1.8 Literature: Unseen

AQA 7712 · about 285 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Five Original Unseen Texts for Practice: Three Poems and Two Prose Extracts

Source written for Revision Library (original, copyright-free). All five texts below (Sources A to E) were written specifically for this worksheet and have not been previously published. They are free for educational reproduction and study; not to be redistributed for commercial purposes. None of these texts is extracted from, paraphrased from, or based on any published or in-copyright work.

SOURCE A: POEM - 'Nightfall Over the Sidings'

1 The engines have gone quiet for the night,

2 and steam sits low along the sidings, pale

3 as breath held back. A single lamp lets fall

4 its circle on the gravel, thin and tired.

5 Somewhere a shunter's whistle, far and small,

6 folds itself into the dark like a word

7 half-spoken. Rust has eaten at the rails

8 in patches, orange as a healing wound.

9 I stand where the platform ends, where the town

10 gives up its edges to the goods yard's hush,

11 and watch the last light climb the water tower

12 the way a hand might climb a sleeping arm.

13 Nothing here is finished. Nothing here

14 is new. The sidings keep their old freight waiting,

15 carriages coupled to a line that goes

16 nowhere tonight, and everywhere tomorrow.

SOURCE B: POEM - 'The Allotment'

1 She kneels among the beanpoles, knees gone stiff,

2 and turns the soil the way she's always done -

3 by feel, not sight, the fork remembering

4 what forty years of Saturdays have taught it.

5 The runner beans have climbed past where she reaches;

6 she leaves the topmost pods for wood pigeons,

7 calls it a fair exchange, though no one's asked her.

8 The shed still holds her husband's boots, size ten,

9 too good, she says, to throw away just yet.

10 Marrow and rhubarb, onions set in rows

11 as straight as anything she means to keep.

12 Some plots nearby have gone to nettle now,

13 their owners moved on, or simply moved away,

14 but hers stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for -

15 a small square kept against the creeping dark

16 the way a name is kept, repeated, said.

SOURCE C: POEM - 'Machinery'

1 Something in the walls keeps time -

2 not a clock, not quite a pulse,

3 but a low mechanical breathing

4 that the house has learned to wear

5 like a second skin it forgets it's wearing.

6 We built it to keep us warm.

7 We did not ask what it would keep,

8 only that it should keep. Now

9 it hums beneath the floorboards

10 at three, at four, at the hour

11 no one names because no one's awake to name it,

12 and I have started to wonder

13 whether the house runs us

14 or we the house, whether the warmth

15 we bought was ever really ours

16 to switch off, given how the switch

17 sits so far from the hand

18 that first imagined needing it.

SOURCE D: PROSE EXTRACT - 'The Long Corridor'

Paragraph 1: The corridor smelled of the same disinfectant it always smelled of, a smell Marion had come to associate less with hospitals than with waiting itself, as though someone, somewhere, bottled the scent and pumped it through vents marked PATIENCE. She had counted the tiles eleven times. Eleven times fourteen came to a number she kept losing at the edges.

Paragraph 2: Her brother sat two chairs down, elbows on knees, phone face down on his thigh as if it might go off and demand something of him he wasn't ready to give. Neither of them had said much since the nurse with the kind, tired eyes had gone through the double doors an hour ago, promising news 'as soon as there is any,' a sentence built, Marion thought, entirely out of soft materials, designed to hold no weight at all.

Paragraph 3: A trolley rattled past. Somewhere a machine beeped twice and stopped, and nobody in the corridor looked up, because everybody in the corridor had learned, in the space of that single afternoon, the difference between a beep that meant something and a beep that didn't, though nobody could have said how.

Paragraph 4: 'She'll be fine,' Liam said, not for the first time, and not, Marion understood, because he believed it more than she did, but because saying it kept a shape in the air between them that silence would otherwise have taken.

Paragraph 5: Marion nodded. She was watching the doors. She had noticed, the way you notice things you will remember for years without meaning to, that the doors had a small round window at head height, reinforced with wire mesh, and that the wire mesh made a grid over whatever moved beyond it, breaking every shape into small, manageable squares.

Paragraph 6: If she looked at the doors long enough, she thought, she could keep whatever was coming small. Keep it in squares. Keep it manageable.

Paragraph 7: The doors did not open.

Paragraph 8: Eleven times fourteen, she thought again, and this time let the number go.

SOURCE E: PROSE EXTRACT - 'Low Tide'

Paragraph 1: The town had been built, my grandmother used to say, by people who trusted the sea to stay where it was put, and had been slowly proved wrong ever since. By the time I knew it, half the front was boarded, the amusement arcade kept one arm of lights working out of six, and the pier stopped a good thirty feet short of where it used to reach, fenced off behind a sign that had lost most of its red paint and all of its urgency.

Paragraph 2: We went every August regardless. My mother would say it was tradition, though I think now she meant it was cheap, and that the two things had simply grown to look alike to her over the years.

