

Finnish A literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 18 | 19 - 34 | 35 - 47 | 48 - 59 | 60 - 72 | 73 - 83 | 84 - 100 |

Standard level

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 16 | 17 - 31 | 32 - 44 | 45 - 57 | 58 - 69 | 70 - 81 | 82 - 100 |

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 13 | 14 - 17 | 18 - 21 | 22 - 25 | 26 - 30 |

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The choice of works for the higher level internal assessment was generally suitable. Most schools had clearly their focus on older poetry (Leino, Meriluoto, Hellaakoski). In the discussion part, the choice of texts was more varied. The choice of texts seemed to be valid and suitable: almost all of the chosen texts offered numerous elements to be interpreted.

The poems were mostly of the correct length and level of difficulty and contained two guiding questions. Most schools conducted the oral examination according to IB guidelines. However, sometimes the chosen poetry extract for commentary was too long (70 lines is way above suitable), resulting in a superficial treatment. Some schools only used extracts from long poems that quite often proved to be very demanding for candidates to be analyzed within a prescribed time limit.

Sometimes teachers had chosen an extract from a long poem, they had copied the poem in its entire length and indicated the lines (even from the middle of the poem) that were supposed to be interpreted by the candidate. This resulted in problems: candidates seemed to show a lot of hesitation

during their interpretation. Teachers should present as an extract only what needs to be analyzed during the commentary.

Teachers should bear in mind that, according to the Language A Literature Guide, it is expected that candidates situate the extract as precisely as possible in the context of the work from which it has been taken (or in the body of work, in the case of poetry). It takes some extra time to situate the extract from a long poem in a meaningful way. Hence, in some schools all commentaries exceeded 10 minutes without the teacher stepping in. On the other hand, this year there were surprisingly many higher level commentaries that lasted only 4–5 minutes.

According to IB guidelines, candidates should talk up to, but not beyond, 8 minutes, with 2 minutes for subsequent questions. Teachers should not interrupt candidates and correct their performance while they are speaking. When students do not speak for up to 8 minutes, the remainder of the 10 minutes must be filled with subsequent questions. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher has prepared several questions in advance. Usually teachers were well-prepared: subsequent questions were generally carefully chosen and engaged candidates in further exploration of the extract.

The guiding questions given were usually appropriate. However, it should be noted that some guiding questions were overly leading and contained information which the students should have provided. Some candidates were given guiding questions that required a simple “yes/no” answer, which should not be the case.

As in the previous session, the discussions were generally conducted according to IB regulations. However, there were some problems when candidates had probably pre-learned the facts of the authors they had studied. This led to a situation where the introduction and even the structure of the discussion were similar amongst most of the candidates for some schools. In addition to this, sometimes the same poem seems to appear to have been used too often for the same class. It is therefore reminded that teachers should make every effort to avoid orals becoming too predictable; furthermore, teachers should not ask the same questions in the discussion all the time, but change them regularly.

Several teachers succeeded in creating a nice atmosphere for the discussion: the candidates were given the possibility to show their knowledge and understanding of the work discussed. In some cases the discussions were conducted more in the form of an interview, making it more difficult for candidates.

It should be reminded that the recordings should be uploaded onto IBIS before the deadline, and the recordings should be checked before uploading. This year some of the recordings were missing or incomplete, which caused extra work and time delays.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the poems, as well as the necessary skills to deliver a good commentary. The ability to place the poetry passage in its context remains a challenge to some of them. Any background information on the author, his/her other works etc. should be tightly connected to the passage of the commentary. Situating a poem in its context is important for a commentary. Pre-learning autobiographies, historical facts or biographical information about the

author is mostly not at all related to the poem and reduces the valuable time that candidates have for their interpretation of the poem itself.

Criterion B

Candidates' appreciation of the writer's choices was generally good. However, some candidates still had difficulties integrating the literary features into their commentaries. Showing an awareness and analysis of the effects of the literary features from the extracts was still a challenge for many candidates. Simply naming literary features or listing them is not enough: the focus should be on how they shape meaning in the poem and what their effects on the reader are. Teachers could help students by posing suitable questions; for example, if candidates have not commented on language and style, questions could lead candidates to comment on these at a sufficient level.

Criterion C

Many candidates were able to structure their commentaries well and develop their response in a meaningful manner. According to the Language A Literature guide, the commentary should be sustained and well organized. It should neither be delivered as a series of unconnected points nor take the form of a narration or a line-by-line paraphrase of the passage or poem. The most successful candidates had planned their responses well with a clear sense of purpose and supported them by well-chosen references to the poem. The weakest commentaries included paraphrases or partial summaries of the poem.

Criterion D

A fair number of candidates performed well, demonstrating a very good understanding of the work used in the discussion. Teachers' questions play a critical role in this: if an interesting aspect of the work is offered by the teacher, the candidate is usually able to expand and explore the question with sufficient depth. Sometimes the aspect offered by the teacher proved to be quite surprising for the student, causing confusion. Weaker performances revealed a lack of knowledge, whereas the best consisted of excellent knowledge as well as personal responses.

