HL External Assessment Criteria- Written assignment

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement • To what extent does the student show how their understanding of cultural and contextual elements was developed through the interactive oral?	0 Marks	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks		
	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below	Reflection on the interactive oral shows superficial development of the student's understanding of cultural and contextual elements.	Reflection on the interactive oral shows some development of the student's understanding of cultural and contextual elements.	Reflection on the interactive oral shows development of the student's understanding of cultural and contextual elements.		
Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding • How effectively has the student used the topic and the essay to show knowledge and understanding of the chosen work?	0 Marks	1-2 Marks	3-4 Marks	5-6 Marks		
	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below	The essay shows some knowledge but little understanding of the work used for the assignment.	The essay shows knowledge and understanding of, and some insight into, the work used for the assignment..	The essay shows detailed knowledge and understanding of, and perceptive insight into, the work used for the assignment.		
Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices • To what extent does the student appreciate how the writer's choices of form, structure, technique and style shape meaning?	0 Marks	1-2 Marks	3-4 Marks	5-6 Marks		
	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below	There is some mention, but little appreciation, of the ways in which language, structure, technique and style shape meaning.	There is adequate appreciation of the ways in which language, structure, technique and style shape meaning.	Examples of literary conventions are satisfactorily identified and developed, with relevance to the question and the works used.		
Criterion D: Organization and development • How effectively have the ideas been organized, and how well are references to the works integrated into the development of the ideas?	0 Marks	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks	4 Marks	5 Marks
	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	There is some attempt to organize ideas, but little use of examples from the works used.	Ideas are superficially organized and developed, with some integrated examples from the works used.	Ideas are adequately organized and developed, with appropriately integrated examples from the works used.	Ideas are effectively organized and developed, with well-integrated examples from the works used.	Ideas are persuasively organized and developed, with effectively integrated examples from the works used.
Criterion E: Language • How clear, varied and accurate is the language? • How appropriate is the choice of register, style and terminology? ("Register" refers, in this context, to the student's use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and terminology appropriate to the task.)	0 Marks	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks	4 Marks	5 Marks
	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below	Language is rarely clear and appropriate; there are many errors in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction, and little sense of register and style.	Language is sometimes clear and carefully chosen; grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction are fairly accurate, although errors and inconsistencies are apparent; the register and style are to some extent appropriate to the task.	Language is clear and carefully chosen, with an adequate degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction despite some lapses; register and style are mostly appropriate to the task.	Language is clear and carefully chosen, with a good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are consistently appropriate to the task.	Language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are effective and appropriate to the task.

Note: The word limit for the reflective statement is 300–400 words. If the word limit is exceeded, 1 mark will be deducted from Criterion A.

Note: The word limit for the essay is 1,200–1,500 words. If the word limit is exceeded, 2 marks will be deducted from Criterion D.

parenthetical documentation doesn't count

Written Assignment Scores replaces WL (2013-)

IB Score	Score Band	#(2013)
7	21-25	6
6	19-20	1
5	16-18	21
4	13-15	52
3	10-12	78
2	7-9	24
1	0-6	1

[3.52 avg score; 103 no pass]

IB Score	Score Band	#(2014)
7	21-25	1
6	19-20	11
5	16-18	41
4	13-15	65
3	10-12	64
2	7-9	0
1	0-6	0

[4.01 avg score; 64 no pass]

IB Score	Score Band	#(2015)
7	21-25	38
6	19-20	15
5	16-18	33
4	13-15	34
3	10-12	29
2	7-9	3
1	0-6	0

[4.934 avg score; 32 no pass]

The written assignment requires personal writing on the development of ideas and the transformation of personal response into a formal essay.

Students develop a formal piece of writing that explores a literary aspect of one work, informed by some understanding of the cultural underpinnings of that work.

There are three assessment objectives at SL and at HL for the **language A: literature** course.

Part 1: Works in translation

In each of the four stages of this assessment—the written assignment—particular qualities needed for active and independent learning stand out. These qualities, which are reflected in the IB learner profile, encourage students to be:

- communicators—both students and teachers have to participate in an interactive oral (stage 1), and students later communicate their ideas in a piece of supervised writing (stage 3) and then again in the final essay (stage 4)
- risk-takers—an element of risk-taking is also involved as students and teachers explore a text and are prepared to articulate their ideas in the group
- reflective—stage 2 of this assessment requires students to write a reflective statement.

In addition, both the teacher and the students should be inquirers, thinkers and be knowledgeable.

1. Knowledge and understanding
   - ⊙ Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of individual literary works as representatives of their genre and period, and the relationships between them
   - ⊙ Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which cultural values are expressed in literature
   - ○ Demonstrate awareness of the significance of the context in which a work is written and received
   - ⊙ Substantiate and justify ideas with relevant examples
2. Analysis, synthesis and evaluation
   - ⊙ Demonstrate an ability to analyse language, structure, technique and style, and evaluate their effects on the reader
   - ○ Demonstrate an ability to engage in independent literary criticism on both familiar and unfamiliar literary texts
   - ○ Show an ability to examine and discuss in depth the effects of literary techniques and the connections between style and meaning **(HL only)**
3. Selection and use of appropriate presentation and language skills
   - ○ Demonstrate an ability to express ideas clearly and fluently in both written and oral communication, with an effective choice of register and style
   - ⊙ Demonstrate a command of terminology and concepts appropriate to the study of literature
   - ⊙ Demonstrate an ability to express well-organized oral and written arguments
   - ○ Demonstrate an ability to write a sustained and detailed literary commentary **(HL only)**

SUBJECT REPORT TIPS FROM MAY 2012:

Subjects and titles continued to be a problematic matter. Broad thematic comparisons, simple reports of similarities and differences in the subject matter of works, synopsis and paraphrase in place of critical analysis, were much more common than focused investigations of a particular stylistic feature of the works.

Far too many topics were broad or vague, or not focused on the work as literature.

Proofreading in particular was weak. Candidates really need to be encouraged to re-read what they have written, and doing that aloud can pick up many of the areas that receive lower grades in this descriptor. Spell-check often fails to pick up near-misses like expert/excerpt and finance/fiancé; candidates appeared to rely more on their computers than on their own eye and ear. Almost every examiner mentioned the low standard for proofreading, evident in many careless errors.

Teachers need to be sure that the requirements for text choices and word counts are carefully read and conveyed to candidates. Signing the cover sheet implies that such things have been scrutinized along with the independence of the candidate's work.

In order to get candidates ready for success with their assignment for this component it would be useful to use works from other parts of the syllabus for practice with:

- ☐ discerning the nature of a literary topic about which an argument can be constructed
- ☐ selecting an appropriate and informative title for the assignment
- ☐ making judicious choices about textual evidence to include as support of the argument
- ☐ practising the contextualization and embedding of textual evidence
- ☐ Insuring that a full title, a sensible font,

The Written Assignment needs to grow out of the Supervised Writing. This approach is intended to keep the candidates working with appropriate topics and reduce plagiarism.

Written assignment (part 1—works in translation)

Translation can be a linguistic bridge into another culture and may illuminate our understanding of some aspects of that culture.

Different translations of the same work will differ; when exploring the "literariness" of the work it is worth keeping in mind that the translator has used craft in finding equivalent words and art in working to convey literary elements such as the style and tone of the original author.

If possible, compare different translations of the same work—even short extracts. This is a valuable exercise that highlights issues such as:

- what is translated

- how it is translated

- how it is received in translation

- what is lost in translation.

Choosing works in translation for part 1

The works must be **titles** chosen from the prescribed literature in translation (PLT) list: two works at SL and three works at HL.

