English A: language and literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 29	30 - 43	44 - 56	57 - 68	69 - 82	83 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 26	27 - 42	43 - 56	57 - 67	68 - 81	82 - 100

Higher level and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

By and large the examiners felt that the schools did an excellent job at following IB procedures and instructions. There were a few complaints that the boxes on form 1/L&LIA regarding the FOA were not fully completed and that often schools failed to indicate the part of the programme in which the FOA was conducted. There were a few instances of candidates not identifying themselves, and there were the occasional upload errors of the wrong extracts or faulty recordings. Please continue to double-check all materials to be sure they are correct and viable before uploading. Errors of this sort can sizably lengthen the marking process for the school.

While some examiners felt that the works chosen by the school were rich and varied, others worried that the works were unsuitable for the candidates in question or that some candidates were discussing works of much greater challenge than those done by other candidates from that school. Works by Chaucer, Milton and Swift seemed to cause problems in particular, as their contexts (particularly language, politics and religion) were difficult for candidates to grasp. Perhaps these authors are better suited for other parts of the course. A similar problem of challenge was noted in terms of amount of material to be covered, with extracts ranging from 14 to 50 or 60 lines. Please ensure, as best as possible, that an equal task is being set for all candidates in the school.

Several examiners were also concerned that there was not a sufficient variety of extracts being used within a school, with a single extract being used again and again. Please take care to follow the guidelines for providing the correct number of different extracts for the number of candidates sitting the exam. To this end, be sure that all works in part 4 have been taught before doing the IOC, and be sure that all part 4 works are included in the choice of extracts.

There was little need to impose the penalty for teaching works whose authors are not on the PLA, but there were a few instances. In particular, be aware that Salinger and Golding are not on the PLA. Also, no works in translation may be used in part 4.

Extracts and Guiding Questions - Please take care to provide all candidates with clearly readable extracts, free of error, and with lines numbered by fives, starting with one. The extracts should contain no prompts, notes or further instructions. Names of works and authors should not appear, with the exception of the titles of poems. The line-numbered extract should be followed by two guiding questions (which should be questions and not commands such as "comment on"), one addressing, in some way, content and one addressing literary features, with each question indicated by a bullet point. The guiding questions should be specific to the extract and offer a starting point for the candidates to analyze their extracts and organize their thoughts in the preparation room. It is not mandatory for the candidates to answer the questions, but if the questions relate to key aspects of the extract, it is unlikely that the questions will not form a part of the response. For the sample, please upload a clean copy of the original extract as handed to the candidate.

Subsequent Questions - Subsequent questions, like the guiding questions, should be open-ended and prompt the candidate to think for him or herself. The questions should take the candidate back to the extract for further analysis of content and literary features, to ensure the candidate can earn as much credit as possible in criteria A and B. Questions about the larger work are useful only if they are aimed at getting the candidate to explore the significance of the extract at hand. No questions should be asked after the 15-minute mark. On the other hand, all candidates deserve to be asked questions for the full 15 minutes to help them reveal as much knowledge and understanding as possible. This segment of the oral is mandatory; all candidates must be stopped in time to allow for roughly 5 minutes of questioning. Please remember that this is an exam, and, thus, not the time for teaching or for supplying information to the candidate.

Further Issues - There are still schools with large candidatures where teachers are not standardizing their marks. This is even more important now that Standard Level and Higher Level have been combined. Not to do so can seriously impact the moderation of the school's candidates.

Some schools still seem to have difficulty finding a quiet location in which to conduct the orals. Though this may be difficult in a busy school, this is part of the candidates' overall assessment, and the candidates deserve to have a quiet, calm area in which to think.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the text or extract

Please note that the length of the extract can impact the candidate's ability to score well in this criterion; be sure each extract is roughly 40 lines, with allowance of fewer lines for extracts that are particularly dense in detail. Candidates are expected to give a thorough analysis of their extracts within 10 minutes. The response should focus on the writer and how the writer is expressing the ideas within the extract to the reader or audience. The oral is not meant to be an explication or paraphrase of the extract. In the analysis, the candidates should make reference to specific words or lines to support their assertions. They should reference the line number so that the moderator can quickly identify the example being given. Reading out large portions of the extract or using time for lengthy biographical or other contextual detail is not helpful for earning marks. Overall, the examiners felt that the candidates in this session were reasonably secure in this criterion.

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of literary features

As usual, the examiners found the candidates to be less strong in this criterion. Some teachers were at fault here for not providing a guiding question that would prompt the candidate into a literary analysis. However, several examiners reported that there seemed to be less "feature logging" this session, with better attempts at discussing the effects of features on the reader and how such features shaped meaning. And, while that is good to note, candidates continue to use literary terms loosely and even incorrectly; many seem unaware of the literary features unique to the genre they are discussing. Drama and poetry continue to be discussed as though they are pieces of prose, and prose pieces are seldom effectively discussed in terms of the writer's style, the narrative point of view, or the placement of the extract within the structure of the work. Examiners also report that teachers seem to be overly generous in their marking of this criterion, perhaps rewarding identification of features rather than genuine analysis.

Criterion C: Organization

There seemed to be improvement in this area as well, which was very encouraging. Organization has a lot to do with the effective use of the 10 minutes of allotted time. A succinct introduction that situates the passage and indicates the significance of the extract (a thesis, if you will) and how the candidate intends to argue that significance is key to a well-shaped response. Having logical points of discussion or division of the extract also helps ensure that the extract is fully covered, that ideas are logically developed, and that a clear focus is maintained. And, as with any presentation, an effective conclusion is needed. To this end, teachers need to remind their stronger candidates that they should not over-run the time, as by being stopped by the teacher, they lose the chance to conclude. If some points are not discussed, the teacher can bring the candidate back to those during the subsequent questioning. Obviously, it takes practice for candidates to learn how to use their time wisely and effectively. And, again, the extracts have to be of an appropriate length so that the candidate doesn't have too little or too much to cover.