Criterion E

Many candidates gave well-informed responses, which resulted in enthusiastic and detailed consideration of the aspect raised by the teacher. Candidates should be given an opportunity to demonstrate independent understanding of the work. On the other hand, if the knowledge and understanding of the work was weak, the responses to the teachers' questions were usually short and sometimes irrelevant.

Criterion F

The use of language was generally good. Candidates mostly used an appropriate register, with a minimum use of informal language. Literary terms were mostly used correctly.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are recommended to work on the analysis of literary features and to help candidates to explore the specific effects of such features fully, e.g. Why were those particular words chosen? What are their denotations and connotations, sound effects, rhythmical patterns, etc.

It should be reminded that teachers should make every effort to avoid orals becoming too predictable: teachers should not ask the same questions in the discussion to all candidates, but change them regularly.

Teachers should consider the length of the poem for the commentary very carefully. The 8 minutes time limit for the student needs to be taken seriously into account. If an extract from a longer poem is chosen, candidates need to situate it in the context of the whole poem.

Good subsequent questions are few, distinct and specific, helping candidates to develop important aspects of the commentary that they have not tackled previously. Questions on the literary features of the extract are always more helpful than questions on matters outside the extract (for example the biographical details of the author's life, which is not rewarded by the assessment criteria).

In the discussion part, comparing the two works (the poem used in the commentary and the other work in the discussion part) does not usually seem to give good results. Comparing works from two different genres (poetry/drama, poetry/prose) is a very demanding task for students, since the two genres operate very differently. Comparison is not expected during the discussion.

Asking candidates during the discussion whether they "liked the plot/protagonist/the ending of the work" doesn't often seem to lead to meaningful analysis of the work. However, an easy question at the beginning of the discussion part is always useful, since it is more likely to contribute to a relaxed atmosphere.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 8 | 9 - 12 | 13 - 16 | 17 - 19 | 20 - 23 | 24 - 30 |

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Choice of texts seemed to be valid and at a suitable level: almost all of the chosen texts offered sufficient elements to be interpreted, although some of the weaker candidates seemed to face problems because they did not have enough to say in the prescribed time frame. Teachers could therefore pay more attention to the choice of the texts in regards to their length and the opportunities for analysis.

There was a difference in the degree of difficulty of the extracts chosen. In general, poetry seemed to be more demanding for candidates as a genre to be interpreted than drama, novel or short stories. However, there were some candidates who were able to analyze poetry in a very persuasive way.

The choice of works for the discussion was generally suitable. Some schools had chosen older favorites and classics as a part of their reading list (e.g. Minna Canth's drama *Anna Liisa* or Eino Leino's symbolist poetry). New literature (such as Jyrki Vainonen's or Rosa Liksom's short stories) had gained some critical attention, too.

It was very pleasant to see that there were no samples without guiding questions. However, teachers could pay more attention to these questions. On the one hand, there were some teachers who just repeated the guiding questions although the candidate had already given answers to these during the commentary. There were also some teachers who posed questions giving too much information or even their own interpretation.

There were a few examples where candidates started their oral performance with an introduction that dealt with the life and work of the author in question. This practice should be avoided because the relevance of this kind of introduction is insignificant to the analysis of the chosen extract.

In a few cases, the same texts appear to have been used too often for several candidates in a school. Teachers should be careful in their choice of passages.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Most candidates were well prepared with regards to the works studied. Criterion A received the highest points although there was a wide range. Some students spent too much time on background information about the author or about the period at the beginning of their commentaries. This is not necessarily relevant to the analysis of the extract. Weaker candidates tended to summarize instead of analyze (tended to give paraphrases instead of analyzing and justifying their response with well chosen references from the text).

Criterion B

A great number of candidates were able to offer some analysis of the writer's stylistic choices and literary or rhetorical devices. However, there were some candidates that almost ignored them or did not analyze the function of stylistic features or literary devices in the chosen extract further. This does not mean that they have a weak knowledge of these terms: they seem to be able to recognize different features in the text and give suitable quotations that indicate that they are familiar with the concept. However, many candidates are not able to reflect on the meaning or function of these devices in the context of the whole extract. Sometimes this causes problems that impact on the structure of the whole commentary: if observations based on language and literary features are disconnected from the interpretation, the response might turn out to be illogical, having no clear coherence or clear focus at all.

There were some candidates that were not able to integrate quotations to their response. This had a negative effect on their argumentation. It was quite common that candidates started their introduction by mentioning a long list of different literary devices from the text. After this kind of introduction, stylistic and literary features were quite often being forgotten.

Criterion C

Most of the candidates showed a suitable organization in their commentaries: the commentary usually started with a short introduction that took up the main characteristics of the extract. After the introduction, they moved onto the second part of the presentation (containing close reading of the extract). Finally, at the end of the commentary, most candidates had an effective conclusion. However, there were still some candidates who found this very difficult to do. Examiners would like to emphasize the role of the organization: it is important to explain briefly the content and context of the

extract in the beginning of the response. Otherwise, it is hard for a listener to understand the function and meaning of the extract.

On many occasions, candidates analyzed the text line by line after a short introduction. This kind of analysis is easy to follow but sometimes the organization is not effective. It was noticed that, if some stylistic elements were often repeated in a chosen extract, then the presentation might contain too much of a repetition if this approach was followed.

