

**CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

## **MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2015 series**

### **9782 RUSSIAN (PRINCIPAL)**

**9782/04**

Paper 4 (Topics and Texts), maximum raw mark 60

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

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### Part I: Topics

Candidates should attempt one question from Part I: Topics and write their answers in the Target Language as these texts/films are studied primarily in cultural context (be it historical, political, social) as well as a literary/cinematic one.

Answers are marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 20 for Content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 10 marks]
- 10 for Language [AO3]

This paper tests candidates' knowledge and understanding of a topic and their ability to use this knowledge to answer questions in a clear and focused manner. A sophisticated literary approach is not expected (although at the highest levels it is sometimes seen), but great value is placed on evidence of a first-hand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have studied. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotations: quotation for its own sake is not useful, though it will not be undervalued if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. This applies to films as well as literary texts. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh up all these at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and especially any signs of understanding and careful organisation. In the marking of these questions, specific guidelines will be given for each question, agreed by the examination team.

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<b>Part I: Topics – Content</b>		
<b>18–20</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive knowledge of both texts/films. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show good understanding of underlying themes.
<b>15–17</b>	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well-argued response to the question. Thorough knowledge of both texts/films. Detailed understanding and illustration of thematic and comparative issues.
<b>12–14</b>	<i>Good</i>	A well-argued response to the question. Equally sound knowledge of both texts/films. Good understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues.
<b>9–11</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge of texts/films. Some understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues AND/OR good understanding of texts/films, but lacking detail. Stronger on one text/film than the other.
<b>5–8</b>	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
<b>1–4</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Poor knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Insubstantial with very little relevance.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable content.

<b>Part I: Topics – Language</b>		
<b>10</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Almost flawless. Excellent range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Good sense of idiom.
<b>8–9</b>	<i>Very good</i>	Highly accurate. Wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Some sense of idiom.
<b>6–7</b>	<i>Good</i>	Generally accurate. Good range of vocabulary and some complex sentence patterns.
<b>4–5</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Predominantly simple patterns correctly used and/or some complex language attempted, but with variable success. Adequate range of vocabulary, but some repetition.
<b>2–3</b>	<i>Weak</i>	Persistent errors. Simple and repetitive sentence patterns. Limited vocabulary.
<b>1</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Very limited vocabulary.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable language.

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### Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

#### 1 НА ДНЕ РУССКОГО И СОВЕТСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА

**(a) Какую картину жизни людей на дне общества рисуют создатели выбранных вами произведений? По-вашему, насколько реалистична эта картина?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe the image of those at the bottom of society as depicted in the chosen works before going on to offer an opinion as to whether or to what extent this image is realistic. The best answers will not only refer to the credibility of the characters but also to how they relate to the different social, temporal and historical contexts in which the works are set. Answers are likely to focus on personality traits, and behavioural characteristics shared by the characters in the works studied. Among these are: a propensity for violence, domestic violence, intimidation and bullying, dysfunctional relationships, casual sex / sexual activity outside the perceived social norm, infidelity, unreliability, selfishness, opportunism, dishonesty (lying, stealing, cheating at cards), lack of foresight, a desire to live for the moment, a need to escape reality through use of alcohol, drunkenness.

When writing about *На дне*, candidates should describe the motley assortment of inhabitants of a provincial lodging-house for social derelicts in a run-down area near the Volga at the very beginning of the twentieth century. The play has little plot, but we learn much about the characters' backgrounds and the reasons why they have fallen so low and seem unable to better themselves significantly or at all. We observe the characters squabble and fight over petty debts and stolen goods, who should do the cleaning, disputes about money and cheating at cards as well as more serious rivalry involving sexual jealousy. We see a range of social types. Some will argue that the concentration of brutalised and dehumanised beings with their sordid and tragic stories is just too much to be considered realistic, though each individual portrait may well be credible in itself. They may also feel that Luka's complex philosophising and political messages, whether emanating from him or quoted by other characters, are too sophisticated for such a lowly character. Others will applaud Gorky's attempt to portray the gritty reality of life at the bottom of the heap, however.

*Калина красная* tells the story of 40 year old Egor Prokudin, a recidivist thief released from a corrective labour colony in the early 1970s. We follow the well-intentioned central character as he struggles to reintegrate into rural society. Intending to buy a cow and do agricultural work, Egor quotes poetry and admires nature as he travels to the town where his former gang are gathered, anxiously awaiting news of a successful robbery. The gang's members, who are drinking champagne, smoking and playing music, appear somewhat caricature-like. The young men are muscular, the women sexually attractive. Some of their names (e.g. Guboshlep, and Bul'dog) reflect physical features. Their language is colloquial and full of criminal slang. Egor decides to travel to the village of Yasnoe to visit Lyubov' Fedorovna Baykalova, the woman with whom he has been corresponding while in prison. Candidates may use Egor's relationships with Lyuba and her family to illustrate their answer.

In *Вор*, set in the last years of Stalin's rule, we are shown how the character, behaviour and morality of one dominant individual can have serious, long-term negative consequences on individuals, society in general and, in particular, on six year old Sanya, whose father had died in WW2, six months before his birth. His mother takes up with a smart, handsome soldier with whom she has a sexual encounter on a train shortly after he has committed a robbery in a carriage. Tolyan, Katya and Sanya pass themselves off as a family, conning their way into

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communal accommodation and into the trust of their fellow residents. After Katya's death, Sanya feels that he has betrayed Tolyan, but in the end it is Tolyan that betrays Sanya, leading to Sanya shooting him dead and his subsequent liberation from feelings of hero worship and a desire to emulate his surrogate parent. (References to the alternative version of the film with extra scenes at the end will be credited, if appropriate.) Candidates are likely to suggest that the film provides a rare insight into the world of the small-time crook at a time when petty criminality, being ideologically unacceptable, was barely mentioned, though it clearly must have existed.

- (b) «На дне общества положение женщин хуже всего». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, насколько создатели выбранных вами произведений сочувствуют женщинам в трудных ситуациях?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe the position of women at the bottom of society in the chosen works, offering an opinion as to whether or to what extent we may consider their situation to be worst of all in comparison to others. In the second part of the question, candidates should offer an opinion as to whether or to what extent the creators of the chosen works sympathise with their female characters. The best answers will discuss, in addition to the content, which artistic methods are used to show or withhold sympathy. For all three genres, candidates might mention the degree to which the author develops rounded characters with whom we can sympathise or not. In the case of the story, the degree to which the narrator allows us insight into the thoughts and feelings of individual characters can be explored, while, when discussing the film, the use of close-up shots depicting emotions, particularly suffering, can be mentioned.

In *На дне* the fates of the various female characters are diverse and not entirely predictable from the outset. Common to all is the reality or assumption that they will be subject to abuse and domestic violence by men, though some women appear to be able to do well for themselves and hold their own in a male-dominated society. Candidates will probably argue that the sex of the character is immaterial in determining the quality of their fate, though in society women appear to be often kept in their place by men through physical violence.

From *Калина красная*, three female characters should be discussed. Each has a different fate and relationship with the bottom of society. Lyus'en is the archetypal gangsters' moll, enjoying the good life while things are going well, but at a terrible price. Lyuba is herself not quite at the bottom of society, but through her association with the ex-convict with whom she falls in love, suffers emotional turmoil and ultimately the tragic loss of her would-be second husband. Egor's peasant mother, Kudelikha, is also a tragic figure, unaware of the fate of two of her sons who left home during the time of famine and who could be alive or dead. Candidates may express different views as to whether the three women's situations are slightly or significantly worse than those of other characters, but will likely argue that the three women may certainly be considered victims. Lyus'en suffers at the hands of her male exploiters, Lyuba through loving another unsuitable man, while Kudelikha may ultimately be seen as a victim of Stalin and his policy of collectivisation.

In *Воп*, Katya, a single mother who had given birth alone at a roadside, becomes entangled in a life of crime and deceit when she falls for the handsome soldier who appears to take a shine to her on a train. She is lonely, vulnerable and in need of a surrogate father for her son. Candidates are likely to agree with the quotation, for though Tolyan suffers years in prison and Sanya spends his childhood in an orphanage, Katya loses her life as a result of weakness and blind love.

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## 2 РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ И ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ ВОЙНА

- (a) Рассмотрите по одной сцене из каждого выбранного вами произведения, которые ясно показывают, что такое победа, разгром или поражение. Как, по вашему, относятся создатели выбранных вами произведений к этим событиям?

Candidates should compare two scenes (one from each work) which clearly illustrate victory, rout or outright defeat. They should describe the events portrayed, the roles of specific characters or groups within them, the degree of realism in terms of human mental and physical suffering, the effects of the fighting on buildings, animals and the environment in general, the degree of destruction to property and land and the significance of the scene in terms of the work as a whole in the context of its Revolution and Civil War setting. In the second part of the question, answers should focus on how the author or director treats the victory, rout or defeat in question. Candidates should consider whether the depiction is realistic, exaggerated, played down, idealised or falsified and why this has been done (political or artistic reasons). The best answers will discuss the ways by which the effects, distorted or otherwise, are achieved. For texts: the degree of objectivity of the narrator, the degree of psychological insight given to those fighting, the amount of pain, suffering, blood and gore depicted, references to the sounds and smell of battle, triumphant music. For the film: close-ups of action and human expressions, infliction of cruelty, pain, depiction of blood and guts, use of sound to illustrate loud noise, confusion, brave or cowardly words, pain and suffering, triumphant or inspiring music.

- (b) «Как весь народ страдал в это время! Часто бывали ужас, хаос, гибель и смерть». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, преувеличивают ли создатели выбранных вами произведений эффекты этих событий и конфликтов на людей в это время?

In the first part of the question, candidates should show, by detailed reference to the studied works, whether or to what extent suffering, horror, chaos, destruction and death during the time of the Revolution and Civil War are reflected in the chosen works. They should then go on to assess from knowledge of the historical background whether or to what extent the creators of the chosen works are exaggerating the effects of conflict on people. These effects may be physical, psychological or both.

*Белая гвардия* follows the activities of the comfortably-off, intellectual Tsarist Turbin family caught up in turbulent events which befell Kiev between May 1918 and February 1919. In particular, the novel focuses on two brothers (Aleksey, a doctor, and seventeen year old Nikolka) and their sister, Elena, abandoned by her Baltic German husband, Tal'berg who has to flee for having publically criticised Petlyura. We are shown the men in a variety of difficult and dangerous situations as they try to defend their city from the encroaching forces of the Social-Democrat, Petlyura. Eventually, Aleksey is shot and wounded, but manages to return to his home, aided by the woman who had first tended to his wounds. Here his sister nurses him to a miraculous recovery from typhus. Though there is an unexpected happy ending for the main character, the text explicitly reveals the horrors of war and the mental and physical suffering of those participating in the confused struggles of the various competing military and political factions (monarchist, nationalist, Bolshevik, German allies etc.). There are many aspects of often gritty realism which could be mentioned. Candidates should address the extent to which we are shown the effects of conflict on the psychology of individuals on all sides. Though Bulgakov gives us insight chiefly into the thought processes of the Turbins and their friends on the same side, we are also made to realise that the enemy shares the same emotions and instincts as the Whites, as we are given limited insight into some enemy characters (e.g. Colonel Kozyr'-Leshko).

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*Разгром* is set in the summer and autumn of 1919. A detachment of Bolshevik partisans fighting in the Far East is forced to retreat in the face of superior forces. Though they are initially successful in extricating themselves from a virtually impassable swamp, they fall victim to a Cossack ambush, as a result of which only nineteen of them survive. Living conditions for the partisans are primitive. These are not depicted through rose-tinted glasses, and the reality of death in wartime is never concealed. It is shown to affect many of the major and minor characters to whom the reader becomes sympathetic: Frolov is given a fatal dose of 'bromide' because his condition is considered hopeless; Metelitsa is shot in captivity by his Cossack guard; Stashinsky, the doctor, is shot and dragged behind his horse; Morozka, trying to warn his comrades about the ambush, fires three warning shots when surprised by some Cossacks who promptly finish him off. If anything is idealised in the novel, and therefore distorted by its author, it is the portrayal of characters according to Socialist Realist principles, although the term was not officially coined till 1932, some five years after the text was written. Fadeev presents to us a variety of types whose intrinsic nature, motivation and behaviour are meant to reflect the reality of Socialist society, predominantly in a positive manner. This does not mean that negative character traits are absent from minor characters, and they are even present in some of the major ones whom we are meant to consider positive. The faults of the proletarian heroes are excused, however, because of their overriding Socialist virtues – their willingness to risk their all for the good of society, their altruism and sense of duty and responsibility. Such superior proletarian attitudes are contrasted with those of Mechik, the petty bourgeois who feels out of place among his rough, uneducated comrades and quickly longs to return to his former comfortable life in the town. Never accepted because of his social origins and Maximalist connections, he acquires the reputation of an arrogant idler, failing to care for his horse and generally pull his weight. His desertion to save his own life at the end of the novel epitomises his selfishness and individualism. Candidates can comment on whether or to what extent the attitudes and actions of these characters and the effects of conflict upon them are credible or idealised.

