience- Les Murray and Bruce Dawe
 - (This number is not fixed but it is a good formula to follow)
 - A paragraph is attributed to each poet
 - Each paragraph contains a conclusion on each poet's technique and its effect
 - Once both poets have been discussed, their respective approaches are compared and related back to the thesis statement
 - (Alternatively, each paragraph could discuss two poets. However, if this approach is used, one must be careful not to paragraphs that are excessively long and thematically diverse)

- It begins with a thesis statements in which the argument of the whole essay is summarised in 1-2 sentences
- The first paragraph is an introduction that clearly outlines the key arguments of the essay
- Each paragraph addresses a single idea
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement
- Each paragraph contains evidence from the texts that supports the topic sentence,
- All evidence is followed by:
 - . An explanation of the effect that a certain technique has on the reader
 - . An explanation of how this contributes to the themes of the text
- Each paragraph concludes with an explanation of how the content discussed in the paragraph relates back to the thesis statement

Section 2: Comparative Text

If under exam conditions, you should aim to spend an hour answering one of these questions. For these questions, "author" may also refer to a playwright, a director or a speech writer, and "reader" may also refer to an audience member.

Q1. Compare and contrast how the authors of two texts you have studied this year use setting to develop the themes of their works.

Q2. Discuss the ways in which two authors you have studied this year have structured their texts in order to convey meaning.

Q3. Compare and contrast the role character development plays in constructing meaning in two texts you have studied this year.

Q4. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year use narration to encourage readers to interpret events in a certain way. Discuss the effect this has on each of the texts.

Q5. Compare and contrast the techniques used by the authors of two of the texts you have studied this year to depict humanity in a certain way.

Q6. What attitude do the authors of two of the texts you have studied this year take toward love? Compare and contrast the techniques they use to convey these attitudes and discuss their effect on the reader.

Q7. Compare and contrast the techniques the authors of two texts you have studied this year use to explore a philosophical idea.

Q8. Compare and contrast the way in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year use metaphor to develop the key themes of their texts.

Q9. "Fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners." — Virginia Woolf. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year blend fiction with reality in order to convey a message.

Q10. Compare and contrast the way in which the authors of two texts you have studied in this year have used a journey to convey the themes of their texts

Q11. Compare and contrast the attitudes that the authors of two texts you have studied this year take towards morality. How do they convey these attitudes to the reader?

Q12. "The truth is rarely pure and never simple." — Oscar Wilde. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year explore this idea.

Q13. "We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be." — May Sarton. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year explore this idea.

Q14. "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." — Socrates. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year lead their readers to this realisation?

Q15. "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."- Martin Luther King Jr. How do the authors of two texts you have studied this year convey this notion?

Q16. Compare and Contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year use a character's transformation to further the themes of their texts.

Q17. Compare and Contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year use symbolism to explore the themes of their texts.

Sample Response (1 of 2) to Comparative Text

Q7. Compare and contrast the techniques the authors of two texts you have studied this year use to explore a philosophical idea.

Beckett and Camus respectively, through *Waiting for Godot* and *The Outsider*, engage in a philosophical debate by encouraging audiences and readers to see the irrationality in attempting to ascribe meaning to an indifferent universe. However, while Beckett presents a metaphor for those who suffer as the result of their inability to accept the absurdity of their reality, Camus presents the journey of a man who comes to understand the insignificance of his existence. Furthermore, while Beckett presents the view that life is ultimately a meaningless struggle, Camus explores the ways in which meaning can be found in an otherwise meaningless universe. Through the use of representative characters and structure, Beckett and Camus encourage readers to become emotionally invested in their allegorical works, prompting them to question their own actions and attitudes towards existence.

Beckett and Camus encourage audiences and readers to examine their own understanding of existence through representative characters. Beckett encourages audiences to comprehend the absurdity of their own attitudes and behaviour through the characters Estragon and Vladimir, who stand as representations of human irrationality. While the tramps frequently discuss the hopelessness of their situation and their desire to escape it, they fail to commit to any action. Frequently, dialogue ends between the tramps with Estragon saying “Let’s Go” and Vladimir replying “We can’t”, “Why not?” says Estragon, “We’re waiting for Godot!” (responds Vladimir.¹ The tramps appear unable to act on their decision as they are bound by their hope that Godot will eventually come. Through this, the tramps create a reflection of humanity, allowing audiences to comprehend the absurdity of belief in a rational universe. Camus, however, adopts the opposite approach.