Criterion D

The majority of candidates were able to use clear language and an appropriate register for the task. There were a few nervous repetitions or some extra speaking particles but this did not have a big effect on the response. However, some candidates used a register which was too informal, using too much colloquial language.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers need to be careful in their choice of passages and in the planning for the guiding questions. Both, candidates and teachers are required to use an appropriate register.

Teachers must ensure that candidates do not have prior knowledge of the passages or the guiding questions before the individual oral takes place.

Teachers should make every effort to avoid orals becoming predictable, for example by using more than two or three extracts for the whole school.

Candidates need to be able to reflect on the meaning and the function of the literary devices presented in the whole extract, not just mention them.

Teachers must avoid asking overtly leading guiding questions.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 6 | 7 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13 - 15 | 16 - 18 | 19 - 20 | 21 - 25 |

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of written assignments concentrating on different genres. In the field of drama, candidates had read works such as Arthur Miller's "Kauppamatkustajan kuolema", Anton Chekhov's "Kolme sisarta" and Ibsen's "Nukkekot". However, novel appeared to be the most popular choice: Albert Camus, Milan Kundera, Per Pettersson, Bernhard Schlinck were some of the biggest favourites. The most popular choice was "Leijapoika" by Khaled Hosseini.

Some book choices seemed to be more successful than others. It appeared that works such as Milan Kundera's "Olemisen sietämätön keveys" can be quite demanding for some candidates because of

their original use of language and style. Even works such as Machiavelli's "Ruhtinas" might be challenging in relation to the assessment of criterion C: candidates might have problems in analyzing Machiavelli's work as a piece of literature which in turn has an effect on interpretation. Teachers should therefore consider, if their choice of literature is suitable for this part of the program.

In general, the essays taking up issues such as symbols, metaphors, language used by certain characters or detailed narratological problems seemed to attain good or very good results. Usually works that consisted of a clear formulated hypothesis, either in the title or in the first paragraph of the written assignment, were successful in getting higher marks, whereas works that did not have a clear question were less successful; successful assignments had a clear point of view and this was revealed in the very beginning of the essay; for example, it is better to study how the main character's development is represented with the help of symbols in the literary work rather than only evaluate how the main character is being described. The first instance clearly deals with some literary aspects, whereas the latter might lead candidates to re-tell aspects of the work rather than concentrate on literary elements.

It was pleasant to see that candidates from the same school had chosen different topics in order to avoid identical works and arguments.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The best reflective statements indicated a clear development of candidates' understanding of cultural and contextual elements, justified with clear references to class discussion and the chosen work. The weaker reflective statements usually summarised the plot of the work or spoke about lines of cultural history behind the work, without focussing on the candidate's own development during the learning process.

Generally, the length of the reflective statements presented was appropriate. However, there were still significant concerns with the reflective statement. Many candidates appeared to lack knowledge of its requirements, particularly the fact that it did not demonstrate understanding of or reflection on cultural and contextual aspects of the work studied. Some simply appeared not to be citing or reflecting the class discussion at all: there were reflective statements where candidates just reiterated the opinion of their classmates without any signs of self-reflection. There were also examples of reflective statements that did not include any contextual aspects at all. Teachers must ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements for this task.

Criterion B

In general, candidates chose topics well and displayed mostly good understanding and knowledge of the works. A topic phrased as a question appeared to be usually more helpful in staying focussed and not drifting off into contextual ponderings. In some cases, the topic of the essay was too broad to be analyzed in depth; for example, it tends to be better to analyze the development of one character in some important part of the novel rather than whole characterisation in a chosen work. The supervised writing may be useful in these cases, helping candidates to decide on their final topic.

Candidates should be reminded that it is useful to provide a short introduction of the characters when they mention them for the first time: for instance, instead of starting directly talking about Marie

(Marie, who?) when analyzing Camus's "Sivullinen", it is better to provide a brief explanation about her: "Meursault's girlfriend Marie" could be a good solution. This could help moderators in their task.

Criterion C

More emphasis could be put on working on the appreciation of the writer's choices, since this seemed to be the most difficult criterion in which to attain high marks. Candidates were sometimes too superficial in their analysis: they just named literary features but did not offer an analysis of how these features were used in the work to shape meaning. Moderators think that a clear question or hypothesis could be helpful also for this criterion. If a candidate explores a question that already has some links to literary devices, this would help candidates to succeed in the task; for instance, the significance of a crucial symbol offered a good starting point for a successful essay.

Criterion D

A great majority of the written assignments were coherent and offered an introduction and a conclusion. However, in many cases there could have been a better handling of the organization of the material presented. It is always a good starting point to start with an introduction that identifies the major research question and presents the chosen work from the point of view of the chosen aspect. It is important that the first paragraphs identify the need for the chosen approach: why is this aspect crucial? This does not mean that candidates need to provide a summary of the work or some biographical facts of the author, but to introduce the chosen point of view and its importance.

Candidates need to justify their arguments by integrating examples and quotations from the work chosen. These references should be an integral part of the essay. More emphasis should be put into the last paragraph, too. At best, it usually demonstrates the depth of the argumentation and the findings.

