



A Level English Language and Literature

EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

AS Level Paper 2, Section B - Exploring text and theme

About this exemplar pack

This pack has been produced to support English Language and Literature teachers delivering the new GCE English Language and Literature specification (first AS assessment summer 2016).

The pack contains exemplar student responses to GCE AS English Language and Literature paper 2 (Section B – Exploring Text and Theme). It shows real student responses to the questions taken from the sample assessment materials. These responses have been typed, for clarity, but retain the students' own spelling.

Section B addresses 3 Assessment Objectives: AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Students must:

AO1	Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received

Following each question you will find the mark scheme for the band that the student has achieved, with accompanying examiner comments on how the marks have been awarded, and any ways in which the response might have been improved.

Mark scheme for AS English Language and Literature paper 2, Section B

AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet point 3
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO3)
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1–5	<p>Recalls information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ideas are unstructured and not well linked, with undeveloped examples. Recalls few relevant concepts, methods and terms and makes frequent errors and technical lapses. ▪ Uses a highly-descriptive or narrative approach or paraphrases. Shows little understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft. ▪ Little reference to contextual factors. Has little awareness of significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
Level 2	6–10	<p>Broad understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, with some appropriate examples. Uses some relevant concepts, methods and terms that show broad understanding, although there are frequent lapses. ▪ Gives surface reading of texts. Applies broad understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft. ▪ Describes basic contextual factors. Links between significance and influence of how texts are produced and received are undeveloped.
Level 3	11–15	<p>Clear understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ideas are mostly structured logically with examples that demonstrate clear knowledge. Uses relevant concepts, methods and terms accurately and written expression is clear. ▪ Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft. ▪ Explains range of clear contextual factors. Able to make relevant links to significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
Level 4	16–20	<p>Consistent application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent analysis supported by relevant examples. Careful application of appropriate concepts, methods and terminology. Structure of response is organised effectively. ▪ Displays a secure understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Provides evidence of effective and consistent understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft. ▪ Displays consistent awareness of contextual factors. Makes inferences and links between the significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
Level 5	21–25	<p>Discriminating application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discriminating analysis is supported by sustained integration of examples. Discriminating application of appropriate concepts, methods and terminology. Structures writing in consistently appropriate register and style. ▪ Displays discriminating evaluation of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a critical understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft. ▪ Evaluates context by looking at subtleties and nuances of how texts are produced and received. Analyses multi-layered nature of texts in a discriminating way.

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE A - Dracula

12 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents characters or personae who are frustrated by the barriers they face.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

Barriers and boundaries are a key theme in the novel, and ones which are present in many shapes and forms. Perhaps the most tangible and obvious barrier faced by characters is that of confinement. In many instances, being physically imprisoned frustrates characters to the point of madness.

Jonathan Harker's time locked away in Dracula castle is one example of a barrier. Harker arrives at the castle in a jovial mood and is welcomed warmly by the Count. He is soon told however that he may go anywhere in the castle he wishes "except of course where the doors are locked". Harker soon finds out that he is unable to leave through, shown as he says "The castle is a veritable prison and I am a prisoner!" The use of an exclamation statement showcases to a reader Harker's fright but also anger at realising that he has no way to leave. We see Harker become more and more frustrated at being banned from exiting as he says "Despair seized me. I pulled, and pulled at the door". The use of a simple sentence shows a reader how he has almost given up hope. The repetition of the word "pulled" give his actions a frantic and angry sense, but evidently to no avail. We see Harker eventually driven almost to suicidal thoughts by being able to overcome the barrier of imprisonment, ending his last diary with the line "At least God's mercy is better than that of these monsters".

The idea of physical barriers also manifests itself into the form of development. As the novel flits from England to Transylvania, we see that there is a marked difference in levels of development. Characters are unable to do certain things when in Transylvania and this evidently frustrates them. Upon discovering that Dracula changed his route of travel, the suggestion of getting a train is made. Godalming says "can't we get a special" assuming that just as in England, his power would allow them to charter a train. He is told "This land is very different from yours or mine". The use of vague language in the phrase "this land" gives Transylvania a sense of mystique and mystery. The characters are evidently irritated at this barrier hindering their search for the Count, and to a reader in 1897, a lack of regular trains would have been hard to grasp. It was a time of development and prosperity in England, with massive advances in technology such as rail travel. Through the barrier of undevelopment, Stoker paints a picture of a land that is perhaps lawless and unknown to a reader. He shows the boundary between East and West as being a clearly marked transition from the modern world to a land where anything goes.