*Адмиралъ* deals with the rise and fall of Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak from 1916 until his execution in 1920. Made in 2008, its aim was not only to chronicle the period but to help to rehabilitate an anti-Bolshevik and present him as a true hero of Russia, regardless of his political beliefs. The film contains, for some, an excessively romantic portrayal of his adulterous affair with Anna Timireva, the wife of a fellow officer and friend, as well as some historical inaccuracies (e.g. the Friedrich Carl was, in fact, sunk by mines in November 1914 rather than November 1916, and most of the crew were rescued). Nevertheless, there are many scenes which accurately depict the violence, blood, guts, noise, confusion and general horror of war on land and sea. The naval battles in the Baltic in 1916 are particularly graphic as is the scene which shows the disarming and execution by rifle and bayonet of terrified officers at Kronstadt following the February Revolution in 1917. The non-violent disarming of Kolchak and his officers in Sevastopol due to the compliance of the respected now Vice-Admiral is shown in contrast. Candidates may well conclude that though the film depicts much of the physical and mental suffering of people in wartime and is broadly accurate in terms of the many gruesome events shown, there are a number of distortions. Because of the aim of the filmmakers to present Kolchak in a positive light, the documented cruelty and reactionary nature of Kolchak's regime has been omitted and the personality of the hero idealised in a positive direction. For some, it may be questionable whether, when facing execution after defeat, one can maintain such a calm and stoical demeanour as the Kolchak portrayed in this film.

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### 3 СОВЕТСКИЕ ГРАЖДАНЕ В ВОЕННОЕ И МИРНОЕ ВРЕМЯ

- (a) Какие аспекты человеческого страдания представляют нам выбранные вами произведения? По-вашему, кто больше страдает в этих произведениях – мужчины или женщины?

Candidates should discuss which aspects of human suffering we are shown in the chosen works before offering an opinion as to whether men or women are depicted as suffering more. Answers should provide description and analysis of characters' physical and emotional suffering. The best ones may discuss the techniques used to depict this and might also consider whether or to what extent the author or director manipulates us into sympathising with a suffering character or not.

When writing about *Река Потудань*, candidates will mainly discuss the effects of war on Nikita Firsov who is returning home after serving for three or four years as a Red Army private in the Civil War. He, like his comrades, has grown wiser, and learned to endure as a result of his experiences, yet Nikita's reaction to civilian life indicates that he has been seriously emotionally and psychologically damaged. From the very start of the story, he displays signs of stress and anxiety. Some candidates may conclude that by the end of the story Nikita has conquered his fears and dealt with his sexual inadequacy, but others may argue that he is still not behaving like a normal healthy young husband. While most of the text is focussed on Nikita and his sufferings, mention should be made of the other characters who suffer in the story: Lyuba, his sick, dissatisfied and abandoned wife, driven to attempt suicide, Zhenya, her friend who falls ill and dies at an untimely age and Nikita's lonely, widowed father who sleeps to forget his memories of his sons and regret for his joyless life. The fact that we are not shown their suffering so intimately does not detract from its existence.

When writing about *Летят журавли*, candidates will mainly focus on the physical and mental sufferings of 25 year old Boris Borozdin, who volunteers for the army when war is declared, and his girlfriend Veronika, though the suffering of minor characters should also be evaluated.

*Баллада о солдате* opens with the image of a woman walking along a road in silent grief. The narrator informs us that her son did not return and that his friends (also bereaved) wish to tell his story. The action centres around nineteen year old signalman, Alesha Skvortsov, whom we first see on the noisy battlefield amid cowering soldiers, shells and death as he disables two tanks, to his obvious surprise. The film is relatively muted in its depiction of the sufferings of the main character, since the innocent young man seems able to withstand the privations and difficulties of his journey home to visit his mother, herself a war-widow. However, on his way, Alesha encounters others physically and emotionally damaged by war, and we share his emotional response to their suffering as well as feel for him as he deals with the difficulties and dangers he encounters. At the end of the film, the narrator informs us that Alesha, because of his character and actions, might well have become a wonderful citizen, for he is indeed a model example of a Russian soldier. Though we do not witness his death, we are once again made aware of it and, by implication, the further suffering of his mother who has already lost so much. All three works show various kinds of human suffering by both men and women in different situations and with different degrees of focus and intimacy. The response to the second part of the question will depend on the combination of works studied and the personal opinion of the candidate.

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- (b) «В этих произведениях советский солдат всегда поступает как герой». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, нам показывают убедительные психологические портреты или идеологические карикатуры солдат?

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe and analyse the character and behaviour of the former or serving soldiers in their chosen works, assessing whether or to what extent their actions can be described as heroic. In the second part of the question, candidates should offer an opinion as to whether these characters are presented as convincing psychological portraits or ideological caricatures (role-models of how the Soviet soldier should be rather than how they actually are).

When considering *Река Потудань*, candidates should describe Nikita Firsov and his actions, before assessing whether or to what extent he is heroic or cowardly in dealing with his psychological state, damaged through contact with war. They should also consider whether his abandoning of his wife and subsequent return to her are brave or cowardly actions in terms of his sexual inadequacy or possible homosexuality, given the historical and social context. Most will agree that we are presented with a complicated psychological portrait rather than an ideological caricature, though there may be different interpretations of the ending in relation to the political message. For some, he is fulfilling his duty as a Soviet husband while others may argue he is being depicted as the victim of social pressure to conform.

Candidates are likely to suggest that Alesha in *Баллада о солдате* is the model of a gentle hero, not only in the context of his behaviour on the battlefield, but also in relation to his many acts of selfless behaviour during his journey which result in his only having the briefest of visits to his mother. Answers may reveal different views as to whether his huge generosity of spirit and apparent sexual innocence are credible for someone of his age in a war situation. Mention should be made of the corrupt sentry on the train. He is all too ready to take advantage of Alesha and extract his tins of meat as payment for the ride. Though a Soviet soldier, he is shown asleep at his post, plump and with a double chin. The lover of Elizaveta Petrovna must also be a soldier as she tries to hide part of his uniform when Alesha unexpectedly visits. These men do not behave heroically, though serving in the Soviet Army. Their characters are undeveloped and depicted purely negatively.

Boris in *Летят журавли* is not the main focus of the film, yet the character's behaviour provides for a number of debateable issues. Having described him, candidates will need to assess whether his actions are brave or cowardly in relation to his enlisting when he could have been given an exemption. Instead of fighting at the front, he could have looked after his family and girlfriend at home. Answers should consider whether his failure to say goodbye to Veronika in person is the action of a coward or a hero and whether his failure to write to her is a cruel or a kind act in the light of the note concealed in the squirrel which is only later discovered. The behaviour of Boris on the battlefield is unquestionably heroic. When Boris's fellow soldier is injured, he carries him through the war-scarred landscape. While resting under a tree at the edge of the bog, Boris is shot by a sniper. The scene preceding his death, in which he imagines the life and future he will not now have, allows us to see the character in a more rounded form. Candidates will probably argue that he is more of a developed character rather than a caricature, but may be divided as to whether his depiction is convincing or not or whether he is principally an ideological stereotype.

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#### 4 СОВЕТСКИЙ БЫТ ПРИ ХРУЩЁВЕ И БРЕЖНЕВЕ

- (a) Выберите по одной героине из каждого выбранного вами произведения и сравните изображение их жизни. По-вашему, создатели этих произведений относятся к таким женщинам позитивно или негативно?

Candidates should compare the depiction of the lives of two female characters (one from each of their chosen works). In the second part of the question, they should then discuss whether or to what extent the author or director presents this type of female character in positive or negative terms. Candidates need not just choose the main characters, provided that there is enough to be said about any minor character to justify a full answer.

If selecting *Неделя как неделя*, candidates will probably wish to discuss the main character, 26 year old Ol'ga Voronkova, a junior research scientist in 1960s Moscow. Married to the loving, but slightly lazy Dima, the young woman struggles with the double burden of doing an intellectually demanding job and performing the role of housewife and mother to two very young children. However, when contrasted with the lives of her female colleagues, Ol'ga's life is good. Her husband is faithful, loving, and supportive, they inhabit a comfortable modern flat, and for all its ups and downs, the family unit functions well. In her diary, Ol'ga voices gentle questioning of the failures and weaknesses of the system as she struggles with the balance of her everyday life. This criticism is articulated not because she is a radical feminist, but simply because she feels her life and work would be of better quality if things were differently arranged. The author clearly offers a sympathetic portrayal of this character type. This might also be said of Ol'ga's colleague Mar'ya Matveevna, the elderly idealist and defender of traditional communist values and principles, whose work ethic is exemplary. Though Baranskaya presents her in positive terms, the comments of Ol'ga and others suggest that her attitudes are seen as out-of-date and impractical for younger women in the late 1960s.

When writing about *Обмен*, candidates might choose to write about Tanya, Lena or Kseniya Fedorovna. Tanya is a 34 year old economist at GINEGA with whom Dmitriev had a short affair three years previously. Now separated from her husband, she lives with her eleven year old son in a roomy co-operative flat which smells of paint, has newspapers on the floor and is only partly furnished. After the affair petered out, she and her husband split and Tanya became unhappy. She now treats Dmitriev as an old friend, though clearly hankers after his company. Dmitriev rarely visits. Tanya understands Dmitriev's current need for money and is willing to lend him cash to help him pay for things to do with his mother's treatment and well-being. She has genuine concern and sympathy for Kseniya Fedorovna who liked her for being genuine, generous, sensitive and cultured. Tanya can readily quote from Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Mandel'shtam and Blok, many of whose works deal with personal feelings and emotions. Tanya is portrayed as a positive female character type with praiseworthy attitudes and values.

Lena, Dmitriev's wife, is largely depicted in negative terms. Though she is an intelligent woman, a translator of English with a prestigious job, Lena has demonstrated during her fourteen years of marriage that she lacks all scruples. She is a natural survivor with the necessary determination to succeed in a fundamentally corrupt society where the ability to use contacts to obtain goods, services and favours is vital. She is described as a bulldog gripping her wishes firmly between her teeth until they have become a reality. Always ready to monopolise and manipulate weaker, more sensitive and morally upright individuals, Lena is depicted as a corrupting influence on her husband whom she pushes to the point of moral bankruptcy. He is gradually infected by her materialism, insensitivity and determination to feather her own nest at the expense of others. Candidates might suggest in Lena's defence that in Brezhnev's Russia, prosperity depended on the individual's capacity for moral compromise, and that she may well be morally justified as a wife and mother in acting as she does.

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Kseniya Federovna represents old-fashioned values of intellectual and spiritual correctness, selflessness and honesty. She disapproves of Lena's values and methods (e.g. she thinks the way Dmitriev took his friend's job is disgraceful). For a long time she wanted to move in with her son, but Lena would never have it. When the opportunity finally comes about, she no longer wants to, for she realises her son has changed for the worse, though in the end, she does agree to move. In her illness, she displays selflessness: she does not want her daughter and her husband to miss their dig and generally wants as little fuss made as possible. Clearly, Trifonov presents this character type in positive terms.

In *Москва слезам не верит*, Katya, the central character, is likely to be the focus for discussion with this work, though candidates might also make reference to the lives of her friends, Tonya and Lyuda.

The three provincial girls are first shown living together in a women's residence in Moscow. Katya takes the opportunity to house-sit for a relative, a professor with a sumptuous flat where she and Lyuda, posing as the professor's daughters, entertain a range of intellectual men. Lyuda is attracted to and marries Gurin, a famous ice-hockey player while Katya falls for Rudol'f, a cameraman who believes that TV will become the most important art form and change the world. When Rudol'f gets Katya pregnant, his mother offers Katya money to keep away, but this she firmly refuses: she can earn her own living.