Criterion E

Almost all candidates understood the formality of the written assignment and used an appropriate register. However, there was a diverse range of abilities. Some candidates showed a very good command of the Finnish language and expressed their arguments in a clear way, whereas others have a poorer command of the language. It was noticeable that some candidates had not devoted time to proof-reading. Candidates should proof-read their assignments before submitting them.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are recommended to help future candidates with the organization of their written assignments.

The reflective statement should always consist of open and direct reflection and references to the classroom discussion as well as contextual knowledge and understanding.

More emphasis could be put to the research question or hypothesis in the beginning of the essay. If candidates find a suitable research question, they are more likely to succeed in the task.

Candidates could bear in mind that it is useful to provide a little introduction of the characters, with the help of some epithets, for example, when they mention them for the first time.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 6 | 7 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13 - 15 | 16 - 18 | 19 - 20 | 21 - 25 |

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The written assignment is based on a work in translation studied in part 1. There were a lot of interesting essays written on different works in translation. The most popular works chosen as the subject of study were “Nukkekot” by Ibsen, “Leijapoika” by Hosseini, “Sivullinen” by Camus and “Lukija” by Schlink. The choice of works was usually appropriate.

Candidates need to write an analytical essay with a reflective statement. The goal of the written assignment process is to produce a literary essay on a topic generated by the candidate and developed from one of the pieces of supervised writing. Usually, this 4-phase-procedure was understood better this year than during the May 2013 session.

In relation to school supported self-taught candidates, they need to base their analytical essay on a topic they have formed during their journal writing. Self-taught candidates should be informed of this.

As in the previous session, candidates usually performed better if they wrote their written assignments on less known works. There seems to be thousands of pages of research, summaries and studies written on great works of literature, usually considered to be a part of literary canon and a lot of these summaries and studies are easily accessible in the internet, too. Some candidates are not able to develop their own ideas from this information, but rather they take too much inspiration from these notes and studies. Quite often new works provide fresh topics to be investigated.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There were still significant concerns about the reflective statement. Many candidates appeared to lack knowledge of the requirements for this task. The length of the reflective statement was usually appropriate, but it usually did not demonstrate understanding of or reflection on cultural and contextual aspects of the work studied. Some reflective statements simply appeared not to be reflecting the class discussion: there were some where candidates just reiterated the opinion from their classmates without any signs of self-reflection. Then there were some reflective statements that did not take up any contextual aspects at all.

The reflective statement should be completed as soon as possible following the interactive oral but before completing the written assignment. Some reflective statements seemed to have been written after the whole written assignment had been finished – this practice should be avoided. However, if we compare this year to last year, there were not so many candidates who confused the reflective statement with the supervised writing.

Criterion B

In general, candidates chose topics well and displayed mostly good understanding and knowledge of the works. A topic phrased as a question appeared to be usually more helpful in staying focussed and not drifting off into contextual excursions.

Criterion C

More emphasis could be put on working on appreciation of the writer's choices, since this seemed to be the most difficult criterion in which to achieve higher marks. Candidates need to engage with the work their assignment is based on and they should be able to read in between the lines.

The biggest problem with the weaker essays was that they did not deal with writer's choices at all. In satisfactory assignments, candidates were usually able to appreciate the language, literary techniques or style, but they were generally not able to analyze their role and function well. In spite of this, candidates were often able to recognize literary tools or stylistic features and name them properly.

Criterion D

Many essays seemed to have a good structure. However, there were too many essays that were not proof-read before submission; for example, some included the same paragraphs twice. In some cases, candidates lost sight of the topic when they started giving unnecessary details related to the author or period.

The best essays had an effective structure: for instance, there did not include long biographies nor any other details about the author that were not related to the assignment, but a simple introduction with constant references to the works studied. An effective research question usually framed the text well.

Candidates need to justify their arguments by integrating examples and quotations from the work chosen. These references should be an integral part of the essay, since the argumentation should be supported by them. More emphasis should be put into the last paragraph: it should conclude the whole essay. At its best, it usually demonstrates the depth of the argumentation and the findings of the essay.

Criterion E

Almost all candidates understood the formality of the task and used an appropriate register. However, there was a large range of abilities seen. Some candidates possess a very good command of the Finnish language and expressed their ideas and argumentation in a clear way, whereas others had a poorer command of the language, which led to severe problems in understanding. It should be reminded that candidates should proof-read their assignments before submitting them.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The administration of reflective statements is an area for improvement. Teachers should definitely study the requirements for the written assignment procedures in order to avoid disadvantaging candidates.

The reflective statement always needs to consist of open and direct reflection and should contain references to the classroom discussion as well as contextual knowledge and understanding.

More emphasis could be given to the research question. If candidates find a suitable research question, they are more likely to succeed in the task. If a research question relates to literary or stylistic devices, then candidates are more likely to be able to analyze more literary devices in their analysis, which will lead to better marks on criterion C.

The work must be proof-read before submitting.