The written assignment process

Stage 1: The interactive oral

Show movie min 4.30 - X 8.16 - X

There are many ways to organize an interactive oral. The demonstration in the *Language A teacher support film* shows four students each presenting a different aspect of a work, followed by class discussion, and this works very well for that group of students. However, it is just one of any number of ideas that would work in the classroom.

> ## Essentials
>
> At least one interactive oral must be conducted for each work studied.
>
> Each student should have some specific role in one of the orals (across all the works studied).
>
> The prompts that students work with must require them to probe into the cultural and contextual underpinnings of the work and to consider how these considerations affect their understanding of the work.
>
> The orals ideally should be an integral part of teaching the work, not an artificial "add-on".

The following suggestions show the range of possible types of interactive orals. In all cases it is advisable to ensure the prompts (or stimulus for discussion) have a tight focus that relates directly to a specific part of the work.

- During the course of one lesson, several students could introduce a problem they have in understanding the culture or the context, with the class and the teacher discussing each issue raised.

- Students could introduce the discussion, adopting the teacher's role for lessons on the work, and lead the class discussion.

- Students, either individually or working in groups, could choose a clip of a film or other visual medium and lead a discussion on how it may deepen understanding of culture or context.

Stage 2: The reflective statement

Essentials

It must be written as soon as possible following the interactive oral. As shown in the *Language A teacher support film*, it is advisable for students to take notes during the interactive oral discussion to assist them in writing the reflective statement.

Each student must write one reflective statement on each work studied. Where there is more than one interactive oral on a work, which is likely, writing on each interactive oral is advised, but optional.

Students must know that the reflective statement on the work on which the essay is written will be assessed, along with the essay.

There is one guiding question for the reflective statement, which is:

- How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?

"Context" refers to all possible contexts. It is intended to embrace the cultural underpinnings of the works by looking at specifics such as:

- the time and place in which the work was written

- information about the author (particularly as it relates to the way in which the author's ideas as presented in the work do, or do not, accord with situations in the contemporary society)

- philosophical, political and social contexts

- ideas that the students themselves bring to the work.

"Developed" is the other key word in the question. It is a personal statement that is most likely to be written in the first person, and should be an honest account of the evolution of understanding. If the student feels that they have not really learned anything, then they should reflect on what they still do not understand.

The aim is to ensure the focus of discussion is sufficiently challenging so that students will be stimulated to think more deeply about some aspect of the work.

The criterion by which students are assessed uses the same words as the question on which the reflective statement is based. If they answer this honestly and fully, then they should be able to achieve the three points.

Sample reflective statement

Example 3 is a sample of what a reflective statement on *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev might look like.

The question that must be addressed is written at the top of the reflection; the title and the author of the work used are also clearly stated.

Stage 3: Developing the topic—supervised writing

Essentials

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher should provide three or four prompts for the work studied. The students must not have seen these prompts prior to the lesson.

Supervised writing is intended to stimulate independent thinking and choice of topic. It must be in continuous prose. However, the format is not prescribed—it could be journal writing, or it may be more like a draft.

At this stage, it is no longer important to consider the cultural or contextual elements of the work.

The students complete three pieces of supervised writing and their essay topic must be generated by one of them. The link between the final choice of title and the supervised writing does not have to be direct, but there must be a recognizable germ of an idea that can be tracked.

When students are deciding on which work to write (and hence which piece of supervised writing to use as a starting point), it is not the quality of the supervised writing that counts, but the link with the essay.

Teachers must play a key role in helping the student to develop from the supervised writing a tightly focused title for the essay. The examples below demonstrate how prompts for the supervised writing can lead to a precise title for the essay.

Supervised writing prompts and essay titles

Prompt: In what ways are the voices of history and tradition present in the work?

Work: *God's Bits of Wood* by Sembène Ousmane

Essay title: Age and wisdom: The significance of Ramatoulaye in *God's Bits of Wood*

Prompt: To what extent is the natural landscape important for the impact of the work?

Work: *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh

Essay title: How the landscape affects the outcome for Kien in *The Sorrow of War*

Prompt: How does the writer convey a sense of time passing in the work?

Work: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Essay title: The significance of time for Shukhov in *One day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Prompt: How are different voices used to express thoughts and feelings? What effect do these have on your responses to the poems?

Work: Selected poems of Derek Walcott

Essay title: Allegiance and identity in the poems of Derek Walcott

Prompt: In what ways is memory important in the work?

Work: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

Essay title: The significance of memory for Jane in *Jane Eyre*

Prompt: How do external and internal structures work together?

Work: *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

Essay title: Conveying a sense of purpose in *Waiting for Godot*

Stage 4: Production of the essay

The teacher's role

Essentials

The teacher should assist the student to develop a suitably challenging topic that will allow him or her to show insight into the work chosen for the assignment.

Teachers are encouraged to comment on the first draft, either orally or through notes on a separate sheet of paper. However, they may not annotate the essay nor assist with subsequent drafts.

Presentation

The essay should be a formal piece of writing with a title and a developed argument. The main references are likely to be to the literary work chosen for the essay. It is essential that a recognized reference system is used consistently throughout *MLA* and that the bibliography includes the full provenance of the work used, including the edition. Secondary sources may be used, although they are not essential, and they must also be referenced using the same system and included in the bibliography.

Students are assessed on their ability to organize and develop their ideas, and to integrate examples from the works used. Before they begin to write their essays, it is important that they have had plenty of practice in using quotations from literary works to support and further their arguments.

Written assignment checklist

Has an interactive oral been completed by the class on each work?

Has each student written their reflective statement?

Has each student done supervised writing on each of the works?

Does the topic of the essay derive from one of the pieces of supervised writing?

Is the reflective statement 300–400 words in length and the essay 1,200–1,500 words?

Have the student and teacher signed the coversheet?

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(http://xmltwo.ibo.org/publications/EAD/2015_EN/GR1/PLA/Welsh_2013.pdf).

Corrections list 1 (http://xmltwo.ibo.org/publications/EAD/2015_EN/GR1/PLA/Corrections_1_2013.pdf)

Corrections list 2 (http://xmltwo.ibo.org/publications/EAD/2015_EN/GR1/PLA/Corrections_2_2013.pdf)

Ukrainian A corrections
(http://xmltwo.ibo.org/publications/EAD/2015_EN/GR1/PLA/Ukrainian_Corrections_2013.pdf)

Applying the assessment criteria

Note: The word "adequate" is not meant to be a pejorative term, but rather indicates a reasonable fulfilment of the criterion in meeting the expectations of the task. This characterizes a response which shows study and preparation, but not necessarily personal insight or engagement with the text.

Examiners are advised to look at each criterion holistically. To avoid making initial judgements examiners should focus on the whole of the description, rather than just on the qualifiers such as adequate, good, very good, excellent.

Word limits

In this session when assignments are being conventionally marked, examiners are not expected to count every word. In cases where it would appear the word limit has been exceeded, examiners should check more closely and apply the penalty (criterion A for the reflective statement and/or criterion D for the assignment itself) as stated in the Language A: Literature guide. Reflective statements or written assignments that do not meet the required word counts will be self penalizing.

The following are included in the overall word limit:

- introduction
- body of essay
- conclusion
- quotations.

The following are excluded from the overall word limit:

- acknowledgments
- citations/references (whether parenthetical or numbered)
- footnotes or endnotes (if used only for referencing)
- bibliography
- appendices.

FYI on word count

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

- "Reflective" should be understood, not as a personal or rhetorical response to the literary work or the interactive oral, but as a way of demonstrating that the candidate's sense of the culture and context of the work under consideration has evolved through the oral presentation.
- Purely reporting or rehearsing factual information gleaned from the interactive oral does not meet the standard of "understanding...developed" (criterion A).
- The candidate needs to reveal in the reflective statement that he or she has processed that knowledge in a way that leads to greater understanding of the work. Examiners need to be aware that candidates may reveal this understanding through implication rather than through explicit demonstration.

