

Past-paper walk-through

Developing commentary ■ 4.12

eXercise

Questions in this set

- 2025 Set 1 Q2 ■ 6 marks
- 2025 Set 2 Q2 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 1 Q2 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 2 Q2 ■ 6 marks
- 2023 Set 1 Q2 ■ 6 marks
- 2023 Set 2 Q2 ■ 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 2

2025 Set 1 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Rachel Cusk's novel *The Bradshaw Variations*, published in 2008. This passage describes Thomas Bradshaw's morning interactions with members of his household. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Cusk uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of Thomas. **[6]**

Solution 2

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- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Rachel Cusk's novel *The Bradshaw Variations*, published in 2008. This passage describes Thomas Bradshaw's morning interactions with members of his household. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Cusk uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of Thomas.

Solution 2

- 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 2

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

Question 2

2025 Set 2 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Jeannette Haien's novel *The All of It*, published in 1986. In this passage, Father Declan, an Irish priest, is driving home after a successful fishing trip. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Haien uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of Father Declan.

[6]

Solution 2

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- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Jeannette Haien's novel *The All of It*, published in 1986. In this passage, Father Declan, an Irish priest, is driving home after a successful fishing trip. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Haien uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of Father Declan.

Solution 2

- 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 2

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

Question 2

2024 Set 1 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Mavis Gallant's short story "One Morning in June," published in 1952. In this passage, Mike Cahill is in France for one year to explore his talent for art. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Gallant uses literary elements and techniques to convey Mike's complex experience of studying painting.

[6]

Solution 2

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- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Mavis Gallant's short story "One Morning in June," published in 1952. In this passage, Mike Cahill is in France for one year to explore his talent for art. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Gallant uses literary elements and techniques to convey Mike's complex experience of studying painting.

Solution 2

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Solution 2

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

Question 2

2024 Set 2 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart's novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth's complex perspective as he completes his mural.

[6]

Solution 2

- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart's novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth's complex perspective as he completes his mural.

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Solution 2

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

Question 2

2023 Set 1 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Nisi Shawl's novel *Everfair*, published in 2016. In this passage, the narrator describes the experience of a young woman, Lisette, as she rides her bicycle through the French countryside in July 1889. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Shawl uses literary elements and techniques to portray Lisette's complex response to her experience of riding her bicycle.

[6]

Solution 2

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- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Nisi Shawl's novel *Everfair*, published in 2016. In this passage, the narrator describes the experience of a young woman, Lisette, as she rides her bicycle through the French countryside in July 1889. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Shawl uses literary elements and techniques to portray Lisette's complex response to her experience of riding her bicycle.

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Solution 2

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

Question 2

2023 Set 2 ■ Q2 ■ 6 marks

Prose Fiction Analysis. The following excerpt is from Brenda Peynado's short story "The Rock Eaters," published in 2021. In this passage, the narrator is one of a group of people who left their home country after developing the ability to fly, an ability that is accepted as realistically possible within the story. Years later, the group returns to that country with their children. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Peynado uses literary elements and techniques to convey the narrator's complex experience of this return home.

[6]

Solution 2

- Prose fiction analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: The following excerpt is from Brenda Peynado's short story "The Rock Eaters," published in 2021. In this passage, the narrator is one of a group of people who left their home country after developing the ability to fly, an ability that is accepted as realistically possible within the story. Years later, the group returns to that country with their children. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Peynado uses literary elements and techniques to convey the narrator's complex experience of this return home.

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