

Unseen Exam - Feedback

The questions:

How does the poet's writing convey to **you** her fascination with the albino blackbird?
How does the writer vividly convey to **you** his feelings about this event?

How = writer's techniques + effects (identify details of the text and describe their effect)

You = what is your personal response to the text, your own thoughts and feelings

Essay Structure

Introduction: Overview of the story/poem, your impression of the poem/prose.
Address the question.

Comment: Most student repeated the three bullet points here, without going further. You are not rewarded for this. You can be guided by the bullet points but **don't paraphrase**.

1. Say what the poem/story is about (This poem is about...)
2. Give your overall impressions. (It explores ideas about... It explores notions of...)
3. In doing steps 1 and 2, refer to the question

For example: 'Albino' explores the poet's fascination with

Body Paragraphs: Develop a response to the essay question, following the bullet points.

Comment: This was generally done well. Most students structured their response around the bullet points and this led to a good analysis of your chosen text. Well done!

Conclusion: Give your personal opinion and link this to question.

Comment: Some students gave their personal opinion of the poem throughout their response. Others used the conclusion paragraph to do this by stating, 'Overall, I feel that...'. It is important to refer back to the question in the conclusion.

General comments:

- **Analysis of Language:** Stronger responses provided a solid analysis of the language of the text AND the effect of this. Many students had interesting ideas and were able to support these ideas with relevant quotes BUT did not explain the effect of the quotes. Remember that every word has been deliberately chosen by the author/poet and you need to give consideration as to WHY.

- **Use of quotations:** Although students generally selected relevant quotations, these were not always effectively integrated into your responses. A quotation does NOT stand on its own as a sentence. **Do NOT use quotations to paraphrase the text**, quotes are used to ANALYSE. You must introduce (contextualise) your quote and then explain its significance.

For example:

*Like at the beginning, the poem ends with a physical description of the bird. However, unlike the lexical field of cold used in the first half of the poem the poet's description is now characterised by words suggesting emotional warmth and attachment. **For example**, the fact that the bird's beak is now like a "crocus", connoting Spring and thus life, and that his eyes are "ringed with gold", suggesting the bird is precious and treasured, implies the speaker's deep affection and attachment to it.*

- **Looking for a deeper meaning:** Make sure you don't just offer a superficial response to the text. Think about its deeper meaning. What is the subtext to the poem or prose? And how can you use the text to prove this? There is no right or wrong answer here, what is important is that you can link your understanding to the text.

For example: Possible Metaphorical/Symbolic meanings:

Albino	I'll tell me Ma
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prejudice, discrimination, racism- Symbolic meanings relating more broadly to the individual's position within society and the difficulties for those who are seen to be abnormal or 'different' from the crowd.- Loneliness, isolation, alienation- A painful but liberating movement towards self-fulfilment and self-identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The boy's emotional development; a rite of passage, innocence to experience in which one feels bewilderment, fear and loss.

- Look for the **shifts/changes in the tone of the text** and what you can say about this.
- Remember that a poem is meant to be read aloud, think about **sound techniques**.

For example:

- **Sibilance:** accentuating the birds insubstantial nature, the smooth, gliding nature of its flight.
- **Enjambment** across stanzas: contributed to a sense of speed of physical movement, the transition from one state of being to another.