School supported self-taught candidates should write their written assignment on the basis of their journal writing. Their journal must be written in Finnish. Candidates should avoid a language mix of Finnish with examples or quotations written in English or some other languages.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 3 | 4 - 7 | 8 - 9 | 10 - 11 | 12 - 14 | 15 - 16 | 17 - 20 |

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

This year, as in the previous session, a vast majority of candidates wrote their commentary on poetry. The commentaries on the prose passage, though, seemed stronger as a whole, even though candidates may not have thought that they were so familiar with the analysis of prose, at least when it comes to the literary features. The poem by Tuomas Anhava on the other hand proved to be rather challenging: candidates struggled with constructing coherent and logical interpretations.

It seems that many candidates have a good grasp of literary devices, but they do not always know how to analyze their effects. Sometimes this resulted in listing these devices only without any consideration of their meaning. Good commentaries incorporated a consideration of literary features as part of the interpretation of the text.

The interpretations of the poem or prose passage should also be justified with specific textual referencing and adequate explanations. This year many of the poetry commentaries offered interpretations that were not substantiated by close references to the poem. There were also some interpretations based on a single phrase (for example '*fascinating massacre*', *kiehtova verilöyly*, in Anhava's poem) which resulted in rather confusing statements not supported by the poem as a whole.

Many candidates had serious problems integrating references and quotations to their responses.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates who read the whole text carefully and planned their responses well before writing performed reasonably well. There were many well organized commentaries with a visible, logical structure and good opening and concluding paragraphs.

Attention had been given to literary devices, so that many candidates were capable of very detailed and sophisticated analysis of the writer's choices, especially in the poetry commentaries.

As a whole, the language and style of the commentaries were very good.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Prose

The prose passage from Jukka Itkonen's collection *Sorsa norsun räätälinä* (2008) seemed to be easier for the candidates this year in comparison to the poem. Most candidates recognized the intertextual connections in the extract *Kolme Musketööriä* and also noted the irony and absurd features this pastiche of the fairy tale genre contains. Many candidates gave a valid analysis of the structure and narrative technique of the passage. Weaker candidates didn't recognize the similarities between the passage and fairy tale genre and had trouble dealing with the periodical elements and humour of the text.

Again the candidates who tried to work through the prose passage in a linear fashion seemed to run out of time. The thematic approach or concentrating on significant literary features linked with themes as the organizing factor seemed to lead to better results.

Poetry

Tuomas Anhava's poem *Monet* (1955) seemed to be rather difficult for many candidates.

On the one hand, there were some excellent commentaries that demonstrated sophisticated engagement with the poem and close attention to the diction, but many candidates were unable to grasp the poem, at least in terms of the overall meaning.

Many candidates struggled with identifying the speaker of the poem and offered different kinds of interpretations. The first person speaker, visible in the opening line, *Minua on monta*, was defined as a veteran of war, an inhuman war criminal, the voice of God or personalised death or of the history of humankind, or as a voice of a poet, for example. Some offered an interpretation without basing it tightly enough on the poem, which led them later on to ignore any aspect of the poem which did not correspond to their original idea. Several candidates noticed, by the end of their commentary, that they had arrived at a totally different kind of reading of the poem than the one they had started with. This was of course acceptable if the change was justified in their response and if they managed to show what influenced their reception of the poem.

Several candidates interpreted the poem within the context of WWII. Often their reading was based solely on the year the poem was published (1955), without any concrete textual evidence from the poem. Some candidates claimed the speaker to be the poet Tuomas Anhava himself. On the other

hand, some offered interesting metapoetic readings of the poem, but the majority of the candidates interpreted the poem as a description of human identity and its development. Again many candidates offered several possible readings in their commentary. Often it would have been better if they had chosen only one interpretation and tried to support it with precise quotations.

As a whole, candidates worked very hard offering analysis of the literary features in the poem including for example the metaphoric language, use of allusions, structure, enjambments and rhythm. Some candidates produced long, detailed listings of different devices, but forgot to consider their effects on the context of the poem as a whole.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As in the previous session, candidates should be encouraged to prepare as thoroughly for analysing prose and its conventions as for the poetry. Many of the candidates that were struggling with the poetry commentary might have done better with the prose passage this year.

Candidates should also get an overview of the whole poem or passage and plan their answer before writing anything. The commentary must cover the entire passage or the entire poem so that the interpretations are based on the text as a whole, not just on some part(s) of it. All interpretations should also be justified with textual referencing.

When using quotations, giving the line numbers is not enough: candidates need to be able to embed quotations into their responses.

Candidates need to remember that speculating upon the aim of the writer is futile: we can't be sure of a writer's intentions as we can only know what a narrator/persona or characters think/say/do and how we react upon that as readers.

Further comments

Quite a few scripts were very difficult to read and mark this year due to illegible handwriting. That which cannot be read cannot be credited either. Candidates should use good pens and practise writing by hand more.

This year there were again several unfinished commentaries. Candidates should learn to plan their responses before writing: thinking via writing does not usually lead to structured, logical responses. Some candidates seem to need more opportunities to practise writing against time limits before the final examinations take place.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 2 | 3 - 5 | 6 - 8 | 9 - 11 | 12 - 13 | 14 - 16 | 17 - 20 |

General comments

Both, the short story and the poem have seemed easy for most candidates. Hence, some of them did not pay due attention to details and nuances and wrote more about their attitudes than about the text. At the same time, some candidates reached a very sophisticated interpretation.