Criterion D: Language

Generally speaking the majority of candidates this session were competent in their language skills. Occasionally nervousness led to casual expressions, "you know," "like," etc., but for the most part candidates seemed to hold to a formal register. Please note that the use of "quote/unquote" is both

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

unnecessary and distracting. The better candidates offered a wide range of vocabulary and varied sentence structure, which enabled them to express their ideas precisely and concisely. Some used a very effective academic register. Occasionally a teacher would approach the subsequent questioning a bit too informally, and this would lead the candidate to lower his or her register as well. A handful of candidates truly struggled with expressing themselves in English and might have been better served by taking English B.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Always take time to review the instructions for Internal Assessment in the Subject Guide, the latest Handbook of Procedures, and the Teacher Support Material.
- Choose works for part 4 and passages for extracts with care.
- Improve your guiding questions and subsequent questions so that they focus clearly on the extract and help the students earn points in criteria A and B (Remember, the candidate should discuss the entire extract, not just parts of it.)
- Have students practice IOCs, perhaps allowing them to give IOCs to each other: selecting passages, writing guiding questions, recording the oral, keeping the times, asking subsequent questions and marking each other.
- Work with students on plans for organizing ideas and delivering them under timed conditions; consider thesis, focus, development, transitions, introductions and conclusions.
- Work on close literary analysis throughout the course, concentrating on what the writer is doing to shape meaning.
- Remember that "close study" of part 4 works means that students have taken the time to understand the many contexts of their works and can understand references and allusions that are made within the works, e.g. the figures of Salome and Medusa in Duffy's poems, the religious and mythical references in Hamlet, etc.
- Teach a more comprehensive literary vocabulary, going beyond figures of speech or tone, e.g. tension, contrasts, shifts, structure, pathos, syntactical choices, ambiguity, etc.
- Encourage students to offer their own opinions and interpretations, with the caveat that they must support their ideas with details from the text
- Be aware of your own comments on form 1/L&LIA; several examiners indicated that the comments were correct, but did not match the mark given. (If the knowledge and understanding is "adequate" the mark should be 5/6 not 7/8).

Further comments

Overall this was a successful session for Internal Assessment and teachers are to be commended for the hard work and care which they gave to this component.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Higher level Written Tasks

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 28	29 - 33	34 - 40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

With a few exceptions, the work submitted for the November 2015 session was appropriate. Most candidates chose an option for Task 1 that enabled them to engage thoughtfully with the linked text and/or topic, and wrote a formal essay on one of the prescribed questions for Task 2.

A wide range of texts and approaches was evident. There were many well-written pieces that showed considerable research, good understanding, and an ability to construct a 'text type' (Task 1) or a coherent argument (Task 2). In some cases, candidates had trouble generating a suitably precise approach to the genres in question, a point that will be developed below.

One of the teacher's roles is to help students choose focused and appropriate aspects of the course studied so that they can submit tasks that 'show a critical engagement with an aspect of a text or a topic' (Subject Guide, p. 40). Students should be encouraged to seek advice from the teacher as to whether their choice of topic and text type suit their objectives. If the right guidance is given at an early stage and students are made fully aware of the formal and practical requirements on pp. 40-46, then benefits will surely accrue not just in the form of better marks but also in terms of more satisfactory learning outcomes.

Here is a summary of the main points raised by examiners about the suitability of the tasks submitted at HL:

- Although the rationales for Task 1 and the outlines for Task 2 now show that more students are understanding the need to demonstrate a link between their tasks and the course, some still do not seem to be aware of how the material they studied related to its aims
- Examiners frequently report incidents of both tasks being based on literary texts, sometimes on the same part of the programme or, in some cases even, on the same text. Sometimes both tasks are based on the language parts of the course. As for the literary parts, it is apparent that some teachers need to review their selection of texts so as to conform to the requirements for parts 3 and 4 (Subject Guide, pp. 20-21). Also, it appears from the headings in some candidates' submissions that there are teachers assigning tasks. This is not appropriate (see pp. 27-28 of the Guide.)
- Unfortunately there are candidates writing on literary texts or topics that do not appear in the programme summary and some choose topics that appear to have little to do with the kind of language topics to be found in the syllabus. The candidate's failure to give an adequate explanation of the link between task and course content is the most common problem reported by examiners
- A considerable number of Tasks, both 1 and 2, address female stereotypes in advertising.