¹ *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett, 1953, p.7

Camus presents the character of Meursault who stands as a literary device to illustrate the journey taken toward awareness of the true nature of existence. Meursault does not conform to society's expectations of how he should behave, nor does he ascribe significance to key life events such as a workplace promotion, marriage and death. Readers are encouraged to exercise compassionate imagination in order to understand Meursault's impartial attitude towards life as well as his eventual realisation of the absurdity of human existence. This allows readers to comprehend Camus' philosophy and, through following Meursault's example, to examine their own world view and desire for a rational existence in an irrational universe. While both writers present characters that are representative of wider ideas, their approaches are distinctly different. While Beckett presents characters who turn a mirror on audiences, highlighting the absurdity of human behaviour, Camus allows readers to follow and understand an example of one who becomes freed from irrational entrapment. These contrasting methods prompt similar reactions of self-reflection, analysis and consideration of existential ideas.

Beckett and Camus use the form of their texts in order to allow audiences and readers to become involved in and understand the ideas being expressed. The structure of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is used to convey the insignificant, degenerative nature of existence. The play contains two very similar acts in which two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir, await the arrival of a man named Godot, who never comes. However, in Act II, the situation worsens. Despite this, it is impossible to tell whether a single night or an eternity has passed between the two acts. As the characters are lacking any motivation, other than to "pass the time"². While they wait for Godot, time ceases to matter and slips away unmarked.³ This use of form conveys to audiences that the lives of the tramps are highly repetitive, degenerative and devoid of all meaning. Consequently, Beckett prompts audiences to examine the rationality of their own behaviour.

Similarly, Camus uses structure as a technique to allow readers greater insight into the atmosphere and themes of his text. Like Beckett, Camus adopts a two-part structure for his text, with the second part depicting a crueller reality. However, the form of *The Outsider* differs from *Waiting for Godot* in that rather than communicating ideas through stagnation; *The Outsider* presents a varied expedition into philosophical discovery. Part one allows readers to gain an understanding of the protagonist and introduces conflict. In part two, *The Outsider* takes the form of a 'trial novel', centring on a court scene which serves as a method of exploring Meursault's values and ideas in addition to their actions. The

² *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett, 1953, p.5

³ *Modern drama in theory and practice*, Styan, 1981, p.72

final Chapter of part two serves to involve readers in Meursault's final epiphany. The structure of *The Outsider* follows Meursault's journey towards existential awakening, which allows readers to be present in and engage with his journey, prompting them to question the meaning of their own existence.

Beckett and Camus adopt both similar and divergent techniques in order to present their common view that humans are irrational in their desire to ascribe meaning to an indifferent universe. Their approaches can be seen as opposites: Beckett's tramps are a metaphor for the ignorance and entrapment of humans, turning a mirror on audiences, highlighting the absurdity of hope and belief in a rational universe while Camus presents a figure who gains awareness, understanding, acceptance and eventual happiness from knowledge of the absurd nature of existence. Furthermore, the two writers differ in their message. While Beckett presents a more existentialist view, that life is utterly without meaning and that we, as humans, are trapped within our own desire and hope for a logical existence, Camus, through Meursault, explores the happiness and meaning that can be found in a meaningless universe. Despite this, the writers leave readers and audiences with the same core philosophical concept of the irrational universe, prompting them to question the rationality of their own existence and behaviour. Through Beckett's and Camus' use of various techniques including representative characters and structure, audiences and readers are encouraged to uncover similar understandings of death, religion, humanity, suffering, happiness and life that may irrevocably shape their world view.

Analysis of Sample Response 1 to Comparative Text (Question 7)

This Essay represents a high quality exam response for the following reasons:

Content

- The essay demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the ideas behind existentialism. This is indicative that the author has done extensive wider reading. This is an excellent way to make sure an essay 'stands out' when it is being marked.
- The essay discusses both the similarities and differences between the two texts using words and phrases like "similarly" and "in contrast" to introduce new techniques
- The essay explores how the two writers differ in their attitudes towards Existentialism and the effect this has on their respective texts
- the essay demonstrates knowledge of the context from which Camus and Beckett were writing
- The question is explicitly addressed in the thesis statement, in the conclusion and throughout the essay
- the essay discusses the way in which both writers prompt their readers/audiences to analyse their own lives
- the essay discusses how readers'/audiences' beliefs and lifestyles will cause them to take different meanings from the texts
- the essay identifies and discusses a wide variety of literary techniques
- The conclusion doesn't just re-state the introduction; it moves past it, however, it does not introduce too much new information

Structure:

- Two writers are compared for each of the three "points" of the argument (representative characters, structure and religious symbolism)

(This number is not fixed but it is a good formula to follow)

-A paragraph is attributed to each poet

-Each paragraph contains a conclusion on each writer's technique and its effect

-Once both writers have been discussed, their respective approaches are compared and related back to the thesis statement

-(Alternatively, each paragraph could discuss both writers. However, if this approach is used, one must be careful not to paragraphs that are excessively long and thematically diverse)

- the essay begins with a thesis statements in which the argument of the whole essay is summarised in 1-2 sentences
- The first paragraph is an introduction that clearly outlines the key arguments of the essay
- Each paragraph addresses a single idea
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement
- Each paragraph contains evidence from the texts that supports the topic sentence,
- All evidence is followed by:
 - . An explanation of the effect that a certain technique has on the reader
 - . An explanation of how this contributes to the themes of the text
- Each paragraph concludes with an explanation of how the content discussed in the paragraph relates back to the thesis statement

Sample Response to Comparative Text

Q17. Compare and Contrast the ways in which the authors of two texts you have studied this year use symbolism to explore the themes of their texts.

