

AS and A Level English Literature



EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

A level paper 2 (Prose)

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About this exemplars pack

This pack has been produced to support English Literature teachers delivering the new GCE English Literature specification (first assessment summer 2017).

The pack contains exemplar student responses to GCE A level English Literature paper 2 (Prose). It shows real student responses to the questions taken from the sample assessment materials. For schools delivering a co-taught AS and A level course, the two prose texts will be covered in the first year, as these texts are the same for both AS and A level. For schools teaching a linear 2 year A level only, the course content can be taught in any order. Please see the example [course planners](#) for more support on delivering the course content.

The prose questions address the same 4 assessment objectives at both AS and A level: AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4. The examples in the pack show response to the A level style questions. For differences in the question style between AS and A level, please see the respective [sample assessment materials](#).

Students must:	
AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
AO4	Explore connections across literary texts
AO5	Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations
Total	

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 schemes for A level paper 2

		AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2)	
	0	No rewardable material.	
Level 1	1-4	Descriptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes little reference to texts with limited organisation of ideas. Limited use of appropriate concepts and terminology with frequent errors and lapses of expression. Uses a narrative or descriptive approach that shows limited knowledge of texts and how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a lack of understanding of the writer's craft. 	
Level 2	5-8	General understanding/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general points, identifying some literary techniques with general explanation of effects. Aware of some appropriate concepts and terminology. Organises and expresses ideas with clarity, although still has errors and lapses. Gives surface readings of texts relating to how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows general understanding by commenting on straightforward elements of the writer's craft. 	
Level 3	9-12	Clear relevant application/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a clear response using relevant textual examples. Relevant use of terminology and concepts. Creates a logical, clear structure with few errors and lapses in expression. Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts with consistent analysis. Shows clear understanding of the writer's craft. 	
Level 4	13-16	Discriminating controlled application/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. Discriminating use of concepts and terminology. Controls structures with precise cohesive transitions and carefully chosen language. Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses, in a controlled way, the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft. 	
Level 5	17-20	Critical and evaluative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained textual examples. Evaluates the effects of literary features with sophisticated use of concepts and terminology. Uses sophisticated structure and expression. Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft. 	
		AO3 = bullet point 1	AO4 = bullet point 2
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO3, AO4)	
	0	No rewardable material.	
Level 1	1-4	Descriptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. Demonstrates limited awareness of connections between texts. Describes the texts as separate entities. 	
Level 2	5-8	General exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes general links between texts and contexts. Identifies general connections between texts. Makes general cross-references between texts. 	
Level 3	9-12	Clear relevant exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Develops relevant links between texts and contexts. Makes relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated approach with clear examples. 	
Level 4	13-16	Discriminating exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes detailed links between texts and contexts. Analyses connections between texts. Takes a controlled discriminating approach to integration with detailed examples. 	
Level 5	17-20	Critical and evaluative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts. Evaluates connections between texts. Exhibits a sophisticated connective approach with sophisticated use of examples. 	

EXEMPLAR SCRIPT A

Women and Society- (Wuthering Heights & Mrs Dalloway)

Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts make use of different voices. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

In both Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Virginia Wolfe's novel *Mrs Dalloway*, the writers employ the technique of narrative voice in order to give considerably marginalised characters a voice, providing them with a sense of liberation and freedom that they do not receive in their respective restrictive societies. In *Wuthering Heights*, narrative voice is portrayed through the two characters of Nelly, whose narration is mainly oral and Lockwood, whose journal actually forms the frame of the novel. Whereas in *Mrs Dalloway*, the narrator is omniscient, although there are continual changes in the points of view throughout the novel.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the notion of being told a story from the narrator's point of view is extremely important to the narrative as a whole. Due to the omniscient, third person narrator, the narrative does not permit the readers to ever gain the full truth of the novel. Thus the readers are completely reliant on the few bits of information that we receive from the narrator to form a judgement on the characters, which we subconsciously assume to be reality, yet this is a fickle assumption. This narrative style prevents the readers from forming a subjective view of the characters. The character of Peter, is undermined from the start of the novel, and the reader receives the least information about him. It is important to highlight that the denial of information is deliberate by Wolfe, for the purpose of highlighting the mystery and secrecy concerning Daisy. In contrast, in *Wuthering Heights*, the narrative voice is used explicitly for the purpose of enabling the readers to form objective opinions concerning the characters as we receive insights not only to the plot, but also the characters themselves. This allows the readers to focus on the narrative plot, and much less of the characters themselves in order for the narrative to express the truth, as this portrayal of reality is not discredited by judgements made by the readers.

