

Paper 2 Prelims 2015: Section A

Question 1(a)

No. of attempts: 9

Mark Range: 4 – 20 marks

General Comments

- The quality of essays for this question was a mixed bag. The best essays (14-20 marks) were a real joy to read – spot-on in their analysis of thematic concerns, grasped the complexities and ambiguities of the poem, very technical and accurate close reading. ☺
- However the essays which scored between 4-7 marks were almost total misreadings of the poem – I’m quite concerned about the degree of misreading and the very general analysis for those of you who fell in this band.
- I’m not going to write too much for this review – I will leave you to read Yuxin’s essay (20/25) – an all-round excellent piece of work – and Benjamin’s essay (15/25). Both are sophisticated, well-written readings with confident, detailed analysis, and taken together, provide a very thorough analysis of the poem.
- One main comment I want to make was the misreading and subsequent uncertainty about the poet’s agenda. There was some significant misreading of the first stanza – when he says “who will say the world is dying?”, he does not *subscribe* to this view. He’s *challenging* the view that the world is dying – the question is confrontational. Likewise, when he says, “fools! Who fancy Christ mistaken ... earth a failure...”, he’s *not saying that earth is a failure*. He’s *saying that those who think so are fools*. Therefore the poem is *not anti-religion* and it does not reflect the breakdown of religion. There is in fact a sense of deep hope and optimism in the poem – but some of you read it pessimistic. That’s a complete (and careless) misreading.
- The poem is also not a critique of industrialization. There is ONE reference to a slave in the last stanza – this is not enough on which to base an interpretation of the entire poem as being a critique of industrialization.
- The poem is much more general and abstract (‘spirit of the age’ sort of idea) – it celebrates and advocates a sense of hope amidst the uncertainty and pessimism in society.

Suggested points

Images convey a sense of optimism, creating a sense of hope in a period of uncertainty.

- Both Benjamin and Yuxin have analysed imagery very well, I’ll leave you to read their essays.
- I just want to point out that the word “race” in “the race of Hero-spirits” does not refer to a sprint. It’s used in the same way as “the human race”.

The poem begins with an almost confrontational tone, which shifts to a tone of deep hopefulness and enduring confidence in man’s goodness.

- The rhetorical questions in lines 1-2 create a confrontational tone as the persona challenges the pessimistic attitudes of those who harbor fatalistic attitudes about society/the age.
- This is heightened by the use of the word “Fools!” to chastise those who have lost faith in a Christ-like vision of the world, in the sense of the eternal goodness and worth of man, who degrade him as nothing more than an object for mercenary and materialistic gain (“who fancy Christ mistaken; Man a tool to buy and sell”), and ultimately those who insist on a hopeless view of life, those who refuse to see the goodness in the world and in life, and who therefore believe that earth is an “anteroom of Hell”.
- The tone grows increasingly confident and optimistic from the second stanza onwards – “still the race of hero-spirits” – the word “still” particularly conveys a sense of perseverance and undying optimism, despite the prevailing pessimism. It shows confidence in the inherent glory, heroism and goodness of human nature. The word “still” is repeated again in line 13 to similar effect.
- Stanza 3 is also very optimistic in its tone. The first 6 lines appear somewhat mixed in its connotations – there are both negative images (“a slave bewails his fetters”, “orphan pleads in vain”), there are also images which speak of promise (“while an infant lisps his letters,/heir of all the age’s gain”). The repetition of the word “while” suggests that this is all part of the human condition – while there are people who suffer, there are also those who are the promise of the future; while there is pain (“a moan”), there is also love (“ripe for kissing”). Despite all this, the poet’s final assertion that “the world is young” conveys a deep and enduring sense of hope and faith in the world/society and the promising future ahead.
- Please read Yuxin’s excellent analysis of the shift in tone created by the use of the word “dying” to describe the world at the start of the poem and the word “young” to describe it at the end.