Williams and Plath use religious symbolism to explore the relationship between expectation and reality. Williams and Plath create idealised depictions of social ideologies. These depictions are imbued with religious connotations. However, over the course of their texts, Plath and Williams demonstrate how these ideologies fail to fulfil the expectations audiences and readers associate with the attached religious symbolism. Both writers use religious symbolism to explore the way in which they fail to meet the expectations placed on them by society and by themselves. Similarly, Plath and Williams use religious symbolism to explore the expectations they place on others and how others failure to meet them. Through this use of religious symbolism, both writers examine betrayals and disappointments in order to demonstrate the incongruence between expectation and reality.

Plath and Williams comment on the failure of social ideologies to live up to their idealised depictions by presenting characters and places associated with hope in a religious context, only to reveal them to be flawed. Williams presents the Paradise Dance Hall in the Glass Menagerie in a religious context in order to criticise the ideology of the American dream. The Paradise Dance Hall is filled with people who seek to find meaning in life by pursuing careers, finding romantic partners and experiencing pleasure. Through his descriptions and naming of the Paradise Dance Hall, Williams creates an association between the dance hall and the Garden of Eden. Through Tom's position as narrator, Williams is able to make the audience aware of the ephemeral, fleeting nature of the dancers' happiness in the context of the imminent unrest of World War II. As a voyeur, Tom conveys the dance hall more objectively as a sleazy, corrupt place, rather than a paradise. Through this use of religious symbolism, Williams demonstrates how pursuing the American dream fails to provide the expected happiness.

Similarly in the poem "Daddy", Plath challenges the ideology that a daughter should respect her father like a God. Plath's relationship to her father was influenced by his early death and by the Freudian psychology that was prevalent during her life. In "Daddy", Plath draws on religious imagery, casting her

father in the role of God, only to show how he failed in this role. Plath does this by drawing on inverted religious imagery, describing him as “not God but a swastika,” a “vampire,” and a “devil.”⁴ Through this Plath aggressively deconstructs the traditional model of a father/daughter relationship. Both Plath and Williams challenge socially constructed ideas by associating characters and places with religious symbols, only to undermine these connections.

Williams and Plath use religious symbolism to explore the personal and societal expectations placed on them by adopting personas in their texts comparable to religious figures. Williams explores the Godly expectations placed on him by his own family through the character of Tom, whose personality and situation mirror Williams' almost exactly. In scene four, Williams has Tom give Laura a rainbow scarf when he agrees to try harder to establish peace in the Wingfield household. This scene is comparable to an event in the Bible that describes God presenting a rainbow to Noah after the flood when a new covenant was formed. However, in comparison to the events described in the Bible, Tom fails to act in accordance with his 'covenant'. Further, when Tom rings a small noise maker in comparison to the tolling of a bell tower this emphasizes Tom's humanity and inability to fulfil the immense expectations placed on him. Tom rejects his role as his family's saviour in the climactic speech of scene three. Tom conjures images that stand as inversions of his role as God in his description of himself as “El Diablo.”⁵ This illustrates Tom's final rejection of his role as saviour and acknowledgment that he can't meet his family's expectations.

Similarly, Plath uses religious symbolism to depict her inability to meet the expectations society places on her as a writer. However, in contrast to Williams, in “Lady Lazarus”, Plath creates a religious persona for her true identity and as a means of escaping societal pressures. Lady Lazarus is a gender inversion of the biblical figure Lazarus, whom Jesus resurrected out of love. Unique to Lady Lazarus is that she must die and be resurrected every ten years to the amusement of a 'peanut crunching crowd', reflecting Plath's personal experiences with being a well-known writer who repeatedly attempted suicide. However, Plath draws on the concept of resurrection in order to convey that she wishes to rise above and overcome the expectations society places on her. Through this, Plath uses religious symbolism to challenge the way in which society views her suffering as a form of literary entertainment. By adopting personas that bear significant connection to biblical figures Williams and Plath cast off societal expectations and embrace their failures.

⁴ Plath, S, (1962), *Daddy*

⁵ Williams, T, (1944) *Glass Menagerie, Scene 4*

Williams and Plath explore how the reality of the characters in their works is distinctly different from what they are expected to be. Williams presents Jim O'Connor as a Messiah figure. He is introduced at the beginning of the play as "the long delayed but always expected something that we live for."⁶ As a result, audiences come to associate Jim with goodness and optimism. Jim fills Laura with hope only to leave her broken hearted. Williams explores Jim's inability to fill the role of saviour as a means of articulating the failure of individuals to live up to the expectations set out for them.