While, understandably, this topic is very popular with students, certain adverts come up time and time again (much as tasks based on *A Doll's House* and *The Great Gatsby* do). All too often these visual stimuli are taken out of context or incompletely reproduced (culled simply as images from the Internet, removed from their original contexts) and adverts from bygone eras are dealt with as if for present-day audiences. In general adverts need to be better referenced and the candidate needs to show better understanding than at present of the contexts in which they were produced

- At a rough estimate, two thirds of the tasks submitted are about women – very often in advertising, in blogs or opinions about the mass media or as a social group in a literary work
- A Task 1 should consist of one text type only. The assessment of two or more text types (such as a screenplay and an interview, a speech and a letter to the speaker) is clearly not practical in terms of the assessment descriptors. There are cases, however, where producing more than one text of the same type is appropriate (for example, a series of diary entries or a group of poems.)
- Tasks such as letters to the editor or opinion columns written in response to imaginary stimuli (press articles, etc.) are rarely – if ever – as successful as those based on authentic material. Occasionally one finds a Task 1 or 2 based on a hoax text, which only goes to underline the need to teach students to be more discriminating in their Internet searches for stimulus material
- Some candidates identify their Task 1 topic as, for example, "the use of persuasive language" and then apply this to a topic of their choice. While it is legitimate to show one's understanding of the persuasive language used in texts, the use of it is not to be understood as a topic in itself. For example, it is fine for the candidate to write a speech to practice the use of rhetorical devices and persuasive language but the topic of that speech needs to explore or be strongly linked to a language or mass communication issue studied. There appears to be confusion in some minds between 'learning outcome' and 'topic'. The distinction between the two is clearly made on pp. 18-19 of the Guide
- Speeches or other texts that attempt to persuade an audience who would not normally be addressed in English are inappropriate, for example, a speech by the Uruguay football coach to his national team or an open letter to Vladimir Putin about the current situation in the Ukraine
- There was quite a lot of careless presentation by students that must be avoided, for example presenting the component parts of a submission in the wrong order, going above the word limits, or inaccurate work that could have been filtered by a spell checker.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Task 1

Criterion A: Rationale

Many candidates were penalized in Criterion A for Task 1 or Task 2, or both, because they failed to follow the guidelines for a rationale (Task 1) and an outline (Task 2) closely enough. Generally candidates need to pay less attention to description and more to how the task met the requirements of the course as well as to identifying the conventions of the text type chosen.

Some candidates offered quite private accounts of their learning and interests. While such testaments of interest and engagement were often inspiring to read, they rarely fulfilled the requirement to identify the academic reasons for the choice of aspects to be explored.

Criterion B: Task and content

Most candidates demonstrated an adequate understanding of generic conventions and the chosen topic or text on which the task was based. If they did not achieve marks in the middle or top bands (5-6 and 7-8) it was often because of the tenuous or unexplained link between their chosen topic and syllabus content and/or because of superficial acquaintance with their chosen text type and its conventions.

Criterion C: Organization

Most students submitted assignments that were adequately organized and developed. Some text types chosen for Task 1 could have been more appropriately structured. The traditional essay structure invariably serves as a poor model for other text types. Better understanding of the conventions of the text type chosen would improve scores on this criterion. Students who based their work on professional exemplars were more likely to receive good marks here. Pastiche, of course, is always an option.

Criterion D: Language and style

Although the language used in the various genres chosen for Task 1 was at times inconsistent, students generally expressed their ideas clearly and with a level of diction, style and register appropriate to the genre or text type.

The quality of the language was in most cases quite good although some candidates chose text types for Task 1 for which they could not provide appropriate levels of usage.

Many students showed a strong grasp of particular styles of writing, formal and informal. Some showed outstanding abilities here. For an examiner, it is always a great pleasure to read a piece by a student that is good enough to be published.

A common problem was inadequate proofreading.

Task 2

Criterion A: Outline

While many candidates were able to highlight the focus of the task clearly, points were lost by others for outlines that were vague and sometimes missing the most basic information such as a link to a part of the programme, to a text or a topic rather than, more vaguely in some cases, to a learning outcome (see the distinction between 'learning outcome' and 'topic', pp. 18-19 of the Guide). Far too many students are not writing 'three or four key points that explain the particular focus of the task' (Guide, p.43) as they are required to do but essay plans that frequently stretch to one or more pages. Identifying the particular focus of the task should involve stating how the key terms of the prescribed question are to be interpreted. If stimulus material likely to be unfamiliar cannot be included, a cast-iron link should be provided so that the examiner can access it rapidly.

Criterion B: Response to the question

Most students included specific textual references and demonstrated an understanding of the expectations of the prescribed questions (though often the latter were interpreted quite superficially). The strongest essays were based on a clear and accurate interpretation of the prescribed question in which candidates had focused on the key words or phrases.

Understanding of texts at times seemed to be inspired by only vague ideas of genre characteristics and limited abilities to provide accurate descriptions of the aspects explored and analysed. Some of the set questions for Task 2 created unnecessary challenges for candidates. This was particularly true of the ones on social groups ('women' may be a social group, but more precise and limited definitions could probably have created more meaningful discussions), on different readers (often they were poorly described and defined) and on the texts having been written at a different time etc. (again, candidates had trouble coming up with meaningful and workable definitions).

Some students appeared to have a different question or a pre-set agenda in mind and so lost marks on understanding of the expectations.

The more successful answers included plenty of direct references to the content of the text on which the task was based. While there was much appropriate, sometimes outstanding, work on texts that were primarily visual (notably ads or music videos on YouTube), there were a good many responses that paid little attention to the analysis of textual features in the broadest sense of that term.

Criterion C: Organization

Most students submitted tasks that were adequately organized and developed. Essays with adequate or effective content rarely suffered from weaknesses in this criterion. The main weakness was a failure to develop ideas in sufficient detail.