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Whilst physical barriers are very prevalent, metaphorical barriers play a part in the novel (equally as big). For Mina Harker, the biggest barrier is that of her gender. Being a woman means she is often excluded from plans. She is forbidden from directly being involved in action, for example when Harker is told “you are to stay with your dear Madam Mina”. Despite the fact that Mina wishes to help, she is hindered from doing so due to her gender. Indeed, Van Helsing believes he is complimenting her when he says she has “a man’s brain”, only serving to show male dominance. In the quote above, it could be said that the use of a possessive pronoun “your dear...” shows that Mina was seen as a possession, yet another barrier caused by her gender.

Despite this, Mina is seen to rebel against this barrier. She expresses frustration at not being involved, and it could be said that she feels she needs to prove her worth to overcome this barrier not just in her life, but in society. For example, she works out Dracula’s route as well as saying “so I learned the times very carefully”. Mina could be seen as an example of a “New Woman” — at the time this movement was beginning to fight for women’s rights in society and to gain more respect. Although Mina initially falls into the trap of being a damsel in distress (a typical feature of gothic novels) she refuses to accept that the barrier of being a woman should hold her back. Not only does she express her frustrations, but she actively fights against conventions in society at the time.

Another barrier present in the novel is that between knowledge and superstition. Van Helsing becomes increasingly frustrated at Seward as his scientific knowledge prevents him from opening his mind to other ideas. The barrier of knowledge in this case prevents Seward from seeing the bigger picture. Helsing repeatedly uses the phrase “Can you tell me why” to show his anger and frustration at Seward’s inability to overcome the barrier between what he knows to be true and what Van Helsing is claiming to be true. Seward in turn expresses his frustration at not being able to overcome the mental barrier of accepting the supernatural nature of what Van Helsing is saying. His exclamation of “Good God, professor” creates a harsh tone via the use of consonance to show his anger and annoyance. He simply cannot believe what Van Helsing is implying.

Throughout the novel we see characters come face to face with many barriers. Some of these are designed only for narrative effect, whilst others are a reflection of society in 1897.

Marker’s comments

This is a very competent and well-focused response, starting with a nicely focused introduction.

This essay is particularly strong on contextual factors which are integrated into the points made. The range of different interpretations of ‘barriers’ in the text is also strong.

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Some of the language points would benefit from further exploration, for example: “The use of a simple sentence shows a reader how he has almost given up hope.” How?

The writing is clear and confident, although some terms could be more specific e.g. “words”

Mark = 21

Level 5	21-25	Discriminating application <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discriminating analysis is supported by sustained integration of examples. Discriminating application of appropriate concepts, methods and terminology. Structures writing in consistently appropriate register and style.• Displays discriminating evaluation of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a critical understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft.• Evaluates context by looking at subtleties and nuances of how texts are produced and received. Analyses multi-layered nature of texts in a discriminating way.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE B – Wide Sargasso Sea

12 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents characters or personae who are frustrated by the barriers they face.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

Annette is a character who faces many boundaries in the early stages of the novel however the most evident is the barrier of isolation she faces. Jean Rhys presents Annette as a clearly troubled lady who is very much an outcast where she lives. This is shown when Rhys writes "the black people stood around in groups to jeer at her" from this it is made obvious that Anette is an outcast and not wanted in the community this is due to the fact her husband was an ex-slave owner and after the emancipation in 1833 tensions between ex-slaves and their former owners grew. As a result of the ex-slaves hatred for the family, Annette's horse is poisoned which deepens her isolation even further and sends her mental state spiraling downwards. As a result of Anette's forever deepening loneliness she finds herself in a state of depression which is shown when she grew thin and silent and eventually dies an unhappy death.

Similarly Annette's daughter Antoinette also faces boundaries that undoubtedly lead to her death. Rochester creates a boundary between Antoinette and her identity, making her constantly question who she really is. By marrying Antoinette Rochester makes her financially depend on him as at this time when a woman got married she would give over all she owned to her husband. This left Antoinette with no independence or freedom and with her only option being to stay with Rochester. Rochester even changes Antoinette's name which is shown when he says "Good-night, Bertha" this shows the lack of control Antoinette holds and how sinister and manipulating the man she thought she was in love with is.