All candidates had tried to write their literary analyses according to the genre. The shortest ones usually lacked detailed analysis. In the best analyses, candidates had paid attention to several various choices that the writer had made, and they were able to name, refer, quote and interpret these choices. They were able to establish a theme that would cover the whole text.

Only a few candidates did really take into account the frame of reference and its potential meaning. In the short story, it was a visit to a museum; in the poem, it was the narrative structure of a fairy or folk tale.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Interpreting the text as a whole seems to be difficult for candidates: they find difficult to choose meaningful details, to understand both formal and ideational structure, to compare the beginning with the ending and to notice meaningful turning points.

Knowledge about literary conventions is weaker when discussing prose texts compared to poetry. In general, candidates have difficulties in recognizing and naming literary features. Some of them give a list of textual features without connecting them to their interpretation.

Some candidates seem to take one idea from the text and then write about their own attitudes and prejudices. They usually come to the conclusion that it is the writer's meaning to express a stereotypical theme rather than give the reader some new idea to think about.

Quite a few candidates claim that they know what the writer wanted to say, e.g. they produce the intentional fallacy.

Some candidates named the text as an extract, though in the guiding questions it was called a short story. Some candidates mixed the name of the text with the name of the book.

It is very challenging for them to use formal language correctly and to construct a cohesive structure in 90 minutes. The focus seems to be on understanding and interpreting the text. In order to improve in this area, candidates should be given the opportunity to have sufficient practice in class.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates are well prepared to produce an analysis in which they try to interpret how the writer's choices create meaning. Most of them use reasonable paragraphs with adequate coherence and are able to add quotations to their analysis.

Candidates who chose the poem seemed to know many features of poetic language, though they did not always connect these with their interpretation.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Criterion A, Understanding and interpretation

The best performances showed understanding of the text as a whole. Candidates were able to pay attention to ways in which literary devices make meaning and to refer to the text or write quotations. Their interpretations were coherent and convincing with some subtleties of the texts. Most performances were partial, so that candidates paid too much attention to some features and were misled by them to ignore some other features. The weaker performances showed candidates' attitudes and prejudices more than what was written in the text. It was often these same candidates who claimed they knew what the writer had meant in the text. Many candidates could not find out what the name of the text was or what the name of the collection was. Some candidates did not identify the text at all.

Criterion B, Appreciation of the writer's choices

In both texts there were plenty of literary choices which would guide interpretation. The frame of reference of the short story was a museum visit by a school class. The instructions in the museum created humour and irony, but only a couple of candidates were able to recognize this. The frame of reference of the poem was a fairy tale; candidates mainly recognized it but could not interpret what meaning this context brought to the poem: a generalization of a typical character, a development that would happen in spite of time and place. Some candidates gave a list of various formal features from the text, without connecting these to their interpretation. Very few candidates explained ordinary facts of the text: topic, narrator or speaker, tone, setting, character setting, conflicts etc. It was usual that candidates were able to name or to refer only to a few of the writer's choices. The concept of theme also seemed difficult. Only a few could write out what a specific theme of the text would reveal.

Criterion C, Organization

All candidates had tried to divide their text into paragraphs, but often coherence was lacking so that candidates changed topic several times in one paragraph, which became quite long. Many candidates could not contextualize e.g. characters in the context that they had explained earlier. Referring to line numbers only is problematic, because candidates' statements may remain separate and without connection to what they had written or would write. As a reader, one would expect an introduction to the text as a whole in the beginning of the literary analysis, e.g. topic, narrator or speaker, tone, setting, character setting, conflicts, frame of reference.

Criterion D, Language

As usual, English language interferes in the use of Finnish, and some linguistic structures are not proper Finnish. Too many candidates had neglected to learn the rules of punctuation or how to make quotations. Relative clauses, word order and sentence structure were the most common problems. Most of the texts were well intelligible.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Students should be encouraged to read texts attentively and in detail. They should realize that without knowledge of literary conventions their understanding and interpretation could be partial or even irrelevant. They should practise with a variety of texts, and they should learn how to enjoy reading and reflecting on a text. They should gain confidence in their reading so that they can bring their experiences and thinking to the meaning making process.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 8 | 9 - 13 | 14 - 16 | 17 - 19 | 20 - 22 | 23 - 25 |

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates were not very successful when applying their pre-acquired knowledge to the actual task in hand. The questions chosen were often not referred to appropriately or convincingly. Some candidates seemed to have problems with the concepts; for example, in some cases, they were not able to write only about motifs, but wrote about all the possible literary tropes at the same time, which should not be the case.

Most candidates knew the texts they had studied very well, but there was sometimes a lack of detailed knowledge or even false facts within the scripts (for instance, some candidates argued that the narrator of the story they had read was omniscient although this was not the case). Even if the question itself does not deal with literary devices openly, it is still important to interpret the chosen works referring to them. However, credit must be given in that candidates seemed to remember the names of the characters and the authors very well.

