- did not identify specific language features or responses when the question clearly called for such, e.g. a "powerful emotional response" required some unpacking
- demonstrated insecure understanding of terminology
- focused on summarising the plot
- often wrote about visual / oral text(s) as if it were a written text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- wrote a focused essay which addressed both parts of the question
- showed convincing engagement with the text and sometimes included a personal response
- analysed the text(s) in some depth, rather than just describing
- used analysis-related terminology securely and included apt examples from the text(s).

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- had a secure understanding of the director's purpose in terms of how language features were used for effect
- showed a high level of maturity both in their writing skills, and in recognising how the text (and their response) illustrated an important aspect of society
- provided an original viewpoint on the text
- went beyond the text by making pertinent and insightful comments, thus demonstrating higher level thinking
- showed evidence of independent research by using material that reflected sophisticated and sometimes unique perception
- wrote a confident, fluent and articulate argument, often using sophisticated and precise vocabulary.

Standard specific comments

The assessment specifications name many "features". Candidates need to understand this term so that they can provide a range of language features if that is the requirement of the question. Many candidates who wrote about structure did not have a secure understanding of this aspect. Further teaching and learning

around understanding the demands of the questions will benefit candidates.

Many candidates wrote on the ever-popular *V* for *Vendetta* and *The Shawshank Redemption* showing understanding and engagement with the texts.

Texts that worked very well included: *The King's Speech*, *Suffragette*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *The Dressmaker* and *The Dark Knight*. Other texts that worked well included: *Gran Torino*, *The Dark Horse*, *Children of Men*, *Tsotsi*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *Hidden Figures*, *Gattaca* and *Crash*.

Less successful texts included: Little Miss Sunshine, *Remember the Titans*, 127 *Hours*, *The Social Network* and *Rabbit Proof Fence*. *Shutter Island* and *Inception* proved challenging for some candidates as they tried to explain plot as well as provide analysis.

91100: Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- answered all three questions
- provided some language techniques in support of their answer
- unpacked one or more language techniques to help develop an answer
- showed understanding of the text or of the techniques (or both)
- may have shown a misunderstanding of part of the text, producing an inconsistent answer
- did not develop an in-depth answer
- looked with reasonable depth at only one part of the text so didn't assess the whole text, or how parts of the text related to one another.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

missed out at least one of the questions

- did not give language techniques in support of their answers
- gave a basic summary or paraphrase of the text
- were unable to demonstrate any analysis of techniques used in the text
- did not identify a specific reaction or unpack the question when providing an answer
- wrote bullet points that were not related to the question
- did not develop the answer, or did not develop the answer with evidence.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- addressed the questions with a clear focus
- showed a confident knowledge and understanding of language techniques
- analysed how techniques created ideas and/or effects, unpacking in some detail how the techniques contributed to the impact of the text
- showed a clear understanding of the text
- showed some awareness of the writer's purpose and deliberate crafting of the text
- made connections across the text
- wrote fluently.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- analysed and interpreted the text with originality or insight
- demonstrated insight in their explanation of key ideas, techniques and examples, and how these worked together
- demonstrated a clear, mature understanding of the ideas in the text, often going beyond the text, linking the ideas to other relevant contexts
- discussed ideas beyond the text and acknowledged either their personal response to it and/or made a link to human experience
- appreciated the choices made by the writer and how they impacted the reader's understanding/experience of the text
- presented an integrated discussion that valued the text as a whole.

Standard specific comments

Candidates engaged positively with the texts provided, with many candidates completing the whole paper. Those who responded with an in-depth analysis were rewarded; the quality of the response is more important than the quantity of language features identified.

At Level 2, candidates must discuss how techniques individually or collectively work to achieve a certain purpose. It is important that candidates relate their discussion directly to the question posed in the examination and that they focus their discussion on the techniques employed by the writer.

As previously mentioned, the number of techniques mentioned in an answer is less important than the quality of discussion attached to each technique; fewer techniques and more analysis of how they work in the context of the text, and in relation to the question will advantage candidates.

Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all three questions. Teachers and candidates should note that a candidate cannot achieve Excellence if only answer two questions are answered.

English subject page

Previous years' reports

2017 (PDF, 57KB) 2016 (PDF, 246KB)

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