For school supported self-taught candidates:

- "Reflective" should be understood, not as a personal or rhetorical response to the literary work or the journal, but as a way of demonstrating that the candidate's sense of the culture and context of the work under consideration has evolved through the journal writing.
- Merely repeating some of the contents of the journal does not meet the standard of "understanding . . . developed" (criterion A).
- The candidate needs to reveal in the reflective statement that he or she has processed that knowledge in a way that leads to greater understanding of the work. Examiners need to be aware that candidates may reveal this understanding through implication rather than through explicit demonstration.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

- The nature and scope of the topic chosen will be a factor in this criterion, along with the degree to which the candidate has used the topic to show knowledge and understanding of the text. Candidates should demonstrate proficiency with these two elements to achieve the highest marks.

- Knowledge is best revealed by the use of detailed textual evidence to support analysis and opinions. Understanding will be shown in the extent to which the candidate makes some sort of proposal from that knowledge: assertions without evidence of some kind (quotation, close textual reference) do not meet the requirements of displaying knowledge and understanding.
- To show insight the candidate should be able to relate the detail of the point made to a reading of the work as a whole, going from the particular to the broader meaning.
- N.B: A penalty, in the form of maximum marks for criterion B, will be imposed in assignments where the chosen work has not been selected from the Prescribed literature in translation (PLT) list (page 41 of the Language A: Literature guide). This penalty applies to both SL and HL.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

- "Appreciation" and "writer's choices" are the key elements of this criterion. "Appreciation" involves analysing the use and effects of the literary features in the work. "Writer's choices" refers to the literary features used in the text to shape meaning.
- Candidates are not expected necessarily to discuss all of the items listed in the criterion (i.e. form, structure, technique, and style).
- Adequate to excellent appreciation of the writer's choices will depend on how probingly and extensively style (i.e. language, structure, technique) has been analysed.

Criterion D: Organization and development

- Any form of structuring will be rewarded if it is effective and appropriate. Different conventions and approaches, including the linear, thematic, stylistic, holistic and circular are acceptable and should be rewarded. Supporting examples must be evaluated in terms of how fluently they are incorporated and integrated in order to shape and advance the argument.
- To award the highest mark, examiners should look for an assignment in which the structure reflects the interpretation stated in the introduction and for clear links between the ideas expressed and the examples provided.

Criterion E: Language

- Examiners should be wary of being prejudiced in the application of this criterion by a candidate's performance in other criteria. It is possible to score well here even if candidates have scored in the lower levels in the other criteria, and vice versa.
- Generally, essays with persistent errors in register, diction, grammar, syntax, spelling or punctuation do not score in the 3 band, but holistic judgment should prevail. In other words, recurrent errors in one of these features do not necessarily prevent a candidate from achieving a 3 in this criterion. Lively language which occasionally misses the mark should be rewarded wherever possible.
- Echoing what is perceived as 'academic language' or the adoption of critical terminology *per se* is not always effective in ensuring clear communication.

Assessment criteria

A printable version of the criteria may be viewed by clicking here (http://xmltwo.ibo.org/publications/EAD/2015_EN/GR1/GR1-A_LIT_WA_AC_EN.pdf).

Higher level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Particularly from schools with experience in this component there was both work that was of a high quality in some cases, and at an acceptable standard in many. Guiding students toward producing Reflective Statements and Written Assignments that range in quality from satisfactory to very good or excellent demands that teachers are fully familiar with the *Subject Guide,* the criteria, the previous Subject Reports and the Teacher Support Materials on the Online Curriculum Centre. In addition there is now a film on the Online Curriculum Centre for both examiners and teachers that addresses the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement. The forum on the same site is also useful when specific questions arise and where teachers can share good ideas and concerns.

It is extremely important that teachers make use of these resources, especially in the case where the teacher is just beginning to teach the literature course. Disappointment with results in this component can sometimes be traced to a cursory acquaintance with helpful materials such as these. Ultimately it is the candidates who are disadvantaged by the teacher's poor understanding and lack of clear direction.

As has been previously noted, choice of texts for Part 1 is a crucial element in the success of the whole range of candidates in a given school or class. Examiners continue to be concerned about works of literary merit that are simply too challenging for a whole group and lead to poor results simply because the individual candidate reveals only the slimmest grasp of the work about which s/he is writing. Many schools choose a familiar range of works, which is fine, as long as they are works translated into English (not originally written in English) and listed on the Prescribed Literature in Translation list. Works that are beloved by teachers from their university study are often not suitable in these times and at the level of secondary school students.

Poetry and short stories are often used and can be very successful, although it is useful if the poem or poems or the stories are presented with some indication of their context in a larger collection.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

There continue to be problems here, although a number of examiners noted improved performance in this criterion. In the hopes of improving the submissions in these aspects of the

Go to A on later page

process, a document of review and clarification has been added at the end of the Subject Report. Included in that document are indications of where the Reflective Statements fall short and how better performances can be achieved.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

On the whole, examiners found that most candidates knew their texts, to varying degrees; at least they had a sense of the arc of the plot, the way a drama evolved, the nature and choices of characters, the meanings of poems. However, examiners had more reservations about the quality of the candidates' understanding of the layers of meaning, of the subtext, of the patterns of artistic expression that give the work their richness. It is also important that candidates understand they are working with translations, and one examiner rightly recommended that at least a class or two be devoted directly to the matter of translation itself, especially in the case of poetry where candidates are sometimes not aware of the vexed issues of sound in translated poetry.

The Supervised Writing prompts which are intended to focus on features discerned through close reading and analysis of many aspects of a literary work have an important role to play in encouraging the candidate to reveal appropriate knowledge and understanding. When these are too broad or vague, or focused on cultural or sociological matters, they do not help candidates to reveal their grasp of a piece of literature.

Overall, there was some exceptional or very good insight into the texts revealed through the handling of the Written Assignment, but some that was quite limited.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

This criterion which contributes a potential 6 marks to the overall score, is possibly more problematic than the production of the Reflective Statement. Many candidates have shown weaknesses in this criterion.

Candidates need to give specific attention to two questions: what choices do you observe the writer making in presenting ideas, plots, characters, places and what do these particular choices contribute to the particular or overall effect of the literary work. Coming to terms with these questions will require modelling, practice and evaluation on the part of the teacher.

Particular weaknesses here are summaries of plots with slight allusion to the topic chosen for the essay, treating characters as real people, and adding hypothetical observations about how the work would change if other choices were made by the writer. Both plays and novels were sometimes treated as if they are all novels. Finally, discussion of graphic novels should address both words and images and how they interact to produce meaning.

Criterion D and E: Organization and Development, and Language

As always there is a range of performance in these two criteria, but on the whole examiners find much of the work to be acceptable or very good, especially where it is clear candidates have been held to a generally high standard of organization and expression in their regular classwork.

Two particular points: secondary sources need to be acknowledged and reported word counts need to be legitimate.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Further comments

Special Supplement on the Interactive Oral and Reflective Statement

The Interactive Oral addresses skills of research and collaboration as well as those of effective presentation.

The materials to be researched and presented by students, then discussed by the whole class and should include the following:

(a) The **context** of the *creation* of the literary work under discussion. These are matters connected to the writer: relevant details of life and writing practice; the place of the writer's work in literary history and the development of the text's genre; reception of the work in its own time; relevant connections to other works, e.g., Sophocles and Anouilh, *Antigone*.

(b) Elements of the larger **context** of the time and place in which the writer lived and created the work

OR

The above aspects as they are included in the work itself. These can be significant matters that apply to various aspects of the writer's personal situation (Levi, *If This is a Man* or Satrapi, *Persepolis)* or any of the following: geography (e.g.Kadare, *Broken April);* history (Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* or Suskind, *Perfume);* politics (Zamyatin, *We);* philosophy (Borges, the short stories).

