

Past Questions on Theme

Past questions have tended to focus on:

- What insights you gained from studying the theme
- How the study of a particular text changed or reinforced your view of the theme
- The way in which key moments can heighten your awareness of a particular theme
- How the presentation of the theme can add to the impact of the text
- How the theme helps to maintain your interest in the text

What does the theme *teach* us?

What *insights* do we gain from studying the text?

What did you find *interesting* about your chosen theme?

The questions above are very similar and can all be answered using the **same subheadings and points**. You must refer directly to the specific question on the day, of course.

- A person's desire to escape can be jeopardised and, in some cases, thwarted if another, stronger-willed person is intent on preventing them from doing so in order to serve their own ends.
- A person who feels isolated and alone has little chance of escaping their fate. Sometimes people need the support and encouragement of others to effect their escape and achieve their desired outcome.
- When a person believes that the world in which they live is overwhelmingly hostile and offers them no avenue of escape, they may be forced to take drastic action and do something that would have seemed unthinkable before that point.

2013

B THEME OR ISSUE

1. “Studying a theme or issue enables a reader to form both personal and universal reflections on that theme or issue.”

Compare both the personal and universal reflections that you formed on a common theme or issue in two or more texts from your comparative course. (70)

Expect candidates to deal in a comparative manner with a theme common to two or more texts, and with the personal and universal reflections that they formed.

Allow for a broad interpretation of “personal and universal reflections”, and that they may be interlinked.

In assessing the quality of the response, consider the extent to which the candidate has engaged in reflection.

Code C P/U for comparisons of the personal/universal reflections on a theme/issue

Possible points for comparison:

- plot, narrative voice, characters’ behaviour provide thought-provoking insights
 - key moments/scenes offer revealing considerations/perspectives
 - resolution of a theme enables readers to draw personal/universal conclusions
 - impact of language (imagery, symbolism, visual and aural effects) shapes perceptions
- Etc.

2. “In many texts, a theme or issue may not be resolved to the complete satisfaction of the reader.”

(a) Discuss the extent to which a theme or issue is resolved to your satisfaction in one text

on your comparative course. (30)

Mark ex 30 by reference to the criteria for assessment.

A+ B C D E-

30 marks 30 – 26 21 17 12 11 – 0

Expect candidates to select a theme or issue in one text, and to discuss to what extent

it is/is not

resolved to their satisfaction. Allow for a broad interpretation of “resolved”.

Code TR +/- for theme/issue is/is not resolved to reader’s satisfaction

Possible points of discussion:

- establishment/development of theme leads to a convincing/unconvincing resolution
- key moments highlight expectations of satisfactory/unsatisfactory conclusions
- characterisation, language, visual/aural effects can be fulfilling/unfulfilling
- impact of author’s approach to the denouement Etc.

(b) Compare the extent to which the same theme or issue (as discussed in (a) above) is resolved to your satisfaction, in two other texts on your comparative course. (40)
Expect candidates to deal in a comparative manner with the same theme or issue (as discussed in (a) above) and to what extent it is/is not resolved to their satisfaction in two other texts. Candidates are not required to make comparative links with the text discussed in part (a). However, they may choose to refer in an explicit or implicit way to the points made in their answer to part (a). Code C TR +/- for comparisons of theme/issue is/is not resolved to the reader’s satisfaction

Theme – How Does it Hold Our Interest?

- You must plan your answer in order to avoid repetition of points and key moments.
- Have a key moment prepared for each subheading.
- You do not need to go into great detail when discussing your key moments.
- Support your points with accurate quotation from and reference to the texts.
- Begin your answer with a direct response to the question asked brief outline of the direction your answer will take.
- Do the same for each subheading.

- Use link words and phrases whenever possible.
- Focus on the extent to which a given statement is true: move from most to least or vice versa.

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