

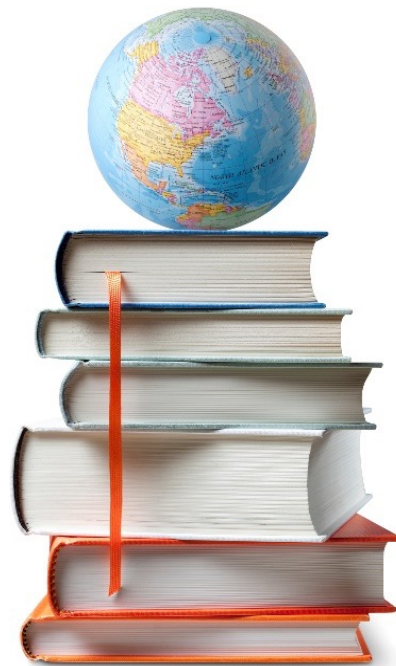


**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 2

**Cambridge International AS & A Level  
Literature in English 9695**

For examination from 2021



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Literature in English 9695, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the subject's curriculum and assessment objectives.

In this booklet, candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2021 series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with a clear explanation of where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by examiner comments on how the answer could have been improved. In this way, it is possible for you to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they could do to improve their answers. There is also a list of common mistakes candidates made in their answers for each question.

This document provides illustrative examples of candidate work with examiner commentary. These help teachers to assess the standard required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme. Therefore, in some circumstances, such as where exact answers are required, there will not be much comment.

The questions and mark schemes used here are available to download from the School Support Hub. These files are:

**9695 June 2021 Question Paper 21**

**9695 June 2021 Mark Scheme 21**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the School Support Hub:

[www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low-level response for each question. The candidate answers are set in a table. In the left-hand column are the candidate answers, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>5. <b>1</b> "The Cat of Habit" presents a cat and its thoughts to the readers. It conveys the true nature of the cat's presence in the house, as eternal, permanent and as a part of the house &amp; itself.</p> <p><b>2</b> Firstly, the cat appears eternal in this poem. This is achieved by the poet due to the present tense that the poem is written in. The cat 'knows' 'what's coming and going', making not only the poem not only permanent, but also continuous through the years. It makes the cat's existence and presence, eternal in the house as if no matter what happens, she shall remain etched into the house forever. The <b>3</b> stanza when hee 'hourlong', how</p>	<p><b>1</b> The essay starts with a concise overview of the poem.</p> <p><b>2</b> The essay identifies the two central marriages in the novel, showing knowledge of the text.</p> <p><b>3</b> The essay demonstrates knowledge of the changes in Gilbert's and Hortense's relationship over the course</p>

**Answers** are by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level. Discuss and analyse the answers with your learners in the classroom to improve their skills.

**Examiner comments** are alongside the answers. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams so you can help your learners to refine their exam technique.

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- This confident essay could have been improved by looking at more of the poem. A range of good references support the ideas in the essay, although some important parts of the text are also omitted. This would also have allowed more consideration of the nuances of the poetic language and use of metaphor, repetition and assonance, for example. This approach would have given the candidate more to discuss.
- Greater consideration of some of the poetic techniques and how they contribute to the poem's structure is discussed, the candidate says less about exact references.

This section explains how the candidate could have improved each answer. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine their exam technique.

## Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- Candidates do not always consider the text form of the unseen. They should consider clearly the techniques of verse when discussing a poem, dramatic techniques when discussing drama, and narrative methods when discussing prose.

Often candidates were not awarded marks because they misread or misinterpreted the questions.

Lists the common mistakes candidates made in answering each question. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes and give them the best chance of achieving the available marks.

## Question 2(a)

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

2	1	Small island.
	a)	<p>Andrea Levy, uses small island to expose the so-called "cosmo" "cosmopolitan" in Britain during the post-colonial era, she uses auto-biographical narratives, relating the characters of Gilbert to her dad who <del>is</del> also was a Jamaican on the 22nd June 1948 Empire Windrush and who was also hit with reality of the true nature of his 'mother country' and her mom who, just like hortense, perceived that her golden skin equated to golden life, to bring to light how Britain Balked its Colonies during the war and discarded them after.</p>
	2	<p>marriage is one of the major themes in small island as it served different purposes to each character, however, each characters perception of marriage varied from toxic love, disgust, and plain respect, to truly understand the significance of marriage marriage in Small island, we need to explore the new perspectives of marriage in which Andrea introduces in Small island.</p>
	3	<p>A main role marriage plays in Small island for each characters narrator, is the use of marriage as a means of escape, the theme of displacement is seen in each character throughout the 'before' of their narration and they can be seen residing in a place their heart or ambitions dont conform to, and thus the narrators find a means of escape using marriage.</p>
	4	<p>Gilberts use of marriage is brings the most pathetic fallacy to readers as in order to end his feeling of displacement he must give away his pride and self-worth. Gilbert joining the war, even when his cousin exhorted him not to 'this is not your war', gave him a chance to explore the world and</p>

1 The essay's initial focus shows knowledge of context, although it is not directly relevant to the question.

2 The key focus of the question is introduced halfway through the opening paragraph. Key ideas are set up for discussion within the essay, indicating structure and direction.