Form, rhyme and rhythm

- Your topic sentences shouldn’t just identify the form, you need to link to meaning.
- The regular form (8-line stanzas) conveys the steady and unwavering hope and faith that the persona has about the promise of the age.
- Impact is created by the shorter final line in each stanza. What is the impact? Look at each line in context and link it to the meaning of that stanza. Possible readings:
 - In the first stanza, the shorter line emphasizes the image of earth as the “Anteroom of Hell”, creating an almost melodramatic effect which serves to ridicule those who possess such exaggeratedly cynical views.
 - In the 3rd stanza, the impact created by the shorter line lends weight and assurance to the persona’s assertion “that the world is young”. It also creates a sense of reassuring finality and closes the poem on a note of hope.

- Yuxin has an interesting reading of how the uncertainty of the age is overwhelmed by its steadiness – and how this is reflected through the form and the shorter final lines of each stanza.
- The sense of steadiness that's created by the regular form is heightened by the regular alternating rhyme scheme. This further emphasizes the sense of enduring hope (which, as Benjamin points out, is a marked feature of this poem as it's also present in images of continuing hope, such as "Pass the lamp from hand to hand". I like the way he discussed form and then made a link back to the meaning of the poem by going back to a key image to support his point).

Question 1(b)

No. of attempts: 30

Mark Range: 6 – 15 marks

General comments

- Generally, I was quite pleased with the level of analysis that most of you reached. Your points were precise and clear, you dealt quite confidently with narrative techniques, and included a good amount of close-reading, where you selected particular words/lines and really broke them down – some of you talked about the syntax in lines 25-28 and how this created a tone of indignation and disbelief; or the choice of diction in Toodle's lines which evoked a sense of humility – that's the way guys! ☺
- Most of you made some attempt to deal with Dickens' agenda (critique, challenge, etc) which was nice. ☺
- There was a sustained attempt to address narrative techniques across the board, with the most common techniques being setting, characterization (Dombey) and the relationship/interaction between Dombey and Toodle.
- However, I was hoping to see more students engage with narrative perspective, dialogue and symbolism (the train). These are techniques that, for this passage at least, are a bit higher-level and would have contributed to more sophisticated analysis.
- A few of you only analysed the first half of the passage (up to about line 30ish) which was puzzling. Your analysis of lines 1-30 was unnecessarily detailed. You need to learn how to select the most important evidence across the entire passage – certain sections merit closer reading than others. A line-by-line approach is not going to work and, at the end of the day, you still need to deal with the whole passage.
- You analysed the image of the train as a metaphor for death, which is correct, but a number of you didn't make the further link to how the train also symbolizes progress – in this case, the idea of progress is subverted by its close association with death and destruction. It's a layered symbol and some of you didn't quite get it. If you missed out on this, I capped your marks at a 14 (assuming you had excellent analysis elsewhere) because this was really a huge part of the passage and I needed to see you at least *try* to deal with it if I was going to score you in the 15-18 band.
- Those of you who scored between 12-15 – I saw actual coherence within your paragraphs and sustained development of points – you tried to link each point of analysis to the next, using the appropriate connectors – this was very encouraging! Keep it up!

Suggested points

I'm going to break this down by technique but there are some overlaps between techniques here – don't worry about it. It really doesn't matter how you choose to tackle a particular aspect of this passage because there are obviously different ways

to approach similar points – ie. you can come at it from the angle of characterization or character relationships, or narrative perspective or setting. In the end, as long as you're analyzing thoroughly and with attention paid to the thematic concerns, you'll be fine.

