



INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
MAY 2025

FURTHER STUDIES ENGLISH

MARKING GUIDELINES

Time: 3 hours

300 marks

These marking guidelines are prepared for use by examiners and sub-examiners, all of whom are required to attend a standardisation meeting to ensure that the guidelines are consistently interpreted and applied in the marking of candidates' scripts.

The IEB will not enter into any discussions or correspondence about any marking guidelines. It is acknowledged that there may be different views about some matters of emphasis or detail in the guidelines. It is also recognised that, without the benefit of attendance at a standardisation meeting, there may be different interpretations of the application of the marking guidelines.

Please take note: Candidates who do not fulfil the requirements of each question concerning the prescribed number of texts **OR** have failed to use the prescribed texts will be penalised.

Question 1: For each missing or disqualified text a 15% penalty is incurred. Question 2: For each missing or disqualified poem a 5% penalty is incurred. Question 3: For each missing or disqualified text a 15% penalty is incurred.

Level	Question 1 – Descriptor
7+	90–100
	A highly eloquent response that indicates academic rigour and sophistication.
	• The response can be characterised as profoundly thoughtful and extraordinary. • It displays sustained, superior thinking and sophisticated reasoning. • The candidate's understanding of the theme and insight into the prescribed texts are superb. • The candidate's capacity to integrate a range of texts in a coherent way is seamless and exceptionally well-articulated. • The argument is highly intelligent and makes a substantial impact on the marker. • The response displays exceptional breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that the candidate has studied, and the candidate has used the issues raised in the texts to articulate his/her response to the question and the theme most convincingly. • The candidate's personal voice is scintillating and his/her perspective is candid. • The style of writing is exceptionally engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and very intelligently. • The structure of the essay is superior.
7–	80–89
	An impressive, sophisticated and distinguished essay.
	• The response is gripping, creatively thoughtful and exceeds expectations. • It displays lucid thinking and reasoning. • The candidate's understanding of the theme and insight into the prescribed texts are distinctive. • The candidate has been most successful in integrating a range of texts in a coherent and sustained manner. • The argument is memorable and intelligent, and it makes an impact on the marker. • The response displays breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that the candidate has studied and uses the issues raised in the texts to discuss his/her response to the question and the theme very successfully. • The candidate's personal voice is powerful. • The style of writing is engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and intelligently. • The structure of the essay is distinctive.

6	70–79
	A perceptive essay that is commendable and well structured.
	• The response is effective, thoughtful, and generally very good. • It is underpinned by clear thinking and reasoning, although some lapses may occur. • The candidate's understanding of the theme and insight into prescribed texts are impressive. • The candidate is able to integrate a range of texts in his/her response, and the references are clear and relevant. • The argument is logical and thought-provoking. • The candidate displays sufficient breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that he/she has studied and has used the issues raised in the texts to reflect his/her understanding of the question and the theme clearly and articulately. • The candidate's personal voice is clearly evident. • The style of writing is effective; the candidate's response reads fluently. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly and appropriately. • The structure of the essay is very good.
5	60–69
	A proficient and skilful essay that is competent and focused.
	• The response is thoughtful and cogent. • There is solid thinking and reasoning, although not sustained throughout. • The candidate's understanding of the theme and insight into the prescribed texts are good. • The candidate is able to integrate texts in his/her response, and the references are mostly relevant. • The argument is generally clear and appropriate. • While there is evidence of some breadth and depth of knowledge, and understanding of both the texts and the theme, these are not always consistent and there are sufficient lapses to detract from the overall quality. • The candidate's personal voice is in evidence. • The style of writing is generally good; it reads with an acceptable fluency, although there are stylistically weaker areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are not always used effectively. • The structure of the essay is good although there may be lapses in places.