Similarly, Plath in "Medusa" uses religious symbolism to explore the way in which her own mother failed to meet her expectation. Plath establishes a connection between her mother and the Madonna, whom readers will associate with the ultimate maternal figure. However, Plath does this in an ironical, sardonic tone. This is evident in the line "Who do you think you are... Blubbering Mary?"⁷ In addition, while Plath begins the poem by comparing her mother to the Virgin Mary, by the end she is stating that her mother is Medusa, a hideous snake-headed gorgon belonging to Greek mythology. Through this inversion of a maternal religious figure, Plath conveys how her mother failed to meet her expectations. Plath and Williams associate characters in their writing with idyllic religious figures, only to have them fail in these roles. Through this, both writers articulate the conflict that exists between their expectations and their experiences of reality.

Through their use of religious symbolism, Williams and Plath explore the ideas of hope and disappointment in relation to society, themselves and others. This allows them to deal with themes such as the American Dream, paternal and maternal relationships, familial roles, the pressure of the media and love. Williams and Plath draw on their readers' and audiences' preconceived ideas surrounding religious symbolism in order to convey the hopes and expectations held by various parties. However, by inverting these religious symbols and undermining the expectations held by readers and audiences, Williams and Plath articulate the way in which one's experiences and one's reality are often incongruous and irreconcilable.

⁶ Williams, T, (1944) *Glass Menagerie*, Scene 1

⁷ Plath, S, (1962), *Medusa*

Analysis of Sample Response 2 to Comparative Text (Question 17)

This Essay represents a high quality exam response for the following reasons:

Content

- The essay demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the symbolic connotations of religious imagery, settings and characters. This is indicative that the author has done extensive wider reading. This is an excellent way to make sure an essay 'stands out' when it is being marked.
- The essay discusses both the similarities and differences between the two texts using words and phrases like "similarly" and "in contrast" to introduce new techniques
- the essay demonstrates knowledge of the context from which Plath and Williams were writing, with specific reference to Plath's relationship to both her mother and her father and Williams' connection to the character of Tom
- The essay discusses the relationship between expectations in a variety of ways (in relation to one's expectations on social constructs, the expectations one places on one's self and the expectations one has of others)
- The question is explicitly addressed in the thesis statement, in the conclusion and throughout the essay
- The essay discusses how the knowledge that readers/audiences bring to a text will influence their interpretation of said text (this is evident in the fact that both writers draw on the knowledge and expectation that readers/audiences already have regarding religious imagery, characters and settings in order to explore the relationship between expectations and reality)
- the essay identifies and discusses a wide variety of literary techniques
- The conclusion doesn't just re-state the introduction; it moves past it, however, it does not introduce too much new information

Structure:

- Two writers are compared for each of the three "points" of the argument

(.The relationship between expectations and reality regarding social constructs

. The relationship between expectations and reality regarding the self

. The relationship between expectations and reality regarding others)

-(This number is not fixed but it is a good formula to follow)

-A paragraph is attributed to each poet

-Each paragraph contains a conclusion on each writer's technique and its effect

-Once both writers have been discussed, their respective approaches are compared and related back to the thesis statement

-(Alternatively, each paragraph could discuss both writers. However, if this approach is used, one must be careful not to paragraphs that are excessively long and thematically diverse)

- the essay begins with a thesis statements in which the argument of the whole essay is summarised in 1-2 sentences
- The first paragraph is an introduction that clearly outlines the key arguments of the essay
- Each paragraph addresses a single idea
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement
- Each paragraph contains evidence from the texts that supports the topic sentence,
- All evidence is followed by:
 - . An explanation of the effect that a certain technique has on the reader
 - . An explanation of how this contributes to the themes of the text
- Each paragraph concludes with an explanation of how the content discussed in the paragraph relates back to the thesis statement

Section 3: Single Text

If under exam conditions, you should aim to spend an hour answering one of these questions. For these questions, "author" may also refer to a playwright, a director or a speech writer, and "reader" may also refer to an audience member.

Questions

1. How does the author of a text you have studied this year encourage readers to consider an issue from a new perspective?
2. What role does the past play in developing the key themes of a text you have studied this year?
3. What techniques has the author of a text you have studied this year used to appeal to the reader's emotions. How does this assist in developing a central idea of the text?
4. How does the author both adhere to and disobey the conventions associated with the genre of his/her text. What role does this play in encouraging the reader to understand important themes of the text?
5. How does the author of a text you have studied this year use metaphor to develop key themes of the text?
6. What techniques does the author of a text you have studied this year use to convey the importance of relationships?
7. Discuss how the author of a text you have studied this year shows the importance of maintaining one's identity.
8. "Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood." — George Orwell. How does the author of a text you have studied this year address this idea?