Characterisation

- Through the characterization of Dombey as an arrogant, middle-class businessman, Dickens criticizes the superior attitude of the middle class towards the lower class, as represented by Toodle.
- Most of you picked up, correctly, on the line: "Mr Dombey habitually looked over the vulgar herd and not at them" – you analysed the word "habitually", which suggests the ingrained prejudice and arrogance of Dombey/the middle class and looked at the choice of diction in the phrase "vulgar herd". Some of you also pointed out that Dombey's perspective of the lower class is completely undercut by the characterization of Toodle, who is anything but vulgar – he's humble, polite, empathetic, kind.
- A number of you then linked this point to the fact that Dombey repeatedly looks at (or overlooks) Toodle, suggesting that he considers Toodle so insignificant as to be beneath his notice or not worthy of conversation. (lines 2, 4, 12) – this was a good way of developing your point.
- Some of you looked at the characterization of Toodle, particularly lines 7-9 (his physical description) in very great deal, picking apart each image or phrase in those lines to show how dirty he is – but honestly, you didn't need to do this, it became quite simplistic and repetitive (how many times can you say that he's dirty?). There actually isn't very much in those lines – yes he's filthy, and that's Dombey's perspective of him, but the narrative voice here points out that he's "professionally clothed". There's some irony in the word "professionally", but at the same time, the narrator suggests that his filth is not a result of poor hygiene or ignorance, but just due to his job.
- You should look at the line "as if a man like that would make his very eyesight dirty". The obvious point is that this line shows Dombey's absolute arrogance and contempt for Toodle. But the more sophisticated point here is that, through the use of hyperbole, Dickens conveys the *absurdity* of Dombey's judgement of Toodle – this line isn't just a portrayal of Dombey's arrogance, but a *critique* of it.
- The above points of characterization can be linked to/combined with an analysis of either narrative perspective or character relationships.

Character relationship/Dialogue

- The interaction/relationship between Dombey and Toodle reveals the arrogance of the middle class, or the mistaken arrogance of the middle class.
- There's a clear contrast between Dombey's arrogance and Toodle's humility. Most of you got this so I won't say too much about it – you pointed out how T's language suggests both his lower-class status but also his humble character ("No thankee Sir") which contrasts with Dombey's tone (again, look at the narrative perspective and the narrator's voice when he points out that

Dombey spoke “(but that he always did) haughtily” (line 17) – link this to Dickens’ critique.

- Many of you also pointed out Dombey’s presumptuous and frankly insulting assumption that Toodle wants money – you linked this to 1) Dombey’s clearly mercenary outlook on life, 2) the irony in Dombey calling Toodle a “presumptuous raker” when he himself is disgustingly presumptuous. This was sharp analysis 😊 I was also very happy that some of you picked up on the fact that Toodle’s response to this was not only humble but dignified, thereby undercutting Dombey’s earlier crass judgement of the lower class as a “vulgar herd”. 😊 😊 THIS IS THE QUALITY OF ANALYSIS, WITH ALL THE LINKS AND DEVELOPMENT OF POINTS, THAT I WANTED TO SEE GUYS! YAY!
- To push your analysis further, you could have looked at *why* Dombey calls Toodle “presumptuous” when all Toodle is doing is trying to sympathize and in fact, empathize, with Dombey on the loss of his son. I’m going to overlap with Dombey’s narrative perspective here, but just to finish the point: The word “presumptuous” means “overstepping one’s bounds; being inappropriate because you’re being too over-familiar” – Dombey feels that Toodle is overstepping his bounds by claiming to share the same feelings of grief that Dombey is currently feeling. “To think that he dared to enter ... into the trial and disappointment of a proud gentleman’s secret heart!” – the line suggests that Dombey feels Toodle is incapable of sharing in his feelings, thereby suggesting that the lower classes are somehow too primitive/too undeserving to experience the same depth of feeling as everyone else. The word “dared” shows that Dombey thinks Toodle has been overly bold and brash, the idea of being able to “enter ... into the trial and disappointment” shows a sense of exclusivity, that the lower classes are excluded from such intense feelings of grief.
- The final thing you want to look at is, again, agenda – Dombey’s high-handedness, even in a time of intense grief, versus Toodle’s simple, open-hearted empathy – Dickens’ critique of the attitudes towards the lower class, and middle-class arrogance, is made clear through this contrast.

Narrative perspective

- Shifts from the 3rd person (lines 1-25) to free indirect discourse from Dombey’s perspective (26 onwards).
- Third person narrative perspective, with the voice of the omniscient narrator coming through quite clearly, particularly in his critique of Dombey (lines 4, 12, 17).
- A number of you looked at the repetition of “to think!” (lines 25-30), together with the exclamation marks, which creates an indignant tone – good close-reading. The FID also reveals Dombey’s mercenary attitude – his grief is undercut by a sense of greed and exclusivity – “divided with him his riches ... shut out all the world as with a double door of gold”. His grief is as much about the loss of his son as it is about the loss of financial gain and prestige (a few of you pointed out that these pompous declarations contrast unfavourably with Toodle’s simple and sincere expression of his own grief).