(c) The **culture** of the work, concerning such matters as value systems and social structures, matters relevant to the text touching on education, family, power, class, ethnicity and race, or belief systems. These matters may also be important to treat in regard to the writer as well.

It is important to note that there is some perceived dissonance between the 4 prompts included on page 30 of the *Subject Guide* and the expectations of Criterion A.

Recommendations for dealing with this dissonance:
- For the Interactive Oral discussions following the presentation, use the prompts in the Subject Guide.
- For the construction of the Reflective Statement focus precisely on the demands of Criterion A: 'how …understanding of cultural and contextual elements was developed through the Interactive Oral.'

A = The Reflective Statement addresses the skills of listening, assimilation, and written articulation.

Keys to constructing a successful Reflective Statement;

(a) Ensure that the candidates understand Criterion A; successful Reflective Statements often use the criterion as a heading to help the candidates focus precisely on its demands.

> **N.B.** 'Developed understanding' may range widely, from simply revealing that particular elements of context and culture are grasped (possibly for the first time) to much deeper

insights.

(b) Remind candidates to indicate, briefly, that the materials they are including in the Reflective Statement are derived from the Interactive Oral and point out how these connect to the text or enhance understanding.

(c) Ensure that candidates understand that the following are **not** the business of the Reflective Statement:

- o   an abstract or statement of intent for the Written Assignment;
- o   an evaluative report on the quality of their peers' delivery of the Interactive Oral;
- o   the comparison of their own culture to that of the text;
- o   close critical analysis of the text itself.

(d) Remind candidates that the word count is not one word over 400 words, with a deduction of one mark for exceeding that number.

Standard level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 15	16 – 18	19 – 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

From the November 2015 session all written assignments will be electronically uploaded, so it is not appropriate here to focus on the procedural issues that were frustrating to examiners in the May 2015 session. Please note that in the future all written assignments will be marked anonymously, so candidate names and numbers should not appear anywhere on the actual reflective statement or assignment. In addition, there is no need for candidates to include a title page. It is important, however, that the reflective statement be identified as such and it is most effective if candidates are encouraged to copy the question that the reflective statement must address. The title of the written assignment must be given. Although it does not need to be expressed as a question, it is worth noting that many of the most successful candidate productions do frame their titles as 'How does writer X …?' The candidate must clearly indicate which edition of the work has been used (in a bibliography, works cited or in a footnote).

It is pleasing to note that in this session there were fewer examples of reflective statements submitted not being on the same work as the written assignment and more candidates remained within the word limits, meaning that examiners had to apply the marking penalties in criteria A and D less frequently. However, it must be reiterated that a reflective statement over

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choices must be examined in the context of how they contribute to the overall meaning or experience of the poem. Candidates should examine how the speaker's voice and point of view are developed, and not simply equate poet with speaker. Prose extracts, too, should not be approached as mere vehicles for the conveyance of information. Rather, they must be examined in the same detail as poems: a focus on narrative voice is absolutely crucial, as well as a consideration of how structure, diction and syntax contribute to overall meaning.

At the same time, the extensive use of critical studies of the texts is probably unhelpful, as it discourages candidates from having, developing and articulating their own responses to the works they are studying. Candidates need to be aware that the study of literature is not a matter of learning what statements are to be parroted back about a text, but rather learning how to articulate and defend their own readings, whether or not these correspond to those of published studies.

As has been noted before, candidates need to have had regular practice in oral commentary throughout the course if they are to do well in the Internal Assessment. Oral commentary can be usefully practised in all parts of the course; it does not have to be limited to Part 2 texts.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As has been the case in the past there was a good selection of works, some familiar and much used, and others freshly added. The latter do seem at times to generate a more interesting range of topics, but given that even the most commonly used works are new to the students who are introduced to them, fresh and closely argued responses happen with these as well.

Some works proved problematic this year. Only some schools have really thought through the difference between writing about a conventional play or novel and writing about a graphic novel.

Many have chosen *Persepolis* as a choice for Part 1, but dealing with only the events of the narrative, or failing to understand both the cultural and historical aspects of the work hampered a number of students in writing well about it.

The Reflective Statement continues to present problems. The Written Assignments that are truly directed to literary matters are successful. Those that move the focus of the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement, writing about culture and context, into the essay or that focus on sociological or theological concerns are not; it's really that simple. Titles are

sometimes helpful, and sometimes give no clear indication ('True romance or not' or 'Family as salvation') of the text explored or the literary angle chosen.

With the use of Supervised Writing prompts larger angles on the texts will be repeated. If these prompts are broad enough and clearly directed to literary analysis, ('How does the writer present the conflict between oppositional characters?' or 'What effect does the writer achieve by recurrent references to weather?'), there should be ample opportunity for individual candidates to choose both their argument and their references so that the diversity foregrounds their personal encounter with the work. Schools where all the candidates chose one text, one prompt, and the same set of references are not likely to produce highly rewarded Written Assignments.

sample research questions

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

In this criterion, a good deal of responsibility lies first with the teacher discerning what is wanted and that is "understanding of the cultural and contextual elements through the interactive oral." Candidates are often losing 3 points that should be quite easy to earn, but they need to know what these two elements are and are not.

Schools are clearly variable in what they are requesting that students prepare if they are nominated to deliver the Interactive Oral. The Interactive Oral is not a close investigation of the text as a literary construct; it is a research project that examines the cultural and contextual 'soup' in which the literary work has been constructed. So it includes giving fellow students a rounded idea of person is who wrote the text: where, when did (do) they live? What are the social, geographical, political elements of their context? What other things have they written? How does their work relate to or contradict the national and literary traditions in which they have worked? What about the context and cultural elements within the work itself, especially if they are different to those of the authors? Some schools have successfully addressed these elements. It is highly likely that teachers of these groups have been quite directive in guiding students in the correct direction.

Unfortunate permutations of the Interactive Oral then become the material of the unsuccessful Reflective Statements. The Reflective Statement is not any of the following: a plot outline or overview of the text; a pre-writing exercise for the Written Assignment; a response to multiple texts or Interactive Orals; a survey of literary features in the text; an evaluation of the way peers have presented the material. It is also not even one word over 400. It is a reflection on the text under discussion. When the Written Assignment is submitted, that Reflective Statement should accompany the submission.

There has certainly been some positive evolution in handling the Reflective Statements, but too many students are losing marks here because they simply have not been guided to articulate how the Interactive Oral has in some way enlarged or developed their understanding of the work.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding of the text

This is the criterion where almost every candidate was able to earn some marks. Surely if the text has been discussed in class and closely scrutinized, almost every candidate can meet

levels 3-4 in this descriptor. That said, faltering by not having insight into the complex Nora that Ibsen presents or overlaying the portrayal of Meursault with half-understood notions of existentialism, will not earn marks in this descriptor. Explicit address of culture and context are the material of the preceding stages; they are not the business of the Written Assignment, except implicitly, but some schools are leading their students in that misconceived direction.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

Once again there was a clear dividing line between the majority of candidates who could identify some of the writer's choices, and the minority who were able to show *appreciation* of the ways in which these choices created meaning. Sometimes, unfortunately, that appreciation was implied rather than made explicit. The majority of papers tended to concentrate on theme or character: however, the focus on how techniques established these was not revealed. Only a minority attempted to discuss how other features generate meaning. Some ignored this element of the task completely; in some essays techniques were implied rather than clearly stated; in a few there was focus on language at the expense of argument. There is some confusion over what is meant by 'imagery' - and the term is used very broadly. However, there were also some thoughtful analyses: candidates who select a thesis with a clear literary focus are likely to score well here.