9. Discuss how the author of a text you have studied shows the importance of one of the following:
- hope
 - change
 - integrity
 - freedom
 - open-mindedness
10. How does the author of a text you have studied this year show the harm that can arise from idealising people, places or things?
10. “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” — William Shakespeare. Discuss the ways in which the author of a text you have studied this year addresses this idea.
11. How does the author of a text you have studied this year express the idea that if no one challenges what is 'normal', society will not progress?
12. “I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think” — Socrates. How does the author of a text you have studied this year encourage readers to form their own conclusions to the key questions raised in the text?
13. Discuss how an author you have studied this year conveys the idea that home is not a place but a state of mind.
14. What techniques does an author you have studied this year use in order to critique or praise a political stance?
15. How does an author you have studied this year convey the importance of thinking for one's self?

Sample Response (1 of 2) to Single Text

Q9. Discuss how the author of a text you have studied this year shows the importance of one of the following:

- integrity
- hope
- freedom
- change
- open-mindedness

Through *The Lives of Others*, Florian Von Donnersmarck explores the importance of freedom by demonstrating that its absence is a primary cause of human suffering. While Von Donnersmarck depicts suffering that occurs due to crises that are universal, the most significant sources of discontent in the film are context specific, occurring due to the oppressive rule of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), specifically in 1984. The declared goal of the Stasi was to “know everything”. As a corollary, the freedom of GDR’s citizens is diminished. Von Donnersmarck uses lighting, sound, camera angles, symbolism, mise en scène, music, character development, dialogue and colour to heighten the audience’s understanding of the importance of freedom. In his exploration of the dominance of the GDR, Von Donnersmarck demonstrates how the removal of one’s freedom can lead to a loss of identity and loss of hope.

Von Donnersmarck explores the lack of freedom granted to citizens of the GDR by using various cinematic techniques to create an atmosphere of control and oppression. He uses recurring themes of ominous music, framing of clone-like Stasi officials in precise formations, and the use of high- and low-angle shots to communicate positions of power in order to portray the state of oppression. Furthermore, Von Donnersmarck presents the lack of freedom, most powerfully through the character of Georg Dreyman. In the first part of the film, Dreyman compromises the integrity of his writing through his choice to conform to the GDR’s regime. The audience is made aware of the magnitude of this sacrifice through several shots of the symbolic books and a pen that lie on Dreyman’s desk, representing freedom of thought. Though Dreyman is not aware that he is being watched, the audience is constantly reminded of the oppressive vigilance of the GDR through frequent shots of Wiesler watching him while he is in his apartment, infringing on his privacy and his freedom. After Jerska’s suicide and when Minister Hempf’s manipulation of Christa-Maria becomes apparent, the audience witnesses Dreyman’s character development as he becomes increasingly disillusioned with the GDR regime and its infringement on citizens’ freedom. Through these elements, the audience is able to perceive the

pervasiveness of the GDR's control, the restriction that this placed on its citizens and lack of freedom it imposes.

Von Donnersmarck further emphasises the importance of freedom by demonstrating the connection that exists between an individual's lack of creative freedom and loss of identity using colour, lighting and mise en scène. The film is shot almost exclusively in dull, muted tones of grey, khaki, brown and beige, frequently depicting minimalistic, empty settings such as interrogation rooms, Stasi offices, Wiesler's apartment and his work space. Characters are often shot in near darkness with under lighting casting much of their faces in shadow. This creates a sterile, soulless environment populated with constrained and oppressed people. In scene 6, Jerska is framed in a book-filled room, with a poster in the background for a play he previously directed. This emphasises to viewers the significance of what the GDR is depriving him of. In this scene Jerska puts the question to Dreyman and to viewers: "What is a director if he can't direct?" The notion is later rearticulated to emphasise Christa's potential loss of identity when she is asked during interrogation "what is an actor without a stage?" Collectively these techniques make viewers aware that these characters' suffering is based on their inability to adequately fulfil their creative identity under the rule of the GDR and as such, they feel that "they are nothing".

Von Donnersmarck, through his depictions of the GDR's rule, demonstrates how the compromising of an individual's freedom and identity can lead to the most significant cause of suffering: the loss of hope. The loss of hope that occurs under the GDR regime is communicated to audiences through the use of lighting. The idea of hope is established early in the film when Minister Hempf tells Dreyman that Jerska is right to have hope. Hempf says that Jerska should continue to hope for the rest of his life and longer as "hope always dies last." When Dreyman meets with Jerska, he is downcast, despairing and obscured in shadow. It is not until Dreyman tells Jerska of his exchange with Minister Hempf that the audience is able to see Jerska's face clearly, lit up with false hope. Similarly, when Christa Maria submits herself to Minister Hempf in the back of his car, the only light is from traffic and street light as they pass. As she walks home, she is framed in a wide shot, making her appear small and insignificant. These scenes are not accompanied by any non-diegetic sound, conveying Christa Maria's emptiness and despair to the audience. After Jerska's suicide, Dreyman is motivated to write an article for the Spiegel exposing the high suicide rate in the GDR. In it, he describes suicide as "the death of all hope." Later, Christa's suicide is the ultimate gesture of anguish. This communicates to viewers the despair that can result from lack of freedom and loss of identity and the importance of hope in an individual's life.