- The narrative perspective shows that his perspective of the train journey is clearly coloured by his feelings of grief, loss and frustration. “Tortured by these thoughts he carried monotony within him ... a wilderness of blighted plans and gnawing jealousies” (lines 34-35)
- Lines 52 onwards – the images of darkness and blackness – can also be read as an expression of his grief and state of mind. “All things looked black and cold and deadly upon him ... He found a likeness to his misfortune everywhere.” (lines 61-62)
- A number of you made the appropriate link between how the external setting mirrors his internal feelings.

Setting and symbol of the train

- I’m putting these 2 techniques together but you can split them up, it’s fine.
- Two things that you need to say about setting:
 - 1) It reflects Dombey’s internal state of mind/emotions. I’ve talked about this under narrative perspective. You can also talk about it as setting. It doesn’t really matter – it’s Dombey’s perspective of the setting.
 - 2) It also reflects the effect of industrialization on the environment – lines 52-60 especially. The images of corruption, destruction and brokenness (“jagged walls and falling houses”) etc, the “smoke ... distorted chimneys ... deformity of brick and mortar penning up deformity of mind and body”) – talk about the sense of entrapment created, the “deformity” of the environment being symbolic of the destructive effect that industrialisation has had both on the surroundings and on the people.
- The train is generally a symbol of progress in an increasingly industrialized society in Victorian literature. However in this text, the train is associated with Death and is associated with words like “relentless”, “monster”, “remorseless”. It’s portrayed as frightening and intimidating (the onomatopoeia in “shriek, roar, rattle”) and threatening in its unquestioning pursuit of progress (“The power that forced itself upon its iron way – defiant of all paths and roads”) – the “power” here refers to both death and industrialization, therefore, death is linked to industrialization. In short, by associating the train with destruction and death, the writer subverts its usual symbolism and association with progress.
- What’s the link between this destructive portrayal of industrialization and Dombey? Remember that Dombey is a middle-class businessman who is obsessed with money and wealth – he’s someone who has gained from industrialization and trade (although arguably it has corrupted him internally, as seen in his attitude towards the lower class and when he conflates his grief for his son with his bitter disappointment at his dashed business hopes).

The presentation of death as the universal equalizer

- Not a technique as such, but since you’re still talking about presentation or portrayal, it’s still close enough.

- It's a good follow up to the previous point about Dombey's sense of exclusivity about grief. Lines 38-40 aptly illustrate this.
- Again, quite a number of you got this point, and linked it to Dickens' suggestion that the boundaries between classes are in fact artificial in the face of the universality of death.
- By the way, Death is NOT PERSONIFIED here. It's a "triumphant/remorseless monster". Monster, not human.
- To develop your analysis of this point, look at how Death is portrayed as frightening, terrifying, relentless (lines 40-50 especially).

Paper 2 Prelims 2015: Section B (Comparison)

Q2a) "The Victorian Age was a period of repression." Compare the work of two writers that you have studied in light of your understanding of this comment.

No. of attempts: 13

Mark range: 8 – 15 marks

General comments:

In summary – you knew how to answer the question and you had good ideas/main points. BUT your illustration and evaluation was weak and you didn't pay enough attention to the writer's agenda.

- Question interpretation was good – you really thought about the idea of repression and came up with good points.
- However, question engagement within the paragraph still needs work – quite a few of you wrote entire paragraphs which didn't mention the word "repression" until your ES. Your TS didn't have the word "repression" in it, neither did it have any other word or concept that I could reasonably interpret as being relevant to the question. I could see that your arguments were generally valid but you made me do the work of linking your arguments to the question for you, therefore, I gave you little credit for the paragraph. (Luckily, most of you who were in this situation got yourselves back on track in other paragraphs, but still, what an unfortunate wasted effort.)
- More close-reading of quotes was needed. A few of you did a good job here; sadly, too many of you were really general in your reading of quotes.
- Paragraphs lack coherence – you jump from one piece of evidence to another without drawing the links between them (sometimes there ARE no links to be drawn!). Use connectors – by which I don't just mean throwing in a 'similarly' or 'furthermore' in at random, I mean spell out the connection: "Furthermore, Mrs Warren's immorality can be seen when she kisses Frank.' (Then I know that this piece of evidence is intended to further illustrate her immoral deeds)
- You need to pay more attention to the writers' agenda.
- Evaluative statements were shaky.
- Most of you only managed 2 complete paragraphs.