Paragraph 3: I remember the tide going out further than seemed sensible, uncovering a wide brown apron of sand studded with black stones, and my grandmother walking further onto it than any of us, her shoes in her hand, calling back over her shoulder that the sea always came back, that it had never once forgotten to, whatever else it forgot.

Paragraph 4: She died the winter I turned twelve, and we did not go back to that town for many years.

Paragraph 5: When I did return, a grown woman with a car of my own and a daughter asleep in the back seat, I found the arcade gone entirely, the pier reduced to a stub the council had finally made safe by removing it, and the sand, when the tide pulled away from it, exactly as brown and stone-studded as I remembered, as though the town had lost everything it was permitted to lose and had simply stopped there, holding what remained.

Paragraph 6: I did not tell my daughter any of this. I let her run ahead of me onto the sand, the way my grandmother once had, and I watched the tide, and I waited, the way you wait for a sentence you already know the end of, to see whether it would come back.

1 Refer to Source A, 'Nightfall Over the Sidings', lines 1-8 only, for this question.

(a) List four different poetic techniques used across lines 1-8, giving one supporting quotation for each. You may not use the same technique twice. **(8)**

(b) Explain the effect of one image of your choice from lines 1-8. **(4)**

(c) Explore how the poet creates a sense of mood in lines 1-8. **(8)**

(Total for Question 1 is 20 marks)

2 Refer to the whole of Source A, 'Nightfall Over the Sidings', for this question.

(a) Explain the effect of the paradox in the poem's final two lines: 'a line that goes / nowhere tonight, and everywhere tomorrow.' **(4)**

(b) Explore how the poet presents ideas about time and permanence in the poem as a whole. **(16)**

(Total for Question 2 is 20 marks)

3 Refer to Source B, 'The Allotment', for this question.

(a) Identify one structural feature of the poem and explain its effect. **(4)**

(b) Explore how the poet presents the woman's relationship with time and loss. **(16)**

(Total for Question 3 is 20 marks)

4 Compare how the poets present the idea of resisting change in Source A, 'Nightfall Over the Sidings', and Source B, 'The Allotment'.

(Total for Question 4 is 20 marks)

5 Refer to Source D, 'The Long Corridor', for this question.

(a) Identify the narrative viewpoint used in the extract and explain one effect it creates. **(4)**

(b) Explain how the writer's use of sentence structure creates tension in one example from the extract. **(4)**

(c) Explore how the writer creates tension in this extract. **(16)**

(Total for Question 5 is 24 marks)

6 Explore how the writer uses the image of the doors and their wire-mesh window to shape meaning in Source D, 'The Long Corridor'.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

7 Compare how the poets use imagery of the built or domestic environment to explore control and powerlessness in Source C, 'Machinery', and Source A, 'Nightfall Over the Sidings'.

(Total for Question 7 is 20 marks)

8 Compare how the writer of Source E, 'Low Tide', and the poet of Source B, 'The Allotment', present the theme of holding onto the past.

(Total for Question 8 is 20 marks)

9 'The poem is ultimately more optimistic than it is troubling.' Using Source C, 'Machinery', and your own interpretation, evaluate this view, supporting your response with close analysis of language and form.

(Total for Question 9 is 25 marks)

10 Refer to Source E, 'Low Tide', for this question.

(a) Identify the narrative perspective and tense used in the extract and explain one effect of this choice. **(4)**

(b) Explore how the writer presents the relationship between memory and place in this extract. **(16)**

(Total for Question 10 is 20 marks)

11 Explore how the writer structures Source E, 'Low Tide', to shape the reader's response to loss.

(Total for Question 11 is 12 marks)

12 Refer to Source C, 'Machinery', for this question.

(a) Identify one example of ambiguity in the poem and explain a possible effect it creates. **(4)**

(b) Explore the ways the poet presents the relationship between people and technology in the poem, considering at least one alternative interpretation of the poem's central attitude. **(20)**

(Total for Question 12 is 24 marks)

Mark scheme · 1.8 Literature: Unseen

Question 1

(a) correctly names a first technique, e.g. simile	**B1**
(a) gives an accurate supporting quotation for that technique, e.g. 'pale as breath held back' or 'orange as a healing wound'	**B1**
(a) correctly names a second, different technique, e.g. personification	**B1**
(a) gives an accurate supporting quotation, e.g. 'Rust has eaten at the rails'	**B1**
(a) correctly names a third, different technique, e.g. sibilance/alliteration	**B1**
(a) gives an accurate supporting quotation, e.g. 'steam sits...sidings'	**B1**
(a) correctly names a fourth, different technique, e.g. enjambment	**B1**
(a) gives an accurate supporting quotation or line reference, e.g. lines 2-4 running on without end-stopping; oe, accept any four distinct, well-evidenced techniques	**B1**

(a) Answer: Any four of: simile - 'pale as breath held back' / 'orange as a healing wound' / 'folds itself into the dark like a word half-spoken'; personification - 'Rust has eaten at the rails'; sibilance/alliteration - 'steam sits...sidings'; enjambment across lines 2-4 and 5-7.

