The challenge
The challenge is to read the text sensitively and perceptively, and to write a relevant, well-organised response.

Higher level indicators
- historical insight and perceptiveness
  o grasps that the portrait of Colonna is idealised, but also that it may nevertheless reflect contemporary social and cultural values
  o registers that the passage makes revealing assumptions about gender, class, power and intellectual attainment
  o addresses genre, specifically the problems posed by the passage’s use of dialogue
  o detects and articulates nuance, grasping that the passage contains unresolved ambiguities and tensions
  o registers that there are other things one might wish to know about the work before interpreting the passage with greater confidence
  o expresses conclusions, therefore, with some caution
- coverage and use of evidence
  o covers a good range of the material efficiently (this is a dense text, so comprehensive coverage is not expected)
  o chooses evidence carefully and represents it accurately
  o interprets the evidence without imposing too much moral judgment
  o treats the evidence in its own terms without intruding external knowledge
  o captures and epitomises material independently, using different prose
  o makes selective and pertinent use of quotation
- shape, structure and style
  o answers the question directly, with a clear focus on ‘values’
  o takes a critically engaged approach to the categories ‘social’ and ‘cultural’
  o organises the material coherently into thematically-arranged paragraphs
  o selects material from different parts of the passage to illustrate themes
  o writes clearly

Lower level indicators
- historical insight and perceptiveness
  o is more descriptive than analytical
  o is overly negative about the passage’s potential to generate historical insight
  o either does not appreciate that the dialogue is fictional, or gets hung up on the fact that it is fictional
  o treats the text uncritically
  o argues inflexibly, failing to detect nuance
  o attempts to judge which claims are ‘true’ or ‘false’
  o contains significant misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the text
- coverage and use of evidence
  o is narrowly focussed, devoting too much time to a small number of points
  o makes generalisations about society as a whole, failing to differentiate e.g. between gender and social groups
o reads the gender dynamics simplistically or focuses too narrowly upon them
  o imposes too much moral judgment
  o tries to smuggle in external knowledge
- shape, structure and style
  o fails to engage with the specific terms of the question
  o depends too heavily on the shape of the passage to structure an answer
  o makes excessive and unreflective use of direct quotation from the passage
  o does not write clearly

Marking scheme

33-40 marks: An impressive, well-organised, balanced answer that engages intelligently and perceptively with the passage, hitting most of the higher-level indicators and few if any of the lower level indicators.

23-32 marks: A good to very good answer, which answers the question in a critically engaged way, but which hits some of the lower level indicators as well as some higher-level indicators.

13-22 marks: A less sophisticated answer, which hits more of the lower-than higher-level indicators.

0-12 marks: A basic answer, which hits a predominance of lower-level indicators.