Twenty years later, Katya is shown waking up in a nice flat where her daughter, Aleksandra, lives with her. She is now the director of a large factory where she is firmly in charge of a range of male subordinates. Lyuda, divorced and lonely, is still being bothered by her ex-husband Gurin for money to feed his drinking habit. Tonya is still happily married to Kolya with whom she has several children. Katya is having an affair with Volodya, a married man, but is really still searching for the right man to come along. Candidates may provide details of Katya's relationship with Gosha, who feels threatened by her career success and asserts his masculine authority at home, and the turmoil caused by the return of Rudol'f.

Candidates can comment on the director's anti-feminist message that though women can apparently get on in their careers, traditional roles must be assumed in the home. Men and women must know their place, and happiness can only be achieved with the man in charge. Women can be single, strong and successful, but this state is no match for the stable nuclear family, led by a father figure.

- (b) «Несмотря на некоторые незначительные проблемы, жизнь при Хрущёве и Брежневев становилась всё лучше для большинства граждан СССР». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? Насколько правдиво создатели выбранных вами произведений показывают нам картину повседневной жизни в это время?**

Candidates should first discuss the 'certain insignificant problems' in the everyday life of the characters of the chosen works. Some may take exception to the use of the word 'insignificant' when discussing the double burden of the Soviet woman, the difficulties of overcoming Soviet bureaucracy or chauvinistic male attitudes at this time, though it is important to make judgements in relation to the temporal and historical context. In the second part of the question, using background knowledge of the period, candidates should provide an opinion as to whether or to what extent the creators of the chosen works are showing us a true picture of everyday life in the USSR. Items for discussion might include: the state and organisation of society, improving living and working conditions in town and country over the period, the growth of technology and science in society; topical references to Soviet culture (books, poetry, song, TV), the significance of references and attitudes to the West whether cultural or political, references to policies and the role of the government of the USSR; references to social problems (alcoholism, domestic violence, loneliness, the demographic crisis); attitudes to sex, marriage, abortion, divorce, bribery and corruption in daily life with specific examples of this; references to the housing crisis, education,

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employment, wages, the economy; personal happiness and success. The best answers will stress that the majority of characters in all three works are well educated and in different ways often privileged. They are therefore atypical of society as a whole, though possibly representative of their own social strata.

## 5 АСПЕКТЫ ПОСТСОВЕТСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА

- (a) **Какими аспектами постсоветского общества интересуются режиссёры выбранных вами фильмов? Как, по-вашему, относятся эти режиссёры к обществу, которое каждый из них изображает?**

In the first part of the question, candidates should describe and analyse those aspects of post-Soviet society which interest the directors of their chosen films. They should then provide an opinion as to what attitudes they think the directors have about the type of society they are depicting.

Bodrov's *Кавказский пленник* is a critique of Russia's imperial legacy, focussing on the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the majority Russian, nominally Christian population, and ethnic and religious (here Muslim) minorities inhabiting the fringes of the Russian Federation. It depicts a society in the Caucasus striving to gain independence, to establish itself as an equal entity rather than a subjugated area under alien domination and occupation. The film highlights the differences in social and cultural values existing within the one state and exemplifies the continuing tensions between nationalities. At the same time, it depicts a number of shared human experiences and common values: unconditional parental love and loyalty, love between men and women whose communities are at war, comradeship, especially in adversity, the ability of the individual to endure hardship and danger, the need or desire to express empathy, compassion and forgiveness. It also exposes the harsh effects of conscription on the soldier and his family, the bad conditions in the Russian army, especially in dangerous and hostile areas, the conflict for the soldier between his personal wishes and feelings and his duty to the state, as well as corruption among those serving in the military and police. During the film, the cycle of senseless revenge killing continues regardless of the wishes of the individual. Candidates are likely to argue that Bodrov is suggesting this cycle should stop. By showing us how acts of kindness can change attitudes to enemies, he is suggesting that reconciliation is possible at the level of the individual and that this should be encouraged, despite the ideology of opposing sides and the revenge tradition of both Russians and Caucasians.

In *Итальянец*, Kravchuk highlights a number of issues related to the situation of orphan and homeless children in Russia today: the conditions in children's homes, adoption and the reasons why this occurs, transnational adoption and the problems surrounding this for individual children and others, corruption among officials, child abuse in various forms. In addition, the general state of provincial society and its problems, such as poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, violence, domestic violence and general criminality, all feature. Kravchuk appears to be highly critical of many aspects of contemporary Russian society, though he shows that society can also provide for a happy ending and that not all people are nasty or selfish since many characters, albeit mainly minor ones, are kind or helpful to Vanya.

*Le Concert* illustrates a number of aspects of post-Soviet society, but mainly deals with the legacy of communism as it affects individuals striving to recover from persecution, injustice and personal suffering brought about through conflict with the former regime and its ideology. It also shows ordinary people trying to adapt to new ways of living in a more complex capitalist world, including those who were servants of and / or believers in the Soviet system. Given the happy ending, candidates are likely to argue that the director is positive about the

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new Russian society. We see several characters who had suffered under the old regime, re-establishing their careers, albeit with difficulty. Filipov and Gavrilov make amends for their perceived and actual misdemeanours. Thus, there is some degree of reconciliation in 2009 between the oppressors and oppressed of old. Many types of Russians are seen to be able to survive and prosper in the new capitalist world. On the negative side, however, there is still too much corruption in society. There are big differences in wealth, and oligarchs, usually lacking good taste, cultural values, manners and integrity, play an all too significant role.

- (b) «В постсоветском обществе жизнь среднего гражданина России всё ещё трудна». Изучив выбранные вами фильмы, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением? По-вашему, кто из режиссёров этих фильмов лучше понимает положение среднего гражданина?

In the first part of the question, candidates should offer an opinion as to whether or to what extent they agree with the statement that in post-Soviet society the life of the average citizen is still difficult. In the second part of the question, candidates should suggest which of the directors shows the best understanding of the situation of the average citizen in the context of the chosen films. Answers should describe the difficulties encountered by the characters and show how they are able or unable to overcome them. The best answers will discuss the artistic methods used to convey to us the emotions and feelings of the characters as they attempt to deal with the situations in which they find themselves (close-up shots focusing on facial expressions and body-language, use of dialogue and intonation patterns expressing thoughts and feelings). Consideration might be given as to whether the situations depicted are realistic or not. Some might feel that though *Кавказский пленник* and *Итальянец* are wholly credible because they deal with serious situations, *Le Concert* is not, as it is a comedy in which many scenarios are exaggerated. Others will point out that beneath the many humorous moments are essential truths about the lives of ordinary people in Russia today.

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## Part II: Texts

Candidates should attempt **one** question from Part II: Texts and write their answers in English, as these texts are to be studied primarily from a literary point of view.

Answers are marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 25 for Content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 15 marks]
- 5 for Structure [AO3]

Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to engage with literary texts and to produce answers which show knowledge, understanding and close analysis of the text. A more sophisticated literary approach is expected than for answers to Part I. Great value is placed on detailed knowledge and understanding of the text; on the construction of an argument which engages the terms of the question and on a close and sophisticated analysis of sections of the text pertinent to the terms of the question. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotation: quotation for its own sake is not useful, although it will gain credit if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered in the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and understanding and especially any signs of analysis and organisation.

In the marking of these questions specific guidelines will be given for each essay, agreed by the examination team.

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<b>Part II: Texts – Content</b>		
<b>23–25</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
<b>19–22</b>	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well-argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points, well-illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the text.
<b>15–18</b>	<i>Good</i>	A well-argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
<b>11–14</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes a fair number of relevant points not always linked and/or developed.
<b>6–10</b>	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
<b>1–5</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the text. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated. OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the text.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable content.

<b>Part II: Texts – Structure</b>		
<b>5</b>	<i>Very Good</i>	A well-structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
<b>4</b>	<i>Good</i>	A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
<b>3</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
<b>2</b>	<i>Weak</i>	Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
<b>1</b>	<i>Poor</i>	No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable structure

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### Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

#### 6 Н. Гоголь, *Шинель*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** towards the end of the text. Akaky Akakievich's efforts to recover his new coat, stolen from him by robbers as he walked home from showing it off, have failed. The policeman who witnessed the theft told the clerk to try to get help from the надзиратель. The частный has questioned his being out late and accused him of visiting a brothel, while the self-important значительное лицо, attempting to show to a friend how he deals with those who seek his help, keeps the clerk waiting only to shout at him later and accuse him of being impudent and rebellious for ignoring the correct procedure. Akaky is scared, nearly faints and has to be carried out. He stumbles out of the building and homewards, his mouth open in the face of a blizzard, as a result of which his throat becomes inflamed, rendering him speechless. Having gone to bed, he breaks out in swellings.

**Content:** The *skaz* narrator reports that Akaky had a high fever the next day. Making an ironic reference to the Petersburg climate, he states that this progressed quickly so that the doctor could do little for him: he simply prescribes a poultice. The reference to the благодетельной помощи медицины once again displays the narrator's ironic attitude. The doctor announces that the clerk will not last more than a day and a half, suggesting to Akaky's landlady that she should order a cheap pine coffin because the clerk cannot afford oak. The narrator then tells us that no one knows whether Akaky heard these fateful words or whether they shocked him into feeling regret for his wretched life as he was delirious. Nevertheless, the narrator appears privy to the content of the clerk's visions. Akaky revisits important moments in his recent life, but these are distorted by his mental condition: he imagines himself begging Petrovich to make a coat with traps to catch the thieves swarming under his bed. He wonders why his old капот is hanging up when he has a new шинель. Then he imagines himself apologising to the general, having been reprimanded by him, but this quickly gives way to a torrent of uncharacteristic obscenities, causing the landlady to cross herself. That the swearing is directly linked to Akaky's uttering ваше превосходительство might well imply criticism of officialdom and its harsh and unfair treatment of ordinary people. Akaky's ravings turn to pure gibberish relating to his coat, and finally, the clerk (referred to by the sympathetic narrator as бедный) dies. Candidates can discuss the characters and incidents referred to, assessing their significance. Commenting on the content is inextricably linked to discussing the device of *skaz* narrator.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** Candidates should define *skaz* narration, quoting examples of features of this narrative technique contained within the extract. Among these are: the narrator's apparent naïvety, use of irony, the nonsensical use of даже, the use of two instances of direct speech amid long, syntactically complicated sentences of third-person omniscient narration, the inappropriately colloquial use of канит, emphasised by its positioning at the end of a skilfully crafted sentence. A sense of gravitas, appropriate for a death-bed scene, is created by the complicated syntax, the frequent repetition of то and the short sentence informing us of Akaky's death which contrasts with the preceding rhetorically complex prose.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the character of Akaky Akakievich, the events of the plot and the significance for him of acquiring, then losing his new coat in the context of various interpretations of the text. The story can be read as a supernatural tale in which Akaky Akakievich returns from the dead to punish those who wronged him in life, a religious allegory in which the clerk is tempted by the devil (Petrovich) into acquiring an object which brings momentary pleasure, but ultimately leads to its owner's destruction or where the clerk's soul is reborn through the influence of love only to be extinguished by the forces of an unspiritual society, a psycho-sexual study of an emotionally stunted individual brought to life through the acquisition of a quasi-love-object and destroyed through its loss or a social study of a 'little man', the victim of bureaucratic inhumanity and social indifference. However, when closely scrutinised, none of these interpretations works consistently from start to finish, and the text can be categorised as an exercise in reader-manipulation.