(b) **L2** Clear explanation of the effect of a chosen image, with accurate reference to the text and some comment on connotation or reader response.	**3-4**
(b) **L1** Simple or general comment on an image, with little development of effect or connotation.	**1-2**
(b) **L0** No rewardable material.	**0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The simile 'pale as breath held back' compares the steam to suppressed human breath, suggesting tension or anticipation held in check across the whole scene.
- 'A single lamp lets fall / its circle on the gravel, thin and tired' personifies the lamp as weary, extending a sense of exhaustion from the industrial setting to the poem's whole atmosphere.
- The simile 'orange as a healing wound' presents the rust as organic and slow-mending, suggesting the decay is part of a natural, ongoing process rather than sudden damage.

(b) Answer: For example: the simile 'pale as breath held back' likens the steam to suppressed human breath, creating a sense of quiet tension and anticipation that colours the whole opening of the poem.

(c) **L4** Assured, well-organised exploration of mood, analysing more than one method (imagery, sound, structure) with precise, well-integrated quotation and a confident personal response.	**7-8**
(c) **L3** Clear, relevant analysis of how language and imagery create mood, using appropriate terminology and effective textual detail.	**5-6**
(c) **L2** Some relevant comment on mood, with quotations used but not always closely examined; explanation rather than analysis.	**3-4**
(c) **L1** Simple, largely descriptive response to mood, with little use of subject terminology and undeveloped or unsupported comment.	**1-2**
(c) **L0** No rewardable material.	**0**

(c) Indicative content:

- References to stillness and hush ('gone quiet for the night', 'steam sits low') establish a subdued, becalmed mood from the opening line.
- The simile 'pale as breath held back' links industrial steam to human tension and anticipation, deepening the quiet unease of the scene.
- The image of the 'single lamp' whose light is 'thin and tired' suggests weariness and melancholy, reinforced by its diminished, singular presence in a large space.
- Sound imagery ('a shunter's whistle, far and small') reinforces distance and quiet, situating the reader in an almost empty, echoing landscape.
- The simile 'folds itself into the dark like a word half-spoken' suggests unfinished, suppressed communication, extending the mood of quiet unease introduced by the steam simile.
- The rust imagery, 'orange as a healing wound', introduces a note of slow, natural decay alongside the stillness, complicating the calm mood with an undercurrent of damage.

(c) Answer: The extract builds a hushed, weary and quietly uneasy mood through imagery of held breath, tired light and suppressed sound, using simile and personification to link the industrial setting to human tension and slow decay.

Question 2

(a) **L2** Clear explanation of the paradox, showing how it holds contradictory ideas (stasis and possibility) in tension, with accurate reference to the text.	**3-4**
(a) **L1** Simple or general comment that the lines are contradictory or confusing, without developed explanation of effect.	**1-2**
(a) **L0** No rewardable material.	**0**

(a) Indicative content:

- The contradiction between 'nowhere tonight' and 'everywhere tomorrow' holds stasis and potential in tension, refusing to resolve whether the scene is one of stagnation or dormant possibility.
- The paradox extends the poem's wider concern with the sidings as a liminal, waiting space, suggesting that apparent inactivity may contain the seeds of future movement.
- Ending on an unresolved paradox rather than a settled statement leaves the reader with deliberate ambiguity, resisting a single, comfortable interpretation of the scene.

(a) Answer: The paradox holds stillness and potential together without resolving them, suggesting the sidings' apparent stagnation may conceal dormant possibility, and leaves the poem's ending deliberately open and ambiguous.

(b) **L4** Sophisticated, coherent and conceptualised exploration of time and permanence, analysing the interplay of language, form and structure across the whole poem, with discriminating textual evidence and, where relevant, perceptive awareness of the poem's implied post-industrial context.	**13-16**
(b) **L3** Clear, well-structured analysis of language, form and structure in relation to time and permanence, using apt textual detail and appropriate terminology; some sound awareness of context.	**9-12**

(b) **L2** Some relevant explanation of content and method in relation to time and permanence; supporting reference is present but not always closely analysed. **5-8**

(b) **L1** Simple, largely descriptive or narrative response with limited reference to the text and little use of subject terminology. **1-4**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The personified decay imagery, 'Rust has eaten at the rails...orange as a healing wound', suggests slow, ongoing processes of change existing alongside apparent stillness, complicating any simple idea of permanence.
- The simile 'the way a hand might climb a sleeping arm' (light climbing the water tower) implies dormant potential and quiet renewal within an apparently static, sleeping landscape.
- The structural repetition of negation, 'Nothing here is finished. Nothing here / is new', uses anaphora to emphasise cyclical rather than linear time, suggesting the yard exists in a permanent, unresolved in-between state.
- The final paradox ('nowhere tonight, and everywhere tomorrow') refuses to resolve stasis and possibility, encapsulating the poem's central tension between permanence and change.
- The speaker's liminal position, 'where the platform ends, where the town / gives up its edges', mirrors the poem's thematic interest in thresholds and transition rather than fixed states.
- A candidate might read the poem's implied context as a post-industrial landscape of managed economic decline, where 'old freight waiting' suggests both literal cargo and a wider sense of a community or industry suspended between past use and uncertain future.
- The poem's free-verse form, with its long, flowing sentences and frequent enjambment (e.g. lines 5-7), enacts the drifting, uncommitted quality of time within the sidings, resisting a neat or resolved structural close.

