**AO4: The progression from ‘*valid*’ to ‘*illuminating*’ links**

*Compare and contrast the presentation of ‘ordinary lives’ in Duffy’s ‘The Captain of the 1964 Top of the Form Team’ and Larkin’s ‘Self’s The Man’*

Simple comparison related to task, so ***valid***, but without development or support.

**Band 2: *superficial, valid***

Both men in the poems are unhappy with their boring and disappointing everyday lives.

Explains link more ***clearly*** and demonstrates its ***appropriateness*** or relevance by developing with apt support.

**Band 3: *clear, appropriate***

The ex-Captain says ‘*I want it back’* meaning the past because he’s unhappy with his life now. He calls his wife ‘*stale*’ and his children ‘*thick kids’* showing that he’s disappointed by his family. Larkin says that Arnold ‘*has no time at all’* showing that, **like the Captain**, he isn’t really enjoying his married life to the woman who is ‘*there all day’*. Arnold is ‘*wasting his life on work’* and all his money goes to the wife and to pay for ‘*the kiddies’ clobber’*.

**Band 4: *sound, secure and purposeful***

It’s clear **both men** find family life dreary and disappointing and use slang terms to show their contempt. Larkin refers to Arnold’s children as ‘*kiddies*’ and ‘*nippers’* who need ‘*clobber*’ and irritatingly ‘*wheel round the house’*, draining all his wages, freedom and pleasure. **Similarly,** Duffy’s narrator describes his family as ‘*my stale wife*’, as if she’s lost all flavour and interest, and ‘*my thick kids’*, with the blunt, colloquial terms emphasising his contempt. **Both men** clearly had dreams of more glamorous lives, as suggested in Arnold’s romantic gesture of marrying the now nameless ‘*woman*’ and Duffy’s narrator’s ‘*fizzing hope’* for the future. **Both** are now disappointed by their reality: Arnold’s wife is a nag he can’t escape as she’s ‘*there all day’* while the quiz captain’s loneliness is suggested in the blunt ‘*Nobody.’*

Strengthens support and quality of connection by ‘digging into’ quoted support. Stays on task with clear sense of direction or ***purpose.*** Well-developed link shows **secure** understanding.

**Band 5: *productive, illuminating***

**Both poets** focus on the family and home life, conventional sources of happiness and contentment, to emphasise the disappointment and tedium of ordinary lives. The narrator’s contempt for Arnold’s wife is conveyed in her anonymity; she is referred to using pronouns, ‘*She*’ and ‘*her*’, not even ‘*the woman’* but just ‘*a woman’*. The ‘*kiddies’* and *‘nippers’* seem equally anonymous, without number, age or gender, although it’s not Arnold’s own thoughts we hear but the narrator’s. Perhaps it’s **more** shocking that Duffy’s first person narrator dismisses his own wife and children, his own loved ones, so quickly and completely, emphasised by the repetition of the possessive pronoun: ‘*my stale wife…my thick kids’*, lumped together with ‘*my boss’* who is sandwiched between them and just as unsatisfactory.

Confident development of key comparison, ***productiv***e in furthering line of argument

The contrast between the past glory Duffy’s narrator felt in his brief moment in the ‘spotlight’ and his present disillusionment is underlined in the poem’s structure with three and a half of the four verses set in the past. ‘*A kind of fizzing hope’*, suggests an almost explosive excitement. The contrast with the flat present in the last half verse is emphasised as a result. In Larkin’s poem, Arnold’s implied dreams of married bliss are **also** juxtaposed with the mundane reality. Larkin’s matter-of-fact tone and colloquial expression in the poem’s second sentence emphasise the contrast. Even the simple rhyme and the shorter, blunt last line highlight the speed of Arnold’s disillusionment: ‘*He married a woman to stop her getting away/Now she’s there all day.’*

Considers important literary ***contrast***in poets’ presentation of disappointment via use of narrative viewpoint. Close consideration of Duffy’s narrator ***illuminates*** or sheds light on Larkin’s.

The different narrative perspectives do point at a **key difference**, however. At least Duffy’s captain has experienced some joy and pride, even if it was short-lived and trivial, when he was ‘*the keeny’, ‘the one with all the answers’*. **By contrast**, we don’t know if Arnold looks back nostalgically on ***his*** dreams of the ‘*woman’* and feels disappointed, because we hear only the narrator’s dismissive view of ‘*his life’*. The breathless excitement of Duffy’s ***narrator’s own*** memories **highlights** the lack of anything personal from Larkin’s first person narrator as he gives a sarcastic, second hand impression of someone else’s disappointingly ordinary life. Who is **more pitiful**: the ‘Peter Pan’ Captain who looks back on a distant tv appearance only he remembers, or Larkin’s narrator who doesn’t seem to have had any illusions or dreams of his own to make the present disappointing?

Uses ***comparatives t***o weigh poems against each other and show an enhanced understanding of one or both.