3 There is clear focus on the question topic, linked to other concerns in the novel, with understanding of narrative structure.

4 Clearly directed focus on Gilbert, showing secure knowledge of the novel, although its application could be made more directly relevant to the question.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

many aspects of it, it was through this war that Gilbert came to a realisation that his 'mother country' did not know or regard him in the least bit and perhaps Elwood was right 'in advising him not to leave and with the flagrant experience of terrible gastronomy and racism, Gilbert was quite happy to return back to Jamaica, until he realised that, 'man, we Jamaicans are small islanders too' upon returning, the lack of opportunity or freedom and space in Jamaica seemed to have made Gilbert forget the racism he faced in England and hence his feeling of displacement, his longing to go back to England and lack of money due to a failed business, found him getting married to Hortense Roberts in exchange for money to be able to board the Empire Hindrush.

Hortense, feeling trapped in a place that lacked manliness and a place where she couldn't express herself to her fullest capacity and explore the benefits of her "golden skin" also resorted to getting married to Gilbert Joseph for the mere reason that it was "not right for an unmarried woman to travel alone", however from my critical point of view, it seems that Hortense does not want to end up alone in Britain, and even needs a man's familiarity and boldness to survive. The use of marriage as an escape for these two was to just see mercy as a business deal, 'it's a deal' and the lack of familiarity between them as they had just been engaged ~~know each other~~ for 'five days' was the reason their first days in brother England together were filled with hatred. The use of marriage by Gilbert in order to get more job opportunities in England was ironic as the qualifications for job opportunities in England was simply not being black, and Hortense's disappointment in arriving

5 Detailed knowledge is shown with the inclusion of key quotations.

6 The information about Gilbert in the paragraph is directed back to the question at the end.

7 The opening of the paragraph makes clear the change of focus to Hortense. Again, secure knowledge is supported by detail, including quotations.

8 The candidate recognises that marriages play a narrative role in the novel.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

9 in ~~flam~~ England, from the lack of maternalism from anyone she met ~~was~~, overshadowed by the lack of interest of the andersons, ~~and~~ the inability for anyone to understand her as they kept on saying 'what?' to everything she said and the disappointment in the place she was to stay in "Just this", "You bring me here to live like this", show readers that escape for this couple was far from their reach because of their race and their unwillingness to let go of their illusions, rendering 10 their marriage useless.

11 The use of marriage as a means of escape can be also seen in Queenie and Bernard's marriage, Queenie's escape through marriage brought her into another imprisonment.

12 From a young age Queenie resented her family business, even though all everyone in her family had a passion for it, she felt disgusted by it, hence her reasons to turn vegetarian, after her ~~parents~~ sent her to transition to London under the tutelage of her Aunt Dorothy, Queenie finally felt like she was at her point in her life where she felt happy, unlike that is until her aunt's untimely passing seen as she would have to return to the farm, she ~~eventually~~ made a gambit to get married to her ~~to~~ then boyfriend, who she planned on breaking up with, in order to once again free herself, however with this 13 marriage Queenie found herself in a bad place of dullness and boredom, her sexual life with her husband was so full of stoniness, "she lay there flat", that she could not have given birth, readers see this quest of Queenie to give birth as a way to trying to have a little bit of life in her house, however, no matter

9 The essay makes secure connections across the text, with understanding of narrative techniques.

10 The end of the paragraph makes direct reference to the question, securing relevance.

11 The paragraph opening has a clear introduction of the second marriage for consideration, developing the argument of the previous paragraph.

12 This paragraph demonstrates thorough knowledge of Queenie in the novel, with a number of references, provided as background to her marriage decision.

13 Detail provided to show the disappointments in Queenie's marriage, including supporting quotations.



Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

how much she tried, she could not bring herself to enjoy sexual relations with her husband, Levy again, shows a failure to find true escape through marriage, as Queenie found herself in a place with loneliness and unhappiness, however, it could be argued that Queenie still preferred his dullness, to the 'republican' fair.

Bernard ~~is~~ utilises marriage, in a desperate attempt to bring life to his dull life as a bank clerk, however, it can be noted that Bernard's marriage the Queenie was the most sincere, as he actually loved her, unlike all other characters, who had absolutely no love for each other before their marriage, although Bernard did not show his love for his wife after he had gotten her, 'he didn't talk to me' and rather showed coldness on his part, at this point of the play, ~~well~~, his love for Queenie is questioned, as readers struggle to understand the reason for his sudden transition, perhaps it was due to the fact that he felt like since he was had her in holy matrimony, he didn't need to bother himself to be pleasant to her in order to keep her.