**(b) Describe and analyse Gogol's methods of characterisation in *Шинель* and the impact of his characters on the reader.**

Candidates should describe and analyse how Gogol defines his characters and informs us about them before discussing whether or to what extent they make an impact on the reader. Essentially, Gogol tricks the reader into believing in the reliability of the narrator and by setting the story in a real, recognisable and contemporary St Petersburg. We take at face value what little information the narrator tells us about the characters, assuming there must be more and accepting that we just do not need to know it. On close inspection, the narrator provides us with only a few random facts about each character, enough to allow a story to be told, but not enough for the reader to sympathise or empathise properly with the characters, even with the main one, Akaky Akakievich, about whom we are told the most. Amid the narrator's endless digressions and circumlocutions, we learn almost nothing of importance or relevance about his past or origins. At the start of the text, we are told the clerk is of unmemorable appearance: shortish, pock-marked, with reddish hair and weak eyesight. The repeated use of the –оват/еват suffix creates a feeling of uncertainty even about the few 'facts' we are given. Later in the text, the fact that he is over 50 is slipped in almost imperceptibly. Akaky lives in a humble rented room, and when he dies, leaves only a bundle of goose quills, a quire of paper, three pairs of socks, two or three buttons and his old worn-out apology of an overcoat. The clerk has neither family nor friends. His life has centred around his obsessive copying, and though his new coat causes his personality to develop, his new-found status and confidence last only until he is relieved of his love-object by thieves. Though some of this confidence remains for him to stand up for himself in front of the clerks when trying to speak to the частный, he is unable to stand his ground with the official himself, let alone the even more intimidating значительное лицо. In creating his characters, Gogol exaggerates certain features of their personalities and appearances so that they become grotesque, caricature-like and largely unlovable. Although we can observe some of the clerk's distress, the modern ideal reader, wise to the rhetorical tricks of the 'pathetic passages', is never tempted to empathise properly with him. Secondary characters feature only minimally in the story and are consequently inadequately developed for the reader to form any meaningful degree of empathy with them. The rambling skaz narrator, who is really a character in his own right in terms of his voice, has no identifiable physical form which the reader can latch on to. His unreliable nature is also not endearing. His confusing discourse, apparent lack of omniscience and the various elements of self-conscious narration within the text all serve to distance the characters from the reader's sympathy. Answers may suggest that this apparent lack of impact is not important since it is Gogol's style which is of fundamental importance to the reader. Sympathy for the characters and an interest in their fate would render an appreciation of the text from a technical point-of-view all the harder. A less likely, but still acceptable, approach to the question would be to endorse the now discredited sociological interpretation of the text, accepting the 'pathetic

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passages' at face value and arguing that Akaky does indeed make sufficient impact on the reader to engage his sympathy.

**(c) 'In presenting us with *Шинель*, Gogol is simply playing with his reader.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement and will show how Gogol creates and exploits an unreliable *skaz* narrator to tell the tale of the poor clerk and his new overcoat, the loss of which results in such terrible consequences. Candidates should describe what is meant by *skaz* narration, then discuss Gogol's innovative use of this technique in the story, showing how effective the device is at various points of the narration as a tool to convey or obscure meaning. The author's hallmark is the *skaz* narrator whose unreliability, naïvety, lack of omniscience, occasional apparent poor memory, shifting narratorial focus, generalisations, circumlocution, digressions and ambiguous comments serve to confuse and entertain the reader. Answers should show how the narrator, who is really a character in his own right, is instrumental in the creation of multiple interpretations of specific events in the plot and meanings for the text overall as well as in the achievement of comic effects throughout. Specific narrative techniques, features of the narrative persona and literary devices permeating the narrator's discourse should be mentioned: the use of *даже* and negative comparison to create comic alogism, self-conscious references to the reader, the story and the writing process, the narrator's habit of focusing on the grotesque, his playing with rhetorical syntax and imagery as in the pathetic passages, the use of direct speech, the balance between this and third-person narration by the narrative voice, irony, symbolism etc. The story can be read as a supernatural tale in which Akaky Akakievich returns from the dead to punish those who wronged him in life, a religious allegory in which the clerk is tempted by the devil (Petrovich) into acquiring an object which brings momentary pleasure, but ultimately leads to its owner's destruction or where the clerk's soul is reborn through the influence of love only to be extinguished by the forces of an unspiritual society, a psycho-sexual study of an emotionally stunted individual brought to life through the acquisition of a quasi-love-object and destroyed through its loss or a social study of a 'little man', the victim of bureaucratic inhumanity and social indifference. However, when closely scrutinised, none of these interpretations works consistently from start to finish. Candidates are likely to conclude that though it is possible to argue that the text contains meaningful sections, overall it is meaningless, due to Gogol's use of the *skaz* device with which he successfully and relentlessly plays with the reader's critical faculties.

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7 М. Лермонтов, *Герой нашего времени*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From *Бэла*. At the wedding of the eldest daughter of a friendly chief, Pechorin's eye is caught by Bela, the chief's youngest daughter. Kazbich, a brigand who sells sheep to the fort, appears also to fancy the 16 year old. Later, Maksim Maksimych overhears a conversation between Azamat, the chief's son, and Kazbich, the owner of a beautiful, intelligent and loyal horse, Karagez. Azamat wishes to buy the horse, offering Kazbich his father's best rifle or sabre, then his sister, but Kazbich refuses, calling him a silly boy and suggesting he would be unable to ride him. An argument ensues, then a fight, after which Kazbich rides off. Arriving back at the fort, Maksim Maksimych tells Pechorin about the overheard conversation. Pechorin laughs, apparently up to something.

**Content:** Maksim Maksimych is continuing his account. Three or four days later, Azamat comes to the fort to see Pechorin who cunningly starts a conversation about horses. Pechorin deliberately sings the praises of Karagez. From his glittering eyes, it is clear that Azamat is desperate to acquire the horse. Pechorin pursues the same tactic whenever the boy comes to the fort, and after about three weeks he resembles someone pining away for love in a novel. Pechorin asks him what he would give for the animal. The boy is prepared to give anything. When Pechorin asks for his sister in return for the horse, Azamat is silent, however. Pechorin has to tease him further, suggesting he is still a child, too young to be riding horses. Azamat, angered, puts up his father as an obstacle, but Pechorin points out that sometimes he is away. Though very pale, Azamat finally agrees to bring his sister the next time Kazbich comes to the fort. Maksim Maksimych shows his disapproval of Pechorin's manipulative behaviour and the terrible consequences for Bela, by referring to events as a *нехорошее дело*. Candidates can comment on the characters of Pechorin, Azamat, Kazbich and Maksim Maksimych and their roles in the novel.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract consists of Maksim Maksimych's first-person account of events, ostensibly reproduced by the frame narrator, complete with dialogue. Several characteristics of Maksim Maksimych's discourse create a sense of immediacy, thereby creating dynamic tension and sharpening the interest of the reader (the mixture of present and past tenses, the brisk pace of the dialogue with its many questions, exclamations). Differentiated language is used as a method of characterisation and to create atmosphere. The speech of Maksim Maksimych is peppered with colloquial features of oral discourse: the particle *ну* (interjection), the emphatic particle *–то* (creating a familiar tone), the colloquial pronoun *этакой*, the colloquial and patronising *татарчонка*, the narrative interjections *смотришь*, *Вот видите*, the abbreviated form of *сударь*, indicating respect to a superior and the use of Pechorin's first name and patronymic for the same purpose. The discourse of Pechorin and Azamat is also colloquial, but not to the same extent as that of Maksim Maksimych.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe how Pechorin sets about wooing Bela after her brother brings her tied up to him, and how she meets her tragic end as Kazbich extracts his revenge for the theft of his beloved horse. Mention might also be made of how Pechorin manipulates other characters in the rest of the text (*Vera*, *Knyazhna Meri* and *Grushnitsky* in *Княжна Мери*). Some analysis of the superfluous man's cynical, egocentric, emotionally detached and calculating nature and the motivation for his actions might be discussed.

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**(b) Describe and analyse Pechorin’s attitude to women.**

Candidates should examine Pechorin’s various relationships with the novel’s female characters and his actions towards them, attempting to evaluate whether or to what extent he displays a consistent attitude to women in general. The best answers will explain his attitude and behaviour in relation to the temporal / historical context in which white, rich European males were considered superior to females, non-Europeans and lower social classes. Most readers are likely to show that Pechorin’s attitude to women is reprehensible. The young officer is confident, courageous, charming, handsome and can display good taste in manners and dress. He is highly intelligent, strong willed and individualistic, but, due to the nature of Russian society, doomed to inactivity and thwarted ambition. Deprived of a focus for using his undoubted talents, he becomes bored, bitter, aimless and thoroughly dissatisfied with life. Alienated and isolated from society, Pechorin ruthlessly pursues his own goals and pleasures, delighting in his skilful manipulation of those around him and ruthlessly pushing aside those who get in his way. Frequently, it is women who become his victims and playthings.

In *Бэла* we see him manipulate Azamat into abducting his sister for Pechorin in exchange for the opportunity to steal a wonderful horse. Pechorin believes that Bela, an uncivilised Circassian girl, should be glad to have him as a husband. Bela, however, is a reluctant bride and must be craftily wooed over a period of time before she finally gives herself to him. Once the challenge is over, Pechorin grows cold to the girl and Bela becomes more and more miserable. The young officer confesses to Maksim Maksimych, that though still in love with her, he is bored by her. Pechorin reacts strangely when she is stabbed and lies dying. Some will conclude that Pechorin suppresses overt emotion, but nevertheless suffers, for Maksim Maksimych reports that he was subsequently unwell for a long time and lost weight. Others will argue that Pechorin’s discomfort after Bela’s death is scant punishment for being the indirect cause of her demise.

In *Тамань* we see Pechorin being punished for his predatory attitude to women or for his primordial male instinct. While waiting for a ship, the officer becomes sexually infatuated with a teenage beauty who captivates him and he is impressed by her breeding which he admires as in a horse. In the story of this liaison, Pechorin shows himself to be vulnerable and, by getting into a boat when he cannot swim, not always to be in control of himself. Even after he reaches safety, he appears still to be partly under the spell of the girl as he says he was almost glad to see his mermaid sitting on the beach, despite her attempts to kill him.

In *Княжна Мери*, the officer reverts to his games of manipulation. This section of the novel, ostensibly Pechorin’s diary, well illustrates Pechorin’s skill at manipulating people for his own pleasure regardless of their own distress. Through the use of cunning psychology, he successfully woos Meri away from the cadet, Grushnitsky, at the same time resuming his relationship with a former lover, Vera, who is now married. Eventually, Vera becomes jealous of the younger woman and later ruins her own life by admitting her love for Pechorin to her husband. Pechorin’s game ends with the killing of his younger rival in a duel. Finally, having lost Vera, Pechorin informs the young princess that he has only been playing with her, thereby turning her love for him to hatred. Few will admire Pechorin’s devious and manipulative behaviour in a society where men and women are subject to strict rules of courtship, where feelings have largely to be conveyed by expressions and body language rather than by honest words and where women have to wait until their affections are claimed by men. However, the confessional nature of the diary allows us to have some insight into the officer’s psychology, and we learn that he has never been a slave to the women he has loved, that he dislikes strong-willed women (16 May), that he occasionally shows himself capable of feeling guilt (e.g. towards Meri at the ball on 4 June), pity (towards Vera on the same occasion), depression at how he cannot help spoil things for others (5 June), deep sorrow when he realises he has lost Vera for ever and some pity for the young princess when he tells her he cannot marry her (16 June). Pechorin finds that women will do anything to hurt a rival, that their reasoning is paradoxical and illogical (11 June), that the expectation of a woman that he will marry her causes him to stop loving her, that he will not sell his

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freedom, and that he has had a fear of marriage since childhood when a fortune-teller told his mother he would die through a bad wife (14 June). Candidates will be divided as to whether his admissions are genuine and whether what we learn about his motivation goes any way to excuse his generally appalling behaviour and attitude to women.