The scripts could be better structured. The comparison was often the most challenging task for many. Often, the comparison only became apparent in the beginning of the response or the conclusion. Here a more effective structure would have helped to connect the separate analysis of the texts.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates knew their works well, were able to summarize the plot successfully and were able to define the themes of the works studied. Many had a good repertoire of pre-learned knowledge (some candidates were even able to quote long quotations by heart). Most candidates concentrated on two works rather than on three. It seemed to be a good strategy.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The most popular question was the development of main characters and its consequences (genre: novel), over half of the candidates had chosen this question. The majority of the responses to this question were very good or good, but less successful candidates seemed to forget literary devices when interpreting the development of the main characters. In addition to this, it was quite common for candidates to forget the latter part of the question; i. e. they just concentrated on the development of the main characters at the cost of analyzing the consequences in the development.

The question that dealt with motifs in the novels was a popular one, too. However, there were some less successful candidates that had little confusion with the concept of motif. The question dealing with reliability or unreliability of narrators seemed to attract most successful candidates, since usually these candidates succeeded in their task.

Regarding poetry, the most popular question dealt with metapoetic traits. Some of the essays were extremely good. However, this question created some problems, too: it appeared that some candidates did not concentrate on self-reflexive or metapoetic traits but rather wrote about their poetry collections in a too broad way (thinking that everything that deals with the life of poet, for instance, is a metapoetic trait). There were some candidates that chose the question about symbols in poetry. The best candidates were able to write a good analysis but there were problems with some candidates that had not figured out what is the difference between symbol, motif and metaphor and added up different types of figurative language to their script.

The most attractive drama question dealt with climax. This seemed to be a little bit problematic because some of the candidates answered this question although their chosen work did not have a clear climax. However, most of the drama answers were of high quality. For instance, there were only a few papers that analyzed foregrounding in their chosen dramas. All of these candidates succeeded, since this question appeared to be very open to originality of thoughts and interpretations.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should read the question properly and make sure that they have taken into account every aspect of the question. Quite often questions can take up two different aspects and both of them need to be considered.

Teachers could encourage candidates to write a concise response with a clear structure rather than a longer response with a lot of repetitions. A more effective structure would have helped to connect the separate analysis of the texts and establish connections between the two or three works analyzed.

It is always useful to give a short introduction of the work in question from the view point of the question before taking a closer look into the work in question.

Candidates should use literary devices when interpreting the work in question.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13 - 15 | 16 - 19 | 20 - 22 | 23 - 25 |

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Paper 2 is the part of the exam that offers an opportunity for candidates to show their understanding of the works and especially: to re-evaluate their understanding of texts in the light of a new idea. However, there is a lot to accomplish in this ninety-minute exercise of Paper 2 for SL. Candidates need to make statements of knowledge relevant to the question, support those statements with specific evidence, discuss the contributions of related literary conventions and then show how this knowledge contributes to the central ideas of each work. There was evidence of this in some responses.

Many candidates were not secure in their use of knowledge to address the question and, unfortunately, many responses appeared to be prepared all-purpose essays. The ability to focus on the demands of the task and think through the implications of the selected question proved to be the most significant factor in the determination of achievement.

Poor focus and also lack of planning were obvious in many essays. Candidates seemed to lack a plan of action before writing. Many essays began with a level of generality which is not helpful in directing the response. Too many times the real point of the essay emerged only in the conclusion.

Furthermore, many of the candidates who were able to refer to works adequately had the same ideas and made the same conclusions than those who had read the same works. They even had the same quotations and the same supporting examples in their texts, instead of showing independent thought. Nevertheless, there were also good and excellent candidates who were able to refer to details in support of their arguments. They also showed a deep understanding of works they had studied.

One of the biggest difficulties for candidates is focusing on the question chosen. Candidates often seem to be more anxious to display knowledge of the text than to respond to the question. While some candidates struggled because it seemed as if they were unfamiliar with the works studied, others struggled because, although they knew the works studied, they were unable to focus on the particular demands of the question.

In fact, many of the candidates showed only a superficial knowledge and understanding of the works used in the responses. Some of the students couldn't answer the question, because they had not understood the books they had read. Weaker essays normally presented basic information about the

works: theme, characters and plot. Description of the plot is significant to the weaker responses. Too many essays did not give detailed references to justify the claims made.

There definitely is room for improvement in the structure of the essays. Most conclusions are trivial summaries. However, many essays have a clear structure, but only the best essays show development of the topic.

The most problematic of the criteria is Criterion C: Appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre, because candidates are seldom able to appreciate the effects of the literary features in relation to the question. They somehow forget that aspect. Some of the candidates are not at all familiar with the critical analysis of the effects of literary features. They find hard to make any comments on the literary features and it seemed even harder to integrate these observations into the body of the essay in a natural and persuasive way.

Last but not least: the accuracy of grammar is sometimes very poor, as in previous sessions. All kinds of basic and trivial mistakes are to be found in too many essays. Even it is only criterion E that assesses the language, if candidates are not able to formulate and write their thoughts and ideas, they won't be able to fulfil some of the requirements of the other criteria.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most of the candidates had chosen a question from the genre 'novel' and answered question 9. The other two questions which were very specific and used literary concepts such as 'unreliable narrator' ("epäluotettava kertoja", question 7) seemed less popular amongst candidates.