Criterion D: Organization and Development

Often candidates had some pattern or formula for arranging their ideas; when they did so they could reach criterion 2 or sometimes 3, given that their points were pursued and exemplified. However, development often falls short and that seems to be the point of differentiation between student performance. Some show they have had sufficient practice in developing their points through well-selected details from the text and the assessment of the effect of these details and how they further the line of argument. Other students fail to do any or all of these.

Happily, overlong quotations have become less frequent. However, many examiners comment on the clumsy incorporation of quotations into the body of the essays. Embedding is a skill that must be taught in this discipline, and without it the arrangement and delivery of the argument is weak, a fault of a good number of essays. One does not expect, however, to see the exact same set of references deployed in every essay in a given centre, something that happens on occasion. Introduction and conclusions, too, are variable in quality and impact the work in this criterion.

Criterion E: Language

Similarly to the work for Criterion B, there is a good deal of competent prose evident in the essays. However, clumsy sentence construction, lack of paragraphing and really poor proofreading tend to appear much too often.

Many students employed excessively complex vocabulary that they didn't understand, creating convoluted sentence structures. At times, the register used was informal, and technical errors (split infinitives, run-on sentences, incorrect apostrophe use, singular/plural agreement errors, misspelling) were often in evidence. This essay is a formal writing situation and both the register used and the care exercised in expressing ideas should reflect the candidate's informed understanding of those factors and how they impact the marking.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Give the students clear directions and models for the Interactive Oral and the Reflective Statement. Make use of the Teacher Support Material, the forum and the Teacher Resource Exchange on the OCC to refine your own understanding.

- It is often useful to practise all the elements of this component with works from another part of the syllabus, particularly since many schools start the program with Part 4. Then the students can bring some level of understanding to the four stages of this assessment and teachers can help by providing ample feedback and awarding grades.

- If handwriting is used for the Reflective Statement, and there are understandable reasons for doing this, be sure that candidates give at least as much attention and care to it as they do in Papers 1 and 2. It is also helpful if every student writes the Reflective Statement question (in the criterion) at the top of the statement.

- Put some extra focus, but particularly modeling and practice, on the features of Criterion C.

- Reports of the word count should be real and not imagined. '1499' raises some red flags with examiners, and one word over the limit in both the Reflective Statement and the Written Assignment will incur a penalty.

- Rules for citation should be followed consistently within the school's submissions and should be based on some recognized system.

- Within the restrictions of your school system it would be good all around to try to move toward some new inclusions of texts; often this can be done incrementally.

- Warn students against the biographical interpretation of their texts; turning Gregor into a cockroach is not necessarily a consequence of Kafka's relation to his own father. Inclinations in this direction are common at this level, but candidates should be told how shaky their arguments in this vein are likely to be without the substantial research such an approach requires.

- Do address the issue of translation, and which elements in a work are likely to be less convincing when they are matters, such as aural features, very much affected by this reality.

New Curriculum

class discussion, and more formally in regular oral commentaries.

These do not have to be restricted to Part 2 texts. Just as candidates are expected to perform their own experiments in the sciences, so they ought to be undertaking their own analyses of what they read in literature class. While modelling (by the teacher, the critics, and the text book writers) has its place, it hurts the candidate if it becomes the core of a literature course. In the end, it is the candidate's own understanding, not the retention of the understandings of others that is being examined – not only in the oral-commentary, but in all assessment components of the course.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most of the literary works chosen for study and assessment in this part of the syllabus were appropriate to the task. Works both new and well-tried comprised the appropriate selection of the three Part 1 works although in a few cases syllabuses have mistakenly included a work originally written in English. Generally the choices were valid and appropriate, and sometimes bold and provocative.

Some schools, however, are presenting their candidates with texts which can present difficulties. These may range widely given different school populations, but the attempts to write successfully about Camus's *The Outsider,* for example, often falter. Misdirected essays, such as the treatment of existentialism in 1500 words with some allusion to the literary work, are likely doomed to fail in terms of the criteria. This particular work along with others are often and rightfully fascinating to candidates at this level; they might be more usefully included in Part 4 where the emphasis is on oral work and where discussions and Individual Oral Presentations would provide ample opportunity for incrementally developed understanding and continual refinement.

Titles are crucially important to success in the assessment of Part 1, and some candidates produced strong Written Assignments, showing the effect of thoughtfully constructed Supervised Writing prompts. The point of inserting this step into the process leading to the essay was to provide candidates with precise direction in writing about literary aspects of the work, not examinations of underlying context or philosophy. When this step was well-handled, essays often succeeded. Titles such as "Symbolism, characterization and co-existence" or "To what extent did Creon and Antigone live up to the expectations of men and women at that time?" tended to divert the candidate's attention from close and well-grounded attention to the writer's choices and the effects of these into large and tenuous explorations. Other Written Assignments may well have originated with good prompts, but devolved too easily into re-descriptions of plot and character. Candidates need good models and practice to succeed in this exercise.

Finally, literary terms for critical features of texts and references to such movements as "realism" and "expressionism" seemed in the minds of candidates to stand for completely fixed and self-evident meanings. Definition of terms or other indications that references are completely understood need to appear in the essays as they allude to the particular text under discussion.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A (Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement): The nature of this expectation seemed not to be understood entirely by teachers directing candidates in this activity. That should be remedied with experience and as more samples become available. However, there is a clearly pointed question in the Subject Guide that, if responded to, should produce Reflective Statements that can do well in this criterion: "how was your understanding of the cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?" Whether the candidate is a presenter of the particular Interactive Oral or a listener, it should be possible, in 300 to 400 words, for the candidate to describe in a straightforward and supported way an enhanced a grasp of the context (the author's biography, setting, place in a literary tradition, historical events, reception of the work) and the culture (linguistic and social background, ethnicity and the like, both of the author and the time and place of the work itself).

The Interactive Oral and Reflective Statement need to be seen as partners in grounding the candidate's sense of the work in these matters, rather than as a preliminary critical study of the literary features or an abstract of the Written Assignment. Timing of these two preliminaries is up to the teacher, but they should precede the next two steps of Supervised Writing and the Written Assignment.

The examiner needs to see in the Reflective Statement evidence of a widened or deepened sense of matters of time and place touching on both author and text, even though these aspects may or may not appear explicitly in the subsequent work of the essay. In many cases, candidates offered superficial generalizations: "society was patriarchal," "the play is grounded in realism and subtleties," "people conversed in an informal way in that time." Such assertions unsupported by any firm evidence or research are not useful. Retelling the plot, describing characters, pointing out symbols, expressing personal views of the texts or critiquing the work of classmates are not the proper material for the Reflective Statement, though much of this was included in the work submitted in this session.

Criterion B (Knowledge and understanding): Performance here ranged from superficial to perceptive, as is the case across all of the assessment components. With one work to explore, candidates were usually able to indicate some grasp of what content the plays, fiction or poetry included. 'Understanding' involves more: subtext, the nature of actions and interactions, the apparent and implied nature of characters and the like. Here, a certain number of candidates offered limited evidence that they had considered more than events, characters or "messages." Paraphrase and plot summary tend to characterize these weaker offerings.

When particular titles are pursued, the candidate needs to evince some evolved or probing thinking about the subject. Teachers need to be sure that when candidates develop a potential Written Assignment from a particular writing prompt that they understand the topic. A candidate writing about music in *Death and the Maiden* without mentioning Schubert or the title of the play is not likely to achieve high marks.

Elements in *A Doll's House* asserted to be 'symbols' must be accompanied by a demonstration of why that judgment is made.

