

# Paper 1 – Example Prose Commentary

## Standard Level

### November 2005

In the extract Joseph, his father, people at a market and those in the clinic, witness a mob that attacks a man selling bread. We get an impression that the event is occurring in a tropical Muslim country as indicated by the title, 'on Tropical Butterflies' as well as the dress code of the butcher's shop owner, 'white robe with blue cotton embroidery.' The attack happens at approximately midday as indicated by the story progressing into the afternoon.

**Comment [KH1]:** Clear summary of the main story of the piece – although the whole paragraph goes into perhaps a little too much detail and it would be better if the analysis began a little more promptly

**Comment [KH2]:** Slightly informal language at points

The relationship between Joseph and his father appears to be a repressed one until moments of tension. The violence that happens at the beginning of the story sparks off a moment of realization of love for each other. His father can not bear to stand in the clinic while an innocent man is being attacked by a mob. Joseph, being younger, can quickly understand the situation without trying any heroic moral actions. It is evident that Joseph is protective of his father since he also knows his father's health status. We get the impression that they had gone to the clinic for his father's sake. His deteriorating health is supported by expressions such as 'it is thin and hard,' referring to his hand and, 'he is held there, pressed into a bony rib cage.' It is also clear that, after retreating from the scene of violence, Joseph's father is not physically in good shape, 'his father is panting heavily.' Thus Joseph sees the need to grab his father's arm and prevent him from interfering when the mob attack.

**Comment [KH3]:** Clear topic sentence indicating the content of the paragraph

**Comment [KH4]:** Perhaps a little too much paraphrasing of the story

**Comment [KH5]:** However, there are moments of clear analysis where the effect on the reader is considered

**Comment [KH6]:** Quotations could be included a little more smoothly

When Joseph receives a hug from his father we can tell that their relationship had previously not been one of warmth and compassion. They appear to love one another but, perhaps due to cultural constraints, it seems that they may not have been able to express their affection for one another, 'he realizes that he it is the first time he has held on to his father in a long time.' The cultural setting that has prompted their reserved feelings is indicated by the last line of the text, 'he has never really looked at his father at all.'

**Comment [KH7]:** Good awareness of when to be tentative

**Comment [KH8]:** Good use of an additional detail to develop this idea further

**Comment [KH9]:** Good, sophisticated topic sentence that explains how this idea follows from the previous one

The violence in the excerpt does not only spark off Joseph and his father's relationship but portrays the cultural situation and the attitudes of people in their society. A bread seller is attacked by a young man whom he knows well and the people at the market move away and do nothing about it. The people at the clinic, except for Joseph's father, can not contribute more than watch the scene. It is a society based on fear of violence as indicated by the withdrawal but at the same time it seems fascinated by violence scenes, such as the pregnant woman who moves to the window to watch the attack. The apparent absence of compassion for the weak and oppressed is accentuated by the lack of concern shown towards the boy acting as a servant at the butcher's shop.

**Comment [KH10]:** Again, perhaps a little too much repetition of the story

**Comment [KH11]:** However, this is a nice subtle point – the candidate appreciates how the violence has been depicted as something both frightening and fascinating at the same time

The narrator has carefully used sights and smells to craft a picture of the typical Muslim society. 'Enveloped by smells of camphor and curry,' indicates the frequent consumption of spicy foods. The descriptive features of Joseph's father also play an important role in highlighting his age, 'dark hollows under his eye, his hair is thinning at the top of his head, and is flecked with grey,' The butcher's shop is recreated by the 'fresh carcass, men in aprons, large knives,' all of which blend together to create the scene.

**Comment [KH12]:** Some points are a little simplistic at times

**Comment [KH13]:** This idea doesn't really seem to belong with the point earlier in the paragraph

**Comment [KH14]:** Slightly more detail about what these elements of the scene have in common would have unified this paragraph a little more

**Comment [KH15]:** Awareness of structure

The passage seems to be divided into two major sections, one ending at line 25 and the next following at line 26. The gap highlights a transition from violence to tranquility. The first section, with short sentences and short paragraphs, helps to increase the pace and tension of the mob attack and people's reactions. However, the pace

**Comment [KH16]:** Clear awareness of literary features and their effect on the reader

begins to slow down as Joseph and his father arrive at the butcher's shop. This is indicated by the long narrative sentences with less direct speech from line 26 onwards.

**Comment [KH17]:** Some more subtle literary features picked out here

As the passage progresses we see how a father-son relationship is reinforced by moments of tension. One can say that both father and son are transformed by the incident: the father realizing his son's protectiveness and the son understanding his father's love and compassion. The passage also highlights the cultural setting of the society in which the story is set and the people's attitudes to the oppressed and those unjustly treated.

**Comment [KH18]:** Clear, although fairly simplistic summing up style conclusion

**Marks Awarded:**

Understanding of the Text	5	There is a clear understanding of the events of the text and some reasonable deductions are drawn about the health of the father and the cultural setting
Interpretation of the Extract	4	Although there is a little too much narrative, there are moments of clear analysis where the candidate is clearly talking about the impression created for the reader. The depiction of the culture as one that is both frightened and fascinated by violence demonstrates a particular sensitivity
Appreciation of Literary Features	4	Some good identification of literary features – especially towards the end where the candidate writes effectively about the effect of structural features on pace. Nonetheless more analysis and less narrative would have helped to raise the grade here
Presentation	4	The essay is well structured with a clear transition between ideas and successful if somewhat simplistic introduction and conclusion
Language	4	The language is clear although there is little evidence of sophistication
	<b>21</b>	<b>Level 7</b>