However, candidates who knew the concepts of unreliable narrator and intertextuality showed that they were able to analyse these features from a literary piece, which reveals the depth in the teaching of literary features. Students were also able to connect their observations of literary features to understanding the meaning of the whole text: some of the students really understand the power of intertextuality in shaping of a text's meaning by another text.

The best candidates have a very good understanding of literary texts and literary conventions. They also showed good analytical skills and their language skills are good too.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding

Many candidates showed mainly good, and some even excellent, understanding of the works studied, but it was a problem that they often used the same "carefully chosen" examples and "detailed" references to the works. Because of that, the essays were sometimes stereotypical and lacked the personal response. Students could pay more attention to the different interpretations of the works, because, if they do not understand the works, they will have difficulties to analyse them.

Criterion B: Response to the question

It seems that it was hard for many candidates to respond exactly to the question. It can easily be seen from the beginning of the essays: candidates do not focus on the question asked. Because the point

of the question is not taken into account, the essay is not well-structured. Sometimes the point of the question can only be read at the end of the essay, in the last paragraph.

It was also hard for some candidates to show any kind of independence of thought or any personal response to the works studied in relation to the question. Most important in studying the chosen works of different authors is to focus on candidate's own independent thought and personal response to the works. The works studied should offer candidates a possibility of inspiration and to show their skills by writing about interesting subjects in their response.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre

It seems that literary conventions are unfamiliar for most of the candidates. Candidates focus on the content of the works and forget to analyse any literary features. If candidates are able to identify them, observation tends to be poor because literary features are just mentioned, rather than analysed deeply in connection to the meaning of the texts.

Criterion D: Organisation and development

The structure of the essay has caused problems to some candidates. Generally, paragraphs were too long. Ideas were not always presented in an ordered and logical sequence. For example, it is important to explain briefly the content of the works in the beginning of the response so that the reader knows what kind of works are analysed in the essay.

Furthermore, many of the students were able to name and find literary features, but often their observations were not connected to the interpretation of the text. If the observations of literary features (imagery, style, narration etc.) are disconnected from interpretation, it causes problems in the structure: the response is not logical and there is no coherence or clear focus at all: the whole response consists of occasional observations. The interpretation of the text must be kept in mind all the time.

A meaningful and logical structure is a crucial aspect in learning how to write a good essay. For this reason, more attention should be paid by teachers on students' writing skills and on expressing ideas in a logical way.

Criterion E: Language

Teachers and candidates must keep an eye on the presentation and the formal use of language because too many candidates have difficulties in writing precise and clear language. They have problems in sentence construction and the choice of vocabulary. Some students had a lot of lapses in grammar. However, the use of language was quite accurate at some schools, and the choice of register was also appropriate for the occasion.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

First of all: teachers should show candidates that the interpretation of a topic is a matter of great importance. Candidates are supposed to concentrate on responding to the question. They must think carefully the requirements of the question they have chosen. Good candidates can link general knowledge of a literary work to an adequate and interesting interpretation of the topic. It is important that the essay is not a general presentation of two literary works, repeating what was said by the teacher in the classroom.

The real challenge is to integrate deep and personal knowledge and understanding of a literary work (content and technique) with an interesting interpretation of a given topic. Candidates should learn not only to give accurate information about the literary works, but to give detailed references, justifying their claims.

To summarize: candidates need more guidance in learning argumentation skills because these are actually needed in Paper 2. For a good, and especially for an excellent response, candidates need to make statements that are relevant to the question and support those statements with references from the texts they have read. That is why the candidates should be taught how to develop their understanding of the literary works by discussing them from many different and specific perspectives.

The demands of good argumentation also mean that candidates should learn to organize and develop their ideas better. More attention should definitely be directed to developing own ideas: candidates should be encouraged to develop independent approaches to the topics. It is crucial that they are able to show how their knowledge contributes to the central ideas of each work.

Future candidates would certainly benefit from increased opportunities to learn how to decode questions and identify the key terms. This would support more precise engagement with the task by providing a sharper direction, based on a defined understanding of the concepts.

There could also be more focus on the skills needed for comparing and contrasting texts. This is something which could enter into teaching in all parts of the syllabus, even though it is a specific requirement for paper 2.

It also seems that candidates don't pay too much attention to the importance of structure in their essays: they don't know how to begin and how to develop the topic through the essay. Candidates should learn how to structure their responses, with interesting introductions and conclusions. That is why teachers could focus more on basic essay writing skills.

In addition, teachers should continue to focus on language skills: there are too many candidates who don't write with clarity or precision. Actually, a significant number showed poor language skills. Cohesion and sentence structure are things, among other aspects of grammar, that should be a part of the programme when studying essay writing. All candidates must receive efficient teaching on how to write correctly and clearly.

Essays about the short story topics often showed a misunderstanding, discussing novels instead. This confusion probably depends on the Finnish word for short story being 'novelli' which is close to the English word 'novel'. Furthermore, the handwriting of many candidates is poor. Candidates with poor handwriting must be identified early on in their studies so they can receive appropriate teacher guidance.

Teaching must focus more on:

- Personal response
- The literary features of a work
- The structure of an essay
- The language skills.