Another way Levy presents marriage is loveless, and the lack of love shown by each married couple, diminishes the true value of love at the beginning of their journey together each character's marriage can be seen to stand just with mere 'tolerance', Gilbert's attitude towards his wife, however, was much more respectful than that of Workise, with her often calling him a 'fool' or a 'buffoon', ~~additionally~~ ~~that~~ additionally the lack of love is shown on their wedding night, when Gilbert tried to have sexual relations with her Workise and

14 Paragraph concludes with direct reference to the question.

15 A discriminating point is made about Bernard, showing understanding of Levy's characterisation.

16 The new direction of the essay is clearly signalled at the beginning of the paragraph.

17 Specific references and quotations support the point, with awareness of the effects of the language used.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

	<p>18 she screamed with fright, 'get that thing away from me', as "that thing" was a means of insulting Worsense's manners and <del>ethic</del> etiquette, however Gilberts attempt at having sexual relations with Worsense, even as he knows their marriage is solely 'business', 'he double my hand over saying I do', shows that inspite of there</p>
19	<p>being no love, there might have been a little lust towards Worsense on Gilberts part. Towards the end of the novel, after the disillusionment of the Gilbert and Worsense, and Worsenses realisation of the menopause in England and after Worsense opens herself to love again inspite of her heart breaks with Michael, 20 their marriage prevails and love is finally found, and it seems like Queerles baby is made for them as just like Queerles husband is light skinned and Gilbert looks like Michael, this respects their marriage.</p>
21	<p>Bernard and Queerles relationship however doesn't get better towards the end, and their lack of love even increases after their sexual revelations, Bernard's refusal to let go of his racism added to the <del>quality</del> toughness in their relationship and the abortion of their baby.</p>

18 Points are supported with quotations, with some commentary and interpretation.

19 The candidate offers careful judgement on character, with supporting evidence.

20 The essay shows understanding of the development of the relationship through the novel.

21 The essay's conclusion focuses on one of the marriages.

**Total mark awarded = 20 out of 25**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- The essay demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the text with numerous references and integrated quotations. It would have been improved however, if these references had been more directly related to the question.
- There are times when the essay gave extended accounts of characters' histories which were close to illustrated narrative summary and the link to the question often occurred at the end of a paragraph. To improve, the paragraphs needed to maintain a clear sense of purpose throughout.
- Communication was always clear, although the essay would have been improved with a tighter control of sentences. Shorter, clearer sentences would be better.
- Some comments were made on quotations. The essay would have been improved by more specific analytical comments on the effects of Levy's choices of language and narrative methods.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

2	1	Andrea Levy presents marriage in her novel 'Small Island' by exploring the lives of two married couples: the Josephs and the Blighs. Gilbert and Hortense Joseph are Jamaican immigrants who move to England for more opportunities in their lives while Queenie and Bernard Bligh are white English born individuals. The novel mostly takes place in 1948, but also contains flashbacks, and explores the themes of marriage and relationship in the context of a post world war two world that was ridden with racial prejudice and classism which ties in to the themes of marriage.
	2	
	3	The Josephs and Blighs parallel each other in the way that both of their marriages were out of convenience more than anything else. Hortense first meets Gilbert while he is courting her friend Celia Langley but upon finding out their plans to move to England she reveals that Celia has a mentally ill mother who she intends on leaving behind, this causes the two to dissolve their relationship. Hortense then ceases this opportunity to move to England and proposes that she will give Gilbert the money he needs to get there if in return they get married and she joins him once he settles. Gilbert agrees as he sees Jamaica as no longer the land of opportunity it once was before he enlisted in the Royal Air Force during the <sup>second</sup> world war and before him and his cousin Elwood started a 'bee farm' which eventually failed. Although he agrees to get married he seems to be disheartened that he could be so easily 'bought'.
	4	
	5	
	6	The Blighs have a similar reason for getting married, convenience. Bernard and Queenie first started courting while she was working for her Aunt Dorothy's sweet shop, Queenie tries breaking it off but not before Bernard proposes to

- 1 The essay immediately addresses the question and identifies the two central marriages which will be its focus.
- 2 The essay shows understanding of one of the important structural features of the novel and relates this to the question.
- 3 The links between the marriages are emphasised by discussing them initially in parallel, communicating ideas with clarity.
- 4 Reference to the specific episode, with some detail, shows competent selection of knowledge.
- 5 The development of this reference becomes a little narrative.
- 6 Progression in the new paragraph is clearly directed, highlighting the connection to previous paragraph.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

7 her, she does not accept his proposal at first but once returning to the sweet shop to find her aunt dead she agrees. Queenie comes from a family of successful pig farmers who seem rich in comparison to the others in the small 'mining town', but she hates it there and in order to avoid going back and 'ending up like my [her] mother' she has to marry the financially stable Bernard Bligh. Both couples end up marrying each other for some sort of financial gain or stability. 8

9 When Hortense first arrives in England she does not sleep in the same bed as her husband and instead he sleeps 'on the armchair', this is symbolic of how they are both still uncomfortable in their relationship and with each other. But by the end of the novel Hortense tells Gilbert to join her on the bed because there is "plenty room" showing how much their trust has grown due to him: standing up for her when a taxi driver assumes she is a prostitute, comforting her once she is rejected from a teaching position and him agreeing to help his friend and fellow Jamaican, Winston, 'fix up' a house in return for living in it for free, once Bernard tries to evacuate them from his house. Hortense although selfish at the beginning of the book, shown by her breaking off Celia and Gilbert's relationship, becomes far more selfless at the end by helping Queenie give birth, destroying her precious wedding dress in the process because of the 'afterbirth', and also by adopting her baby. This growth was brought about by the way her marriage with Gilbert and subsequently moving to England made her view life through a new perspective. In this way Andrea Levy presents their marriage as a catalyst for positive change and self growth. 10 11 12 13

7 Specific reference shows knowledge supporting the point.

8 Connections confirmed at the end of the paragraph, demonstrate competent essay structure.

9 References to two episodes from different parts of the novel support the point about the development of the relationship. As elsewhere, they are rooted in the text by the use of brief quotations.