(b) Answer: The poem presents time as cyclical and unresolved rather than linear: decay (rust) and dormancy (sleeping light) coexist, structural repetition of negation reinforces stasis, and the closing paradox holds permanence and change in unresolved tension, reflecting an implied post-industrial landscape suspended between past use and uncertain future.

Question 3

(a) **L2** Clear identification of a structural feature with a developed explanation of its effect, supported by accurate reference to the text. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple identification of a structural feature with little or no explanation of effect. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- The repeated verb structure in line 14, 'stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for', creates an incantatory, insistent rhythm that mirrors the woman's quiet determination to resist change.
- The poem's single unbroken block of sixteen lines gives a controlled, continuous shape, echoing the neat, tended rows described within it ('onions set in rows / as straight as anything she means to keep').
- Enjambment (e.g. lines 3-4, 10-11 and 15-16) creates a flowing, unbroken quality that mirrors the continuity and habitual repetition central to the poem's meaning.

(a) Answer: For example: the triple repetition 'stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for' creates an incantatory rhythm that enacts the woman's quiet, determined resistance to time and loss.

(b) **L4** Sophisticated, coherent and conceptualised exploration of the woman's relationship with time and loss, exploring the interplay of language, form and structure with discriminating textual evidence and an assured personal interpretation. **13-16**

(b) **L3** Clear, well-structured analysis of language, form and structure in relation to time and loss, using apt textual detail and appropriate terminology. **9-12**

(b) **L2** Some relevant explanation of content and method in relation to time and/or loss; supporting reference present but not always closely analysed. **5-8**

(b) **L1** Simple, largely descriptive or narrative response with limited reference to the text. **1-4**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- Physical detail, 'knees gone stiff', and habitual, embodied action, 'by feel, not sight', establish a relationship with time built through repeated, physical labour across 'forty years of Saturdays'.
- The husband's boots, kept in the shed because they are 'too good...to throw away just yet', function as a symbol of deferred grief, suggesting loss that has not yet been fully processed or accepted.
- The structural refrain 'stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for' enacts resistance to time and loss through insistent repetition, turning ordinary gardening tasks into a form of quiet defiance.
- The contrast between her tended plot and neighbouring plots that 'have gone to nettle now' (abandonment through death or departure) frames her continued cultivation as a deliberate, meaningful act of resistance against a wider pattern of loss.
- The closing simile, comparing the kept plot to 'the way a name is kept, repeated, said', explicitly links physical cultivation to memory and memorial, suggesting gardening functions as a form of remembrance.
- The poem's tone is understated rather than lamenting, using plain, concrete diction (marrow, rhubarb, onions) rather than heightened emotional language, suggesting the woman's relationship with loss is expressed through action and habit rather than open grief.

(b) Answer: The poem presents the woman's relationship with time and loss as one of quiet, physical resistance: habitual labour and kept objects (the boots) defer grief, while the structural refrain and closing simile of a 'kept' name suggest her cultivation functions as an ongoing act of memorial rather than passive endurance.

Question 4

Level 5 A sophisticated, well-substantiated comparison, analysing a wide range of methods across both poems with precise, well-integrated textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; genuine, sustained comparison throughout rather than sequential treatment. **17-20**

Level 4 A convincing comparison with clear analysis of methods across both poems and well-chosen textual support; comparison is sustained for most of the response. **13-16**

Level 3 A clear comparison with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support from both poems, though development may be uneven or partly one poem at a time. **9-12**

Level 2 Some relevant comparative comment with reference to both poems, but analysis is thin and points are often treated separately rather than compared directly. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general or largely descriptive response with minimal reference to one or both poems and no meaningful comparison. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Both poems use small, deliberate human actions set against a backdrop of larger decline: the speaker's steady watching in Source A, and the woman's continued tending in Source B.
- Source A presents change as impersonal and structural (industrial decay, rust, low steam), while Source B presents change as more human-scaled and communal (neighbouring plots abandoned through death or departure).
- Both poems use anaphora or repeated structures to resist forward motion: Source A's repeated negation ('Nothing here is...') and Source B's repeated affirmation ('stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for') achieve a similar insistent rhythm but with contrasting tonal effect (suspended ambiguity versus defiant continuity).
- Source A ends on an unresolved paradox holding stasis and possibility together, while Source B ends on a simile of continuity and memorial, offering a more resolved, though still poignant, note.
- A contextual reading might note that Source A implies a landscape of post-industrial economic change (the yard, the freight, the rust), while Source B implies the erosion of allotment culture and ageing communities, both suggesting eras of broader social and economic change against which the individual acts of resistance are set.
- Candidates might argue Source B's resistance is more successful or sustaining (the plot 'stays...spoken for'), while Source A's is more passive and observational (the speaker merely 'stands' and 'watches'), suggesting a difference in the degree of agency each speaker or subject has over the change they face.

