

Past-paper walk-through

Developing commentary ■ 8.8

eXercise

Questions in this set

- 2025 Set 1 Q1 ■ 6 marks
- 2025 Set 2 Q1 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 1 Q1 ■ 6 marks
- 2024 Set 2 Q1 ■ 6 marks
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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 1

2025 Set 1 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In Colleen McElroy's poem "Monologue for Saint Louis," published in 1980, the speaker returns to her childhood home in St. Louis, Missouri, after an extended absence and contemplates how she has changed. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how McElroy uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex experience of returning home. **[6]**

Solution 1

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- Poetry analysis essay (6 points). Prompt: In Colleen McElroy's poem "Monologue for Saint Louis," published in 1980, the speaker returns to her childhood home in St. Louis, Missouri, after an extended absence and contemplates how she has changed. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how McElroy uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex experience of returning home.

Solution 1

- 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 1

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

Question 1

2025 Set 2 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In Victor Hernández Cruz's poem "Two Guitars," published in 2001, the speaker imagines that two guitars are alive and engaging in conversation about their musical experiences. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hernández Cruz uses literary elements and techniques to convey a complex portrayal of the guitars' musical world.

[6]

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Question 1

2024 Set 1 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In John Rollin Ridge's poem "To a Star Seen at Twilight," published in 1868, the speaker admires a solitary star shining at twilight and considers its significance. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Ridge uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex reflection on the star.

[6]

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Question 1

2024 Set 2 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In George Moses Horton's poem "On Summer," published in 1829, the author describes multiple aspects of summer in a rural area. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting. **[6]**

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Question 1

2023 Set 1 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In Alice Cary's poem "Autumn," published in 1874, the speaker contemplates the onset of autumn. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Cary uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex response to the changing seasons. **[6]**

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Question 1

2023 Set 2 ■ Q1 ■ 6 marks

Poetry Analysis. In William Ellery Channing's poem "The Barren Moors," published in 1843, the speaker addresses moors, open expanses of wild, uncultivated land. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Channing uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the speaker's experience of this natural setting. **[6]**

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