**(c) 'From the point of view of its structure, *Герой нашего времени* is a failed experiment.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first describe the structure of the novel before going on to discuss whether the complexity of its experimental structure is a success or failure. Though *Бэла*, *Фаталист* and *Тамань* were originally published separately as works in their own right, we need to consider as a single organic unit the entire text as it was finally presented for publication by Lermontov. The novel has a complicated narrative structure which was highly innovative in its day, a time of great experimentation in Russian short prose fiction. It consists of a framed cycle of five stories, all featuring Pechorin, the central character of the novel as a whole. The stories are presented by a variety of narrators, each of whom sheds progressively more light on Pechorin's character and the events of the plot. The stories are, however, not presented in chronological order, so that the reader is required to reconstruct the time-line of the plot and re-evaluate his perception of Pechorin from the first two stories in the light of the more intimate first-person narrative of his journals with their confessional episodes. This poses a considerable challenge for the reader, and some may find it too hard a task. Thus, the artistic success of the text may be called into question. After a preface, the frame narrator of *Бэла*, essentially a writer of travel notes, encounters a captain (Maksim Maksimych) whose first-person account of the story of Bela and Pechorin is reproduced by the frame narrator, complete with dialogue. In *Максим Максимыч*, the frame narrator tells of a later meeting with the captain during which he himself encounters Pechorin and comments on his character. At the end of this story, the author acquires Pechorin's journals. In the *Предисловие* [to Pechorin's Journals], the frame narrator justifies their publication as their writer has now died. The reader is next presented with a first-person account by Pechorin of an adventure in a sea port (*Тамань*), an intimate diary with dated entries by Pechorin (*Княжна Мери*), chronicling his manipulation of the emotions of two women and the events leading up to a fatal duel, after which Pechorin is exiled to the fortress commanded by Maksim Maksimych, and a short first-person account by Pechorin of an incident perhaps clarifying his relationship with fate (*Фаталист*). Candidates can discuss the merits of this technique as a means of presenting Pechorin to the reader, the credibility of the presentation of the direct speech of various characters within the discourse of the different narrators, the degree to which each narrator's discourse is individualised, the use of Tatar (*Бэла*), Caucasian vocabulary (*Максим Максимыч*), Ukrainian (*Тамань*) and French (*Княжна Мери*) to add local colour and define social types, the use of the device of the frame narrator who disclaims authorship of the rest of the text, and the effects of numerous intertextual references throughout the work. Though candidates will agree that the novel is a clever creation, they may be divided as to whether its structure is an artistic success or failure.

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## 8 Л. Толстой, *Смерть Ивана Ильича*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** The beginning of Chapter 9. It is about a month before Ivan Il'ich's death, and his sufferings are steadily worsening. Earlier on this day, a specialist had provided him with a glimmer of hope, but this had not lasted long. His pains had returned, and he had been given an injection to knock him out. In the evening, his wife, son, daughter and her fiancé had briefly sat with him before going to the theatre to see Sarah Bernhardt. The conversation about the ability of this famous actress and her roles had struck Ivan as futile and irrelevant. His future son-in-law had noticed him staring indignantly and had fallen silent. The others had also stopped talking. All were afraid that by breaking the silence their deception would become obvious and the truth about Ivan's condition would have to be acknowledged. When they leave, Ivan feels that falsity has gone with them. He asks for Gerasim, his peasant servant, whose presence helps him physically and spiritually.

**Content:** When Praskov'ya returns late at night, she wishes to send Gerasim away and sit with her husband, but he tells her to go. She leaves once he has taken some opium. The drug causes him to imagine that he and his pain are being pushed into a black sack. Though they are pushed further and further in, they cannot be pushed to the bottom. He is frightened and wishes to fall through the sack. Eventually he succeeds, falls and regains consciousness. He sees Gerasim dozing at the foot of the bed. His legs are resting on his shoulders as this position alleviates his suffering a little. He sends Gerasim away, though his loyal and caring servant is reluctant to go. Once Gerasim has gone, he weeps like a child out of self-pity. He feels helpless, alone, that man and God are cruel and that God is absent. In marked direct thought or speech, he asks God why he is suffering as he is, but receives no answer, as he expects. As the pain intensifies, he challenges God to strike him, asking what it is all for and what he has done to God to deserve such suffering. The best candidates will identify this section as the place where Ivan reviews his life and starts to realise that he has not lived as he ought to have done, though he is still uncomfortable with the idea that the correctness of his life has been a lie and dismisses it.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is an interesting mixture of third-person omniscient narration, some of which is (objective) externally focalised and some of which is (subjective) internally focalised and presented from the point of view of Ivan. This allows us to experience intimately the sufferings and thought processes of the frightened dying man. The verisimilitude of the scene is further enhanced by the presence of direct speech exchanges between the characters and two short instances of marked direct speech or thought by Ivan towards the end of the extract. The use of a number of present tense verbs amid past tense verbs in the paragraph beginning Часов до трѣх... also allows the reader to experience in an immediate fashion Ivan's perception of being pushed into the sack, falling and waking up. On the other hand, the stylised use of И at the start of three sentences in this paragraph suggests the presence of an author and this adds a feeling of biblical gravitas. This is intensified in the next long paragraph by the same number of repetitions of Он and a series of phrases beginning with о or об. Ivan's questioning of God is also delivered in threes and may relate to the Trinity. Ivan and his wife use the standard educated speech of the narrator, while Gerasim confirms his status by attaching the abbreviation -c to his discourse, thus indicating his subservient position. Candidates might also refer to the symbolism of the black sack which can be read as a symbol of death as well as a symbol for the womb. Thus Ivan on the one hand longs for his sufferings to be alleviated through death, yet fears having to give up life. At the same time, the sack is a source of life, and so a means of rebirth into the next life.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the characters of Praskov'ya, Gerasim and Ivan, their respective attitudes to death, the relationships between Ivan and his wife and servant in view of their contrasting attitudes to the correct way to live and how to deal with death. Ivan's reassessment of his life in the context of his spiritual transformation and Tolstoy's overall message can also be mentioned.

**(b) What does Tolstoy have to say in *Смерть Ивана Ильича* about the medical and legal professions and 'civilised' society as a whole?**

Candidates should describe and analyse the character, behaviour and attitudes of the representatives of the medical and legal professions and other members of the educated middle or upper classes featuring in the text. They should then assess whether or to what extent Tolstoy is presenting us with a particular generalised view of them and whether this is a favourable one or not. During the course of the story, we are shown the falseness of the professional dignity of the doctors whom Ivan consults and those in the legal profession who purport to be his friends. Those from both professions are portrayed as self-interested, lacking concern for others, hypocritical and conformist. Often they are pompous and condescending. For example, the self-important doctor whom Ivan consults after he experiences his first symptoms makes him feel like an accused person in court, adopting the same air as Ivan is used to assuming himself. The doctor sees him as a case to be solved rather than an individual to be treated. About a month before his death (chapter viii), Ivan is irritated by the false and inappropriate cheerful disposition of the visiting doctor who asks him how he is, though he clearly knows there is no hope. The initial reactions of Ivan's colleagues to his death centre around thoughts of how his passing will create vacancies and promotions for themselves and others and a sense of relief that it is Ivan who has died rather than themselves. Petr Ivanovich is made uneasy by the sight of his colleague's body, performs religious rituals which are for him clearly meaningless, just because this is expected, and generally finds his visit to Ivan's widow a tiresome nuisance. For both him and Shvarts, the prospect of a routine card-game is of greater importance than paying their respects or acknowledging the reality of universal death. Mention should be made of the spiritual transformation of Ivan, who is, of course, also a member of the legal profession. Despite having lived a life in which he continually conformed to society's rules and expectations relating to his professional, social and domestic life and expected material and social advancement, Ivan is shown by Tolstoy to be able to redeem himself and die with a morally correct attitude as to how best to live, though this comes too late for Ivan's new way of thinking to have a positive effect on his family, friends and those he encounters in his public life in the legal profession and Civil Service. Ivan's wife, Praskov'ya Fedorovna, also embodies middle-class obsessions, values and attitudes. Throughout her married life she has been chiefly interested in advancing her own material circumstances rather than developing a close spiritual bond with her husband. Ivan's daughter is shown similarly to be focused on her own life and impending marriage. Neither of them can speak honestly to Ivan about his approaching demise and both generally find his illness and suffering an impediment to the smooth running of their lives. Of Ivan's family and friends, it is only his schoolboy son, Vasya, who appears to show heartfelt grief and pity. Honesty, true kindness and genuine compassion are shown only in the words and actions of Gerasim, Ivan's peasant servant. It is this character whom Tolstoy sets up as an example for the reader of morally correct and praiseworthy behaviour as a contrast to the representatives of 'civilised' society of whom he is heavily critical.

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(c) '*Смерть Ивана Ильича* is more of a moral tale than an example of realist fiction.' Do you agree?

Candidates should offer definitions of the concepts of moral tale and realist fiction. They should then discuss the text, assessing whether or to what extent *Смерть Ивана Ильича* falls into either category and deciding whether it is more of one rather than the other. Tolstoy sets his story about ordinary members of the upper middle class in a Petersburg completely recognisable to his readers when the text was published in 1886. Descriptions of places, buildings, institutions, legal and medical practices, furniture, styles of fashion, hair, manners of speech, attitudes, modes of transport, references to famous people etc. are all accurate and true-to-life. Professional and personal relationships between characters vary in nature, reflecting the reality of every-day life. Specific examples of these should be given in support of the case that the text is an example of realist fiction. Most candidates will argue that there are no supernatural elements in the story. Ivan's being thrust into a black sack (ix) or his catching sight of the light (xii) can be explained in terms of the effects of opium on his brain and / or the effects of prolonged extreme pain and suffering. Some candidates, however, may interpret this as a supernatural / religious experience. This would still allow the text to be classified as realist since the writer and the readers of his time shared a belief system in which such events could be accepted as real rather than imagined. The best candidates will refer to the problem of narratorial omniscience when reporting the thoughts of someone in the last moments of life. The narrator also skilfully manipulates the reader throughout the text through the construction of a non-chronological time structure. This and the occasional use of symbolism and biblical stylisation, it could be argued, detract from the illusion of realism. For many, Tolstoy is a tendentious moralist who forces the reader to accept his point of view by propelling us in one direction. Answers should trace the presentation of Ivan's spiritual conversion and realisation that much said and done by people is false and empty, that materialism is futile, that death cannot be ignored, should be embraced and that there is something beyond it. That suffering is designed to purify the soul and bring about true understanding is a point that some candidates may take issue with, but all should agree that it is a hallmark of Tolstoy's traditional Christian moral stance.

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## 9 A. Чехов, *Дядя Ваня*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From near the very end of Act 1. Astrov, summoned by the factory to attend a patient, reluctantly announces his departure, inviting Elena to visit his garden and nursery with Sonya. Having given his views about conserving the forests and the need to stop environmental degradation, he takes his leave via the house with Sonya. Elena and Voynitsky walk away from Mariya Vasil'evna and Telegin towards the terrace.

**Content:** This scene introduces and / or highlights several key elements of the plot and aspects of the characters' personalities. Elena upbraids Voynitsky for once again having behaved badly: he has irritated his mother, Mariya Vasil'evna, by criticising Serebryakov with whom he has quarrelled at lunch. Voynitsky justifies his behaviour by saying he hates him. Elena defends her husband by saying he is just like everyone else. This prompts Voynitsky to call her indolent. Elena vigorously defends herself. She is clearly annoyed at the attitudes of people and the assumptions they make about the quality of her life and her feelings about it: Everyone sympathises with her because her husband is old. Men cannot look indifferently at a woman not their own because they have the devil of destruction in them. This is destroying humanity, and soon there will be no fidelity, purity or capacity for sacrifice. Elena sees that Astrov has a sensitive and interesting face and understands why Sonya is in love with him. She regrets not having had a proper talk with him and that he must think she is disagreeable. She thinks that is why she and Voynitsky get on – they are both tiresome and tedious. Voynitsky dislikes what she is saying, but is looking at her in a way she dislikes. When she asks him not to look at her as he is doing, he declares his love, though he acknowledges the chances of this being returned are nil. He only wants to look at her and listen to her voice. Elena, exasperated, tells him to be quiet in case they are overheard.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The characters use a register appropriate to their social station. The degree of intimacy in their relationship is indicated by the use of polite forms (вы, ваш and the use of full first names and patronymics), even though they are part of the same extended family and even though Voynitsky makes a declaration of love. This is indicative of social usage of the period of the play. The dialogue of both characters is highly emotional. This is shown by the use of short sentences, phrases and broken syntax, frequently followed by exclamation marks. Both characters' discourse is rapid and generally spontaneous. Elena's longer passage contains more complex sentences indicative of some already formulated thoughts. This contrasts with the speech after the highly effective and dramatic pause where the syntax reflects more spontaneous and emotional thought processes. There is much scope for making the audience feel the range of emotions experienced by both characters by having them vary the pace, volume and intensity of delivery. Candidates might mention gesture and body language appropriate for such a sensitive, semi-clandestine exchange.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** The extract provides candidates with an opportunity to discuss several elements of the interwoven plot and the characters speaking in it or being referred to. The reasons behind Voynitsky's bad behaviour can be mentioned. He is frustrated that life and personal happiness have passed him by while he has been selflessly managing the estate in order to clear its debts and finance the lifestyle of Serebryakov whom he now regards as an academic failure. Though Elena at this point appears to wish to remain loyal to her husband, she states she can see why Sonya is in love with Astrov. Candidates can explain the course of Sonya's unrequited love, Astrov's attempts to woo Elena and her reactions to this. Elena's betrayal of Sonya and Voynitsky's reaction to seeing Astrov kiss Elena at the end of Act 3 can be discussed.