Another barrier that Antoinette faces which evidently frustrates her is the one between her and her childhood. The burning of Coulibri symbolises the end of her childhood and arguably the most enjoyable stage of her life. The nature in Coulibri provided a safety element for Antoinette, something that provided comfort and stability — something her mother could not give her. This is shown when she says "...I am safe. I am safe from strangers" so by everything in Coulibri burning, nature included, Antoinette loses this sense of protection and as a result gets presented as a character who is in desperate need for attention and craves to feel safe again.

Rochester's biggest barrier in the novel is the physical barrier he faces between his home in England and the alien country he travels to. In Antoinette's world Rochester feels isolated and alone. In contrast to his wife, Rochester hates the nature that surrounds him which is shown when he says "the scent of the river flowers was overpoweringly strong. I felt giddy" this

hatred for something his wife so clearly loves and needs in her life pushes even more of a wedge between the pair.

Rochester also faces a barrier between himself and his own family. After finding out that he was tricked into the marriage he unsurprisingly feels a sense of sadness.

Marker's comments

This is a promising response. The candidate has discussed a range of barriers and demonstrated a clear understanding of the text and the context in which it is set.

The response would be considerably improved by systematically providing evidence and should then investigate this evidence analytically to comment on the author's technique.

Mark = 13

Level 3	11-15	Clear understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideas are mostly structured logically with examples that demonstrate clear knowledge. Uses relevant concepts, methods and terms accurately and written expression is clear.• Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.• Explains range of clear contextual factors. Able to make relevant links to significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE C – The Whitsun Weddings

9 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents individuals who experience change.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

Philip Larkin, author of the Whitsun Weddings poetry series presents the theme of change in a distinct way. In the poem "MCMXIV", the theme of individual change is embodied in the poem throughout. The poem embarks on life of the British people throughout World War I. The title of the poem "MCMXIV" has a significant depth into indentifying the poem as "XIV" is the roman numeral number for fourteen which was the year the first world war began. This depicts the change of individuals as the idea and concept of war will affect everybody who is involved (soldiers) and additionally, the innocent citizens who lives will be changed forever after witnessing and living through the horrors of war. Throughout war a change of situation will be an increasing factor as many females would of found that their partners/husbands would be expected to enrol into the army.

Larkin further begins to depict the individuals who experience change in "MCMXIV" when he describes "those long uneven lines, as if they were stretched outside, the oval or villa park". This quote shows huge significance to individuals experiencing the change of time as "those long uneven lines" is making reference to the crowds of men "lining" up to enrol into the British army. Many men enrolled in order to feel a sense of patriotism and to defend their country however many were unaware of the reality of war which shows the change over time as most men did not return home. He uses the verb "stretched" which puts more emphasis and shows the reality of the actual amount of men who are and want to fight for their country. Describing the amount of men to sporting venues such as "the oval and villa park" again presents the naivety and unawareness of the men going to fight. Larkin potentially could be presenting the change over time linked with the change of individuals as the men were soon to realise the terrible fate of war.

Larkin uses a pun on his own name to describe "grinning as it were all, an August Bank Holiday lark". The pun "lark" reflects the vulnerability and senseless as the men continue to smile and fool around, however time will soon change and the naivety and vulnerability will soon change.

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Into the second stanza, the tone of the poem changes into a deep, and harsh tone; in contrast to the first stanza where the mood was happy and joyous, yet time has turned and the “grinning” has now turned into darkness. Larkin describes “shut shops” – the uses of alliteration gives a harsher sound and presents the change over time. He then uses colour imagery to describe the “dark-clothed children at play”. This quote is very significant as the children could present a symbol of the men who are now out to war, experiencing terrible situations – additionally with the “dark colours” symbolising the deceased however also presenting the mood and atmosphere of England. The mood would of most likely be extremely dull and emotional as citizens found no one was returning home alive. The change over time for the individual is presented from the first stanza to joy and the second stanza perceiving heartache. The change of circumstance for the soldiers has been completed.

Marker’s comments

The selection of poems links quite well to the task (especially “MCMXIV”). The candidate makes some valid comments on change, exemplified sensibly from the poems chosen. However, little reference is made to poetic forms and devices and the candidate should try to build this/these into their response. The response does not cover a great deal of ground, although enough to achieve Level 3.