Unpacking “repression”:

- Restraint, inhibition, suppressing – this could relate to feelings, thoughts, desires, but also to an individual’s behavior towards another individual.
- While the latter is more commonly referred to as ‘oppression’ or ‘suppression’, you could angle this in such a way where you argue that an individual has to repress desires/feelings/parts of their identity etc due to the dominance asserted by another character.
- One could also be repressed by structures of power, institutions, expectations, etc.
- Some related ideas/concepts that are relevant in these texts: restriction, rigidity, marginalization, silencing, submission, the Angel in the House figures

Agenda:

- It is clear that the writers are critical of repression – they do illustrate it, often to expose exactly how restrictive it is. They also often show characters or situations which challenge the repression within society.
- As part of this critique, they also illustrate situations which are the complete opposite of “repressive” – permissive, liberal, modern – this is especially so with regards to immorality, whether it’s the attitudes held by particular characters or the presentation of marriage & infidelity.
 - While you can absolutely bring this in as an argument, you must always go back to the idea of ‘repression’ and frame your ideas in line with the key word – *ie. By presenting unconventional, controversial, liberal situation X, the writers challenge the idea of repression in Y area.* You should not be rewriting the question as: ‘discuss the way the writers prevent provocative situations’.

Suggested points:

As usual, I’m providing you with as wide and varied a range of points as possible. Note that there are obviously going to be overlaps here. What you need to pay attention to is the different ways in which you can craft and angle your argument – two people can write about what ostensibly looks like the same basic point, but they may angle their arguments completely differently.

- Repression of women (or women’s independence) due to patriarchal dominance
 - This is clearly challenged by the playwrights through their portrayal of assertive female figures
- Repression of women within the patriarchal institution of marriage
 - The double standards applied to men and women regarding their immoral sexual behavior
 - The treatment of women as objects for barter within the marriage (eg. Crofts’ repressive treatment of Vivie in the proposal scene)
- Repression of passion/individual desires in favour of fulfilling one’s social duty

- Repression of immoral desires and feelings
- Secrets and the repression of the truth
 - Leading to the breakdown of the family unit
 - In terms of the identities of the mothers in the plays
 - Leading to a sense of betrayal within the mother-daughter relationships
- Repressive definitions of conventional gender roles (female or male)
- Repressive social expectations which lead to hypocrisy in society/affectations/pretensions.
- Traditional moral codes are presented as overly rigid and ultimately repressive.
 - Challenged by Vivie and Lady W's revision of their moral codes
 - Challenged by the male characters (Frank, Crofts, Cecil, Dumby) who completely defy/disregard these moral codes and refuse to be repressed by them, thereby suggesting that traditional moral codes have lost their relevance in late Victorian society.
- Repression of the Fallen Woman as seen through her marginalization/silencing by society, which attempts to repress her experiences
- Fallen Women who fail to repress their immoral/excessive sexual passions are punished by society
- The playwrights challenge the repression of the Fallen Woman by giving her a voice, through which she is able to defy society's attempts to repress her experiences
- The characters of the Fallen Women challenge society's repressive definitions of female sexuality

Q2b) Compare the ways in which any two writers of the period present illusion and disillusionment in their work.