Criterion C (Appreciation of the writer's choices): Unlike the reasonably satisfactory performance on average in Criterion B, the candidate outcomes in C ranged from almost no address of authorial choice to some excellent work. In some ways, the very nature of the task, 'Written Assignment,' is defined by this criterion. The task is a critical and literary one in the narrowest sense, so examiners are looking for assessment of what choices a writer has made to deliver the material, how those are deployed and to what effect.

write a literary analysis of author's specific choices

Here the weaker performances might indeed "mention" some literary strategies (choices in diction, pace, plot elaborated by subplots, techniques of characterization) but do not go on to show "appreciation" of how these worked and what they meant to the whole work. One examiner summarized the performance in this criterion as follows: *"In this process candidates had the most difficulty in determining how the writer's method related to the text's meaning. Often this aspect was virtually ignored; conversely, other candidates strained to show some relationship that was clearly superficial or simply misguided."*

Clearly candidates cannot do this sort of analysis without a good deal of guidance and practice throughout the course.

Finally, in this criterion, candidates often failed to make their chosen examples work to their advantage, simply citing their presence without exploring their use and significance.

Criterion D (Organization and Development): It should be carefully noted that there is a preliminary statement in this descriptor that addresses the word count. "The word limit for the essay is 1200-1500 words. If the word limit is exceeded, 2 marks will be deducted." Please note that the same rule applies to the Reflective Statement where the penalty is 1 mark. These penalties were applied by examiners this session. (The word count includes all quoted material from the original text[s]). Attempts to subvert the word limit by including the supporting text for assertions in footnotes is not permitted.

word count

In terms of organizing the material candidates are presenting, examiners were on the whole satisfied that there was a least some plan for structuring the argument, although these patterns ranged from fairly basic and choppy to very coherent, fluent presentations that were easy to follow. Where candidates tend to fall down is in the use of cited materials, where overlong portions of the original text are included, where quotations are poorly embedded or inserted without any rationale or interpretation.

Additionally, candidates sometimes make very poor use of their introductory remarks, falling into formulas that merely state that a certain feature is found in the work and that it is important or fascinating. Paragraphing, too, -- or the lack thereof --is a feature that makes delivery of ideas either effective or obscure, and a clear sense of the rhetorical value of this structural device is too often absent in these essays.

Criterion E (Language): On the whole, most candidates in this course are able to convey their ideas in a reasonably competent way. That said, there is often the implied expectation that examiners will overlook careless proofreading, imprecise diction and slips in register and style.

Avoid

While on the one hand, evaluation does not tend in the direction of penalizing for occasional lapses in spelling, grammar or punctuation, frequent incorrect usage is, in fact, penalized and holds candidates back from higher marks when, with some care, they could gain marks in this descriptor.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Although many schools approached the new demands for assessment in this part of the syllabus with seamless success, there is a clear need for a review of the Subject Guide with careful attention to the nature of each step in this four-step process of writing the assignment.

The foundational stages (Interactive Oral and Reflective Statement) need to be seen as the first half of a process, providing candidates with a secure sense of the context in which the particular work has been generated and that it continues to reflect. Two additional suggestions for the Interactive Oral bear on the personal experience of the candidate, asking about difficulties and connections between the work and the candidate's experience. It is probably best to use the suggestion about literary technique as one related to literary history so as not to divert the focus from the central question of the Interactive Oral.

Note

N.B. Understandably, the requirement to submit to the examiner the Reflective Statement on the same work as the focus text of the Written Assignment appears to imply that the second must exhibit obvious links to the first. Because the Reflective Statement addresses one area of knowing a work, and the Written Assignment another, there is no requirement that context and culture be explicitly discussed in the latter. What is hoped is that the solid grounding in the wider sense of the work will usefully inform the candidate's approach to the essay.

No link expected b/w RS + WA

The third and fourth steps of the process aim, beginning with the Supervised Writing, to steer the candidate in a productive direction when producing the essay (the Written Assignment), which should treat in some depth a feature in one of the three studied texts.

The prompts provided by the teacher for Supervised Writing should be both sharply focused on literary features and wide enough to allow some latitude for individual approaches to the prompt. Beyond the Supervised Writing, the teacher needs to look at the first draft of the Written Assignment to be sure that the candidate is headed in a productive direction. Examiners will not be surprised to see topics such as "The effect of the narrative voice," or "The handling of stanzaic structure" or "The use of stage directions" treated in the same literary work but with an individually chosen critical angle and evidence in support of the particular candidate's argument.

Although the final editing of the submitted assignment is entirely in the candidate's own hands, every encouragement should be given to care in devising the structure of the argument and the use of the language, with a final proofreading before submission of the work.

Further comments   → NOW

A checklist follows that may help in solving the most common problems encountered this session; insuring that all of them are addressed may provide the assistance teachers have requested about the demands of the exercise.

1. Check and double check that the *works* chosen for study in Part 1 are (a) listed on the PLT and (b) are written originally in a language other than English.

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2. Assess the reading skills and sophistication of your class groups and select works whose content and style are both accessible and engaging for the majority, not just the very talented.

3. Work with candidates to ensure that they have a solid working knowledge of literary terms such as 'exposition' or 'lexical field' or literary movements such as 'Romanticism' or 'Theatre of the Absurd.'

4. Make available to candidates and discuss the central question that must be addressed in the Reflective Statement:

"How my sense of the cultural and contextual considerations of the work has evolved through this Interactive Oral."

5. Practise writing reflective statements in response to other oral presentations such as those that might be delivered as IOPs in Part 4 work.

6. Assess when Interactive Orals are most fruitfully delivered to advantage candidates. Work on authorial biography as well as the author's geographical and historical position, including literary history, and events in the larger world can be useful in advance of reading the work. The process of reading the work may then be enhanced by discussions of aspects within the work such as linguistic and political culture, social norms and expectations, and other aspects of the work's setting.

7. Provide Supervised Writing prompts that point candidates in directions that encourage, not philosophical, sociological or anthropological studies, but explorations of how the writer has chosen to invent and present an artistic approach to human thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Only with this latter kind of focus can candidates do well in Criterion C.

8. Model for candidates the way a literary essay evolves from a prompt such as "Analyze the way the writer advances plot evolution with the use of a minor character," or "Show how the playwright uses one or more dramatic moments to produce comic relief in an otherwise serious play" or "Examine the recurring motif of weather change in the work of the poet."

9. Show candidates how paraphrase and re-description differ from critical analysis with examples of both, and with writing exercises that demand they construct examples of these in order to see the difference.

10. Ensure that candidates know the precise word limits on the Reflective Statement and the Written Assignment as designated in the *Subject Guide* and that there are penalties for exceeding them, even by one word.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

Collection of Subject Report Comments on World Literature

- The word count is 1000 to 1500 words. There is a margin of grace in this matter, but students are best encouraged to observe these limits as a norm. (Nov 2003); The word count has not risen to 1650 words. It remains 1000-1500 normatively. (May 2003)
- (Some carelessness in declaring word counts accurately, with 1499 appearing regularly and not very credibly, occurred in materials from some centers as well as assignments which clearly exceed the word count allowed; Nov 2002)
- Note: Too many papers were only 1000-1100 words long; too few words do not allow the candidate to develop ideas fully and so such essays tend to be either superficial or consist only of generalizations (May 05)
- It is crucial that the translation being used is indicated in the works cited.
- Candidates repeating in WL#2 with slight variation the task already executed in WL#1 are unlikely to garner high marks.
- Use Quotation Marks for Poem Titles   Underline for title to plays and novels and collections of poetry

GENERAL TIPS

➢ Candidates need to find something that engages them and is worth their effort. Examiners look for an argument, something observed and believed in, that the candidate can argue for, develop, explore.
➢ Candidates should be encouraged to "find their own interesting ways into a text."
➢ Candidates were often complimented for their ability to convey the interest with which they read the literature. There was also appreciation for the energy with which they expressed their views and their clearly personal voice.
➢ The chief concern, in fact the crucial moment, is when the student chooses the topic/title of the assignment. Topics must be well-conceived and appropriately limited.
➢ The chief weakness of candidates' essays springs from the choice of an unsuitable aspect to write about. Every year we see that a failure to carefully narrow and define the topic inevitably leads to a woolly, vague, unfocussed argument. (May 05)
➢ The wording of the title is very important because vague titles tend to result in essays that lack a clear focus. (May 06).