10 Further references show knowledge of the text. The selections provide sound support for the point being made and show competent understanding of the ways in which Levy shows the development of the relationship.

11 The essay focuses the points on Hortense, drawing from previous references and introducing new ones.

12 The point about Hortense is related to the question, showing sound essay structure.

13 The paragraph ends effectively with reference to the question and the author's methods.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

14 Queenie despises her married life with Bernard, she strongly dislikes the monotonous ~~and~~ and routine way everything has to be done, like how Bernard winds up the 'grandfather clock' every day. So when the 'Blitz' happens and people have to be rehoused, she volunteers against her husband's will. This fractures their already failing marriage as she barely has time to see her husband, so when he is conscripted she is portrayed as being ~~relief~~ relieved. Bernard even says that she did not look back when he was leaving. While he is gone she has an affair with a Jamaican BAF soldier named Michael Roberts which results ~~in~~ in her getting pregnant. In the part of the book which is set in present day '1948' Bernard had been gone missing for a few years, ~~in~~ it is later revealed that he had slept with a prostitute in India during the war but thought he had contracted Syphilis and decided to stay away from his wife out of shame. But he returns to her once a doctor tells him that if it were syphilis he would have already ~~be~~ been dead. Their reunion is awkward as he immediately begins to try and evict the tenants of their house, mostly due to his racial prejudice, and demands that they move to the suburbs.

17 When Queenie gives birth Bernard is angry at first but develops a bond with the baby and has a short moment of redemption where he wants to keep the baby instead of letting the Josephs adopt him. But in the end he makes it clear that he still has racial prejudices when he tells Gilbert to ~~not~~ get his "filthy black hands" off of Queenie while consoling her which results in the Josephs adopting him. In the end, although Queenie was headstrong and independent during the war she caves in and becomes her husband's subservient wife once more. Levy presents how

14 Change of focus for the new paragraph is clearly identified.

15 Points about changes are supported with specific references.

16 Further references show knowledge although presented in a narrative style.

17 While the topic is clear at the beginning of this paragraph, the style is close to narrative summary.

18 The conclusion of the paragraph focuses on the author and brings the two marriages together to show contrast.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

	unlike the Josephs, they were not able to develop a mutual understanding of each other, which caused them to stay in an unhappy, selfish marriage.
19	Levy <sup>also</sup> presents marriage between Gilbert's mother and father, who are minor characters. <del>The two of</del> Gilbert's father is a Jewish man who converted to christianity and married <del>her</del> <sup>his</sup> mother, the theme of colonialism comes to play here because although he is an alcoholic and Gilbert's mother and sisters have to provide for themselves, his mother is still proud of her "almost white" husband.
20	In conclusion Andrea Levy presents marriage in 'Small Island' by drawing parallels <del>by</del> between the Blighs and Josephs to show how a marriage that was formed out of selfish needs can go two ways. Parallels are also drawn from how most of the character's parents marriages reflect their present day relationships, for instance Hortense was an illegitimate child brought up by her father's cousin and Queenie's baby Michael will have the same fate.
21	Levy presents marriage as a bond between two people that can be strengthened over time by building love and trust or that can be broken by infidelity and prejudice.

19 The end of the essay widens the topic by introducing a different marriage. This shows knowledge, although the new reference is not connected to the previous points.

20 Conclusion goes beyond summary by introducing relevant new knowledge.

21 The essay ends with concluding direct reference to the question.

Total mark awarded = 15 out of 25

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- The essay competently used references to a number of specific episodes from the novel to support the points made. There was a tendency for some of these references to lapse into narrative summary. It would be an improvement if this narrative tendency were avoided, and all references were specifically connected to particular points.
- The essay would also have been improved by using some of the quotations as opportunities to comment on the effects of Levy's choices of language and narrative methods.
- There were useful references to Levy throughout the essay; it would have been an improvement to make more direct comments about the writer's choices of language, structure, characterisation and plot events.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

2 a **1** In the novel, *Small Island*, marriage and love is a major theme in the story. ~~Andre~~ ~~Amir~~ Levy provides two marriages in the story to compare and contrast and to present the theme of ~~strong~~ marriage. Levy presents ~~strong~~ marriage to be difficult and complex. The author presents this by showing trials and tribulations, adultery, and poor communication between characters.

**2** To begin, the author presents the difficulties of marriage through trials and tribulations. Levy presented the marriage between Hortense and Gilbert and the ~~relationship~~ marriage of Queenie and Bernard in the story. Both marriages were shown to have ~~issues and problems~~ domestic issues and problems in the story, and ~~the~~ showed how both relationships had to work intensively to make things better. For instance, in the story, the author ~~shows how~~ shows how Hortense and Gilbert are having ~~from~~ problems and how each of them are not satisfying the other's ~~expectations~~ expectations and standards. **3** It is not until ~~near~~ the end of the story, where it is shown that they are trying to grow together and bond closer to ~~each other~~. They were able to do this overcoming prejudice, different ideologies, and further obstacles. **4** Levy was able to suggest to the reader that marriage is difficult by showing how it's not easy to overcome a conflict and how in a relationship marriage, they have to work together.

