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91473



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## Level 3 English, 2016

### 91473 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

2.00 p.m. Tuesday 22 November 2016  
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and convincingly to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and perceptively to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**Write ONE essay in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Merit

TOTAL

M5

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

texts that deserve attention and more  
challenge our thinking 4

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 5 pages in length. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

In your essay, discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

Begin your visual or oral text(s) essay here:

Statement number: 6

I believe that the film American Beauty, directed by Sam Mendes, deserves attention because not only is it an enjoyable film to watch, but ~~his~~ Mendes' use of dialogue, motifs, and film techniques challenges the viewers view and perception on society, and their own lives.

The first idea that challenges the viewers thinking is the idea of social masks, and hiding your unhappiness. Mendes uses a strong use of dialogue to project this image to viewers, the opening ~~scene~~ scene of the film is a monologue from ~~of~~ <sup>only</sup> one of the main characters Lester, and he says "in less than a year I'll be dead, although I'm dead already". So immediately from the opening scene viewers are challenged to wonder why Lester is "already dead", when it is shown to us that he has a job, wife, and daughter and seems to be living the 'american dream'. Later on in the film when we are introduced to Angela, ~~Lester's~~ of whom Lester fantasizes about,

We can now understand why Lester believes he is "already dead". Mendes shows viewers that for twenty years life for Lester has just been the same routine, with nothing that excites him or gives his life purpose, until he sees Angela and begins to fantasize about her. We are shown this through the use of dialogue when Lester ~~say~~ is speaking about Angela "I've been in a coma for ~~20~~ twenty years, and I've just woken up". This confirms to viewers that Lester has found a new purpose in life. I believe that through his clever use of dialogue to expose this theme of masking our true emotions, Mendes has challenged all ~~rei~~ viewers to take a look at their own lives to see if they themselves are "dead already".

The second technique that Mendes uses to challenge our thinking is a ~~the~~ motif of the ~~center~~ colour red. The colour red is used all throughout the film to highlight various themes such as desire and lust, all the way to anger and disguise. Our first introduction to the colour red is when we first see the Burnhams front door, which is a big, bright red door, a strong contrast to the rest of their house. It challenges viewers to think about and wonder what behind it? what does it hide? It's a clever use of a metaphor by

mendes to reflect Lester and the way he disguises his true emotion. We are also repeatedly shown roses - a strong motif - whenever Lester is thinking about Angela, this shows his romantic desire for her and his lust for excitement. Then the colour red is finally used to express anger. Lesters neighbor, ~~the~~ Col. Fitz, believes that Lester is conducting homosexual ads with his son, Ricky, and marches over to Lesters house and shoots him. We see Lester lying in a pool of his own, very red blood, which is also splattered across the wall, and as viewers we are challenged to perceive the anger of Col Fitz, and of Lester, splattered across the wall and smothering their faces. This scene also challenges viewers to reflect upon their own anger, both for themselves and others.

The third challenging concept of the movie is that of power. To viewers it appears as if everyone is struggling to gain power. This sort of theme is a reality in the world we live in today and seriously challenges the viewers thinking into effects and consequences of demanding power. Once Lester realizes he is "already dead", he sets off on a journey to reclaim his life for

himself, by trying to gain power. He first does then when he quits his job, with an obsece letter to his bosses, he then treats his wife poorly saying "I will do what I want, when I want". showing his desperation for power. His wife Carolyn, is on a similar mission when she yells to herself "I refuse to be a victim", this challenges viewers to question how far she will go to not "be a victim". She then ~~by~~ buys a gun and often goes to the shooting range - a strong symbolism of power. She is also told by her real estate idol that to remain successful "one must <sup>always</sup> project and image of success". This shows us that she will refuse to be seen as vulnerable or weak as that would mean an instant loss of power.

American Beauty deserves the upmost attention, as it ~~is~~ challenges us to question and analyse our ~~beliefs~~ beliefs, idols and ideals through the clever and powerful use of dialogue, motifs and film techniques to portray the ideas of masking your emotions and claiming power.

**Merit exemplar 2016**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Standard:</b>	<b>91473</b>	<b>Total score:</b>	<b>M5</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Grade score</b>	<b>Annotation</b>			
6	M5	<p>Introduction states the argument that will be followed – “challenges the viewer's view and perception on society and their own lives”.</p> <p>Topic sentences clearly state argument – “idea of social masks”, “concept of power”.</p> <p>Accurate knowledge of the film – the candidate uses examples to support ideas.</p> <p>Engagement shown – the candidate shows understanding of and engagement with aspects of the film, e.g. when discussing the motif of red, commenting, “It challenges viewers to think about and wonder what is behind it? What does it hide?”</p> <p>Partially convincing, but not always when analysing the challenge – the second part of each paragraph is weaker than the first part.</p> <p>A range of evidence and critical responses are provided – examples and quotes are provided in each paragraph.</p> <p>Appropriate structure, but formulaic, e.g. “The first idea” ... “The second technique...”.</p> <p>Writing style is accurate, with some evidence of sound vocabulary and sentence construction, but it is inconsistent. The candidate writes in first person, which is ok.</p> <p>Conclusion – minimal, but summarises paragraphs.</p>			