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**(b) Describe the character of Astrov and assess his significance in *Дядя Ваня*.**

Candidates should first describe the character of Mikhail L'vovich Astrov, the local doctor, before assessing his significance to the plot and message of the play. Though only 36 or 37, Astrov is already losing his looks due to overwork and indulging in vodka in which he finds solace. Caring deeply for his patients regardless of their social status, he is tortured by his conscience when he loses one of them (the signalman). A vegetarian with a big moustache, he finds Russian provincial life tedious, stupid and dirty. The environment and those within it have a negative effect on his personality, and he feels he has become a crank. He likes to drink with his friend, Voynitsky, with whom he shares idealist values of hard work and self-sacrifice. The doctor seems to regret he has grown old, worked too hard, has blunted feelings and is no longer capable of love. After his patients, his passion is conservation. He helps to run a government plantation and has been given a medal for his model garden and tree nursery. Astrov tries to stop the destruction of forests, believing that they beautify the country and teach man to understand beauty. He has documented the disappearance of local flora and fauna on a map showing the effects of 'civilisation' on the environment over the last half-century. According to him, the demise of forests, rivers and animals, the destruction of the climate and the impoverishment of the earth are due to inertia, ignorance and lack of understanding. Nothing has replaced what has been lost. Through Astrov, Chekhov voices his own opinions about the environment. Astrov's role in the play initially seems unimportant as he has merely come to treat Serebryakov's gout and visit Voynitsky. Soon, however, the audience sees that Astrov has a profound effect on several characters and influences the general outcome of the violence which occurs towards the end of the play. Sonya finds him refined, soft-voiced and handsome and, unbeknown to Astrov, has loved him for six years. Elena promises to try to discover whether he is attracted to her stepdaughter, but finds herself drawn to the doctor, finding him handsome, interesting and fascinating. Elena betrays both her husband and Sonya by herself falling for Astrov whose own passions are aroused by her physical beauty. The doctor informs Elena that it is she who has caused him to visit so regularly and invites her to call on him at his plantation (a request repeated even in Act 4 when she and Serebryakov are about to depart). Elena does the morally correct thing by rejecting the invitation, but it is obvious from her attitude and body language that she holds strong feelings for the doctor and is struggling to control them. Astrov is also significant in that it is his declaration of love to Elena (overheard by Voynitsky) which helps to provoke the attempted murder of the professor. It is Astrov, however, who stops Voynitsky from killing himself with the morphine stolen from his medicine chest, by insisting, along with Sonya, that he return it. Candidates might argue that the doctor sets a positive example to the audience by not allowing his personal tragedy to destroy him as a force for good in the world. In the end, he returns to his patients and trees to resume his life's work.

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(c) **'Дядя Ваня is suffused with excessive gloom and pessimism.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should discuss the plot and, in particular, the mood created by the characters as they interact. They should then assess the overall effect, evaluating whether or to what extent the play is excessively gloomy and pessimistic. The mood of *Дядя Ваня* can variously be described as tense, dramatic, pessimistic or one echoing the frustration of most of the main characters who, for different reasons, are denied the happiness they seek. However, the ending emphasises all-round reconciliation, especially between Voynitsky and Serebryakov, while Sonya's final speeches clearly express the view that happiness can be attained through working for others and that one can patiently bear the trials sent by fate since God will reward one after death. This suggests that Chekhov is ultimately presenting us with an optimistic outlook on life and a final message which leaves the audience with positive feelings. During the course of the play, however, we observe the main characters living unhappy lives where they are trapped in unsatisfactory and unsatisfying situations and relationships of different degrees of dysfunctionality. Most are disillusioned with work, life and love, for this is often unrequited or unattainable. Both Astrov and Voynitsky love Elena who, though she is attracted by the doctor, remains faithful to her dull, elderly husband. Sonya's romantic feelings for Astrov are never returned. The professor is aware his wife is unhappy. Ailing and irritable, he is deeply frustrated at the effects of old age on his failing body and at having had to leave his more interesting way of life in the town. Chekhov makes his characters credible by endowing them with a subtle blend of positive and negative attributes, and though much of the play appears to be gloomy, there are some elevating moments when optimistic incidents occur and positive attitudes are expressed. For example, Telegin seems to accept his lot, while Astrov displays laudable concern for the environment and the need to improve conditions generally. The best answers will make reference to how fluctuations in mood throughout the play may depend on the staging and interpretation of the director, the pace of delivery, the length of the pauses, the use of music and lighting effects.

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10 М. Булгаков, *Роковые яйца*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From near the end of Chapter 8. Aleksandr Semenovich Rokk, a careerist revolutionary, is now Chairman of the State Farm on the former Sheremetev estate where he is trying within a month to replenish the country's chickens wiped out by a plague. The eggs in two chambers have hatched with the aid of Professor Persikov's ray, but the chickens are nowhere to be found and appear to have escaped. In the third chamber, the eggs are beginning to make sounds prior to hatching.

**Content:** Rokk is unwilling to wait for the eggs to hatch, instead going off to the pond for a swim, having given orders that he is to be summoned at once should anything happen. Despite his revolutionary credentials, Rokk appears to feel at ease in his luxurious surroundings, walking cheerfully, swinging his fluffy towel and clutching his flute on which he will shortly play the waltz from Tchaikovsky's *Evgeniy Onegin*. As he passes a thicket of burdock, Rokk spits, causing a rustling to emerge from it. He feels an unpleasant gnawing in his heart as he peers into the thicket. For two days the pond had been silent. After a pause, the strange sounds resume as the voice of Manya, Rokk's wife, announces she too is going for a swim. The man makes no reply as he is transfixed by the appearance of a greyish olive log rising up from the thicket. Candidates can describe the characters of Manya and Rokk and his role in the plot. Mention should be made of the ending of the chapter, Manya's grizzly demise and Rokk's reaction to this.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract consists of a long paragraph of third-person omniscient narration followed by a short one containing a single sentence of direct speech in standard Russian and the beginning of a larger paragraph like the first. The narrative is mainly externally focalised, though occasional insights into the feelings of Rokk are also given. The narrator indicates Rokk's important status by repeatedly using his first-name and patronymic. Surprisingly, Rokk's wife also addresses him in this formal manner. The tone of the first paragraph is deceptively pleasant: *груда зелёных яблоков и горы проса* suggest an abundance of natural produce, the playing of the flute evokes civilisation while *поиграть над водной гладью* suggests calm normality. Rokk runs out *бодро*, and this adverb is repeated and placed at the beginning of the following sentence for extra emphasis. The use of *И* at the start of the sentence *И тотчас в глубине...* prefigures an event of biblical magnitude, while the rustling sound is emphasised by the repetition of plosives and sibilants. Rokk's feelings of unease appear to be quelled by the image of flitting dragonflies and the everyday remark of his wife. All this makes more horrific the image of the giant snake rising up before him.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can give a brief account of the plot of the povest', showing the symbolic significance of Rokk in relation to the text's meaning: it is he who is behind the regime's expropriation of an undeveloped and potentially dangerous scientific discovery in the mistaken belief that it can successfully regenerate poultry production. Rokk, the half-educated representative of the political elite, coerces the scientist into serving the needs of the regime despite warnings from that expert of the unknown consequences of the ray's application. Mention should be made of how the giant reptiles and ostriches hatched at the farm cause havoc for ordinary people and the authorities before nature intervenes in the form of an unseasonal frost, killing off the invading creatures which the might of the Soviet army had failed to do. Though the danger from the attacking creatures is over, so too is the life of Professor Persikov, the discoverer of the ray, as he is attacked and killed by an ignorant mob.

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**(b) To what extent can the reader sympathise with the characters in *Роковые яйца*?**

Candidates are likely to differentiate between the reader's attitude to minor and major characters. All Bulgakov's characters are to a greater or lesser extent caricature-like with some features exaggerated and others only thinly sketched or ignored completely. Answers should cover a range of examples, showing whom we can sympathise with, why, to what extent and at which points in the plot our sympathy is engaged. Some minor characters, such as Pankrat and Manya, are so undeveloped that even when they meet their untimely and undeserved deaths at the hands of the mob and a giant snake respectively, our sympathies do not engage with them. Other minor characters, such as Drozdova, though deeply distressed because her hens are dying from a particularly nasty form of fowl pest, do not command our sympathy mainly because they feature only in isolated episodes. In addition, in the case of the archpriest's widow, the narrator informs us that she has managed to avoid a tax bill through a ruse, and this immediately takes the edge off her plight, since she has clearly been cheating the system and therefore deserves to be punished. The situation is somewhat different for the major characters of Rokk and Persikov, however, since we are provided with more detail about their backgrounds, personalities and ideas. Both Rokk and Persikov may be viewed as responsible for the existence of the giant aggressive creatures, the former for hatching them out before methods for controlling them have been tested, the latter for having started the whole business and for ordering the snake and ostrich eggs for his experiments in the first place. Nevertheless, both men are seen to suffer. Rokk has to witness his wife's gruesome death as a result of which his hair turns white and he experiences a physical and mental collapse. Persikov, whose wife had left him because of his frogs and who had spent his life devoted to science, has to witness the disaster caused by the application of his ideas and the physical destruction of his working environment by ignorant and irrational people before meeting an undeserved violent end at the hands of a primitive, ape-like intruder. Some candidates may argue that the satirical elements of the text (both the targets of satire and the techniques used to achieve it) force the reader into a detached objectivity which renders any kind of sympathy for any character virtually impossible.

**(c) '*Роковые яйца* is a brilliant work depicting the consequences of combining ignorance with political power.' Do you agree?**

Candidates will probably first outline the plot, explaining how the disaster comes about, which forms it takes and how it ends for individual characters and Russian society as described in the text. They may also suggest an overall meaning. They should then assess whether or to what extent 'brilliant work' is an appropriate epithet for the story. Set in 1928, four years into the future from the time of writing, the story illustrates how the political elite expropriate and misuse scientific knowledge in a misguided attempt to solve a practical problem – the re-establishment of poultry production after the wiping out of chickens due to a virulent form of fowl pest. Professor Persikov, a Moscow zoologist, makes a chance discovery – a red ray which causes living things to grow and reproduce at an amazingly rapid rate. Persikov orders reptile and ostrich eggs from abroad for further experiments. Meanwhile, fowl pest spreads rapidly throughout the country, wiping out the nation's chickens. News of the discovery of 'the ray of life' leaks out, and the professor and his discovery become the centre of media attention. After a talk given by Persikov at the Tsekuba, an up-and-coming party official, Rokk, has the idea of applying the discovery to deal with the consequences of the fowl pest. Having won the backing of the Kremlin, Rokk becomes the official in charge of the Red Ray Sovkhoz with the authority to expropriate Persikov's equipment. Though the professor protests that his 'discovery' is still only an experiment and withholds his approval from the conducting of experiments with eggs until he has done so himself, he is forced to hand over everything required by the authorities. Due to an administrative error, Persikov's egg order is sent to the Sovkhoz. When the eggs hatch,

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the creatures escape and Rokk witnesses his wife being killed by a giant snake. This causes him to have a nervous breakdown. The hatched reptiles and ostriches quickly reproduce, wreaking havoc on the Smolensk area and soon advance towards Moscow. The Red Army is unable to contain them, and there are innumerable human casualties. Moscow is terrified, and a violent mob descends on Persikov's institute, smashing it up and eventually killing the professor whom they blame for the calamity. Russia is saved only through a freak of nature – a severe August frost which kills off the rampaging creatures. Answers will probably reflect the view that the text serves as a warning to politicians not to interfere in things about which they have inadequate knowledge and expertise. Candidates are likely to agree that the text is indeed a 'brilliant work' and may justify their opinion by discussing any of the following aspects of Bulgakov's writing: the comic caricature-like characters, their comic names, the interplay of comic scenes with moments of extreme horror, the creation of credible science fiction through the use of a realistic setting, the satire of elements of Soviet society and institutions (bureaucratic incompetence, the language of Soviet officialdom, the inadequate quality of Soviet products, the dullness of the press and the nature of its journalists, the secret police and their methods and strategies, contemporary writers and their works, including Bulgakov's own, surviving elements of religion and superstition, the mentality of the uneducated peasants and workers), the creation of a political allegory with clear references to contemporary political figures, an advocacy of NEP, the creation of a narrative voice able to manipulate the reader in his interpretation of events, characters and ideas. Some candidates may limit their praise by suggesting that the elements of irony and satire are too many and too complicated for such a short work.