In addition, the author presents the hardships of marriage through ~~another~~ adultery. A lot of unfaithfulness and lack of commitment was

**1** The candidate addresses the question immediately. The idea of contrast is introduced to give direction to the essay.

**2** The essay identifies the two central marriages in the novel, showing knowledge of the text.

**3** The essay demonstrates knowledge of the changes in Gilbert's and Hortense's relationship over the course of the novel, with some basic understanding of the presentation of this change.

**4** The essay offers a simple comment on Levy's achievement and what the marriage represents.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

shown in this story. <sup>5</sup> Neither couple was faithful  
 faithful to each other and this is the author's way  
 of saying that creating was an escape. Without a  
 doubt, both relationships had ~~big~~ problems and  
 it was overwhelming and stressful for some of the  
 characters. Committing adultery was a way for the  
 characters in the story to escape from the bad side of  
 marriage and be free. In the tale, the writer  
<sup>6</sup> shows Hortense cheating on Bernard, while he's  
 away at war. Being without her husband for so  
 long and the way Bernard treated her in the relationship  
 and others, made it easy for her to cheat. This  
 indicates ~~how~~ when marriage is difficult and hard,  
 the difficulties of marriage by showing the  
 willingness of the characters trying to escape from  
 it.

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the author presents the hardships  
 of marriage through poor communication. In the  
 story, both ~~these~~ relationships had ~~trouble~~ trouble  
 communicating with each other ~~of~~ or understanding  
 each other. When near on the same side of ~~an~~ a  
~~side~~ of conflict or an issue, that causes hardships  
 in a ~~marriage~~ marriage and makes it hard for the  
 relationship to progress. The author shows that  
 both relationships having communication problems  
 to generalize how marriage is like or can be. In <sup>8</sup>  
 the story, the author shows how Hortense and  
 Gilbert are having problems communicating each other  
 and understanding one another feelings, hopes, and  
 aspirations. This creates conflict in the relationship,  
 which makes marriage so difficult and hard to be.  
 The author knows that ~~communication~~ communication and  
 understanding is the most important part of a

<sup>5</sup> Knowledge is less certain here – there is adultery in Queenie's and Bernard's marriage, but not in that of Hortense and Gilbert. The essay has not yet mentioned Queenie and Bernard, confusing the issue further.

<sup>6</sup> The reference to Hortense and Bernard is more likely to be an error of writing rather than knowledge, but the essay is less secure here. Without direct reference to Queenie, knowledge is limited.

<sup>7</sup> The candidate uses discourse indicators to structure and direct the paragraphs. The idea of 'the author presents' suggests understanding, although without detail it remains limited.

<sup>8</sup> The topic of communication is an appropriate one. Comments remain at a general level, showing basic knowledge without supporting detail.



Example Candidate Response – low, continued	Examiner comments
<p>reletter marriage, which is why the author intentionally made both relationships have communication problem to show how difficult it is.</p> <p>9 To summarize, marriage has its drawbacks states contrast to the what the majority may think of marriage, it is not always wonderful and defin. The author was able to realistically shows this and present how difficult marriage can be. The author presented marriage to be difficult through little to rare communication, not adultery, and the lengths to overcome issues.</p>	<p>9 The conclusion is general, presenting a basic summary of previous points.</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 7 out of 25</b></p>

### How the candidate could have improved their answer

- While the essay showed some limited knowledge and understanding of the text, there was limited evidence of understanding of Levy's methods and language. The knowledge displayed would have been more secure without the inaccurate suggestion of infidelity in Gilbert and Hortense's relationship. Queenie could have been mentioned more, which might have avoided the misidentification with Hortense at one point.
- The essay would have been improved by the use of some specific examples of episodes from the novel to support the general points made. These could have been used, for example, to illustrate the comparison of different stages of Gilbert and Hortense's relationship. They could also have been used to show comparisons and contrasts between the two relationships discussed in the essay. The candidate could have developed the comments on ways in which Levy 'presents' and 'shows' with such details, considering how Levy invited the reader to respond.
- The essay would also be improved with the use of quotations from the novel; these would have allowed the candidate to make direct comments about the effects of Levy's choices of language.

### Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- Responses could have been improved by the inclusion of more specific references or quotations. Without references and quotations to support points, essays tend to be general and narrative.
- Most responses focused on the marriage of Queenie/Bernard and Hortense/Gilbert. The most successful answers moved beyond these two marriages to consider marriage more broadly.