Criterion D: Language and style

As in previous exam sessions, students struggled more with the formal academic language required for Task 2 than with the language for their chosen genre in Task 1. However, usually communication was at least adequate, and, once again, better proofreading would have eliminated errors that might have made the candidate lose a mark on accuracy.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Here is some advice, much of it of a practical nature, emerging from the observations made by examiners:

Electronic marking by the examiner of scanned, discrete, anonymous scripts instead of paper-based batches by a whole group of students from a clearly identified examination centre has several practical consequences for candidates and their teachers:

- A candidate's submission should be anonymous. This means that the pages should not include school and candidate names and numbers
- It is more important than ever that the pages are sequenced in the right order and that rationales and outlines *precede* the tasks. The inclusion of short texts (advertisement, opinion article, poem, etc.) on which the task is based is to be strongly encouraged (examiners can waste an awful lot of time looking for stimulus texts that have been poorly referenced.)
- Before the candidates write their rationales, they should be made aware that the examiner is not able to refer to the candidate and school details on the cover sheet in order to better comprehend the context the student is writing about or even whether the writer is male or female (for example, one rationale began: 'Discrimination against women is a serious issue in this country')

- Make sure candidates are submitting one task based on the language parts of the programme, the other on the literary parts
- Guide students to choose text types that are best suited to their purposes
- Unpack the prescribed questions with candidates before they attempt to answer them. Discuss the concepts they refer to
- Guide candidates in matching suitable texts and questions
- Encourage students to develop independent critical responses to literary texts rather than relying on study guides

- Rationales and outlines:
  - Perhaps consider providing templates or guidelines for the rationale and outline to ensure they are complete and fulfill the requirements
  - The rationale must address the task's relevance to the course and to the topics and works the student has studied. That Task 1 is not purely a creative writing task needs to be better understoo.
  - The outline needs to clearly identify the prescribed question, the part and topic or text on which the task is based and provide three or four key points about how the terms of the question are to be addressed. Further description is irrelevant and essay plans are neither required nor welcom.
- Specific instruction in the genres and text types typically chosen by candidates for Task 1 would be helpful. Too often, students chose an apparently easy genre such as a blog entry, opinion column, a diary, an 'article' (much too vague), or a letter, only to show their ignorance of the basic formal conventions
- In Task 2, students appear comfortable with the general expectations of an academic essay, but would potentially benefit from further instruction in the conventions of formal academic English (especially diction and syntax). This will of course also be good practice for the Paper 2 essay
- Ensure that students understand the importance of word limits and accurate word counts. As for the 1,000 maximum for tasks, only the task itself is to be counted (including internal quotations)
- Students appear to need guidance with how to understand the Task 2 prescribed questions, and how to use the key terms to structure an essay
- Provide advice about proofreading (reading aloud; checking for errors a spell checker will not pick up, paying attention to apostrophes and personal spelling or vocabulary problems, etc.).

Standard level Written Task

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a good range of interesting and suitable tasks relating to the course and there were more successful tasks relating to Part 2 than in previous sessions. The blog and the magazine article continue to be quite common choices of text type; candidates need to make sure that they understand the type of blog they are emulating, or the type of publication that the magazine article might appear in, and include particular features of the text type in order to ensure that they demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of the text type. There were some excellent examples of both text types, but also some that were only identifiable as blogs or articles by their titles. There were some tasks, although not as many as in previous sessions, which exhibited the conventions of the text type to a good degree, blogs and brochures for example, but the content of the tasks did not relate to any of the parts of the course. It is therefore worth repeating that the Written Task needs to be linked to a text, or a topic/aspect studied from a part of the programme. Submitting a media text type is not sufficient in itself as the content of the task also needs to relate to a topic or aspect or text from the programme.

It was good to see more successful tasks relating to Part 2. In most cases both the text type and the content related to the media. As said above, there were still some cases where the demonstration of the conventions of the text type was very good but the content did not explore an aspect of Part 2 (or any other part of the course).

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale

Candidates need to understand what constitutes a clear rationale and what the rationale needs to include. The rationale should be carefully drafted in order to adhere to the word count and provide a clear explanation of the task and the aspects that are being explored. It should indicate the aspect/topic/text and the part of the course that this comes from and say something about the conventions of the chosen text type. It is helpful if candidates are able to provide sources for texts used/referred to.

Criterion B: Task and Content

Both content and ability to replicate the text type are assessed under this criterion and many candidates dealt with both of these aspects well but there were still some cases where one of these two aspects was overlooked. It is worth re-iterating the importance of both well-selected content, relating to a text or topic, and the clear demonstration of the conventions of the text type.

Criterion C: Organization

Most Written Tasks were organised/well organised and candidates often scored good marks on this criterion.

Criterion D: Language and Style

Language was generally clear and effective, often with a good or very good degree of accuracy. The register was generally appropriate/ appropriate, not often 'confident and effective.' Some candidates would benefit from proof reading their work to eliminate inaccuracies.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Electronic marking by the examiner of scanned, discrete, anonymous scripts instead of paper-based batches by a whole group of students from a clearly identified examination centre, has several practical consequences for candidates and their teachers:
    - A candidate's submission should be anonymous. This means that the pages should not include school and candidate names and numbers
    - It is more important than ever that the pages are sequenced in the right order and that rationales and outlines *precede* the tasks. The inclusion of short texts (advertisement, opinion article, poem, etc.) on which the task is based is to be strongly encouraged (examiners can waste an awful lot of time looking for stimulus texts that have been poorly referenced.)
    - Before the candidates write their rationales, they should be made aware that the examiner is not able to refer to the candidate and school details on the cover sheet in order to better comprehend the context the student is writing about or even whether the writer is male or female
- It is important that the programme summary is clear on the coversheet so that the connection can be made between the task and course content
- Candidates should be aware of the importance of the rationale, in explaining the nature of the task. It should be carefully drafted, not written because it has to be. Candidates must clearly relate the task to a text from Parts 3 or 4 or a topic from Parts 1 or 2
- Candidates should be encouraged to choose an appropriate Written Task which is both plausible and something which can be tackled within the word limit
- Having chosen the task and text type (in agreement with the teacher), candidates should familiarise themselves with the form/conventions and style of that text type. This is particularly true in the case of different media texts (an online blog, a news report, a feature article, an opinion column).