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## 11 В. Маяковский, *Клоп*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From near the beginning of Scene 5, the opening of Part 2. It is 1979. Fifty years have passed since the fire at the hairdressing salon which apparently caused the deaths of all at Prisyarkin's wedding to El'zevira. The firemen were unable to find the body of one of those present, and it is assumed that it was completely burnt up. However, the body (Prisyarkin) has been found frozen in a caved-in cellar. In a vast, futuristic conference-hall filled with a screen and loudspeakers, two technicians have been tinkering with the apparatus necessary for an important vote by thousands from all over the country. The technicians have been discussing the inadequacies and difficulties of meetings in the past when people had to be present and struggle to be heard. The orator orders all the zones of the Federation to be plugged in, and all the red, green, and blue bulbs simultaneously light up.

**Content:** The orator introduces himself as the President of the Institute for Human Resurrection and presents the facts of the situation to those taking part. He describes in factual terms the discovery of the frozen body and states the opinion of the Institute that the body can be resurrected, for the life of every worker must be utilised until the last second. X-rays have shown that the body has callused hands, the distinguishing mark of the worker of fifty years previously. The orator reminds his audience that human life had been declared inviolable by a World Federation decree of 1965, but also brings to their attention the objections of the Epidemiological Office which fears the spread of bacteria known to have infected the people of what had been Russia. He ends by reminding voters that they are voting for a human life, thus guiding them in the direction of endorsing resurrection. The text of the motion in favour is flashed on a screen followed by the sound of voices, most of which make comments of support. A second motion, proposing that the body remain frozen, appears and is read out. Most voices reject this. The orator asks for amendments, then reads a third motion which calls for the resurrection to be postponed until the broad masses can take part. The orator puts the first motion to the vote, and the vast majority of steel hands are raised. Only two hands are raised in favour of the amendment to postpone. The orator declares the motion accepted. To the sound of 'hurrah!!!', the orator closes the session. Candidates can comment on the setting of Part 2 and the significant changes that have happened to society in the fifty years since Part 1. This scene and the decision to unfreeze Prisyarkin is pivotal to the plot and message of the play.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The extract is highly effective due to (in the original production) Rodchenko's Constructivist set which differs in style from that of the Kukryniksy, used for Scenes 1–4. The flashing coloured lights, high-pitched bells, use of a screen to display motions, the relaying of far-flung voices and the voting through loudspeakers with mechanical arms combine to thrust the audience into an alien and disturbing futuristic world. Despite the disconcerting set and references to future events as well as great political and social changes, the audience is partially put at ease by the familiar syntax and rhetoric of political meetings of the 1920s. The sequence of the orator's thoughts as expressed in words, his tone, sentence structure, arrangement of long and short sentences, use of participles and the vocabulary and phraseology of the motions (e.g. repetition of *во имя*, use of *требуем*) all conform to the patterns of educated political speech of the 1920s.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the significance of the decision to resurrect the frozen body. Prisytkin, miserable and ill at ease, starts to infect the society of 1979 with the philistinism and bourgeois values and tastes from the past. His character can be analysed along with his function in defining the play's message (see Q11B).

**(b) What do you consider to be Mayakovsky's artistic purpose in writing *Клоп* and to what extent do you think he has succeeded?**

Candidates will identify Mayakovsky's artistic purpose in writing *Клоп* as an attempt to criticise through virulent satire various aspects of the philistinism he saw taking hold in society as a result of NEP. Mayakovsky shows his disdain for those who have made elements of pre-Revolutionary life a part of their everyday existence in the USSR through the character of Prisytkin, the embodiment of a number of bourgeois traits, tastes and values. The former Party member styles himself Pierre Skripkin, has a penchant for fashionable clothes and hair, likes to wear a tie, dances the foxtrot and sees it as his right to have the good life since he has fought for it. The writer abandons his pregnant girlfriend, Zoya, to marry El'zevira, the cashier of a hairdressing and beauty salon, failing to react appropriately when Zoya attempts to shoot herself. During the wedding speeches, a grotesque fight develops, ending with a fire from which there are apparently no survivors. However, Prisytkin *does* survive, frozen in a cellar. In 1979, when he is discovered, a democratic vote is taken about whether to unfreeze him or not. Despite the reservations of many that there is a danger of the arrogance and sycophancy of the late 1920s being spread, the majority vote for him to be brought back to life. But Prisytkin *does* spread the feared diseases along with a liking for alcohol, cigarettes, decadent music, dancing and love. Ultimately, he is exhibited in a zoo together with the bedbug which was unfrozen with him, two parasites sharing a cage and highlighting the 'horrors' of a bygone age. The zoo director announces that the mammal was wrongly classified as belonging to the highest group of humanity, the workers, and suggests he is more dangerous than the bedbug, being able to lure his victims with his pre-Revolutionary behaviour and tastes, disguised as those of the new society. In a final twist, reminiscent of Gogol's *Ревизор*, Prisytkin addresses those come to view him, hailing them as his brothers and inviting them to join him. Some candidates will regard the cold, sterile, rational world of 1979 in Part 2 as simply a device for throwing Prisytkin's philistinism into sharp relief because his character, attitudes and desires are alien and incomprehensible to those who inhabit it. Others, however, will argue that Mayakovsky also intended through satire to question the desirability of an 'ideal' Socialist future utopia by depicting a world where dancing only exists as a form of mass physical exercise, the guitar is unknown, tobacco and alcohol are regarded as poisons and where, until Prisytkin spreads his primitive germs, love, jealousy and passion are absent. All candidates are likely to suggest that the play is funny, and therefore effective, whether it is interpreted as a single or dual satire. As a brilliant satirical comedy with elements of visual humour, topical references, music, songs and dance, it is accessible to a relatively wide audience, none of whom is likely to forget it as a theatrical experience. Mayakovsky's message will, therefore, also endure.

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- (c) *Клоп* is a theatrical masterpiece designed to hold the audience from start to finish.'  
Do you agree?

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement and may discuss one or more aspects of the play to justify it. The best candidates will discuss several: the plot (See Q11B), a range of characters, themes, dramatic techniques and devices. They will show how these are combined to create a work which shocks, entertains and informs throughout. Mention should be made of the detailed stage directions and notes about the set at the beginning of each scene. The striking, unusual nature of the sets causes an alienation effect, allowing the audience to distance themselves from the characters, limit empathy with them and analyse their behaviour objectively. In Meyerhold's original production, the use of challenging incidental music by Dmitry Shostakovich, the featuring of contemporary dance (e.g. the chorus girls and foxtrot in Scene 7) and the original and outlandish sets by the Kukryniksy and Rodchenko all contributed much to the atmosphere. Particularly effective is Mayakovsky's use of puns, wordplay, parody, intertextual references to his own works and those of others and the frequent mentioning of contemporary cultural and political figures from around the world. Candidates should provide examples of these with detailed explanations of their significance for the play and for the audience. Some candidates may suggest that for the present-day audience, many of the once topical references fall on deaf ears unless one has a detailed knowledge of the time of writing and that this lessens considerably the effect of the play as a theatrical experience.

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## 12 В. Некрасов, *Кира Георгиевна*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** The extract comes from the end of Chapter 7. Kira has been wandering around Moscow, thinking of her previous day's conversation with Vadim, her first husband, from whom she has been parted for more than twenty years: Vadim asks after her family and friends. Their common bond is illustrated by the fact that they both dislike the new Gogol statue. In a restaurant Kira finds herself proposing a toast to her former husband's return. Vadim shows her a photograph of his two year old son, to whom Kira also proposes a toast. Now that they are together again, Kira starts to feel she no longer needs anyone other than Vadim. He also seems to feel a rekindling of feelings for his former spouse as he says they understand each other and that they could have had a son who, by now, would have been around twenty. Immediately before the extract, Vadim has been telling Kira about his wife, Mar'ya, a doctor who had taken care of him in hospital.

**Content:** Kira appears to become jealous. She feels she does not want to see Vadim's wife as he clearly has a high regard for her and perhaps even loves her. As they stroll through Moscow, Vadim tells Kira everything about himself in a calm, matter-of-fact manner. On Krymsky Bridge, they stand, looking into the water. Vadim appears to reclaim his former wife by throwing his jacket over her shoulders and embracing her. Kira considers how he has changed: he has grey hair and wrinkles, but his fingers are as strong as ever and his eyes still show he understands everything. After standing together for some time on the bridge, Vadim asks what they are to do next. Kira replies that it is clear enough. Candidates can describe the characters of Kira and Vadim, discussing the complexities of their relationship in the past and in the time-frame of the text.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The arrangement of voices within the extract is highly complicated and typical of the text as a whole. Omniscient third-person narration is at times fused with the perspective of Kira. In the first paragraph the narrator relates events objectively while allowing us a glimmer of insight into Kira's thoughts about Vadim's wife. The use of *может быть* and *даже* clearly indicate the perspective of Kira rather than that of an omniscient narrator. The second and third paragraphs are almost entirely objective third-person narration with just a hint of insight into the fact that they do not want to speak as they stand on the bridge, looking into the water. Their bodily contact is enough for them to communicate their feelings to each other. The fourth paragraph is composed of free indirect thought whereby the omniscient third-person narrator's discourse mingles with the thoughts of Kira. Her thought processes are indicated by the broken syntax, the use of *может быть* in relation to the quantity of Vadim's wrinkles and the strength of his fingers and the repetition of words evoking the things which strike her most about him: *глаза* and *всё понимающий взгляд*. Here the repetition of the soothing sounds *в, с, ш, and щ* might indicate love, reassurance and contentment. The Russian of the extract is typical of the educated Soviet middle-class of the 1960s – grammatically accurate with occasional colloquialisms. The image of the dawn over Moscow at the end of the extract may be seen as a symbol of the renewal of the couple's relationship and of hopes for the future.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the characters of Kira and Vadim and the effect the latter's reappearance after many years of imprisonment has on her relationship with her current husband, the elderly Nikolay Ivanovich, as well as on her relationship with her young model, Yurochka. Though the former couple try in Ukraine to re-establish what they once had, Kira finds that Vadim has changed: he has lost his youthful enthusiasm for poetry and art. It proves impossible for her to understand his recent past and how he cannot adapt to being free again. He, in turn, finds Kira's selfish nature unpleasant and soon realises

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that twenty years of separation and different influences have affected their characters too significantly for their relationship to be successful once again. When Mar'ya arrives in Kiev with their son, it is clear to Vadim he cannot give him up. When Kira learns of the sudden serious illness of Nikolay Ivanovich, she also realises where her duty lies. Leaving Kiev suddenly, she returns to Moscow to be with her ailing husband. Vadim's return does leave a permanent effect on her character, however. Some months after her return to Moscow, Kira realises that her art is actually false and lifeless and that her attitude to life and relationships is equally wrong. Future happiness for her is now some considerable way off.

**(b) Describe and analyse Nekrasov's narrative techniques and their effect on our understanding of *Кира Георгиевна*.**

Answers will focus on the interplay of omniscient third-person narration, interior monologue (free indirect speech and free indirect thought), direct thought and dialogue and the effect this mixture of voices has at various points in the text as the reader concretises his image of the characters and evaluates their actions during the course of the main time-frame. Though the narrator provides us with much information, the most interesting parts of the text are where the perspective of a character fuses with that of the narrator so that the reader has to decide whether a fact or impression is being provided objectively by the narrator or subjectively by a character. This stream of consciousness effect is indicated by repetition of words and phrases, apparently at random to suggest spontaneous thoughts, rhetorical questions to suggest still incomplete thought processes involving laboured recall of events, deliberation and internal argument, broken syntax to suggest the same and exclamations to suggest strong emotions and feelings on the part of one character or another. By far the majority of instances of this mingling of voices between narrator and character concern Kira. Thus we observe her arguing with herself about whether to tell off Yurochka for kissing her (C3 and 4), rejoicing at the return of Vadim and considering how he has physically changed (See Q12A), wondering why she feels unhappy as her train leaves for Kiev (C10), feeling remorse at the prospect of not speaking the truth when her husband asks about her holiday in Ukraine as he lies seriously ill in hospital (C17) etc. This technique allows us to follow from inside the gradual changes taking place within her as her world of simplified conclusions and self-persuasion to take the easiest ways out falls apart, allowing her to accept that her life and work have all been false. Insight is provided to a lesser degree into the psychology of Vadim e.g. wondering to himself what he knows about collective farms and therefore turning down an offer to write about them (C12), discussing with himself why and how Kira cannot understand his problems in adjusting to being free (C13). Yurochka also justifies his attitude to life as he talks to Vadim (C9). Candidates will probably conclude that though the reader has to work hard to understand this text properly, the narrative techniques are interesting, effective and original.