❖ The Language A1 programme encourages students to see literary works as products of art and their authors as craftsmen whose methods of production can be analyzed in a variety of ways and on a number of levels.
❖ Students are increasing in literary topics, addressing the "methods of production" and "the means used to convey subjects." Students are writing about topics such as tone, irony, unreliable narrators, comparison of deliberate gaps in the narrative, various patterns of imagery and the like.
❖ Trawling the Internet for what other have said about the text might be better replaced by a good re-reading of it.
❖ Forget about existentialism, machismo, etc; write about texts as stories/dramas, reclaim the pleasure of the narrative/audience. Examine small topics, descriptions of places, such as décor or landscapes in The House of Spirits.
❖ Candidates also need to be reminded that this is a literary essay so they should try to avoid psychological or sociological approaches, especially when they go on to discuss the characters as if they are real people who exemplify a social or psychological problem.
❖ Students need to be reminded that their audience has read the works they are discussing. Lengthy summaries of content are not needed.
❖ An introduction should define terms and clearly state what the essay is going to be about; a conclusion should draw various threads together and relate the aspect to the works as a whole. (May 06)
❖ Topics should be narrow and have a clear focus – allowing for substantial depth in exploration.
❖ Most schools have begun to see the difficulty with "society" discussions.
❖ Examples of topics which are likely to carry candidates into the 4 or 5 range of category A of the rubric are usually focused toward the craft of the writer, such as "How is the notion of the need for change presented in two novels?" or "Turning points as they are handled in two plays."
❖ We do not wish to say students should not write about themes, but what they SHOULD write about is the way in which the writer treats these themes and presents his/her ideas.
❖ At times, a good essay should show that a student has increased his/her understanding and tolerance of other cultures.
❖ Discussion should be directed, especially in the comparative essay, to the significance of features observed, not to their simple description.
❖ The best way for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their works is to be able to make plenty of detailed and relevant references to them. Far too many candidates discuss the works only in general terms, sometimes without mentioning the name of any of the characters apart from the protagonists.

General Problems:
1) General topics with little sharp focus: "The Sufferings of Gregor Samsa and Meursault" or "Women in Text 1 and 2" vs. one with a sharp and unique approach: "The use of pauses in Play 1 and 2" OR "The treatment of the elderly in text 1 and 2" or "The way references to food are used in text 1 and 2"
Another example, "How Ibsen and Kafka use the opening and shutting of doors to illustrate imprisonment" is a title which is likely to generate a much better essay than "Personal freedom in Kafka and Ibsen"
2) Choosing topics that do have a literary focus or concentrate on a literary feature, but fail to go to the last step: to offer analysis of the effect of that literary feature on the whole work.
3) Offering lengthy paraphrases of the texts, leaving little space for any analysis of choices made by writers and their effects
4) Treating characters as real people who have lives separate from the texts, for example, "If Tita has ignored her mother she could have lived happily ever after, but she didn't..."
5) There is no valid reason to use colloquial language in these pieces ("For once the bad guys won" or "Juan is really losing it here")
6) In many schools, candidates write primarily about the main characters.
7) Too many students were surveyors rather than explorers. 2C is titled "detailed study" for a reason! Too often ideas are stated and not proven.

Might have some useful FYIs

8) Carelessness in writing and/or proofreading occupied a significant place in the examiners' reports this year. There were many, many technical errors in these papers. Misspelling of authors' or characters' names, of titles, etc. seem highly inappropriate in such prepared assignments.

9) One of the most striking problems is the facile reduction of context, of national or ethnic traits (all Catholics are devout practitioners, all Latin American men are characterized by machismo, all Japanese women are submissive, etc)

10) Topics should move from sociological/anthropological focuses to literary ones. Almost invariably those candidates who have sharp and well-defined angles on the works they discuss are easily outdistancing candidates who have not attained this level of skill.

11) Candidates are short on logical structure. A reader should be able to follow the line of their thinking, to see why they have arranged things as they have. Often it is quite difficult to discern any rationale for why material appears in the order it does. (Nov 06)

12) What are the most common technical flaws? Comma splices, erroneous use of semi-colons as well as commas, the use of "this" with no clear referent, pronouns with unclear referents, no page references for citations, and few if any transitions between paragraphs (Nov 06)

13) Students also need to be reminded that the characters are not real people, but are the result of decision made by an author. (Nov 06)

14) "Try to persuade candidates they need to spend more time on their essays" (Nov 06)

15) Internet sources are used tenuously, revealing very flexible standards within schools and questionable classroom oversight. It is obvious in some cases that internet material is being lifted and incorporated in students' assignments - Candidates who use secondary sources can produce excellent assignments, but much depends on the quality of their sources; it is essential teachers warn students against poor sources, especially those such as gradesaver/sparknotes which are to be found on the internet. Overall, students should write essays which they have personally researched using their texts rather than the internet; they should not depend entirely on notes made in class (May 06).

16) Please dissuade students from using too many generalizations which are the downfall of many essays. A statement such as, "Emma is always dissatisfied with her life" must be supported by several examples from the text.

17) Depending on the aspect, it is not necessary to switch backwards and forwards from one work to the other, but it is important to concentrate on the argument all through the essay. In order to write a good essay, candidates must be able to write in paragraphs. Several examiners felt that many candidates had no idea how to construct a paragraph.

18) Too many silly errors create a negative impression, especially in names of characters or titles are misspelt.

Topic Selection Concerns:

1) Breadth of scope that is well beyond what is viable at this level of schooling and the word limits of the task. "The use of relationships in Medea and A Doll's House"; "A brief exploration of structure, conflict and the great transformations they bring forth in the protagonists of Medea and A Doll's House"; "How tradition controls the lives of Tita and Clara in works by Esquivel and Allende"; "How protagonists in Woman at Point Zero and The Stranger are at odds with society" are all examples that severely tax the ability of young scholars to write with specificity and to persuade a reader of their argument.

2) Lack of relevance to literary study. Such topics as "Racism in Chronicle of a Death Foretold and The Stranger"; "How Nora Helmer and Grenouille attempt to find their identities"; "What does the theme of medicine tell us about the societies and cultures of The Doctor's Wife and Like Water for Chocolate?" offer serious challenges to candidates trying to keep their attention fixed on matters of authorial choice and style. It is surely difficult to discern what the argument might be in some of these titles.

3) One particularly unpromising approach to Assignment 1 is found in many essays which simply catalogue the similarities and differences of characters, or settings, or relationships, in two of their texts: "Women play a central role in Medea, but not in Tartuffe". There seems to be a wide lack of understanding that making such lists without being guided by some exploration of function or significance is a fairly pointless descriptive exercise. Frequently such essays will be titled in a way that is indicative of the slimness of their contents... "A comparison essay of ..."

Integrating Quotations

o   The incorporation of evidence or detail is still a difficulty for too many candidates. Either by offering large chunks of text which are then presumed to speak for themselves or by failing to offer more than one example to support an assertion, candidates fail to understand the effective use of evidence.

The Title

▪   What examiners would really like to discover from the title is what the writer plans to explore in the text(s) to reveal some particular response or angle of vision.

▪   Examiners tend to prefer titles to be clear and explicit.

