

Past-paper walk-through

Writing a thesis statement ■ 2.6

eXercise

Questions in this set

- 2025 Set 1 Q3 ■ 6 marks
- 2025 Set 2 Q3 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 1 Q3 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 2 Q3 ■ 6 marks
- 2023 Set 1 Q3 ■ 6 marks
- 2023 Set 2 Q3 ■ 6 marks

Reading the mark scheme

- **B1** a mark that stands on its own – the point is either made or not.
- **M1** a *method* mark: the right approach, even if the number is wrong.
- **A1** an *answer* mark, and it usually needs its M mark first.
- **C1** a working mark on the way to the answer.
- **//** separates answers the examiner accepts equally.
- **ecf** = error carried forward: a later part is marked on your own earlier answer.
- **owtte** = “or words to that effect” – the wording need not match.

Question 3

2025 Set 1 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. In a 2022 interview with People magazine promoting her program to empower young girls through sport, professional tennis player and mental health advocate Naomi Osaka said: “For me, the biggest lesson I’ve learned is to try to be present in each moment. It’s easy to lose sight of how far you’ve come, but I’ve been prioritizing trying to live in the moment and enjoy the journey.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment is valid.

[6]

Solution 3

- Argument essay (6 points). Prompt: In a 2022 interview with People magazine promoting her program to empower young girls through sport, professional tennis player and mental health advocate Naomi Osaka said: “For me, the biggest lesson I’ve learned is to try to be present in each moment. It’s easy to lose sight of how far you’ve come, but I’ve been prioritizing trying to live in the moment and enjoy the journey.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment is valid.

Solution 3

- Scoring rubric — Row A (Thesis, 0-1 pt): 1 pt — responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that presents an interpretation or a position. | Row B (Evidence and Commentary, 0-4 pts): 1 pt — provides mostly general evidence; 2 pts — provides some specific relevant evidence with commentary that mostly repeats it; 3 pts — provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning, with commentary that explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning; 4 pts — as for 3 pts, and consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning, explaining how multiple pieces of evidence support the argument. | Row C (Sophistication, 0-1 pt): 1 pt — demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex understanding of the rhetorical or literary situation, e.g. by explaining significance within a broader context, discussing alternative interpretations, or employing a vivid and persuasive style.

Solution 3

- General notes: responses are first drafts; award points for what the response does, not for length or polish.

Question 3

2025 Set 2 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. Amanda Gorman is the first National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, an honor given to a young person for exceptional artistic expression, civic engagement, and social impact. In a 2021 interview in Time magazine, when asked how to maintain optimism¹ in challenging times, Gorman stated: “Optimism shouldn’t be seen as opposed to pessimism,² but in conversation with it. Your optimism will never be as powerful as it is in that exact moment when you want to give it up.” 1: a tendency to view things in a positive light 2: a tendency to view things in a negative light Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Gorman’s claim about the relationship between optimism and pessimism is valid. **[6]**

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Question 3

2024 Set 1 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. In a 2013 New York Times article on the practice of taking selfies, writer, editor, and podcast host J Wortham wrote: “Rather than dismissing the trend as a side effect of digital culture or a sad form of exhibitionism,¹ maybe we’re better off seeing selfies for what they are at their best—a kind of visual diary, a way to mark our short existence and hold it up to others as proof that we were here.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Wortham’s claim about the value of documenting one’s life with selfies is valid. 1 behavior that is meant to attract attention to oneself

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Question 3

2024 Set 2 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. In a 2019 interview, award-winning poet and memoirist Jimmy Santiago Baca asserted: “In America we value possessions. We would much rather talk about a new car than talk about a story that happened between grandfather and me. We’d much rather get on the computer and play video games and enact some cataclysmic¹ epic² than to talk about the epics in our own lives.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Baca’s claim about the value of possessions is valid. 1 destructive on a large scale 2 a narrative or story of grand proportions **[6]**

Solution 3

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Question 3

2023 Set 1 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. In a 2016 interview published in the Los Angeles Review of Books, Maxine Hong Kingston, an award-winning writer famous for her novels depicting the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the United States, stated: “I think that individual voices are not as strong as a community of voices. If we can make a community of voices, then we can speak more truth.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid.

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Question 3

2023 Set 2 ■ Q3 ■ 6 marks

Argument. In a 2018 interview about the importance of collaboration, then United States Representative Carlos Curbelo stated: “If you’re trying to convince someone that they need to get involved in an issue or perhaps change their thinking on an issue, trying to scare them is not always effective and can actually sow¹ resentment.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Curbelo’s claim about persuading others is valid. 1 spread

[6]

Solution 3

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