Mark = 11

Level 3	11-15	Clear understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideas are mostly structured logically with examples that demonstrate clear knowledge. Uses relevant concepts, methods and terms accurately and written expression is clear.• Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft.• Explains range of clear contextual factors. Able to make relevant links to significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE D – The Bloody Chamber

11 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents encounters that contain an element of mystery.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

In the Bloody Chamber short story, one encounter that contains an element of mystery is the reader's first encounter with the narrator. She keeps talking about the Marquis, but we don't know him yet. She keeps referring to a "him", saying things like "during his courtship", "he was a big man", "I could hear his steady, even breathing" and "scent of leather and spices always accompanied him." The constant use of the word "him" creates a sense of mystery, as the way she's describing him, saying he smells like "leather and spices" and the fact he had a "courtship" makes us very intrigued and gives us the impression of a good and handsome man, very different to the Marquis we know now. This example also links to context, as she's thinking all of this whilst on a "railway", which shows they're sleeping on a train carriage — which people don't do anymore.

Another example of mysterious encounters from the Bloody Chamber could be how when the narrator encounters the Marquis getting ready to leave for his business trip, he gives the narrator a set of keys. He tells her that there's one room she can't go in, and that "Every man must have one secret, even if only one, from his wife. He then tells her exactly where it is: "...at the foot of the west tower, behind the still room, at the end of the dark little corridor." This just enhances the sense of mystery about this room as he's gone into so much detail about it and "told" the narrator exactly where it is. He also says that the corridor is "full of horrid cobwebs that would get in your hair and frighten you", which while enhancing the sense of mystery, also reflects the context of the time period in which the time period for this story was set, as the statement is quite patronizing to the narrator, saying it might "frighten" her. Also, the idea he's allowed "one secret" from his wife follows and reflects the context, as a powerful rich man is objectifying his wife by having secrets and being the one in control. The lexical choice of "frighten" reminds the reader of a person quite pathetically running around screaming. Also, the word frighten is usually used to refer to women, whereas a word like "scare" would be used for a man, telling us why Carter chose it.

Another short story that presents mystery within encounters is The Courtship of Mr Lyon. When beauty's father steals from the Beast's home, "every window in the house blazed with furious light and fugal baying, as a pride of lions, introduced his host. "This encounter between Mr Lyon and the Father

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presents mystery as you don't get a very good description of the "host". The lexical choices of "blazed" and "furious light" create the imagery of fire/personification of anger. Saying "Every window in the house blazed" creates the imagery of fire coming out the windows. This all makes a mysterious build of the "host", and when he's introduced by a "pride of lions" the situation becomes even more mysterious, until we find out he is a "beast".

Another example of mystery through encounters is in the short story "Puss in Boots". The encounter is between the young man and a lady. Puss describes the lady saying she "sits in a window for one hour and one hour only", and that "You can scarcely see her features". This creates a sense of mystery surrounding why the girl isn't aloud outside, why she only sits for "one hour and one hour only" and what her character is like. Puss also refers to her as "like a holy image", which is a metaphor for her being extremely beautiful, enhancing the mysterious qualities of the young lady.

Marker's comments

This response shows a valiant attempt to sustain focus on "mystery" and "encounter". Although it does attempt context, this is very straightforward and sometimes the candidate struggles with it (e.g. end of first paragraph). It also lacks specific analysis of technique and application of attendant terminology.

Mark = 11

Level 3	11-15	Clear understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideas are mostly structured logically with examples that demonstrate clear knowledge. Uses relevant concepts, methods and terms accurately and written expression is clear.• Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows clear understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.• Explains range of clear contextual factors. Able to make relevant links to significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE E – The Bloody Chamber

11 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents encounters that contain an element of mystery.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

Angela Carter presents each mysterious encounter in a similar way. "The Bloody Chamber (story)", "The Tiger's Bride" and "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" all include the main character doing or being with something or someone they love during the misfortune that has befallen them. "The Tiger's Bride" and "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" are the most similar, with the main character being left with the apparent villain. Both also include the main character's father, a widower, being responsible for the loss of his daughter.

"The Tiger's Bride" and "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" both use long pieces of description, rather than speech, when introducing "The Beast". This makes "The Beast" (and apparent villain seem more terrifying). In "The Tiger's Bride", Carter uses many examples of triplets during her description. For example, she describes his face, hair then clothes before summarizing his whole appearance in one sentence. This description of "his beautiful face", "false hair" and "chaste silk stock...with gloves of blond kid" increase the air of mystery because it gives the reader a brief description of The Beast without revealing enough for the reader to build a clear picture in their head.