By demonstrating the anguish that fills the citizens of the GDR in *The Lives of Others*, Von Donnersmarck shows that freedom is an essential part of human existence. While the causes of the film's protagonists' suffering are specific to the GDR, modern audience members of all cultures are likely to be able to see something of themselves and their situations in the dilemmas these characters face. Through this, Von Donnersmarck is able to construct an analysis of the human condition that is universally relevant. Through his use of lighting, sound, camera angles, symbolism, mise en scène, music, character development, dialogue and colour, Von Donnersmarck shows that an individual's freedom plays an instrumental role in establishing one's identity and maintaining one's hope.

Analysis of Sample Response 1 to Single Text (Question 9)

This Essay represents a high quality exam response for the following reasons:

Content

- The essay demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the historical setting of the film. This is indicative that the author has done extensive wider reading. This is an excellent way to make sure an essay 'stands out' when it is being marked.
- the essay discusses the way in which the film conveys importance of freedom on a universal level in addition to the importance of freedom in relation to the GDR
 - The essay discusses the importance of freedom in a variety of ways: the importance of freedom for its own sake, the importance of freedom for maintaining one's identity and the importance of creative freedom for maintaining hope
 - The essay discusses how freedom relates to other key themes of the film
 - The question is explicitly addressed in the thesis statement, in the conclusion and throughout the essay
 - the essay identifies and discusses a wide variety of filmic techniques, including light, shadow, colour, mise en scène and framing
 - the essay discusses how the above techniques appeal to the audience
 - The conclusion doesn't just re-state the introduction; it moves past it, however, it does not introduce too much new information

Structure:

- the essay begins with a thesis statements in which the argument of the whole essay is summarised in 1-2 sentences
- The first paragraph is an introduction that clearly outlines the key arguments of the essay
- Each paragraph addresses a single idea
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement
- Each paragraph contains evidence from the texts that supports the topic sentence,

- All evidence is followed by:
 - . An explanation of the effect that a certain technique has on the reader
 - . An explanation of how this contributes to the themes of the text
- Each paragraph concludes with an explanation of how the content discussed in the paragraph relates back to the thesis statement

Sample Response to Single Text

1. "How does the author of a text you have studied this year encourage readers to consider an issue from a new perspective"

In *The Reader* Bernard Schlink encourages readers to suspend their judgement of Hanna long enough for them to develop a more in depth understanding of the Holocaust and of themselves. By withholding the information that Hanna worked as a guard in a concentration camp during the Holocaust until later in the novel, readers gain an understanding of her as an individual and a human being before learning of her dark past. Through this, Schlink encourages readers to view Hanna as human, guiding them to try and understand how she could behave so inhumanely. By providing readers with an ambiguous description of the character Hanna, through the perspectives of both her lover and her victims, Schlink challenges existing ideas and understandings of Nazi Germany, encouraging readers to suspend, but not withhold, judgement. As a result, readers are encouraged to suspend their condemnation long enough to develop an understanding of how such an atrocity could occur and how it can be avoided in the future. Furthermore, Schlink's depiction of Hanna prompts readers to enter a state of introspection through compassionate imagination, where they must question their own morality and ethical framework.

Schlink, through his ambiguous characterisation of Hanna, encourages readers to temporarily withhold judgement in order to consider things from a new perspective. A strong theme throughout *The Reader* is the conflict between understanding and condemnation. This is most evident when Schlink, through Michael, writes that "I wanted simultaneously to understand Hanna's crime and to condemn it... but it was impossible to do both". Schlink presents his readers with two distinct images of Hanna. The first of these is from the perspective of Michael, as a 15 year old who presents Hanna as compassionate and beautiful. However, later in the text, Schlink introduces the dark truth about Hanna's past in the courtroom through the testimonies of the witnesses. During the trial Hanna displays an inhumane side that is contrary to what readers have come to expect of her. When defending the fact that she stood by while the Jewish prisoners burned in a bombed church, Hanna says "...we couldn't just let them escape. We couldn't, we were responsible for them". This quote illustrates the way in which the Nazi ideology of the time had caused Hanna to dehumanise the Jewish prisoners. In part three, Hanna is described by a surviving prisoner as being 'truly brutal'. When it is evident that Hanna's code of ethics

does not align with that of the conventional reader, a conflict develops as the two depictions of Hanna seem almost irreconcilable. Through this, readers are placed in a position to exercise compassionate imagination; to suspend judgement and attempt to gain an understanding of Hanna's mental processes before they condemn.