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

General comments

Although the discrepancy was not as great as it has been in some past sessions, the majority of candidates chose the second pair of texts, on thunderstorms.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

In terms of Criterion A, the majority of candidates mentioned context; however relevant analysis of context remains a challenge. Some candidates discussed almost nothing about the texts other than stylistic features. Examiners noted a lack of textual support in some papers.

Candidates' performance on Criterion B was the least successful. They too often listed stylistic features without explaining their importance to the text or their effect on readers. A comment like "to keep the reader interested" is inadequate. Similarly, using terminology such as "ethos," "logos" and "pathos" without any explanation in terms of the text being discussed will not result in a high mark on B. These terms – and others –appeared too frequently with little or no specific analysis. A few candidates focused on details such as the length of sentences, number of paragraphs or font without explaining the significance of these aspects, if any, in the context of the text. Some weaker candidates confused stylistic and literary features and therefore found no stylistic features in non-literary passages.

A few candidates did not understand that the footnotes on the examination were added by the paper setter and commented on them as part of the text.

As noted above, more care needs to be taken with grammar and vocabulary. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation were particularly evident in word-processed papers.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates seemed comfortable with the requirements of the examination, attempting to comment on rather than merely summarize the texts.

Papers overall tended to be stronger on criteria C and D than on A and B. Most candidates have learned how to organize a commentary and plan appropriately. The majority of commentaries were balanced in their treatment of the two texts, although the approach to organization was sometimes quite formulaic. Language skills were, in general, at least adequate; however, wording was sometimes imprecise and vocabulary limited. As well, there were rather too many grammatical errors. These did not always obscure meaning, but did lower the mark on D.

Genre, purpose and audience were at least mentioned by most candidates and often analysed with insight.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The first pair seemed to pose more problems; there were very few papers on this pair at the top end of the marks spectrum. Some candidates had difficulty identifying the common theme; others found it challenging to compare such different text types. Many candidates were not familiar with the folk tale genre and misidentified Text A as a short story, usually one written for children. Examiners did not penalize scripts for a lack of knowledge of the genre, but the misunderstanding sometimes led candidates in problematic directions. There were also some very misinformed generalizations about South Africa in 1910. Despite the indication of provenance, many did not understand the audience of

Text B, identifying it as students or as students and parents. Some candidates referred to Text B, as "biased," seemingly unable to distinguish between bias and persuasive argument.

Although the second pair was challenging in its own way, candidates had fewer difficulties. Both text types were more or less recognizable to most candidates and the shared theme was easy to grasp. Thus, at least on a basic level, candidates were surer of themselves than many who chose the first pair. Among the flaws of the commentaries, few candidates commented in any detail at all on the graphics in C and discussions of stylistic features in D often became a list with no analysis of effects.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are generally well-prepared for the examination; however, the following areas need to be addressed:

- Candidates still need help on approaches to a discussion of context
- Stylistic features are a challenge for many. Specifically, candidates need practice on the following: analysing the importance of stylistic features in the context of the text; commenting on effects on the reader; identifying and commenting on the features of non-literary texts; avoiding a listing approach. It should be emphasized to candidates that the use of literary terms without a detailed analysis of their relevance to the text does not make a positive impression on examiners
- Editing for correct spelling and grammar must be emphasized, especially in a word-processed paper
- Practice in handwriting is essential. The merits of an illegible paper cannot be appreciated.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

November 2015 Language and Literature paper 1 was interesting, topical in nature and provided a wealth of features for candidates' commentaries. Candidates were well prepared to write an analysis of one of the given texts and the mark range covered the full spectrum.

There was a range of performance on both questions, representative of the range of candidates' abilities. It appears that, on the whole, they are more comfortable with written texts as opposed to pictorial ones.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Text One

In Text 1 some candidates did not understand that the initial audience was US readers, as "English setter" was understood to be the author rather than the dog. Many candidates wrote about the "voice of the setter" and "the dog and his setter". The 1952 period context was often omitted, suggesting that candidates were unsure about it or merely forgot to discuss it. There were some candidates, however who managed to address 1952 well and wove the context into their arguments, achieving both criteria A and C.

There was also some misconception of "insert" with it being interpreted as being an integral part of a Sunday newspaper rather than loosely folded within its pages as extra reading material.

Often candidates muddled or did not understand the narrative voice or the change from second to first person narrative. Many candidates thought that Corey was the dog, especially when named in the photo. Few candidates expressed that text 1 was not written by a dog but by a man expressing his response to his dog holding power over him. Frequently candidates wrote the "dog speaking...", or "the dog says..."

Text Two

Unfortunately, candidates tended to omit the wealth of structural and linguistic devices for text two and to dwell instead on possible messages. Sometimes candidates wrote several pages of unsubstantiated, possible interpretations of layers of meaning but without support or textual detail.

With regard to source information there was some confusion with *Mail & Guardian* – some assuming its context would be England and disregarding "Africa's best read".

Criteria A and B – Understanding of the text and the use and effects of stylistic features

A weakness common to analysis of both texts was the tendency to restate content, with some candidates still dependent on mere summary or explanation of the text with no further development. Candidates seemed to struggle with context and the majority only really dealt with context at a superficial level, failing to link context with analysis of purpose, text type, audience, speaker, etc.