Question 5

(a) **L2** Clear identification of the narrative viewpoint with a developed explanation of its effect, supported by accurate reference to the text. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple identification of the viewpoint with little or no explanation of effect. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- The extract uses third-person narration closely restricted to Marion's perspective (free indirect style, e.g. 'She had counted the tiles eleven times'), giving the reader intimate access to her private, obsessive coping strategies.
- This restricted viewpoint means the reader, like Marion, is denied direct knowledge of what is happening beyond the doors, heightening suspense and shared uncertainty.
- The close third-person perspective allows the narrator to comment on Marion's private interpretation of Liam's words and the nurse's promise, revealing a gap between what is said and what is privately understood.

(a) Answer: The extract uses close third-person narration focused on Marion, restricting the reader to her perspective and private thoughts, which heightens suspense by denying both Marion and the reader knowledge of events beyond the doors.

(b) **L2** Clear explanation of how a specific sentence structure creates tension, supported by accurate reference to the text. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple or general comment on sentence structure, with limited explanation of effect. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The short, isolated sentence 'The doors did not open.', given its own paragraph, creates a sudden, blunt halt after the more discursive sentences that precede it, denying the reader the resolution the build-up seems to promise.
- The long, subordinate-clause-heavy sentences describing the nurse's promise ('a sentence built...entirely out of soft materials, designed to hold no weight at all') mirror Marion's anxious, overthinking mental state through their winding, qualifying structure.
- The repeated short imperative fragments 'Keep it in squares. Keep it manageable.' create a clipped, urgent rhythm that conveys Marion's mounting need for psychological control.

(b) Answer: For example: the isolated short sentence 'The doors did not open.' is set apart as its own paragraph, creating an abrupt halt that denies resolution and sharply increases tension after the longer, more discursive sentences that precede it.

(c) **L4** Sophisticated, coherent and conceptualised exploration of how tension is created, analysing the interplay of language, form and structure across the whole extract, with discriminating textual evidence and an assured personal response. **13-16**

(c) **L3** Clear, well-structured analysis of language, form and structure in relation to tension, using apt textual detail and appropriate terminology. **9-12**

(c) **L2** Some relevant explanation of how tension is created, with supporting reference present but not always closely analysed. **5-8**

(c) **L1** Simple, largely descriptive or narrative response with limited reference to the text. **1-4**

(c) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(c) Indicative content:

- The repetition of counting ('eleven times', 'Eleven times fourteen') frames the beginning and end of the extract, functioning as a coping mechanism whose circularity increases tension by refusing narrative resolution.
- Short, blunt sentences (e.g. 'The doors did not open.') isolated for impact contrast with longer, subordinate-clause-heavy sentences, mirroring anxious overthinking and creating rhythmic variation that heightens suspense.
- The extended metaphor of the nurse's promise as being 'built...entirely out of soft materials, designed to hold no weight at all' conveys dramatic irony, since the reader senses the reassurance is unreliable even as the characters cling to it.
- The symbolic imagery of the wire mesh window, breaking movement beyond the doors into 'small, manageable squares', suggests Marion's psychological need to control an uncontrollable situation, and this motif of containment is echoed in the repeated verb 'keep' throughout the extract.
- The unresolved ending, withholding whether the news is good or bad, sustains tension beyond the extract itself, leaving the reader in the same suspended state as the characters.
- The restrained dialogue (Liam's repeated 'She'll be fine') is shown to be performative rather than genuinely reassuring, its repetition suggesting mounting anxiety rather than confidence.

(c) Answer: Tension is built through circular structure (the counting motif framing the extract), contrasting sentence lengths that mirror anxious thought, dramatic irony around the nurse's hollow reassurance, and the symbolic wire-mesh imagery of containment, all sustained by an unresolved, open ending.

Question 6

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed exploration of the symbolism of the doors, analysing a range of methods with sophisticated use of textual detail and critical vocabulary; coherent, well-organised personal response, with, where relevant, sound awareness of the significance of the institutional setting.	**10-12**
Level 3 Clear exploration of the doors' symbolic function, with relevant analysis of method and appropriate textual support.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some relevant comment on the doors' significance, with some reference to method, but analysis may be thin or unevenly developed.	**4-6**
Level 1 Simple, general or largely narrative response with limited textual support and little analysis of method.	**1-3**
Level 0 No rewardable material.	**0**

Indicative content:

- The wire mesh imposes a literal 'grid' that fragments whatever moves behind the doors into 'small, manageable squares', symbolising Marion's attempt to impose psychological control over an uncontrollable situation.
- The doors function as both a literal and metaphorical threshold, dividing the known, ordinary world of the waiting room from the unknown, possibly tragic world beyond, giving the extract a symbolic architecture of anticipation.
- The repetition of the verb 'keep' (Liam's words that 'kept a shape in the air', Marion's wish to 'keep it manageable') links the doors' symbolism to a wider motif of containment and control running through the extract.
- The final short sentence, 'The doors did not open.', withholds closure through the very symbol that has structured the extract's tension, sustaining suspense beyond the page.
- A candidate might note the significance of the hospital as a liminal, institutional space in which individuals typically lose agency, reflected in Marion's reliance on a small, controllable visual detail (the grid) as a substitute for genuine control over events.
- The doors could be read as a broader symbol for the limits of knowledge and communication between people in crisis, since neither Marion nor Liam can truly reassure the other, only perform reassurance, much as the mesh only appears to make the unknown 'manageable' without actually doing so.

Question 7

Level 5 A sophisticated, well-substantiated comparison, analysing a wide range of methods across both poems with precise, well-integrated textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; genuine, sustained comparison throughout. **17-20**

Level 4 A convincing comparison with clear analysis of methods across both poems and well-chosen textual support; comparison is sustained for most of the response. **13-16**

Level 3 A clear comparison with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support from both poems, though development may be uneven. **9-12**

Level 2 Some relevant comparative comment with reference to both poems, but analysis is thin and points are often treated separately. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general or largely descriptive response with minimal reference to one or both poems and no meaningful comparison. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Source C's house that 'runs us' evokes, at a domestic scale, the same loss of control that Source A shows at an industrial scale, where 'carriages' are 'coupled to a line that goes / nowhere tonight'.
- Both poems use built or mechanical imagery (the sidings, the water tower versus the house, the switch) as sites where human agency is questioned rather than confirmed.
- Source A externalises the built environment as a public, visibly decaying industrial space, while Source C internalises it within the private home, suggesting a shift from visible, collective forms of powerlessness to private, less visible ones.
- Structurally, both poems resist resolution: Source A ends on a spatial and temporal paradox ('nowhere tonight, and everywhere tomorrow'), while Source C ends on an unanswered rhetorical question, both refusing to settle the balance of power between people and their environment.
- A contextual reading might suggest Source A implies a post-industrial economic order in which workers and communities have limited control over decline, while Source C implies a contemporary, technologically mediated domestic order in which individuals have limited control over the systems that sustain their comfort, allowing candidates to compare two different historical moments of powerlessness.
- Candidates might note a difference in tone: Source A's powerlessness is presented with weary resignation ('Nothing here is finished'), while Source C's is presented with uneasy curiosity ('I have started to wonder'), suggesting different emotional registers for what may be a related underlying concern.

Question 8

Level 5 A sophisticated, well-substantiated comparison across prose and poetry, analysing a wide range of form-specific methods with precise, well-integrated textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; genuine, sustained comparison throughout. **17-20**

Level 4 A convincing comparison with clear analysis of methods in both texts and well-chosen textual support; comparison is sustained for most of the response. **13-16**

Level 3 A clear comparison with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support from both texts, though development may be uneven. **9-12**

Level 2 Some relevant comparative comment with reference to both texts, but analysis is thin and points are often treated separately. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general or largely descriptive response with minimal reference to one or both texts and no meaningful comparison. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Both texts centre an older female figure (the grandmother in Source E; the woman in Source B) whose habitual actions embody continuity and quiet resistance to loss.
- Both use repeated or patterned language to enact persistence structurally rather than only thematically: the tide that 'always came back' (Source E) and 'stays turned, stays sown, stays spoken for' (Source B) both function as verbal anchors against change.
- Physical objects function as anchors to the past in both texts: the husband's boots 'too good...to throw away just yet' in Source B, and the shoes the grandmother carries 'in her hand' while walking onto the sand in Source E, both symbolising a reluctance to fully let go.
- Both texts use a generational frame (the narrator's daughter in Source E; the passive witness of wood pigeons and abandoned neighbouring plots in Source B) to suggest how habits of holding on might, or might not, be passed on or sustained.
- A key difference is form: the prose extract uses first-person retrospective narration across an extended, non-linear time frame spanning decades, while the poem presents a single, continuous, present-tense scene, producing markedly different relationships between the narrating voice and the passage of time.
- Candidates might note that Source E's ending is more genuinely uncertain (the narrator 'waited...to see whether it would come back'), whereas Source B's ending is more affirmatively resolved (the plot definitively 'stays...spoken for'), suggesting the two texts differ in how confidently they resolve the tension between holding on and loss.