4	50–59
	An acceptable, satisfactory essay that has broadly responded to the question.
	• The candidate has made a concerted effort to answer the question and displays some knowledge, albeit superficial, of the texts. • The thinking and reasoning displayed in the response are only mediocre, and not always sustained or clear. • The response is merely adequate. Insight into prescribed texts often lacks depth and sufficient understanding. There is insufficient reference to the theme. • Integration of prescribed texts is awkward and, at times, jarring. References are not always accurate. • The argument is not always logical, successful, or focused. • The breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of both the texts and the theme lack sufficiency. It is, at times, inaccurate. • The candidate's personal voice is not always discernible. • The style of writing is adequate; however, there are stylistically weak areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used either ineffectively or infrequently. • The structure of the essay is adequate.
3	40–49
	An essay that attempts to engage with the question although there are lapses in places.
	• The candidate has attempted to answer the question and has tried to incorporate different texts. • The thinking and reasoning are flawed and lack logic. • Insight into the prescribed texts is weak and the candidate's understanding is vague and very superficial. The candidate has made no effort to refer to the theme. • The argument is not sustained and often deviates from the topic. • The candidate's response does not illustrate either breadth OR depth of knowledge. There are a number of inaccuracies in relation to textual reference that negatively impact the candidate's response. • The candidate's response displays superficial evidence of a personal voice. • The style of writing is flawed and is characterised by obvious weakness in basic language structures. • The candidate does not know the texts well enough to refer to them directly. • The structure of the essay is poor.

1–2	0–39
	An extremely weak essay that is muddled/vague OR does not engage with the text or the question.
	• The candidate does not make a concerted attempt to write about the ideas contained in the literary texts that he/she has studied. • The quality of thinking and reasoning is wholly inadequate. • The candidate's response displays minimal understanding of the prescribed texts and makes no reference to the theme. • The argument is very fragmented and there is minimal focus on the topic. • The response is so limited that there is no evidence of breadth or depth but only the most basic textual reference. • There is no evidence of a personal voice in the candidate's response. • The style of writing is completely inadequate. • The candidate does not have sufficient knowledge of texts to refer to them in any direct way. • The structure of the essay is flawed, and, generally, non-existent.

Level	Question 2 – Descriptor
7+	90–100
	A highly eloquent response that indicates academic rigour and sophistication.
	• The response can be characterised as profoundly thoughtful and extraordinary. • It displays sustained, superior thinking and sophisticated reasoning. • The candidate's understanding of the chosen schools and insight into the prescribed poems are superb. • The candidate's capacity to integrate the unseen poem and the prescribed poetry in a coherent way is seamless and exceptionally well articulated. • The argument is highly intelligent and makes a substantial impact on the marker. • The response displays exceptional breadth and depth of interpretation of the poetry that the candidate has studied, and the candidate has used the issues raised in the poems to articulate his/her response to the question most convincingly. • The candidate's personal voice is scintillating and his/her perspective is candid. • The style of writing is exceptionally engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and very intelligently. • The structure of the essay is superior.
7–	80–89
	An impressive, sophisticated and distinguished essay.
	• The response is gripping, creatively thoughtful and exceeds expectations. • It displays lucid thinking and reasoning. • The candidate's understanding of the chosen schools and insight into the prescribed poetry are distinctive. • The candidate has been most successful in integrating the unseen poem and the prescribed poetry in a coherent and sustained manner. • The argument is memorable and intelligent, and it makes an impact on the marker. • The response displays breadth and depth of interpretation of the poetry that the candidate has studied and uses the issues raised in the poetry to discuss his/her response to the question and the theme very successfully. • The candidate's personal voice is powerful. • The style of writing is engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and intelligently. • The structure of the essay is distinctive.