As seen on past exams, candidates continue to have a difficult time negotiating humour. Many students do not show understanding of the differences between humour, sarcasm, irony, satire and parody. Often these terms are being used interchangeably.

There was still some confusion for candidates who continue not to understand the formatting of the examination and mistake the footnotes and italicized identification of publication place/date as part of the text.

Criterion C – Organization and Development

Generally the majority of candidates achieved adequate organisation but not always with a developed argument. Integrating of evidence was not always smooth and often the quotes were written as stand-alone sentences. Candidates continue to have difficulty in developing an argument that is an interpretation. They are very good at organizing a piecemeal analysis, with each paragraph being about one point or aspect. This shows a clear focus and organization, but often lacks development of the overall interpretation/analysis of the text.

Organisation of an argument provided a challenge for a significant number of candidates. They tended to provide fairly random, though often valid, observations and analyses, but with little sense of structure.

Criterion D - Language

Students continue to struggle with punctuation use in the exam setting and weaker students display incorrect word choice and vocabulary.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Text One

Text 1 immediately appealed to candidates, perhaps as a result of its subject matter being intrinsically within a candidate's experience and its illustration, which elicited interpretations. Responses were generally well attempted with most candidates showing at least a general understanding of the subject matter. Candidates were particularly good at commenting on known idioms and phrases and relating them to the passage and many seemed to genuinely appreciate the role reversal between dog and man.

Text Two

Text 2 was interesting and immediately accessible to candidates, certainly within candidate experience. Most candidates who attempted this text understood the subject matter and provided interpretations of method, message and purpose.

The candidates who responded well to Text 2 had knowledge of comic strip stylistic features and this enabled them to reach the higher range of marks.

Criteria A and B – Understanding of the text and the use and effects of stylistic features

The best responses to both questions ranged across the text, making links that gave the responses a strong argument. Students who could look critically at the texts were able to address the contexts and stylistic features on a much deeper level. Candidates were aware of the need to discuss stylistic and formal features that accompany different text types, and that there may be multiple purposes and audiences of a text. Knowledge and understanding of how tone is created and conveyed in both texts (criterion B) were strengths this session. The candidates did not have particular difficulty in the examination of stylistic elements apart from the usual lack of ability to take the analysis one step further and discuss the effects of stylistic features.

Criterion C – Organization and development

There was a sense in this session that responses are better organised and therefore easier to follow. Many candidates built responses upon the guiding questions, which structured their responses successfully and pointed them towards all the assessment criteria efficiently. Some candidates set out their arguments in the initial paragraph while others developed an argument as the analysis progressed. Some candidates based their analysis structurally using the focus of criterion B, discussing how authorial purpose is achieved through features and devices. Both approaches to structure were

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

successful. A few candidates shaped their responses by continued contextual comment and fared well on criteria A and C.

The scores for section C this session were mostly 3 and above whereas previously, 2 was a common mark. It seems that candidates are learning to plan their work and take time to think before writing.

Criterion D - Language

Generally good register and style appropriate to the task. The general language level seemed to be in the adequate to very good range.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text One

Most candidates answered on Text 1 showing that they are still more comfortable with written texts as opposed to those with a strong pictorial element. The question was generally well attempted with most candidates showing at least a general understanding of the subject matter.

Some candidates struggled with the point of view and the effect it had on the reader, often leading to more misunderstandings later in the analysis. Candidates had problems articulating and discussing the effects of this point of view, making such statements as: the audience is "human readers" or "the audience is not really for dogs because dogs are illiterate" or "the audience is for humans not dogs because it is in human language not dog language".

There was very little accurate discussion of context, which kept many scripts from upper mark bands. This was disappointing as there was a lot of context available for candidates to access: 1952 America, Sunday leisure read, gendered language, only males in pictures, post-WWII America, treatment of animals, dog-man relationship, values of companionship and loyalty, class and race. Along with this, most candidates stayed very general with audience.

Text Two

Unfortunately, as in Text 1, some candidates tended to paraphrase the content in each frame and not interpret meaning or analyse effects. Candidates tended to omit the wealth of structural and linguistic devices (criterion B) for Text 2 and to dwell instead on possible messages. Perhaps candidates are not learning about political cartoons and comics in their classes, as the analysis involves much more visual and less linguistic analysis, which is perhaps not the norm. The genre of this text type, with the tone, should have been closely linked and explored, as developed by the characters, gestures, drawings, dialogue, body positioning, facial expressions, etc. It was disappointing that this did not occur and many candidates had difficulty understanding or expressing that humour in this text type is used as social commentary.

As in Text 1, there was also very little accurate discussion of context beyond the perception that there was a problem with education. Some students identified the context as a United Kingdom or American issue, despite the provenance. Many key issues in education could have been explored for context by those who did not identify the setting, such as problems in education, issues of educational reform,

difficulty of maths for students and in pedagogy and the growing gender gap in education. Unfortunately, very few candidates recognized these areas.