Number of attempts: 25

Mark Range: 8 – 16

Mark Range	Band Descriptors
8 – 9	Scripts only examined illusion or disillusionment
10 – 13	Scripts discussed illusion and disillusionment, though engagement with illusion and disillusionment was oblique (10 – 11 band) and

	inconsistent (12 – 13 band)
14 – 16	Scripts engaged with illusion and disillusionment consistently, though balance was lacking (scripts with 14)

General Comments:

- On the whole the question was well attempted. It was heartening to see that students had no issues with Question Interpretation and Generation of Points.
- The main issue that students had was with Question Engagement, which resulted in:
 - Longwinded points
 - Unnecessary or weak evidence that had nothing to do with illusion and disillusionment
 - Unnecessary or weak analysis that had nothing to do with illusion and disillusionment
 - Irrelevant evaluative statements that had nothing to do with illusion and disillusionment
- To improve Question Engagement, students need to express points that **directly** answer the question, rather than answer the question in a longwinded manner. For example, let us look at this point:
 - Both plays present the protagonists' shift from having puritanical moral codes to having a more discerning sense of morality, revealing the illusion of puritanical moral codes and the disillusionment towards such puritanical moral codes.

Isn't this such a mouthful? Rather than plonking that pre-prepared point and then making a link to the question, it is better to tweak the point such that you express it in this manner:

- Both plays present circumstances that disillusion the protagonists of their puritanical moral codes, rendering such moral codes as illusionary.
- To improve Question Engagement, students need to go straight to relevant evidence that engages with the question because that would **directly** answer the question, rather than cite evidence in a longwinded manner that only answers the question after 8 – 10 sentences. There are many pieces of evidence to cite to support the above point, such as:

LWF	MWP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody has some choice... I don't believe in circumstances. • You are wrong: you know nothing about her. If you knew the circumstances against 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She taught me what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. <i>She</i> allowed of no compromise. <i>I</i> allow of none. [Quote A] • I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad as though they were two separate races or creations. [Quote B]

which my mother had to struggle • I know very well that fashionable morality is all a pretence	• There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice. [Quote C]
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However, rather than simply chart the protagonist's shift from having puritanical moral codes to having a more discerning sense of morality, the quotes in **bold** are way better because they engage with the key words question – illusion and disillusionment. Because many students simply plonked the pre-prepared point about the protagonists' shift from having puritanical moral codes to having a more discerning sense of morality, much of the evidence cited did not engage with the key words question – illusion and disillusionment.

- To improve Question Engagement, students need to be more discerning (yes please learn from the protagonists of the plays) about when T-E-M analysis is needed and when it isn't. Many students engaged in micro-analysis and hence did not have time to develop a 3rd body paragraph. **T-E-M analysis is only needed when the analysis engages with the key words in the question. It is as simple as that.** For instance, look at the evidence for MWP in the table above – you do not need to do T-E-M analysis on Quotes A and B! No need to look at Vivie's tone of conviction and the sense of absoluteness in "no compromise" in Quote A, or her reflective tone in Quote B. Instead, just cite the quotes, then **analyse the juxtaposition between Quotes A and B because it is the juxtaposition that reveals the illusion of having puritanical moral codes.** Only then should you go on to Quote C and analyse the relevant techniques that are used in the quote to engage with illusion and disillusionment.
- To improve Question Engagement, students need to craft evaluative statements that engage with the question. Currently, many students plonk pre-prepared evaluative statements into the essays without tweaking them. Students write evaluative statements that go:
 - Wilde's presentation of the erosion of traditional ideals of marriage is more subtle...
 - Shaw's critique of morality is harsher because...
 - Wilde's critique of morality is more light-hearted because of the use of humour...

When the evaluative statements should at least go:

- Wilde's presentation of the illusion of traditional ideals of marriage is more subtle...
- Shaw's critique of the illusion of morality is harsher because...
- Wilde's critique of the disillusionment towards morality is more light-hearted because of the use of humour...

More importantly, evaluative statements should be crafted in a sensible way that follows the development of that particular paragraph. That means if you want to evaluate Wilde's use of humour, you must have discussed this use of humour earlier in the paragraph. Before you write your evaluative statement, stop, re-read the paragraph which you have just written and then evaluate accordingly.