▪   Titles are important to the assignments, but coy and flashy offerings seemed endemic this year, failing to inform at the same time as they repelled the interest of the reader.

Drama Aspects

❑   Problem: Offering little awareness of the theatrical or spoken effect of drama

❑   Too many candidates treat plays as if they were novels and too few are aware that characters are manipulated by authors.

❑   Students writing on Ibsen rarely regarded it as a play to be performed on stage. They treated it as a novel – sometimes even calling it a novel – to be cannibalized for its themes. Plays in particular seem to suffer from this oversight, which very few assignments which focus on specifically dramatic features.

Assignment Two must be labeled as 2A, 2B or 2C so the examiner will know what it is that s/he is reading (May 05)

2A

✓   "Some very good essays emerged this year from this option." (May 2004)

✓   "Some candidates are producing some very interesting comparisons in 2A." (Nov 2002)

✓   "2A is the least commonly chosen." (May 2002)

✓   The skill here seems to be, first, locating appropriate texts, finding a viable link, and writing a comparative essay.

✓   Perhaps in the guidance stages of preparing this comparative assignment the teacher might insist on answer to the question "to what end?" Students need to be required to articulate why the two texts are being addressed with their particular angle. (May 06)

✓   Problem: Offering simple lists of similarities in two texts, many of which are obvious and which convey very little personal insight

✓   Problem: Some essays link the texts only in the introduction and conclusion with occasional nods to connection

- ✓ Avoid unlikely, obvious or forced comparisons.
- ✓ These papers must address why the similarities and differences are significant. For example, true, love and revenge are present in Medea and The Visit. What does it matter? How are they different in their presentation? What is the effect of the context? Where is the analysis? So often paraphrase is offered in the guise of analysis. These are not book reports...
- ✓ Problem: Too often candidates offer sweeping unsupportable generalizations that ride roughshod over cultural, gender and historical differences as well as those of different literary genres.
- ✓ Some candidates lost marks over valiant efforts to link texts between which there was very little common ground.
- ✓ Candidates need to understand the nature of comparative work, that it includes both similarities and differences, that texts must not be forced into artificial similarities
- ✓ Even in schools where candidates could write well, there were weaknesses in the construction of a comparative essay. Problematically, students offer a loosely connected set of two discussions of two texts.
- ✓ The linking of texts was often strained and unpromising. Such assignments often comprised a series of examples with a vague or implied connecting thread; the similarity was only firmly articulated in the conclusion. (Nov 05)

2B

- ➤ "Again, candidates are producing some very pleasing work with this option." (2004)
- ➤ "In particular, examiners stressed that 2B has the potential to elicit the extremes of performance, witty and effective imitations and responses to the work studied, and abysmal misconceptions and productions." (2003)
- ➤ Students go astray in perceiving this option (2B) to be both pleasant and easier than the other options, the later usually a misperception.
- ➤ "The statement of intent is often unsatisfactory." (May 2002)
- ➤ Problem: A common criticism is that candidates wander from connection with the original text, losing a sense that their task is to illuminate the strengths and pleasures of the original by some creative work with it.
- ➤ Adding missing chapters or new endings must certainly explore something beyond "it's not there and it would be fun to do it."
- ➤ Problem: Most have some sort of "Statement of Intent" but other appear without them, a failure that incurs a penalty. It is crucial that the statement include a rationale for embarking on this venture. The question "why" there is a reason to do this assignment needs to be answered in preliminary stages of the assignment. (Ask: What enhancement of understanding or illumination of the original is likely to be achieved?)
- ➤ Statements of Intents must provide a rationale for the project, but many comments from examiners remain "WHY are you doing this? What does it illuminate about the original text or your understanding of its content and style?"
- ➤ The Statement of Intent MUST accompany any 2B and MUST precede the creative work... so the reader may know what is being attempted. It needs to be viable and reasonable.
- ➤ Ask: What does the writer and, potentially, the reader learn to further appreciate about the original text through this assignment (2B)?
- ➤ The most successful assignments in this category are those which have as their focus a close study of the original text, and an attempt to imitate both the concerns of the original and its style. These assignments should show that they have provoked further thought about the original, and illustrate assimilation of both intention and style observed in the text used.
- ➤ Many exercises which may contain a seed of success still show little sign of literary appreciation or understanding, creativity, cultural understanding or good writing, all of which should surely be elements of this exercise.
- ➤ The pastiche needs to be chosen and conceived by individual students who are committed to investing the time needed to execute this challenging task. Pastiches require a sensitivity to style that not all possess – while a feew can do it very well (and should), other options, including the essay might serve others better.
- ➤ There are still some pointless diaries and letters, but also emerging are some very provocative and productive pieces: an encounter between Hamm of *Endgame* and Hamlet; the creation of an additional choral ode in *Antigone*; a letter about the removal of the text, *Therese Raquin*, from a school syllabus.
- ➤ Beware the choice of the diary or journal, which is often, though not always, a rehash of the events of the plot, with some slight shift of viewpoint.

2C

- ❖ "Commentaries and essays continue to be successful endeavours for the second assignment." (2004)
- ❖ Very few candidates seem to do well in comparing two key passages. (Nov 2001)
- ❖ Key passage exercises are also sometimes successful, but only when the student is aware of the nature of the exercise (see the handouts you have).
- ❖ There appears to be some continuing confusion about the difference between a key passage exercise and a commentary. Often, what a student will label as a key passage exercise is a stylistic investigation/close reading that should have been approached as a "commentary".
- ❖ What was intended by the "key passage exercise" was that the student would choose a passage that is a *crux* in the larger work, one whose connections in terms of the art of the piece can be pursued in the course of the assignment. How that passage is central, climatic, a resolution, a revelation, a typical or recurrent narrative or dramatic strategy on the part of a particular writer.
- ❖ Commentary is not a "laborious paraphrase" with an occasional nod to style.
- ❖ Nov 2001: There are still problems of confusion about the key passage and the commentary. The first has a broad focus, one that takes the passage as a point at which ideas and themes are gathered, reiterated, emphasized, and in which the close reading of the passage has a lesser role than it does in commentary. In passage, the gaze is outward and synthesizing (towards plot, characterization, suspense, revelation, etc.). In the commentary, the focus is inward, on the particular passage, not only what it presents, but precisely how that is done, with the candidate focusing on close stylistic analysis of tone, diction, imagery and the like (construction and technique; how the passage works; what choices the writer made in the passage itself).
- ❖ Commentary and key passage exercises on exactly the same passage in one center will not garner marks for "independence of thought".
- ❖ A key passage needs to be justified as "key" to the whole work and then in terms of how it functions as an important moment.

Version 1

kill; must be anonymous

Header can keep Pg # only if you desire

Ava M. Hanner
IB Candidate 000536-XXXX
HL English: Written Assignment
1 May 2016

Pg 1

Reflective statement on Harry Mulisch's *The Assault*

The interactive oral aided me in understanding the importance of the time period in which

Ava M. Hanner
IB Candidate 000536-XXXX
HL English: Written Assignment
1 May 2016

Pg 2 or 3

The Role of Innocence and Guilt within Harry Mulisch's *The Assault*

Several characters within *The Assault* by Harry Mulisch are portrayed as both innocent

himself, "Was everyone both guilty and not guilty? Was guilt innocent,

Version 2

Brian Bujalski
IB Candidate # 000536-0168
HL English: Reflective Statement
1 May 2016

Pg 1

In Jiro Taniguchi's *A Distant Neighborhood*, school seems to be a very essential and

000536-0168 Bujalski 3

Brian Bujalski
IB Candidate # 000536-0168
HL English: Written Assignment
1 May 2016

Pg 2 or 3

The Author's Use of Plot in Order to Develop the Character of Hiroshi Nakahara

Every single person learns through his or her experiences in life. These experiences are