Identification of the target audience varied greatly from the general public in the UK to African schoolteachers. Candidates did not have a clear understanding of who would be reading this text and therefore what the real purpose was.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should teach candidates to:

- Interpret a variety of text types to give students a real choice when presented with their examination paper
- Analyze content and not summarize the text
- Link context to audience, purpose and text type
- Organise a response that includes comment on structure and/or pictorial elements
- Develop voice and style in their written response
- Probe for deeper meanings, particularly in regard to elements like humour and social satire
- Consistently support comments on text and context
- Go beyond identification of literary techniques to understand their purpose and how techniques impact meaning
- Provide a more integrated approach which allows the candidates to see the connection between language and thought
- Develop their vocabulary, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and overall essay organization

Teachers should ensure that they:

- Expose candidates to different text types
- Provide activities to allow candidates to de-construct text
- Teach candidates to respond to multimodal texts by integrating analysis of the elements into a cohesive argument where the images, layout, graphics, etc., work together
- Prepare students always to look for the primary and the secondary audiences of texts, as well as for the multiple layers of purposes in texts
- Teach cultural contexts of countries, so students are prepared to comment on how the cultural context of a text affects meaning.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

In general, examiners found November 2015 comparable to previous years' exams. The quality of the papers appeared similar but examiners mentioned that they did not see as wide a range of questions being addressed (most students chose questions 1, 2 and 4.) This limitation of questions at times appeared to indicate that at least some candidates were not prepared to deal with potentially more complex or literary questions, choosing instead to answer questions which appeared simpler (one examiner felt that "There was still a tendency for a lot of narrative and plot description, and I do feel that the nature of both of the most popular questions called for some of this").

Another examiner commented, "I do feel that this paper was slightly more difficult than that for the last session. Given the contextual focus of Part 3, students tended towards questions that were context driven and not those focused on literary elements" (and as a result did not focus on Criterion C very well).

Some candidates appeared to struggle with the task (avoiding answering the actual question). While some candidates showed they had some knowledge of the texts, the responses were at times superficial without illustrating understanding. Similar to previous exams, there were a number of assumptions made about "Victorian Society" (including Dickens, Shaw, Ibsen, Wilde, and Zola) and the "American Dream" (in which Fitzgerald, Williams, and Miller dominated) with little evidence beyond broad unsubstantiated generalizations. These kinds of statements, for some, replaced any discussion of what was specifically happening in the text (for example, between Nora and Torvald in *A Doll's House*, or Blanche and Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*). This general approach made it difficult for the candidates to reflect the historical, cultural and social context with specific details or examples from their texts.

With this cohort, the language ability of the candidates was at times hindered by their lack of comfort with English as a written language – the errors in spelling, syntax, grammar, diction and register made it very difficult to read and follow the specific arguments in some of the papers.

Finally, some candidates still seem to struggle with the chosen genres, being unsure of the difference between a play and a novel.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Still, there were many students who were well prepared for this exam. Their good responses were well developed and illustrated with appropriate and often insightful references.

These candidates were very capable of dealing with "context" and "content". One examiner commented that "generally students seem to have grown in their understanding of the importance of context" and the subsequent effect on the reader.

The more successful candidates were very capable of discussing stylistic features and presenting their ideas on the narrative structure, poetic form, point of view, symbolism, metaphor, etc. They were able to make specific and perceptive references to the texts (and in the case of Drama they were also able to cite the author's own notes (Miller's references to the McCarthy Hearings in *The Crucible*).

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Candidates studying graphic novels were knowledgeable and comfortable discussing the specifics of this genre, taking into account the visual nature of the work, and the effects of specific elements (layout, panel arrangement, voice bubbles, colour [or lack of], picture and font size, etc. in an illustrated work [not calling them comic books is particularly helpful when referring to *Persepolis or Maus*]).

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

This was an interesting question which directed students to deal either with narrative voice or characterization. Almost all students focused on character development which worked well with drama, but many students ignored the narrative voice in novels such as *The Great Gatsby* or *Wide Sargasso Sea.* Still the choice of characterization worked well with almost any novel or play. Answers that were a series of character sketches, or papers that introduced characters only as the "movers of the plot" missed out on the opportunities that others took to show how characterization produced an understanding of a social concern (shallow consumerism in *The Great Gatsby* or meaningless lives in *The Outsider* or male/female stereotypes in *A Doll's House*).

This was a very popular choice for candidates. If happiness was not defined by students, the implied understanding of the term often became too broad (anything and everything was seen as a pursuit of happiness including Winston Smith wanting change which became synonymous with happiness, or in a similar way seeing Willy Loman's suicide as a form of happiness). The students who were able to provide a focused definition managed to illustrate their ideas in a much clearer fashion.

Not that many candidates looked at this question and those that did focused on the "stylistic features" and often ignored or glossed over the idea of "popularity over time". So while this question naturally led to good results on Criterion C, it proved problematic for some on Criterion B.

This question was chosen by a large number of candidates, and almost all works were seen as works of protest in a very broad and general manner with little to differentiate between the choices of texts (although the stronger responses looked at social and historical context in order to focus the discussion of protest). The general nature of the question meant that students needed to find a way to discuss stylistic features as well as to separate the "protest in the work" as opposed to the authors "potential purpose" in writing the work. One examiner commented that this question often "resulted in speculation about the authors of the texts" rather than providing a springboard for analysis of the particular text.

Only a few candidates seemed to choose this question and since the focus of the question is on families revealing cultural similarities and differences one has to wonder what part of the question was problematic for candidates (or had they already found a question by the time they read this one)?

This was the least popular question and the few who chose it had only a vague sense of what irony is.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As was implied above, the excellent attention that has clearly been applied to the teaching of the specific stylistic aspects of graphic novels should also be applied to drama and the prose works.

Candidates have constantly to be encouraged to provide evidence for their ideas. There is still a tendency to generalize and assume. In some cases candidates made stereotypical statements about

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

"a woman's place in *A Doll's House*" or "racial stereotypes in *Things Fall Apart*" or "cultural assumptions in *A Chronicle of a Death Foretold*".