Sample Student Paragraphs:

- Joel – 2 solid, clear body paragraphs on 1) circumstances that disillusion the protagonists of their traditional moral codes, rendering such moral codes as illusionary (albeit a slightly long paragraph) and 2) the illusion of traditional figures of authority being exposed, resulting in disillusionment
- Roxanne – A good body paragraph on a sense of disillusionment towards ideals of love, rendering such ideals as merely an illusion (although the Evaluative Statement can be improved upon)
- Clara – A good body paragraph on the disillusionment that arises from the erosion of illusions in mother-daughter relationships (although the Evaluative Statement can be improved upon)

Paper 2 Prelims 2015: Section C (*Jane Eyre*)

Q3a. Examine the role and function of Jane as an orphan figure in the novel.

Number of attempts: 28

Mark Range: 5 – 16

Mark Range	Band Descriptors
5 and below	Scripts did not engage with Jane as orphan figure at all
6 – 8	Scripts engaged with Jane as an orphan figure rather incidentally and obliquely
9 – 11	Scripts had 1 to 1 ½ paragraphs that engaged with Jane as an orphan figure consistently
12 – 14	Scripts had 2 paragraphs that engaged with Jane as an orphan figure consistently
15 – 16	Scripts had 2 ½ paragraphs that engaged with Jane as an orphan figure consistently

General Comments:

- Most students attempted this question but performance across the cohort was underwhelming, with many students not engaging well with Jane as an orphan figure (or in some cases, at all!) in the essays.
- The big problem was question engagement, which encompasses generation of points, choice of evidence as well as analysis.

- Because of a lack of engagement with Jane as an orphan figure, many invalid points were presented, including:
 - Jane's emotional struggle with passion and restraint
 - Jane's quest for independence as a woman
 - Jane's embrace of spirituality as her moral compass
- The reason why many students presented invalid points is due to a force-fitting of preconceived points to suit the question when the approach should be the complete opposite – students need to always start from the question. This review will focus on implementing such an approach.
- Besides weak question engagement, students also struggled with time management. Very few students managed to craft 3 complete body paragraphs, with some students only writing 1 full body paragraph.

Approaching an Essay Question:

Question	Examine the role and function of Jane as an orphan figure in the novel.
Unpacking key words in question	<p>Orphan: A child whose parents have passed away (literal definition), who subsequently faces abandonment, isolation and a lack of belonging in the world and is destined to lead a miserable life (commonly held perspectives during Victorian era)</p> <p>Jane as orphan figure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Her isolation and lack of belonging with the Reeds? ➤ Her attainment of social mobility? ➤ Her encounters with substitute parental figures in her life?
Thematic engagement with question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mistreatment of Upper Class towards Lower Class orphans ➤ Rigid social boundaries that place orphans into the Lower Class ➤ Jane's emotional growth as an orphan facilitated by substitute maternal figures in her life (Mrs Reed, Bessie, Ms Temple)
Technical engagement with question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Character relationship between Jane and the Reeds ➤ Characterisation of Jane as an orphan figure facilitating her ambiguous social position in society ➤ Character relationship between Jane and Mrs Reed / Bessie / Ms Temple
Quotes, examples or evidence relevant to question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jane having no 'father or mother, brothers or sisters' ➤ Jane as a 'dependent' who 'ought to beg' ➤ Jane who is sent to Lowood in 'conformity to her position and prospects' ➤ Allusion to Gulliver as a 'desolate wanderer' mirroring Jane's

(those that come to mind when brainstorming for points)	<p>isolation as orphan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Setting of Lowood as ‘an institution for educating orphans’? ➤ Parallels between Jane and Adele as orphans?
Topic Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The character relationship between Jane and the Reeds functions to critique the mistreatment of Upper Class characters towards Jane by revealing her isolation and lack of belonging as an orphan. ➤ The characterisation of Jane as an orphan figure facilitates her ambiguous social position in society as she attains social mobility, functioning to critique the rigid social boundaries that place orphans into the Lower Class. ➤ The character relationship between Jane and Ms Temple functions to present how Jane’s emotional growth as an orphan is facilitated by substitute maternal figures in her life.