## Question 5

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

5.	<p>1 The Cat of Habit presents a cat and its thoughts to the readers. It conveys the true nature of the cat's presence in the house, as eternal, permanent and as a part of the house itself.</p> <p>2 Firstly, the cat appears eternal in this poem. This is achieved by the poet due to the present tense that the poem is written in. The cat 'knows' what's coming and going, making not only the poem not only permanent, but also continuous through the years. It makes the cat's existence and presence, eternal in the house as if no matter what happens, she shall remain etched into the house forever. The use of tense is even more striking in the last stanza when because because it creates a sense of a time passing by, 'hurrling', however, simultaneously it <del>remains</del> forever remains in the present as if passing through the time barrier. This could, in the bigger picture symbolise the effect that pets have on people. Even animals that remain distant and not active, still still grow into our souls, embed embedding themselves into our existence through the ages and forever. The poet's use of tense in this way, thus allows him to make this poem relatable to many most pet-owners in the world.</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5 Furthermore, the cat is presented as almost all <sup>knowing</sup> <del>knowing</del>. It spectates the world it sees from the side, 'distantly' from the side, <del>as</del> the same way the poet places the reader as a spectator of the poem through the 3rd person used. In addition to this, the <del>enormous</del> <del>amount</del> large amount of contrast <sup>used</sup> <del>used</del> in this poem, emphasises this idea. From <del>to</del> 'shades and light', the contrast develops to enormous comparisons of <sup>on</sup> 'the earth and in the sky'. This highlights the cat's ability of some sort to spectate the whole world around it and comprehend it all. <del>That</del> All this, brings to the cat a sort of power in the reader's eyes, more than they would have imagined earlier and much more than they expected. The poet brings the reader's attention to something they probably never would have thought of before and showing them that the world</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p>
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- 1 The essay starts with a concise overview of the poem.
- 2 The essay is structured by the progression of the candidate's ideas about the poem rather than working through it chronologically.
- 3 The first point is an overarching one, considering the tense of the verbs and the effects created.
- 4 The points develop into personal response, supported by the ideas of the paragraph.
- 5 With clear progression of paragraphs, the essay moves on to the way the cat is characterised in the poem.
- 6 There is confident consideration of techniques and their effects on a reader.
- 7 Points are supported with short embedded quotations and directed comments on them.
- 8 The essay confidently develops the point, putting the focus on the writer of the text.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

9 that they do not see or comprehend could be much bigger and complex than ever imaginable. Yet another example of the mystical knowledge that the cat possesses is the knowledge and vision of the ~~unseen~~ 'unseen'. The mention of the 'unseen' is strongly highlighted by the poet through the pauses that he creates around it by the caesuras. ~~The~~ The cat sees a 'passing ~~witch~~ witch' for many, 'unseen'. This could be a hint at the common myth that cats have the ability to see ghosts and spirits, once again ~~portraying~~ portraying the cat as a much more powerful creature than ever imaginable or expected to humans.

10 Moreover, the cat's existence is ~~port~~ presented as very powerful ~~overall~~ over its surroundings. An odd aspect that sticks out in the poem is the very short third stanza, much ~~is~~ shorter than the other three. The other stanzas, all being just one ~~sent~~ sentence each, stretch out to being long, continuous ~~sent~~ sentences, emphasising the power of the cat ~~at~~ over the space around it, however ~~at~~ the third stanza, brings the reader's ~~attentio~~ attention to the unseen <sup>power</sup> ~~power~~ of possession and ownership. The cat 'has the place marked', linking to the idea mentioned earlier, that the cat has etched its existence into the house, but this also could relate to marking ~~its~~ its owner. This idea is brought up right before this as well, at the end of the ~~second~~ ~~stand~~ stanza, regarding 'permanent ownership'. Throughout the poem there is no mention of a person, or any owner, but this <sup>conveys</sup> ~~portrays~~ their existence, as does the phrase 'It's mine' which, in the same way as ~~the~~ 'unseen', is the only other phrase significantly separated by pauses to ~~bring~~ <sup>bring</sup> the reader's attention. It shows that the cat thrives in the fact that in the 'most warm place' it is owned by someone and given love.

12

In conclusion, this poem conveys the unseen side of a cat that we, as people, don't even consider. It gives the reader a very fresh, new perspective over life and over ~~our~~ ~~the~~ pets that many own. The title of ~~this~~ this poem, 'The

14 'Cat of Habit' which is also repeated three times throughout the poem, at the start of the first three stanzas, ~~it~~ delivers to the reader the idea of permanence and eternity ~~as~~, ~~it~~ similarly to the way the tense does, since habits ~~offer~~ <sup>offer</sup> eternity offer a permanent nature to everything, yet again showing the unchanging nature of the cat and its power that is shared <sup>by</sup> ~~in~~ every cat, ~~thus~~ lasting through the ages.

15

9 The candidate develops ideas with examples from across the text.

10 The argument develops confidently, using discourse markers.

11 This stage of the argument focuses on the structure of the poem. The ideas are expressed confidently.

12 The candidate considers different possible interpretations.

13 The essay develops a thoughtful point from close observation of the details of the poem.

14 The conclusion avoids summary by bringing in the point about the poem's title, linked to the structure.

15 The concluding points are drawn clearly from the earlier discussion.

Total mark awarded = 21 out of 25

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- This confident essay could have been improved by looking at more of the poem. A range of good references supported the ideas in the essay, although some important parts of the text were also omitted. This would also have allowed more consideration of the nuances of the poet's language and use of patterning, repetition, and assonance, for example. This approach would have given greater thoroughness to the response.
- Greater consideration of some of the poetic techniques would also have improved the essay. While stanza structure was discussed, the candidate said less about examples of rhyme, half rhyme and enjambment in the poem.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