6	70–79
	A perceptive essay that is commendable and well structured.
	• The response is effective, thoughtful, and generally very good. • It is underpinned by clear thinking and reasoning, although some lapses may occur. • The candidate's understanding of the chosen schools and insight into the prescribed poetry are impressive. • The candidate is able to integrate the unseen poem and the prescribed poetry in the response, and the references are clear and relevant. • The argument is logical and thought-provoking. • The candidate displays sufficient breadth and depth of interpretation of the poetry that he/she has studied and has used the issues raised in the poetry to reflect his/her understanding of the question and the theme clearly and articulately. • The candidate's personal voice is clearly evident. • The style of writing is effective; the candidate's response reads fluently. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly and appropriately. • The structure of the essay is very good.
5	60–69
	A proficient and skilful essay that is competent and focused.
	• The response is thoughtful and cogent. • There is solid thinking and reasoning, although this is not always sustained. • The candidate's understanding of the chosen schools and insight into the prescribed poetry are good. • The candidate is able to integrate the unseen poem and the prescribed poetry in his/her response, and the references are mostly relevant. • The argument is generally clear and appropriate. • While there is evidence of some breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the poetry, this is not always consistent and there are sufficient lapses to detract from the overall quality. • The candidate's personal voice is in evidence. • The style of writing is generally good; it reads with an acceptable fluency, although there are stylistically weaker areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are not always used effectively. • The structure of the essay is good although there may be lapses in places.

4	50–59
	An acceptable, satisfactory essay that has broadly responded to the question.
	• The candidate has made a concerted effort to answer the question and displays some knowledge, albeit superficial, of the prescribed poetry. • The thinking and reasoning displayed in the response are only mediocre, and not always sustained or clear. • The response is merely adequate. Insight into the chosen schools and prescribed poems often lacks depth and sufficient understanding. • Integration of the unseen poem and the prescribed poetry is awkward and, at times, jarring. References are not always accurate. • The argument is not always logical, successful, or focused. • The breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the poetry lack sufficiency. It is, at times, inaccurate. • The candidate's personal voice is not always discernible. • The style of writing is adequate; however, there are stylistically weak areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used either ineffectively or infrequently. • The structure of the essay is adequate.
3	40–49
	An essay that attempts to engage with the question although there are lapses in places.
	• The candidate has attempted to answer the question and has tried to incorporate different texts. • The thinking and reasoning are flawed and lack logic. • Insight into the chosen schools and prescribed poetry is weak and the candidate's understanding is vague and very superficial. • The argument is not sustained and often deviates from the topic. • The candidate's response does not illustrate either breadth OR depth of knowledge. There are a number of inaccuracies in relation to textual reference that negatively impact the candidate's response. • The candidate's response displays superficial evidence of a personal voice. • The style of writing is flawed and is characterised by obvious weakness in basic language structures. • The candidate does not know the texts well enough to refer to them directly. • The structure of the essay is poor.

1–2	0–39
	An extremely weak essay that is muddled/vague OR does not engage with the text or the question.
	• The candidate does not make a concerted attempt to write about the ideas contained in the prescribed poetry that he/she has studied. • The quality of thinking and reasoning is wholly inadequate. • The candidate's response displays minimal understanding of the chosen schools and the prescribed poetry. • The argument is very fragmented and there is minimal focus on the topic. • The response is so limited that there is no evidence of breadth or depth but only the most basic textual reference. • There is no evidence of a personal voice in the candidate's response. • The style of writing is completely inadequate. • The candidate does not have sufficient knowledge of the texts to refer to them in any direct way. • The structure of the essay is flawed, and, generally, non-existent.

Level	Question 3 – Descriptor
7+	90–100
	A highly eloquent response that indicates academic rigour and sophistication.
	• The response can be characterised as profoundly thoughtful and extraordinary. • It displays sustained, superior thinking and sophisticated reasoning. • The candidate's insight into his/her chosen texts is superb. • The candidate's capacity to integrate a range of appropriate* texts in a coherent way is seamless and exceptionally well-articulated. • The argument is highly intelligent and makes a substantial impact on the marker. • The response displays exceptional breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that the candidate has studied, and the candidate has used the issues raised in the texts to articulate his/her response to the question most convincingly. • The candidate's personal voice is scintillating and his/her perspective is candid. • The style of writing is exceptionally engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and very intelligently. • The structure of the essay is superior.
7–	80–89
	An impressive, sophisticated and distinguished essay.
	• The response is gripping, creatively thoughtful and exceeds expectations. • It displays lucid thinking and reasoning. • The candidate's insight into his/her chosen texts is distinctive. • The candidate has been most successful in integrating a range of appropriate* texts in a coherent and sustained manner. • The argument is memorable and intelligent and makes an impact on the marker. • The response displays breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that the candidate has studied and uses the issues raised in the texts to discuss his/her response to the question very successfully. • The candidate's personal voice is powerful. • The style of writing is engaging. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly, appropriately and intelligently. • The structure of the essay is distinctive.

