**Sample response 5: The Tempest**

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| **The question** | Discoveries often require individuals to reconsider their perspective and develop a new understanding of the world around them. Examine this statement in relation to your prescribed text and at least ONE related text.  |

**Prescribed text:** The Tempest*,* William Shakespeare, 1611 (play)

**Related text:** Dead Poets Society, Peter Weir 1989 (film)

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| Conceptual opening that also addresses the focus of the questionIntroduction of both the set and related texts within a conceptual framework | The nature of discovery entails a journey that is transformative and concerns one’s relationship with one’s self or one’s world. Discoveries can be either sought or serendipitous and can lead to good or bad consequences, but ultimately they are all concerned with the acquisition of greater knowledge and a new perspective. In William Shakespeare’s The Tempest,Prospero comes to realise not only the limitations of his art, but also the importance of love and redemption in redefining one’s place in the world, as well as one’s view of it. Peter Weir’s Dead Poets Societyrepresents the importance of new perspectives on the familiar in order to realise the self, in the face of conflicting and controlling forces. |
| The topic sentence and the nature of the discoveryClose analysis of language – tone of regretClose textual references to support the topic sentence Reference to dramatic techniques | The Tempest, as its title suggests, is partly concerned with the forces of nature, but mostly it is about the need for the liberating and redemptive power of forgiveness in the face of man’s inhumanity towards man. Prospero conjures a storm, with Ariel’s forced assistance, that brings to the island those who have wronged him. The scene seems set for a revenge plot to unfold. However, we soon discover that Prospero has changed in the 12 years that he has been exiled on the island. He realises that he is as much to blame for his exile as his treacherous brother Antonio to whom he relegated his ducal responsibilities in order to pursue his selfish interests: ‘And to my state grew stranger, being transported/And rapt in secret studies.’ Just as Miranda discovers her true identity, her history and her future husband, Prospero has discovered his error and will return to Milan a wiser, more forgiving and less self-indulgent ruler: ‘I’ll break my staff, / Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, / And deeper than did ever plummet sound/ I’ll drown my book.’ Through the dramatic device of the masque and Ariel (music) he comes to see that even on the island his powers are unable to change those unwilling to change (Stephano, Trinculo, Sebastian and Caliban), just as he has realised his powers did not prevent his exile from Milan, and comes to accept the need for himself to change his perspective on human nature; one that sees it as a combination of both Caliban and Ariel, evil and good, chaos and harmony. Ultimately he comes to realise that his powers are based on illusions. |
| Related text introduced in connection to question Implicit difference with set textThe catalyst for changing perspective is introducedClose reference to a scene Representation of the tension between old and new perspectivesThe last sentence returns to the question highlighting implicitly another difference between the texts | By contrast Dead Poets Societyis set in Welton Academy where those who choose to enter its halls are forced to have a particular world view and a particular niche in life; one consistent with the view of success that entails ivy-league universities, high-status professions and material lifestyles. The arrival of John Keating, ironically himself a graduate of Welton, destabilises this world view by exposing the students ready to follow him to notions of curiosity, mystery, poetry and personal fulfilment. Their journey begins with the vandalism of their poetry textbooks. Keating then moves out of the classroom only to turn the trophy cabinet, a symbol of Welton’s values, on its head by focussing rather on notions of potential, *carpe diem* and the transience of life. ‘Tradition, Honor, Discipline and Excellence’, the four pillars of Welton are soon challenged by the principles of the Dead Poets Society: freedom, self-expression, passion and integrity. Furthermore, the conflicting setting becomes a secret cave with its symbols of rebellion: poetry, smoking, saxophone and girls. Keating challenges the boys to see things from a new perspective by having them literally stand on their desks; he trains them at football accompanied by poetry and non-diegetic classical music; he teaches them in the courtyard; he tells them that ‘words and language can change the world’; and, most importantly, he challenges them to discover their emotions and to express their passions. However, Keating also discovers that ‘unorthodox teaching practices’ designed to highlight the ‘dangers of conformity’ have their own price. He is forced to leave Welton, but his legacy will remain with those whose eyes and hearts have been opened. The tables that provided them with a platform from which to see their classroom differently, are now used as plinths upon which Keating’s real achievements, his disciples, in this pyrrhic victory are to be found; none of them will ever see the world and themselves in the same way. |
| Topic sentence introduces another kind of discoveryLove as the basis of moving forward rather than revenge | Similarly, with the arrival of the ‘survivors’ on the island, Miranda discovers a ‘brave new world’ populated by creatures other than the few she has known. Most importantly, however, as a fifteen-year-old girl on the verge of womanhood, she discovers a new kind of love: ‘I might call him / A thing divine; for nothing natural/I ever saw so noble.’ Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples, the enemy and co-conspirator in Prospero’s usurpation and exile, is the man Prospero has chosen for Miranda and as the vehicle for his return. Miranda is on the verge of a new life and Prospero is about to return to his old one transformed. Despite her sheltered existence and without her father’s powers and books, Miranda already realises what Prospero has for so long refused to accept: ‘Good wombs have borne bad sons.’ Clearly she is ready to return to the real world and to discover more. |
| Returns to related text and explores the complex nature of discoveryReference to particular scene and cinematographic techniques | Through Keating’s influence, Neil Perry comes to see the limitations of the world his father wants for him: ‘You’re going to Harvard and you’re going to be a doctor’. However, Neil’s father discovers the consequences of forcing Neil to live a false life too late and he must live on without him. For Neil, the price of discovering his new perception of himself and the world around him is his own life. His final words as Puck are directed to his father and embody the hope of achieving the kind of forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation that Prospero achieves on his stage, the island. The energizing delight of discovery and the joy of self-actualisation is visible on the close-up of his face as the curtain closes on the applause for his performance of Puck. |
| Conceptual conclusion that relates to the questionBoth texts revisited to highlight central similarities and differences: importance of discovery but varied outcomesComparative observation | The nature and legacy of any discovery can be complex, diverse and transformative on both personal and global levels, confirming the inter-relatedness of inner and outer worlds. The Tempest moves from the discovery of an unchartered island and the creatures that inhabit it to the equally important discovery of the power of love and forgiveness in a world made imperfect by man. The discovery of metaphysical realities continues in Dead Poets Societythrough the representation of relationships that seek to control and shape the lives of others in accordance with existing expectations devoid of any recognition of individual differences. Whilst essentially different in their endings, both texts represent the liberating nature of the discovery of self, our limitations and our potential. In short, discovery is an unending journey that transcends time and place because it reflects our need to find personal meaning in our world.  |