Candidates need to define (explain) the terms used in their question early in their papers. Too many candidates lost focus because there was no clear direction established in the introduction and the conclusions were often only tacked on. A good introduction and conclusion can give structure to an essay which otherwise may drift.

A greater emphasis must be made to have candidates address literary conventions/ stylistic features in their responses (with specific focus on the effects these features have on the audience/reader), especially if the question does not specifically ask for it.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As one examiner put it, "for the average candidate, the chief difficulty seems to be in answering the question as it is asked." This observation was echoed by a number of the other examiners and was linked to the concern that many students had been "over taught" and were bringing to the exam very rigid learned responses to the texts. Examiner comments on this included the point that: "candidates need to be taught how to tailor their knowledge of the text to the demands of the question and not vice-versa." And: "Teachers need to teach these works more open-endedly, letting the candidates discover for themselves what is there and how all of that works together with their contextual findings." One wonders whether the dominance of questions 1 and 4 was partly to do with the fact that these two questions coincidentally most suited this rather limited way of preparing for an examination. This is not to question the quality of the teaching, as will be seen in comments below it is clear that a great deal of creative and conscientious work is going on in schools. A plea must be made however for schools to adopt in their preparations for this subject a more inquiry based model rather than one that approaches the texts by fitting them to a particular theme. This was particularly seen in responses to pairs of texts like *The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman* or *All Our Sons* which were overwhelmingly driven by a focus on the American Dream. This was poorly understood in many cases or its relevance strained to fit the texts in a way that made it hard for students to base their argument on the evidence of the texts. Students then were often failing to define the terms of the question they selected in a way which suited the texts they had studied and consequently the response lacked direction or development.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

There was a general feeling among examiners that student responses were somewhat improved on the previous session and that to some degree this appeared to be down to the maturity of the course with teachers teaching more effectively and confidently. This was noted particularly in the area of context and the way this is linked to the content of the texts. There were also comments by two or three of the examiners that responses were more extensive, of greater length and demonstrating good knowledge of the detail of narrative and character in the texts. Concerns about rather too tightly focused teaching, however, suggested that students were rather limited in the questions they could choose and this is looked at in more detail below.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Overwhelmingly students chose to answer questions 1 or 4. Examiners noted that candidates showed generally good knowledge of the texts and there were clear signs of engagement with their main ideas and literary features. Students did not always seem to select questions that suited their texts and examiners noted that in many cases students continue to find it difficult to produce a clear thesis statement, the defence of which allows them to develop an argument. Again many candidates seemed restricted by a learned theme or set of themes that they felt compelled to present even where it traduced the terms of the question.

Q1. This was generally well done, though weaker candidates tended to recount the intellectual or social concerns with little or no address of narrative voice or characterization. Generally narrative voice was the least commonly focused on and only the strongest candidates were able to show convincingly how it addressed intellectual concerns. Overall however, candidates were able to use their knowledge of the texts effectively here and, more than in most questions, craft a convincing argument.

Q2. This was fairly popular and often done well though examiners noted that "happiness" was not always defined and that weaker candidates understood the question very generally, tending at times to write more about the misery of the characters. Candidates needed to define happiness clearly in relation to the texts they were studying and when this was done some excellent outcomes were produced with literary features effectively incorporated into the response.

Q3. Few students selected this question and while a few very good responses were seen, with one examiner highlighting one on *Othello* and *A Doll's House* that showed great insight into how stylistic features impacted the audiences both at the time of production and now. Generally, however, this was not handled well with students failing to look at the temporal context and focusing on themes rather language and literary devices.

Q4. This was a very popular question and there were many good responses especially when appropriate texts were used; too many students, however, seemed attracted to a question about protest without fully thinking it through and therefore failing to define protest clearly, often simply shoehorning texts about oppression like *1984* into the question and then presenting a general discussion of oppression or totalitarianism rather than focusing on the idea of protest. Selection of texts was important here with *Persepolis* and *A Handmaid's Tale* often working well, while attempts to see *The Outsider* as a protest against the French judicial system seemed simply very wide of the mark.

Q5. This was also attempted by only a few candidates and when it was selected responses were often unsuccessful. Students did not really use the family, often giving general accounts of the treatment of women, especially the case in those looking at *A Doll's House* and failing to show how they brought out cultural similarities and differences. There were a few excellent responses that looked at texts where culture defined family relationships such as *Persepolis* or *Ghosts.*

Q6. Relatively few candidates attempted this question and results were generally good with many candidates convincingly showing the role and purpose of irony in texts like *The Reader*, *Therese Raquin* and *Merchant of Venice.*

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

While examiners were unanimous in acknowledging the hard work teachers are doing and the clear improvements that are emerging in the understanding and exploration of context and the knowledge of the texts there was also evidence that teachers are tending to provide students with received ideas of how the texts might be understood and analysed. One examiner noted this as a "compartmental approach to the teaching of the texts" rather than one that was inquiry led. Another commented that, "candidates continually try to put their responses into boxes, for example, 'appearance versus reality', which hinders their ability to answer a question effectively." The Grade Descriptors for level 7 in Group 1 ask that responses may be "convincing, detailed, and independent in analysis, synthesis and evaluation." Too few Grade 7s are achieved and teachers need to ensure students are given the opportunity to take risks and explore texts openly and without the sense that they are on some kind of archaeological exploration of the text, digging down to find a single incontrovertible meaning. Focus needs to move from teaching content to how one might construct and substantiate a reading.