6	70–79
	A perceptive essay that is commendable and well structured.
	• The response is effective, thoughtful, and generally very good. • It is underpinned by clear thinking and reasoning, although some lapses may occur. • The candidate's insight into his/her chosen texts is impressive. • The candidate is able to integrate a range of appropriate* texts in the response and the references are clear and relevant. • The argument is logical and thought-provoking. • The candidate displays sufficient breadth and depth of interpretation of the texts that he/she has studied and has used the issues raised in the texts to reflect his/her understanding of the question clearly and articulately. • The candidate's personal voice is clearly evident. • The style of writing is effective; the candidate's response reads fluently. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used regularly and appropriately. • The structure of the essay is very good.
5	60–69
	A proficient and skilful essay that is competent and focused.
	• The response is thoughtful and cogent. • There is solid thinking and reasoning, although this is not always sustained. • The candidate's insight into his/her chosen texts is good. • The candidate is able to use an integration of appropriate* texts in his/her response and the references are mostly relevant. • The argument is generally clear and appropriate. • While there is evidence of some breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the texts, this is not always consistent and there are sufficient lapses to detract from the overall quality. • The candidate's personal voice is in evidence. • The style of writing is generally good; it reads with an acceptable fluency, although there are stylistically weaker areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are not always used effectively. • The structure of the essay is good although there may be lapses in places.

4	50–59
	An acceptable, satisfactory essay that has broadly responded to the question.
	• The candidate has made a concerted effort to answer the question and displays some knowledge, albeit superficial, of the texts. • The thinking and reasoning displayed in the response are only mediocre and not always sustained or clear. • The response is merely adequate. Insight into the candidate's chosen texts often lacks depth and sufficient understanding. • Integration of appropriate* texts is awkward and, at times, jarring. References are not always accurate. • The argument is not always logical, successful, or focused. • The breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the chosen texts lack sufficiency. It is, at times, inaccurate. • The candidate's personal voice is not always discernible. • The style of writing is adequate; however, there are stylistically weak areas. • Quotations and/or direct, exact, specific references to texts are used either ineffectively or infrequently. • The structure of the essay is adequate.
3	40–49
	An essay that attempts to engage with the question although there are lapses in places.
	• The candidate has attempted to answer the question and has tried to incorporate different texts, although these are not always appropriate*. • The thinking and reasoning are flawed and lack logic. • Insight into the candidate's chosen texts is weak and the candidate's understanding is vague and very superficial. • The argument is not sustained and often deviates from the topic. • The candidate's response does not illustrate either breadth OR depth of knowledge. There are a number of inaccuracies in relation to textual reference that negatively impact the candidate's response. • The candidate's response displays superficial evidence of a personal voice. • The style of writing is flawed and is characterised by obvious weakness in basic language structures. • The candidate does not know the texts well enough to refer to them directly. • The structure of the essay is poor.

1–2	0–39
	An extremely weak essay that is muddled/vague OR does not engage with the text or the question.
	• The candidate does not make a concerted attempt to write about the ideas contained in the chosen texts that he/she has studied. • The quality of thinking and reasoning is wholly inadequate. • The candidate's response displays minimal understanding of his/her selected texts and makes no reference to the theme. • The argument is very fragmented and there is minimal focus on the topic. • The response is so limited that there is no evidence of breadth or depth but only the most basic textual reference. • There is no evidence of a personal voice in the candidate's response. • The style of writing is completely inadequate. • The candidate does not have sufficient knowledge of the texts to refer to them in any direct way. • The structure of the essay is flawed, and, generally, non-existent.

Please take note:

*Appropriate texts are those that are considered to be sufficiently challenging and can be considered authentic, independent choices.