Carter uses the same technique in the description of The Beast in "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" when she describes The Beast as like "an angry lion [who] wore a smoking jacket, ... was the owner of that lovely "house and the low hills..."

In "The Tiger's Bride", she gave a longer of "The Beast", but here she uses shorter, albeit complex, sentences to keep the air of mystery up.

Mysterious encounters is a theme that progresses throughout "The Tiger's Bride". The girl is shown her mechanical ??? to "assuage [her] loneliness" and is told that nothing human lives in the building. This encounter increases the air of mystery as it makes the reader wonder why the Beast chooses to have no servants, but his valet, and how he developed this strange model of the girl.

In "The Bloody Chamber", one mysterious encounter is that between Jean-Yves, the piano-tuner, and the young bride. She says he is blind "of course" and that he appeared "terrified" of her. Like the encounters with "The Beast" in "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride", Carter uses triplets to

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describe him more than spoken language. He is described as “slight, stooping...and...terrified”. The second encounter between Jean-Yves and the young bride has a higher level of mystery as it is in the middle of the night, after the Marquis has given all the staff one day off. It throws into question why Jean-Yves stayed behind.

Marker’s comments

The answer is hampered by what seems to be a very literal definition of “encounter”, which restricts development beyond the introduction of characters. There is very little to excavate on context, which is a limiting factor. Even though there is some analysis, this needs extension and development in what is a very brief response.

Mark = 8

Level 2	6-10	Broad understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, with some appropriate examples. Uses some relevant concepts, methods and terms that show broad understanding, although there are frequent lapses.• Gives surface reading of texts. Applies broad understanding of writer’s/speaker’s craft.• Describes basic contextual factors. Links between significance and influence of how texts are produced and received are undeveloped.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE F – The Bloody Chamber

11 Discuss how the writer of your other studied text presents encounters that contain an element of mystery.

In your answer you must consider:

- the writer's use of linguistic and literary features
- relevant contextual factors.

Angela Carter creates mystery in a lot of weird, different ways in her texts, whether it's to do with magic or whether it is to do sexual encounters in the extract on page 15. She creates mystery in a less subtle kind of way.

It starts by the Marquis saying after being intimate with his love "the agent for New York has called with such urgent business and he must leave when the tide is low enough". This creates a sense of mystery, what was the "urgent business" and who was "the agent"? Angela Carter I feel doesn't say a lot about this on purpose, I feel that her use of linguistic and literary features are that she uses the expression "the agent" this here is to create a sense of mystery. It makes the reader question who is the agent, not only that what does the Marquis do for a living, what is this business that he has to attend to. Contextually we know there were someone at the time this book was set in the late 19th Century to mid 19th Century and we know that there was an actual person called Marquis. This Marquis we already know however as a very dark, sinister, weird man who is very sexually explicit and is quite fond of himself, this creates more mystery to what this business is.

"A deal, an enterprise of hazard and chance, involving several million lays in the balance", he said. This is very subtly adding more to the mystery. What is this that can obtain this amount of money involved? The linguistic and language features are the same here as they were earlier in this book and Carter still does not say what this business is, she just says a deal, an enterprise: what is so secret that he is hiding?

"He made me change into that chaste little poiret shift of white muslin" and then carries on to say "my breasts showed through the flimsy stuff, he said, like little soft doves that sleep, each one, with a pink eye open". This is obviously a metaphor the white doves are a metaphor for her breasts and "with a pink eye open" this is referring to her nipples. It's a mystery why the Marquis is so sexual though in some sense quite perverted in his ways.

"He would not let me take off my ruby choker, although it was growing very uncomfortable". This shows that the Marquis isn't a very nice man, nor does he care for his lover's pain, all he cares for is his sexual tendencies, this adds

more to mystery. If the Marquis won't let her take something as little as the ruby choker off, how sinister and powering over her can he be? This could be the start of a very cruel domestic relationship. Will his sexual needs and obsession get the best of him, will there be any blood shed? How far will it go?

Marker's comments

Although there is some attempt at context, the candidate struggles with this task, offering only a superficial reading and drifts off focus at times. For example, at the end of the fourth paragraph, the examples are not clearly linked to the theme of mystery.

Mark = 6

Level 2	6-10	Broad understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, with some appropriate examples. Uses some relevant concepts, methods and terms that show broad understanding, although there are frequent lapses.• Gives surface reading of texts. Applies broad understanding of writer's/speaker's craft.• Describes basic contextual factors. Links between significance and influence of how texts are produced and received are undeveloped.
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