Schlink explores the power of literature to encourage readers to see things from a new perspective. The title "The Reader" refers to several different characters throughout the course of the novel: Michael as he reads to Hanna, the Jewish children whom Hanna has read to her and later commits to death and Hanna when she learns to read and consequently gains insight into the morally repugnant quality of her actions. When readers are able to withhold their condemnation, as they attempt to understand the rationale of the Holocaust generation of Germans through Schlink's contradictory depiction of Hanna, the title refers to them. Schlink conveys how literacy leads to empathy and understanding through the placing of one's self imaginatively in the role of another in order to gain an understanding of human behaviour that is not compatible with one's ethical framework. Readers are only able to empathise with Hanna through the understanding they have developed of her character in part one. Martha C. Nussbaum wrote that "The central role of art is to challenge conventional wisdom and values". Schlink does this through allowing readers to see the humanity of a character, Hanna, whom they would otherwise see as inhuman. As a result, readers must place themselves in Hanna's position, so that they can gain an understanding of what caused her to act in such an immoral way. This is instrumental in the destruction of clichés. During the trial, Hanna poses a question, with regard to her behaviour during the Holocaust. She asks the judge "what would you have done?". However, this question is also addressed to readers. The novel prompts readers to engage in a journey of introspection in which they look at their own morals and ethics and consider how they would have behaved in the same situation.

Through the novel, readers are encouraged to place themselves imaginatively in Hanna's position in order to gain a greater understanding of how the morality of Hanna's generation could become so warped. By prompting readers to have an empathetic relationship with Hanna early in the novel, readers are encouraged to search for mitigating factors for the abhorrent behaviour they learn of later in the novel. While Hanna's actions can never be justified or excused, the novel encourages them to be aware of factors such as political manipulation, brainwashing, propaganda techniques and the fact that Nazi ideology was the norm at the time. Through this, readers develop a deeper understanding of the Holocaust that is stripped of modern clichés.

Through his characterisation of Hanna, Schlink encourages readers to reexamine the Holocaust on a deeper level. Schlink does not intend to redeem Hanna and her generation through his contradictory portrayal. Schlink merely encourages readers to see the humanity and the complexity of this representational character: her beauty and her darkness, her compassion and her cruelty. Through this, readers are given a new insight into what facilitated the morally deplorable acts of the Holocaust, while simultaneously being prompted to ask themselves how they would've behaved in the same situation.

Analysis of Sample Response to Single Text (Question 1)

This Essay represents a high quality exam response for the following reasons:

Content

- The essay demonstrates an in-depth understanding of both the dominant ideology of Germany during WWII and of the climate from which Schlink is writing from. It also demonstrates a well-researched knowledge of the way in which humans respond to literature. This is indicative that the author has done extensive wider reading. This is an excellent way to make sure an essay 'stands out' when it is being marked.
- The essay discusses the effect that Schlink's characterisation of Hanna will have on readers
- The essay conveys that different readers will respond differently to the text dependent on their own moral framework
- The essay discusses the way in which the text prompts readers to enter a state of introspection
- The essay discusses the idea of compassionate imagination, a useful idea to consider when analysing any text, particularly one that engages in moral debate
 - The question is explicitly addressed in the thesis statement, in the conclusion and throughout the essay
 - The conclusion doesn't just re-state the introduction; it moves past it, however, it does not introduce too much new information

Structure:

- the essay begins with a thesis statements in which the argument of the whole essay is summarised in 1-2 sentences
- The first paragraph is an introduction that clearly outlines the key arguments of the essay
- Each paragraph addresses a single idea
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement
- Each paragraph contains evidence from the texts that supports the topic sentence,
- All evidence is followed by:

- . An explanation of the effect that a certain technique has on the reader
- . An explanation of how this contributes to the themes of the text
- Each paragraph concludes with an explanation of how the content discussed in the paragraph relates back to the thesis statement

Section 4: Critical Reading

Read the following texts and then answer the question listed at the end.

Text 1: The Last Lesson by Alphonse Daudet

I started for school very late that morning and was in great dread of a scolding, especially because M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles, and I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright! The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods; and in the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles, but I had the strength to resist, and hurried off to school.

When I passed the town hall there was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board. For the last two years all our bad news had come from there—the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer—and I thought to myself, without stopping:

“What can be the matter now?”

Then, as I hurried by as fast as I could go, the blacksmith, Wachter, who was there, with his apprentice, reading the bulletin, called after me:

“Don’t go so fast, bub; you’ll get to your school in plenty of time!”

I thought he was making fun of me, and reached M. Hamel’s little garden all out of breath.

Usually, when school began, there was a great bustle, which could be heard out in the street, the opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated in unison, very loud, with our hands over our ears to understand better, and the teacher’s great ruler rapping on the table. But now it was all so still! I had counted on the commotion to get to my desk without being seen; but, of course, that day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning. Through the window I saw my classmates, already in their places, and M. Hamel walking up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and go in before everybody. You can imagine how I blushed and how frightened I was.