Question 9

Level 6 A sophisticated, well-substantiated evaluation that engages directly and critically with the given view, analysing a wide range of methods with precise, apt textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; reaches a clear, well-justified overall judgement, showing genuine engagement with alternative readings of the poem. **21-25**

Level 5 A convincing evaluation of the view with clear analysis of methods and well-chosen textual support; some genuine engagement with an alternative reading. **17-20**

Level 4 A clear response to the view with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support, though development may be uneven or alternative readings only briefly noted. **13-16**

Level 3 Some relevant engagement with the view and some analysis of the poem, but points may be underdeveloped and evaluation limited. **9-12**

Level 2 A largely descriptive or narrative response with limited engagement with the view and little effective analysis. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general response with minimal reference to the poem and no meaningful evaluation. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Arguments for 'optimistic': the domestic warmth is presented as chosen and valued ('We built it to keep us warm'), and the tone throughout is reflective and curious rather than overtly fearful ('I have started to wonder').
- Arguments for 'troubling': recurring images of lost agency (the house that 'runs us', the switch positioned 'so far from the hand / that first imagined needing it'), disrupted, unnamed time ('the hour / no one names because no one's awake to name it'), and an unresolved final question all suggest unease rather than reassurance.
- The poem's ambiguous, fragmented closing lines resist a single, settled reading, which could itself be used as an argument against a simply 'optimistic' or simply 'troubling' conclusion, since the poem may be deliberately structured to resist either label.
- Strong responses might argue the poem is most convincingly read as poised between the two positions, using its formal irresolution (halting syntax, unanswered rhetorical question, irregular line lengths) to enact the very uncertainty it describes, rather than settling on either extreme.
- Candidates might note that the poem's calm, unforced rhythm and lack of overtly negative or violent diction lend some support to a more optimistic reading, while the extended metaphor's erosion of the boundary between house and body ('a second skin it forgets it's wearing') supports a more troubling reading of surrendered identity and control.
- The best answers will use precise, well-integrated textual evidence throughout, weigh both possibilities explicitly against the given view, and reach a clear, personal, substantiated judgement about how far they agree, rather than simply describing the poem's ambiguity without evaluating the specific claim.
- A particularly sophisticated response might argue that describing the poem as 'ultimately' anything misreads its central technique, since its refusal to resolve is precisely the point, meaning the view in the quotation, while understandable, arguably underestimates the poem's deliberate and sustained ambiguity.

Question 10

(a) **L2** Clear identification of the retrospective first-person narration with a developed explanation of its effect, supported by accurate reference to the text. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple identification of the narrative perspective with little or no explanation of effect. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- The extract uses a first-person, retrospective adult narrator recalling childhood memories, creating a dual perspective in which past events are filtered through later understanding and loss.
- This retrospective viewpoint creates dramatic irony, since the adult narrator (and reader) knows the grandmother will die, while the child within the memory does not, adding poignancy to earlier scenes.
- The shift into extended reflection ('I remember...') allows the narrator to layer past and present, comparing her childhood self, her grandmother, and her own daughter across time within a single continuous narrating voice.

(a) Answer: The extract uses a first-person, retrospective adult narrator recalling childhood memory, which creates a layered, doubled perspective and dramatic irony, since the narrator's later knowledge of loss colours her account of earlier, apparently ordinary events.

(b) **L4** Sophisticated, coherent and conceptualised exploration of the relationship between memory and place, analysing the interplay of language, form and structure with discriminating textual evidence and, where relevant, perceptive awareness of the implied context of British seaside decline. **13-16**

(b) **L3** Clear, well-structured analysis of language, form and structure in relation to memory and place, using apt textual detail and appropriate terminology; some sound awareness of context. **9-12**

(b) **L2** Some relevant explanation of content and method in relation to memory and/or place; supporting reference present but not always closely analysed. **5-8**

(b) **L1** Simple, largely descriptive or narrative response with limited reference to the text. **1-4**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The retrospective, adult narrator frames the whole extract, so childhood memory is filtered through later loss and return, creating a double perspective that intertwines nostalgia with present uncertainty.
- The symbol of the tide, which 'always came back' according to the grandmother, functions as an assurance about continuity that is later privately tested when the adult narrator 'waited...to see whether it would come back'.
- Physical decline of the town (the boarded front, the reduced arcade, the shortened pier) is structurally mirrored by personal loss (the grandmother's death), linking place and memory throughout the extract.
- The circular structure, returning to the same setting and action (walking onto the sand) across two timeframes, enacts the persistence and repetition characteristic of memory and grief.
- A candidate might read the implied context as the decline of the traditional British seaside town, using the physical deterioration of holiday infrastructure as an objective correlative for personal loss and the passing of a way of life.
- The final generational parallel, the narrator's own daughter running ahead 'the way my grandmother once had', suggests place can carry inherited patterns of memory and ritual across generations, even as the physical place itself changes or diminishes.

(b) Answer: Memory and place are presented as intertwined and mutually reinforcing: the physical decline of the seaside town parallels personal loss, the tide functions as a tested symbol of continuity, and the circular, generational structure suggests place carries and transmits memory even as it changes, within an implied context of wider seaside decline.

