IB Language and Literature

IOC Tips

According to moderators of the Individual Oral Commentaries, performance could generally be improved by candidates:

* Sufficiently focusing their commentary so that it is ‘doable’ in 10-12 minutes.
* Annotating the extract! Using colored highlighting or another system of organization along with an outline on a separate piece of paper to quickly organize your ARGUMENT (and remember, you have to form an argument, not simply describe). Providing INTRO, ARGUMENT, CONCLUSION (that builds on rather than just repeats what was in the intro, and leads out in an interesting manner)
* Focusing on why the extract is significant to the work, with MOST of the discussion about the extract itself, but providing quick references to quotations and/or examples before and after (if relevant) the extract to demonstrate your claims that it is significant to the work
* Demonstrating quick understanding of where the extract occurs in the text (just before, just after) BUT trying to integrate this into your claim about why it is significant to the work as a whole, rather than just simply paraphrasing the situation in the text.
* Making specific, rather than vague, claims in the intro, while setting out a clear structure for the listener
* Making interpretive claims FIRST, then supporting and analyzing them.
* Saying the writer discusses ‘education’, ‘class’, ‘gender’, ‘power’, ‘control’ or *whatever****is not***sufficient. Those are broad topics. What statement about class does the author seem to be making? What specifically does the author convey about gender? Etc.
* Allowing for possibilities in interpretation. When aware of possibly competing, conflicting, or complementary interpretive claims, mention them. Then also make your position clear (do you see them as all possible, is there one you particularly find persuasive? Why?)
* Using socio-historical contextual information when it helps to inform an interpretive claim (not randomly)
* Being sure to focus on THE EFFECTS of language/stylistic devices/literary features in relation to your interpretive claims.  DO NOT just give a list of these.  If you identify a symbol, for instance, you must analyze how it contributes to the central meaning of the passage or the work as a whole.
* Fully exploring/exploiting literary features/stylistic devices.  Don’t stop at only one effect if there are more that are relevant to your interpretive claim.
* Analysis of content should be longer than the content you have quoted/paraphrased itself.
* Integrating examples carefully–leading in grammatically and contextually to a quotation example (not just reading it as if it’s a sentence on its own).
* Neither over- nor under-quoting.  Use what is necessary to exemplify your quotation, but ensure any single word quotations are clearly explained in their context or your argument will not be made. Where you will not be commenting on a literary feature/stylistic device/the language, paraphrase rather than quote. Who is speaking to whom? When? About what?
* Helping the listener by indicating exact line numbers when quoting or paraphrasing from the extract.
* Transitioning carefully within points and between main points (remind the listener of your structure, e.g., Having discussed X, let us move on to Y), *without*sounding too repetitive (remember, variety of language).
* Ending with a conclusion that reiterates key points you’ve made in the argument, but doesn’t just repeat what you’ve said in the intro… Lead out in a way that allows your listener to ask a question you want them to! e.g. “An aspect I would have liked to discuss but haven’t had sufficient time to is…” etc.
* Using a formal register and literary vocabulary precisely.
* Demonstrating *VARIETY*in formal language use–where repetition of a key point is required (helpful to your listener), can you say it in a different way?
* Communicating a sense of genuine interest in the discussion–after the initial coherent commentary–the exchange should flow freely but formally!