**Examiner’s comments**

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| **Criterion** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **Total** |
| Marks available | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| Marks awarded | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 17 |

The passage is short and it is also elliptical in its own way, requiring the candidate to make some inferences, to move into a possibly unfamiliar context and analyse identities, relationships, elements of a situation and responses to it. This particular version of a bewildering moment in a child’s life offers something recognizable, but with details that need close scrutiny for full appreciation of both the situation as well as the writer’s skill, the crux of the second question. Names, details, pace, descriptive and emotive language, indicators of a heterogeneous community: all of these are the materials of both context and effective delivery of the incident.

The candidate shows an understanding of the events and has offered a comment of reasonable scope and detail for the passage. Not every assertion is amply developed. There is logic to the structure and the language is clear and easily comprehensible.

**Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation**

The candidate surely grasps the situation of the mother’s demise and the familial responses, but seems to avoid making inferences about such elements as the contrasting ethnicities (“Old China,” “white lady”) and about the time and place of what has happened (cabins, kerosene lanterns, sirens, farming hands). What is conveyed, however, is often linked to particular elements of the passage.

**Criterion B: Appreciation of the writer’s choices**

Addressing a number of stylistic choices, the candidate provides some solid literary analysis in response to the second question, tying it to both the characters and the situation requested in question (a). Mr and Mrs Chin are distinguished, with one seen as the “foil” of the other; details are noted as defining characters and responses, and the candidate does well on connecting the elliptical quality of the writing with the response of the boy. We do not hear much about tone, but the sensory detail is well handled and the candidate also addresses diction and its effects. Clearly, the candidate has a sense of the task and the tools to complete it, and the analysis and appreciation are “good”.

**Criterion C: Organization**

The candidate appears to have given some thought to how to begin and end the essay, and offers a reading of the essence of the passage at the outset. The responses to the questions are gracefully incorporated in a fairly coherent discussion of relevant matters, with transitions that assist the reader in following her approach.

**Criterion D: Language**

Here, the candidate meets the demands of the level 5 of the criterion. Register is appropriate to the task, and consistent, and the language is natural and clear. Sentence construction is well handled and the vocabulary is “carefully chosen and precise”; spelling and punctuation are seldom flawed.