**(c) 'In *Кира Георгиевна* Nekrasov clearly lays bare the powerful and relentless effects of time on people.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should analyse the development of several characters over their lives, examining whether or to what extent the passage of time has altered them for better or worse. Answers should feature illustrations of their personal circumstances, appearances, personalities and attitudes to life. Though most answers will concentrate on Kira and Vadim, the best ones will discuss Nikolay Ivanovich and others. Kira, a 41 year old, self-centred, sculptress with a husband some twenty years her senior and a toy-boy who could well have been her son, has changed little in her superficial attitude to life since her youth. Adept at suppressing facts or emotions which are inconvenient or which complicate her life, Kira is made to confront her past when her former husband, a victim of Stalinist cultural policies, reappears after twenty years in camps. The couple attempt to restore the happiness of their youthful relationship,

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but though they are quickly attracted to each other once again, it proves impossible to wipe out the people and events of the intervening years and the effects they have had on their personalities and world-views. When Nikolay Ivanovich becomes dangerously ill, Kira comes to realise that her present and future lie with him and that her attitude to life has hitherto been false and shameful. Vadim also discovers that the clock cannot be turned back, for he cannot give up his present wife and their young son. Despite his time in prison as an enemy of the people, Vadim is not bitter as he was able to get to know interesting people, think and learn a lot. Rejecting his youth as a vapid time of triviality, he has, in contrast to Kira, an honest and positive world-view: the main thing is to have around you people who need you. His values seem to rub off on Kira as well as on Yurochka with whom he has an instinctive bond. The model's brief affair with the sculptress can be seen as an educative experience. Though he feels shame at betraying the trust and friendship of her husband, he is able to move on, taking his life away from Kira in a positive direction. Nikolay Ivanovich is depicted as a sick, lonely old man. Despite his artistic and material success, his marriage to Kira is clearly flawed, and he greatly misses the loss of his only son. Nikolay Ivanovich is one of several characters in the text whose lives have coincided with the traumas of twentieth-century Soviet life: purges, hunger, occupation etc. Like Lyudmila Vasil'evna, the mother of Kira's friend in Kiev who resisted German attempts to recruit her, Nikolay Ivanovich has survived, but at a physical and emotional cost. Candidates are likely to agree with the statement of the question as the povest' clearly shows that the passage of time affects people in numerous ways, despite the attempts of some to pretend the contrary to themselves or others.

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### 13 И. Грекова, *Вдовий пароход*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From Chapter 5. The narrator, Ol'ga Ivanovna Flerova, has informed the reader that Anfisa Gromova has died. Here she is describing her husband, Fedor Savel'evich Gromov. Olga has been recalling the time in the autumn of 1943 when Anfisa returned from the front to her room in a dilapidated communal flat. She had been wounded a year previously and is now pregnant, but not by her husband. At first she is not recognised by her neighbour, Капа, who had been looking after her room, though occasionally letting others use it in return for presents of food. Fedor is one year younger than his wife whom he had met through musical activities in a club run by the factory where they worked. A skilled worker, he had earned well, and Anfisa had enjoyed the luxury of not working outside the home.

**Content:** The narrator describes Fedor's moderate drinking habits. Her attitude to his occasional binge drinking on days of important national celebrations reveals much about society at the time. When he asks Anfisa's forgiveness, the narrator remarks: А чего прощать-то? Мужчина, он и есть мужчина. This indicates women's general tolerance of this aspect of undesirable male behaviour. Fedor appears to be less of a drunk than Anfisa's father, and for this she seems grateful. The narrator tells us that the couple had a good life, only there were no children. Indicating her socially conditioned instinct to accept 'blame', Anfisa simply assumes it is she, who is infertile rather than her husband. Fedor becomes her child, her love unconditional. She dismisses his increasing baldness as irrelevant. The couple live in domestic bliss for eight years until the outbreak of war. When Fedor receives his call-up papers, Anfisa collects them and weeps, yet when the inhabitants of the flat sit drinking vodka to mark his departure, Anfisa is unable to wail по-бабьи and is ashamed. In the morning, however, she cannot tear herself from him and Fedor has to push her gently aside in order to leave for the war, telling her to wait for him.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is an interesting and complicated mixture of voices. Though it does not contain a я reference and therefore appears to be third-person, it is, in fact, first person narration. Ol'ga's discourse is characterised by colloquial vocabulary (e.g. выпивка, опохмелка, по-бабьи) the interjection ну, the emphatic particle -то, several rhetorical questions and exclamations, diminutives, the use of the perfective future to describe continuous past events. Yet, as well as being colloquial, her style is clearly that of an educated person with logical sequencing of ideas, integrated, colloquial, marked direct speech from Fedor and clever stylistic features such as the use of a long series of verbs in the first sentence of the last paragraph to emphasis speedy activity and the dramatic two word sentence at the end of the extract. The use of И to begin this gives the action biblical gravitas. The best candidates might address the question of whether the extract contains free indirect speech, discussing whether utterances such as А чего прощать-то? or Значит, неплодная. Ну что теперь поделаешь? might be read as really belonging to Anfisa's perspective rather than the narrator's. Reference might also be made to Fedor's final word to Anfisa: жди. This might evoke for the Russian reader Simonov's Жди меня, и я вернусь. It might even suggest a parallel between Anfisa and Simonov's wife, Valentina Serova, to whom his poem is addressed since she allegedly had an affair with a general during the war.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the characters of Anfisa and Fedor as well as Anfisa's struggle to work and bring up her son after her husband's death for which she feels responsible because of her infidelity. Mention will be made of Fedor's magnanimous reaction to the discovery of four year old Vadim when he finally returns from

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fighting, his acceptance of the boy as his son by giving him Fedorovich as a patronymic, the positive effect he has on the behaviour of the women in the flat and what this says about relationships between men and women, his depression, curtailed relationship with the narrator, alcoholism, decline and accidental death. The significance of his death for Vadim and his attitudes and behaviour might also feature.

**(b) Consider the view that Vadim may ultimately be perceived as a symbol of hope for social and personal improvement.**

Candidates should describe and analyse the character and behaviour of Vadim throughout the text before assessing whether or to what extent his changed nature in the final chapters suggests he can be considered a symbol of hope for social and personal improvement. Answers should consider Vadim's behaviour not just as being peculiar to him, but also as representative of a type of Soviet male in the text's historical context. Vadim is the illegitimate son of Anfisa Gromova and Grigoriy, a convalescing soldier with whom the young nurse has a passionate affair at the front. The baby masters his mother like no one else has done. He is spoilt by his mother and the other women in the flat. He struggles to adapt from being the top dog in the orphanage he is allowed to attend, to being more ordinary in the nursery school and at school. His mother is unable to grasp what she reads in books about child-development and, as a result, is largely to blame for her son's selfish nature and ungrateful behaviour. Vadim's journey from spoilt and revered young infant to sullen and jealous older child/teenager can be plotted via his realisation at nursery school and school that he is not always top dog, the loss of the person he thought was his father, his lack of respect for his mother and his increasing distaste for human mendacity. His jealous nature and reprehensible treatment of women, seen earlier with his hatred of his mother's partner, is shown once again when he hits his first girlfriend, Svetka. Vadim, though appalled at his own behaviour, tries to justify himself, suggesting non-violence to women is part of nineteenth-century morality and claiming that his action was due to his love for the girl. Through a teenage pregnancy and mediocre school certificate, Vadim's journey to unremarkable scholar progresses, ending up with him out of his depth in the institute (only there because his mother entreated the Dean to let him in) and especially resentful of female teachers. His period of friendship with Klavochka, his departure for the Virgin Lands and his only occasional, short and unloving letters to his mother come to an end after two years, both he and Klavochka having lost the sparkle of youth, turning out to be ordinary and unremarkable young men. He continues to show his lack of respect for women in his relationship with Zhenya. He is still bored, his soul restless, always trying to analyse where he has gone wrong and searching for something illusive and apparently unattainable.

At this point things start to change, he starts to notice the beauty of nature and to miss his mother. Vadim returns as soon as he can to see his mother when he hears she is in hospital. From this point onwards, his character starts to change profoundly as he sets about assuming the role of a remorseful and dutiful son. It is as if he is trying to atone for his past behaviour by shouldering all the caring. Sometimes he is rude and ungrateful to those who would help and can be described as cruel when refusing her visitors or when tying his mother to the bed to prevent her getting up and injuring herself when he is forced to take a demeaning job after his money has run out. Though Anfisa's condition improves a little, her son's attempts to teach her to speak are in vain, though he is more successful in teaching her to distinguish and pick up various coloured crayons. Vadim's praise gives Anfisa great joy, but her modest improvement is short-lived. When she has a relapse, Vadim cannot cope with the situation, sometimes breaking down, but also finding solace in drink and sex, upsetting his helpless mother who has to endure his behaviour. When the old lady finally dies, Vadim is polite to the women in the flat, allows Kapa to wash her, but refuses to let her place a prayer on her forehead. At the crematorium, he is clearly vulnerable and after the funeral, his life is empty. At the wake, he drinks a lot and speaks little. That night, he dreams of all the sins he has committed against his mother, breaks down and weeps. We are told

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that this spells the start of a new life for him. While some candidates will argue that Vadim may be perceived as a symbol of hope for social and personal improvement from this point, others will seek to establish positive aspects of his character earlier in the narrative and may suggest that his transformation begins when he starts to care for his mother or even earlier before he returns from the Virgin Lands.

**(c) ‘The main interest for the reader of *Вдову́й пароход* is the tragic nature of Soviet society and history.’ Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to offer a range of opinions. For some, the main interest will lie in the background against which the characters struggle to survive and make a life for themselves from the beginning of the Great Patriotic War until the early 1960s, the period of time over which the text is set. Focussing on a range of historical and social phenomena, answers will discuss: the depiction of war and its effects on Moscow (air raids and the consequences for Ol’ga and her family), frightening conditions at the front with particular reference to Anfisa in her capacity as a nurse; spartan living conditions in the women’s communal flat, conditions in children’s homes, schools and in higher education, austere working and living conditions in the Virgin Lands; the inadequate provision of medical services; the impact of communist ideology on individuals generally and specifically at work (e.g. Ol’ga is made to stop using her own songs with the young children because they are unauthorised and tantamount to ideological diversion. Anfisa decides against having Vadim christened in case he later might have problems as a member of the Komsomol. Ol’ga’s dislike of the sterility and uniformity of the atheist cremation service). Candidates should identify those aspects of life which appear to improve during the period in which the text is set (e.g. the more modern facilities of the nursery school attended by Vadim, the provision of consumer goods in the 1960s exemplified by Panka’s TV). For some, the main interest will lie in the depiction of male / female relationships, the acceptance by women of a secondary role in private and public life. This is illustrated by Anfisa’s slavish devotion to Vadim, his reprehensible attitudes to his mother, Svetka and Zhenya, the attitude of the Dean’s wife to her husband, Anfisa’s attitude to Fedor (chapter 12 – мужчина сам себе хозяин and her acceptance of his drinking and occasionally beating her), Ada’s belief that stoutness does not harm a man; it is a woman who has to watch her figure etc. Answers may suggest that the plot and the development of characters (in particular of Ol’ga, Anfisa and Vadim) form the main interest of the text, while others will wish to discuss the author’s unusual, interesting and complicated use of narrative perspective and the effects of its frequent switching at crucial points in the narrative. The best answers will at least outline other possible foci of interest in addition to offering a discussion of the nature of the social and historical phenomena featured in the text and an opinion as to whether or to what extent these may be described as tragic.