5	<p>1 In the poem "The cat of Habit" the author describes the life of a domestic cat, focusing on its ability to be attentive at all times as well as being comfortable in his space. From the tone of the poem, the reader gets a sense of admiration for the cat.</p>
	<p>2 The first stanza of the poem has eleven lines that focus on the introduction of the cat and its abilities. 3 There is juxtaposition in the second and third lines of the poem as the reader plays with</p>
6	<p>4 the idea of a saying contrasting it to reality, "knows the place by heart" refers to the sense that the cat knows the place very well, the author adds a humorous <del>but</del> but literal tone to this saying</p>
5	<p>5 by completing it through "on at least by space, scent, direction, bull" as well as adding that said note of human, the asyndetic list focuses the attention of the reader on the cat's sense of awareness</p>
8	<p>8 The list continues with a half-rhymed repetition of the word "light" which once again emphasizes on the magnitude of things "the cat of habit" can do.</p>
9	<p>9 To portray clearly how far the cat is able to go and aiming to demonstrate its grand collection of <del>abilities</del> abilities the author uses hyperbole "on the earth and in the sky, exaggerating the span of attention of the cat." "in who in what coming and going" the author describes a trait clearly associated with cats that helps the reader picture the animal with more clarity.</p>
10	<p>10 The second and third stanza are shorter but unequal in number of lines, as the second one has five lines and the third one is a tercet.</p>
	<p>11 Once again the stanza begins with the line "the cat of habit" and for the first time the author refers to it with a feminine pronoun, as we</p>

1 The essay opens with a sound overview of the poem's content and tone.

2 The focus begins logically at the opening of the poem with a clear overview topic sentence.

3 The clarity of this next section is impaired by weak sentence construction.

4 There is a clear focus on effect for the reader.

5 The essay shows appreciation of tone.

6 The candidate uses quotations to support points.

7 The candidate recognises poetic technique with some comment on the effect.

8 The essay develops a sound point from observations about structure and language.

9 Points, quotations and comments are competently linked in this section to show the candidate's understanding.

10 The candidate clearly directs the focus of the new paragraph.

11 The essay picks out some useful detail and makes a competent comment on it.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

5	<p>find out more details about her the reader's curiosity increases. The main image of this stanza is very comforting as the author uses alliteration of "w" sounds and sibilance to transmit the calm of the cat's "most warm place"</p> <p>This stanza personifies the animal for the first time: <del>then</del> by giving it the words "it's mine" this personification is perhaps a way to make the reader feel <del>the</del> more attached to the cat by giving it a coherent thought. "ear-twitching" and "tail-flip" are very similar structurally which add to the recurring theme of repetition in the tenet which begins as the previous stanzas shantly establishes the previously mentioned sense of ownership typical of these animals.</p> <p>The last stanza, a septet, begins however with a different line which through a polysyndetic list that gives a sense of repetition, describes the cat's routine. The repeated word "feed" in between actions conveys the routine stages of its day and how these are repeated constantly. The assonance in "<del>the</del> mat and mice" add to the overall sense of never ending routine. The idea of the cat being "unseen" or unnoticed suggests that everyone has grown so accustomed to his routine that no one notices its presence anymore.</p>
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12 Points are made with competent use of appropriate terminology.

13 The essay develops sound comments on features of the poem which have been selected.

14 The candidate makes a useful observation of detail and makes a solid point.

15 Observations of key details are accompanied by sound comments, expressed with appropriate terminology. Quotations are integrated effectively.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

5	<p>The wiana "half-heartedly" <del>suggests</del> conveys another common feline trait which is laziness, this once again makes us <del>picture</del> picture the cat effectively.</p>
16	<p>Overall, the theme of the poem and <del>the</del> the techniques used in it revolve around the idea that the cat is a creature of habit. This is portrayed through the repetition of the first line at every stanza with the exception of the last one. The most used literary <del>device</del> device is repetition or any technique related to this such as onassance, alliteration or syllabance.</p>
17	<p>The register is simple however it's not colloquial, this simplicity adds to the comfort created by the cat's routine and constant awareness of his surroundings. This structure is unequal which shows that while the it's a cat of habit there are constant alliterations, it's the comfort in familiarity what it enjoys. <b>18</b> this same thing occurs with the varied rhyme scheme that has ear rhymes such as "light" and "eye" as well as half rhymes like "watch" and "watch" <del>for eye</del> rhymes like "manued" and "based", while they are uneven they add to the recurring theme of familiarity the cat in the poem <del>enjoys</del> enjoys as it is a creature of habit.</p>

**16** The conclusion returns to an overview of the poem and summarises previous points while making some new observations.

**17** The candidate adds a new point about the register of the language in the poem, which links competently to the other issues in the paragraph.

**18** The candidate also introduces a comment on the rhyme scheme at the end of the essay.

**Total mark awarded = 16 out of 25**

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- The essay showed competence throughout, selected some key aspects of the poem and made sensible comments. An improved answer would have been more thorough, looking at the stages of the poem more carefully in order to comment on more of the language and other features, as well as developing the points made in more detail.
- A tighter control of sentence structure would have enabled the candidate to express points in a clearer, more confident way with a better progression of ideas.
- It can be a good idea to introduce new points in the conclusion of an essay, if they develop from points already made. In this case, it would have been better if some of the new points, particularly about the rhyme scheme, had been introduced earlier where they could have benefited from greater discussion.

