

ENGLISH LITERATURE ADMISSIONS TEST: Marking Criteria

Range	Features of performance
27 – 30	<i>Highly impressive work, with few if any areas of significant weakness.</i> The candidate's argument will be well structured and fully developed, underpinned by detailed and perceptive close reading which demonstrates secure comprehension and moves confidently between the passages.
24 – 26	<i>Work which shows clear signs of an ability to identify and respond to the literary features and nuances of the texts under discussion together with independence or originality of thought.</i> While the argument or analysis may have some hesitations, essays which show good comprehension and close reading skills and can use these to support a generally well-focused argument, based on a confident comparison of the selected passages and an appropriate awareness of genre, should be placed in this range.
18 – 23	<i>Essays which demonstrate the qualities described above, but less consistently or less confidently.</i> In selecting their passages, candidates will have identified an appropriate basis for comparison or contrast; and close reading skills will be generally well developed, going beyond a straightforward analysis of content to compare and comment on the effects of structure, language and style. Answers which clearly signal the candidate's engagement with the passages chosen and the ability to develop a well-supported argument (even if there are some lapses of focus or instances of misreading) may be placed in the upper half of this range. Essays where the level of response to one passage is significantly higher than to the other(s), though the overall quality of the essay is promising, may be placed in the lower half.
12 – 17	<i>Essays that, on balance, provide limited evidence of effective close reading or responsiveness to literature.</i> Close reading skills may tend to be under-developed, concentrating too much on narrative summary at the expense of features of language, even though there will be some evidence of engagement with the chosen material. The analysis may be rather superficial or glib; or alternatively thorough but pedestrian, with limited awareness of the possibilities offered by the chosen passages. Answers may focus only on one passage or may offer only a token gesture towards comparative discussion. Essays which would otherwise be placed in the range above, but which are seriously mistimed so that they lack proper development may be placed in the upper half of this range. Essays should be placed in the lower part if they fail to make clear what they are exploring or illustrating, but otherwise offer at least an attempt at close reading of the passages.
9 – 11	<i>Essays which show the candidate has struggled to meet the terms of the task belong in this range.</i> Scant engagement with the passages (or possibly with only one passage), coupled with limited evidence of insight or awareness of the effects of structure, language and features of style, will characterise essays at this level. Arguments may be offered but lack substance or sufficient support to be at all persuasive.
0 – 8	Marks below 9 should be reserved for essays which, for whatever reason, are completely inadequate or unacceptable as a response to the task.