Sample Student Paragraphs:

- Yuxin – Bronte exposing the injustice behind the mistreatment the Jane received as an orphan
- Roxanne – Bronte critiquing the rigid social boundaries which dictate that Jane remain an outsider to the Reed family because of her orphan status
- Sara – Bronte exposing how social class is not a marker of moral distinction through the contrast between Mrs Reed and Bessie’s attitude towards Jane as an orphan
- Zhifeng – Bronte critiquing material conditions as an indicator of social standing through the portrayal of Jane as an orphan figure

Q3b. In what ways, and with what effects, is *Jane Eyre* a gothic fairy-tale?

Number of attempts: 10

Mark range: 7 – 13

Mark Range	Band Descriptors
7 – 8	Scripts only dealt with gothic, not with fairy-tale
9 – 10	Scripts dealt with gothic and obliquely engaged with fairy-tale
11 – 12	Scripts engaged with gothic and explicitly engaged with fairy-tale, though rather inconsistently
13 – 14	Scripts dealt with gothic and explicitly engaged with fairy-tale consistently in 1 to 2 paragraphs

General Comments:

- Only 10 students attempted this question. Performance across the cohort was underwhelming with many students engaging with the gothic but not with the novel as a fairy-tale.
- Much like those who attempted Question 3a, the big problem was question engagement, which encompasses generation of points, choice of evidence as well as analysis. This is a very clear sign of the weakness of the cohort which clearly needs addressing in the weeks leading up to the A' Levels, otherwise students run the risk of completing going off-track because the nature of the error committed renders essays invalid (the essays do not answer the question).
- While students knew where to go to for evidence of the gothic, evidence that engaged with the novel as a fairy-tale was found to be severely lacking. Again, this was also the issue with those who attempted Question 3a and did not cite evidence related to Jane as an orphan figure.
- Besides weak question engagement, students also struggled with time management. There was also a tendency to jump from 1 paragraph to the next, leaving huge chunks of empty space on the scripts rather than sustaining the development in one paragraph. This shows a lack of clarity of thought and poor organisation.

Approaching an Essay Question:

Question	In what ways, and with what effects, is <i>Jane Eyre</i> a gothic fairy-tale?
Unpacking key words in question	<p>Gothic Fairy-tale: An idealised, magical and enchanting story, infused with dark, ominous and supernatural elements, which traditionally ends with a happy ending.</p> <p><i>Jane Eyre</i> as a Gothic Fairy-tale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The use of fairy-tale allusions to characterise Jane and Rochester's happy, fairy-tale union despite the use of gothic allusions to prevent such a fairy-tale union?➤ The novel using gothic elements to facilitate the happy fairy-tale union between Jane and Rochester?➤ The gothic description of Bertha to characterise Bertha and Rochester's failed happy fairy-tale union?
Thematic engagement with question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Male-Female Relationships
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Gothic & Fairy-tale allusions / the Characterisation of Bertha

engagement with question	<p>and the character relationship between Jane and Rochester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Symbolism of chestnut tree, Jane's dreams and the motif of clairvoyant calls ➤ Characterisation of Bertha
Quotes, examples or evidence relevant to question (those that come to mind when brainstorming for points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fairy-tale allusions ('Men in green', 'brownie', 'bluebeard's castle') ➤ The 'wreck' of the Chestnut Tree that 'gaped ghastly' ➤ Jane's gothic-like dream where the child strangles her in 'terror' ➤ Clairvoyant calls ➤ Bertha as 'Vampyre', 'foul German spectre', 'goblin' ➤ Deus ex machine as a plot device to bring about an idealised fairy-tale union between Jane and Rochester?
Topic Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bronte uses fairy-tale allusions to characterise Jane and Rochester's idealised union to override the use of gothic allusions to prevent such a union. <p>OR</p> <p>Bronte presents the gothic figure of Bertha serving as an impediment in Jane and Rochester's fairy-tale union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bronte uses gothic elements to initially warn against Jane and Rochester's union, yet these gothic elements ultimately facilitate Jane and Rochester's fairy-tale union ➤ Bronte uses the gothic figure of Bertha to highlight the failed fairy-tale union between her and Rochester

Sample Student Paragraphs:

- Daryl – Gothic elements serve as a warning to Jane against marrying Rochester, and only after such gothic elements are removed can the fairy-tale union between Jane and Rochester take place.