### Example Candidate Response – low

### Examiner comments

5	B	Discuss the presentation of the cat in the following poem.
1		The Cat of Habit is about a cat which lives its life with no worries and like the title suggests, it has a habit of doing everything the same way as previous times. This poem does not have a specific structure, but it is not free verse. The cat is presented through the way the poet describes the cat's habits.
2		In the first stanza of the poem the cat is described as an animal who has no specific purpose in doing what it's doing. Everything it does is because of its habit of doing things. The stanza begins with the poem's name 'The cat of Habit' to emphasise what the poem is about.
3		The fact that the poet wrote the cat 'knows the place by heart or at least by space, scent, direction, talk', indicates that the cat moves around even with its eyes closed out of habit. Each movement he does is out of habit and maybe because it has no specific meaning to what it's doing, it is like its own schedule of doing things. Note mention the fact that the word 'light' is being repeated quite a few times, shows that it does not really go outside and usually stays inside, so much, that it has the place memorised and each movement is a <sup>movement</sup> habit that it has become a habit.
4		
5		
6		

1 The essay starts with a simple but clear overview of the poem.

2 There is an attempt to comment on the poem's structure.

3 The essay uses quotations to support the points being made.

4 Quotations from the poem do not consider the line breaks and structure.

5 The comment on the quotation paraphrases the meaning.

6 There is some focus on language and structure, and an attempt to comment on the effect.



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

	<p>due to the many times it has occurred. The following line of the stanza says 'a three-focused shut eye on who or what's coming and going', which could highlight once again that the cat has witnessed so many things and maybe people going in and out that out of habit it knows, who is coming at what time and when exactly even with its eyes closed.</p>
8	<p>The <del>see</del> second stanza begins with the name of the poem again which yet again highlights the cat who moves around and does the same things out of habit. 9 the second stanza the readers can see that a few of the cat's actions are being described to emphasise how the owner already knows its movements and how predictable it is to know its next movement.</p>
10	<p>The first line uses enjambment through the second line, to <del>express</del> emphasise even the smallest of actions the cat does. It also further emphasises how predictable it is for the owner to predict its next move.</p>
11	<p>Once again, another stanza begins with the name of the title 'The cat of habit' which might be to remind the reader <del>that</del> what the poem is about. The third stanza contains only three 12 <del>so</del> lines. This could be <del>because</del> due to the fact that the poet wants to emphasise that</p>

7 The candidate offers an interpretation.

8 The essay works through the poem logically and chronologically.

9 The essay gives an account of the content which is close to a summary.

10 The candidate recognises a poetic technique, although the comment on its effect is limited.

11 A limited comment on the effect of the repetition.

12 The candidate offers a more thoughtful comment on structure.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

the cat has the place marked, the joint cased'. This indicates that it is used to emphasise that the cat knows each movement which is happening inside that place. It could also infer to the readers that it is used to emphasise that the cat has been observing what is going on inside the place. This might highlight the cat's habit of doing the same thing on repeat.

The following stanza, which is also the last one does not begin like the rest of the stanzas. This could be indicated ~~as~~ that this is not from the cat's point of view but from its owner's, ~~which~~ in this stanza the point of view may have changed to the owner's who describes what its cat does and how it passes its time. The constant repetition of the word 'and', ~~could~~ highlights ~~the fact that~~ the cat's movements and actions ~~in the~~ and what its owner does for it to have a life. What the cat usually does is eat 'and sleep and' eat. This further indicates that the cat usually does what it ~~is~~ does out of habit.

Hence, this poem was ~~basically~~ about a cat which had nothing much to do to the point that everything it did was out of habit. The cat is presented through different techniques and the writer's use of language. It was also presented through the fact that the ~~title~~ ~~is~~ constant use of the title 'The Cat of Habit', to remind the readers the cat's habits.

13 The candidate offers an interpretation based on previous comments.

14 The candidate suggests a point from the observation of change, although it is asserted rather than argued.

15 The essay makes a point about structure and language.

16 The conclusion summarises previous points.

**Total mark awarded = 8 out of 25**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- The essay explained the meaning of the poem in a simple, clear way; the candidate would have achieved more marks with a greater focus on how that meaning is communicated. This would have lifted the essay from the tendency towards summary and paraphrase which characterises the candidate's approach. The comments and interpretations made are asserted rather than argued. The candidate would have written a stronger response with greater argument if they had suggested how the poet's choices of language and structure lead the reader to the judgements made.
- It is a good idea for candidates to show their understanding of the text form of the unseen text. In poetry, they could show the line breaks when quoting, which could help them to focus on poetic form and structure.
- The essay would also have been improved by communicating a stronger sense of the mood and tone of the poem by considering some of the poet's choices of language.

## Common mistakes candidates made in this question

Candidates do not always consider the text form of the unseen. They should consider clearly the techniques of verse when discussing a poem, dramatic techniques when discussing drama, and narrative methods when discussing prose.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
t: +44 1223 553554  
e: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

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