Question 11

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed exploration of structure, analysing a range of structural methods with sophisticated use of textual detail and critical vocabulary; coherent, well-organised personal response. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear exploration of structure with relevant analysis of method and appropriate textual support. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on structure, with some reference to method, but analysis may be thin or unevenly developed. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, general or largely narrative response with limited textual support and little analysis of method. **1-3**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- The extract's chronological but broken structure (childhood memory, the grandmother's death, adult return) creates temporal gaps that mirror the disorientation and discontinuity of loss and grief.
- The extract circles back to the same setting and action (walking onto the sand) to enact the persistence and repetition of memory and grief, structurally reinforcing the theme rather than simply stating it.
- Withholding the outcome of the closing image, 'waiting...to see whether it would come back', leaves the ending deliberately open, mirroring the unresolved nature of grief.
- The accumulation of losses in paragraph 5 (arcade gone entirely, pier reduced to a stub) builds before the single constant of the sand and tide is introduced, creating a structural contrast between change and permanence.
- The final generational parallel, positioning the narrator's daughter where the grandmother once was, provides a sense of structural closure while simultaneously renewing the pattern of continuity and potential future loss.
- The shift from the collective, communal 'we went every August' in the opening paragraphs to the solitary, individual 'I' of the final paragraph traces an arc from shared family ritual to isolated, private reflection.

Question 12

(a) **L2** Clear identification of a genuinely ambiguous moment with a developed explanation of a possible effect, supported by accurate reference to the text. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple identification of an ambiguous moment with little or no explanation of effect. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- The unresolved rhetorical question 'whether the house runs us / or we the house' is genuinely ambiguous, leaving open whether the poem views domestic technology as benign or as a loss of control.
- 'that first imagined needing it' is ambiguous as to whether 'it' refers to the switch, the warmth, or the whole system, creating deliberate uncertainty about where responsibility or agency originates.
- The phrase 'a second skin it forgets it's wearing' is ambiguous as to whether 'it' refers to the house or, by extension, to the people living within it, blurring the boundary between built environment and inhabitant.

(a) Answer: For example: the unresolved question 'whether the house runs us / or we the house' is deliberately ambiguous, leaving the poem's attitude to domestic technology and control open to more than one reading.

(b) **L5** A sophisticated, well-substantiated exploration that analyses a wide range of methods with precise textual detail and assured critical vocabulary, and that develops at least one genuine alternative interpretation with equally rigorous support; a fluent, well-organised personal response. **17-20**

(b) **L4** A convincing exploration with clear analysis of methods and well-chosen textual support, considering an alternative interpretation with reasonable development. **13-16**

(b) **L3** A clear response with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support; some awareness of an alternative reading, though it may be only briefly considered. **9-12**

(b) **L2** Some relevant comment on the relationship between people and technology, with limited analysis of method and little genuine consideration of alternative readings. **5-8**

(b) **L1** A simple, general or largely narrative response with minimal reference to the poem and no meaningful exploration of interpretation. **1-4**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The extended metaphor of the house as a living organism ('second skin', 'a low mechanical breathing', 'not quite a pulse') dissolves the boundary between the built environment and the human body, exploring how far technology becomes indistinguishable from the self.
- The poem's tone is ambiguous: 'We built it to keep us warm. / We did not ask what it would keep' can be read as gently ironic self-awareness, or as a more troubled comment on the unforeseen costs of dependence on unseen systems.
- The unanswered rhetorical question, 'whether the house runs us / or we the house', invites at least two readings: as a comforting sense of mutual domestic partnership, or as a genuinely unsettling anxiety about surveillance, automation or loss of agency.
- The physical distance between 'the switch' and 'the hand / that first imagined needing it' symbolises the alienation of the present-day user from the origins and consequences of the technology they depend on, which could support a reading concerned with energy use, climate cost, or economic systems beyond individual control.
- The poem's fragmented, halting syntax and irregular line lengths mirror an uneasy, unresolved consciousness, which could be read either as mimicking the soothing, half-heard hum of the machinery itself, or as dramatising genuine anxiety and disorientation.
- A candidate might argue for a primarily comforting interpretation, in which the domestic warmth is a chosen good and the poem's questioning tone is simply reflective curiosity rather than fear, supported by the poem's calm, unforced rhythms and lack of overtly negative diction.
- A candidate might instead argue for a more troubling interpretation, in which recurring images of lost agency (the house 'running' its inhabitants, the disrupted, unnamed hour, the distant switch) suggest a critique of unseen dependency, whether domestic, economic or environmental.
- The strongest responses will hold both readings in view, using the poem's structural and tonal ambiguity itself as evidence that the poet deliberately resists settling the question of whether technology is presented as comforting or troubling.

(b) Answer: The poem explores an ambiguous, unresolved relationship between people and technology, using extended metaphor and unanswered questions to suggest technology may be either a comforting, chosen extension of the self or a troubling source of lost agency and hidden dependency; the poem's own formal irresolution suggests this ambiguity is deliberate rather than accidental.