

Paper 1

Common Examiners' Comments

-  Irrelevant connections
-  Lack of specific examples
-  Misreading of the text
-  Insufficient analysis- Lack of clear connections between interpretation and appreciation of text
-  Descriptive writing vs. analytical commentary

My Suggestions

-  Do not decide ahead of time to write about the prose or the poetry passage. Do not choose the one that is solely easier to understand.
-  Read your choice **at least 2** times before you make your selection. Once you make your selection, keep reading, annotating, and organizing your thoughts into coherent outlined chunks before you start writing your actual commentary. This preparatory stage might take over 30 minutes of your time but don't panic, as without careful analytical forethought you might get into writing some superficial analysis that does not bear any significant literary value or depth.
-  If in the preparatory/annotation stage you feel you are getting nowhere, changing your selection should always be your other option.
-  The title and the ending of both prose and poetry selections are often key elements that could impart significant central ideas. Make sure you examine them carefully and draw meaningful relevant connections to your analysis.
-  Write a clear introductory paragraph drawing the reader's attention to key ideas and signposting which direction you will go with your observations.
-  Linear analysis of the text is not the ideal way of presenting your observations. Assemble your findings under thematic, structural or semantic focal points.
-  Details alone from the text are not sufficient. You need to use quotations in your analysis.
-  Always keep in mind the author-reader-text triangle and make sure the voice of the author is brought into your analysis.
-  Avoid assumptions and ensure you provide real textual justifications for your observations. Your personal voice and confidence have to come through your writing.
-  Good literature is about tension and sustaining it throughout the piece. Make sure you identify the tension/s, conflicts and contrasting elements in the selection and examine their effects from different perspectives and in detail.
-  Good commentary is all about appreciation of literature and literary elements embedded in the text. Avoid listing the literary elements one after another. Make sure they are fully examined and their effects are analyzed in detail.