But nothing happened. M. Hamel saw me and said very kindly:

“Go to your place quickly, little Franz. We were beginning without you.”

I jumped over the bench and sat down at my desk. Not till then, when I had got a little over my fright, did I see that our teacher had on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt, and the little black silk cap, all embroidered, that he never wore except on inspection and prize days. Besides, the whole school seemed so strange and solemn. But the thing that surprised me most was to see, on the back benches that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like ourselves; old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the former mayor, the former postmaster, and several others besides. Everybody looked sad; and Hauser had brought an old primer, thumbed at the edges, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages.

While I was wondering about it all, M. Hamel mounted his chair, and, in the same grave and gentle tone which he had used to me, said:

“My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master comes to-morrow. This is your last French lesson. I want you to be very attentive.”

What a thunderclap these words were to me!

Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall!

My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn any more! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up. And M. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.

Poor man! It was in honor of this last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes, and now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room. It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thanking our master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country that was theirs no more.

While I was thinking of all this, I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say that dreadful rule for the participle all through, very loud and clear, and without one mistake? But I got mixed up on the first words and stood there, holding on to my desk, my heart beating, and not daring to look up. I heard M. Hamel say to me:

“I won’t scold you, little Franz; you must feel bad enough. See how it is! Every day we have said to ourselves: ‘Bah! I’ve plenty of time. I’ll learn it to-morrow.’ And now you see where we’ve come out. Ah, that’s the great trouble with Alsace; she puts off learning till to-morrow. Now those fellows out there will have the right to say to you: ‘How is it; you pretend to be Frenchmen, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language?’ But you are not the worst, poor little Franz. We’ve all a great deal to reproach ourselves with.

“Your parents were not anxious enough to have you learn. They preferred to put you to work on a farm or at the mills, so as to have a little more money. And I? I’ve been to blame also. Have I not often sent you to water my flowers instead of learning your lessons? And when I wanted to go fishing, did I not just give you a holiday?”

Then, from one thing to another, M. Hamel went on to talk of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world—the clearest, the most logical; that we must guard it among us and never forget it, because when a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison. Then he opened a grammar and read us our lesson. I was amazed to see how well I understood it. All he said seemed so easy, so easy! I think, too, that I had never listened so carefully, and that he had never explained everything with so much patience. It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give us all he knew before going away, and to put it all into our heads at one stroke.

After the grammar, we had a lesson in writing. That day M. Hamel had new copies for us, written in a beautiful round hand: France, Alsace, France, Alsace. They looked like little flags floating everywhere in the school-room, hung from the rod at the top of our desks. You ought to have seen how every one set to work, and how quiet it was! The only sound was the scratching of the pens over the paper. Once some beetles flew in; but nobody paid any attention to them, not even the littlest ones, who worked right on tracing their fish-hooks, as if that was French, too. On the roof the pigeons cooed very low, and I thought to myself:

“Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?”

Whenever I looked up from my writing I saw M. Hamel sitting motionless in his chair and gazing first at one thing, then at another, as if he wanted to fix in his mind just how everything looked in that little school-room. Fancy! For forty years he had been there in the same place, with his garden outside the window and his class in front of him, just like that. Only the desks and benches had been worn smooth; the walnut-trees in the garden were taller, and the hopvine that he had planted himself twined about the windows to the roof. How it must have broken his heart to leave it all, poor man; to hear his sister moving about in the room above, packing their trunks! For they must leave the country next day.

But he had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last. After the writing, we had a lesson in history, and then the babies chanted their ba, be bi, bo, bu. Down there at the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles and, holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with them. You could see that he, too, was crying; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so funny to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and cry. Ah, how well I remember it, that last lesson!

All at once the church-clock struck twelve. Then the Angelus. At the same moment the trumpets of the Prussians, returning from drill, sounded under our windows. M. Hamel stood up, very pale, in his chair. I never saw him look so tall.

“My friends,” said he, “I—I—” But something choked him. He could not go on.

Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, bearing on with all his might, he wrote as large as he could:

“Vive La France!”

Then he stopped and leaned his head against the wall, and, without a word, he made a gesture to us with his hand:

“School is dismissed—you may go.”

Instructions: Read the following text and answer the questions below

Text: Dulce Et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen-

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!-- An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.--
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,--
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.*

Notes:

***"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" can be roughly translated from Latin to "It is sweet and honourable to die for your country"**

Text 3:



Critical Reading questions

1. What attitude does each of the texts take towards war? (2 or more paragraphs)
2. What is the relationship between texts 2 and 3? (1 or more paragraphs)
3. Compare and contrast the techniques used in these texts to persuade readers of a certain idea? (3 or more paragraphs)