It is also important to highlight that in *Mrs Dalloway*, Wolfe chooses to follow the narrative structure of the stream of consciousness in order to mimic the theme of wandering thoughts. This creates a sense of intimacy between both the readers and the characters, as the readers feel as though we have a greater access to the 'true' character despite the constant changing points of view. This stream of consciousness also provides the characters with a sense of freedom, they can express themselves fully without being hindered.

Whereas in *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte chooses a non-linear narrative structure, providing the readers with both flashbacks and flash-forwards, in order to encompass the readers in the plot, adding to the sense of the meandering of thoughts.

In Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* the narrative voice is not used to give the characters freedom. In fact it can be argued that the characters are restricted by the narrative form as it denies the voice of Nelly, as the purpose of the text is not to give the author a voice, but to give the text a voice, telling the story without any involvement from the narrator. In spite of this it can also be

argued, that whilst Nelly has no obvious voice within the novel, the fact that she is a character within her narrative does give her a voice as she participates in the story. It is also important to highlight the importance of the narrative voice of Lockwood. The narrative form of the diary, allows the readers to see the events of the plot from a first-hand perspective, thus creating a sense of closeness between the author and the readers. Similar to Nelly, this narrative form gives Lockwood who is limited in the fact that he is an outsider, a sense of liberation as he is free to express himself openly. This is also echoed in Wolfe's *Mrs Dalloway*

In conclusion it can be argued that both Virginia Wolfe in *Mrs Dalloway* and Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights*, employ the use of narrative for a variety of reasons. Both writers aim to give the narrators who are constrained a sense of freedom and liberation from their restrictive societies. *Wuthering Heights* aims to force the readers to rely on their imaginations to aid the plot whereas in *Mrs Dalloway* the readers rely heavily on the information we are given and are not given permission to employ their thought which gives sole focus to the narrative.

Marker's comments:

Sophisticated argument but barely any textual examples used. Also, there's limited acknowledgement of context.

16 + 4 = 24

Level 4	13-16	<p>Discriminating controlled application/exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. Discriminating use of concepts and terminology. Controls structures with precise cohesive transitions and carefully chosen language. Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses, in a controlled way, the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft.
Level 1	1-4	<p>Descriptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. Demonstrates limited awareness of connections between texts. Describes the texts as separate entities.

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE B

Science and Society - (Frankenstein & The Handmaid's Tale)

Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts use the narrators in their works. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

Throughout the female dystopian novel, "The Handmaid's Tale", Atwood makes use of her narrators to present how the patriarchy abuse their power so they can live in a utopia; "better never means better for everyone...it always means worse for some." Atwood's journey to Iran allowed her to experience first-hand abuse of power by patriarchal forces in society, creating her inspiration for the novel and even in today's western world it is not hard to imagine, or see examples, of women's rights being removed, which therefore this hyperbolises the reaction of horror we have towards the events of the novel. Whereas Atwood employs a single narrator, Shelley uses three main narrators in her novel Frankenstein; Walton, Frankenstein and the monster. By using these three different narrators, Shelley emphasises the Chinese box structure of her narrative, as well as portraying many voices and therefore differing themes for the reader.

Throughout 'The Handmaid's Tale', Atwood uses Offred, the female protagonist and narrator of the novel, to represent the oppression of women. Abuse of power is instantly shown through the uniforms women in society are forced to wear. The red cloaks which the Handmaid's must wear are "the colour of blood" and represent menstruation which, in the regime, is a positive symbol as it signals that the women are capable of carrying life. However, the conventional connotations of red are of danger and lust; therefore the reader views these uniforms as a signal from Atwood that the Handmaid's position in society are far from perfect, but instead are destructive and negative. As all women wear the same and Offred is used to represent any Handmaid, forced to wear a colour she "never looked good [in]". Atwood never reveals to the reader the name of her protagonist, as it allows us to understand that any woman can be in the position of a Handmaid and makes us aware of what could happen if our lives were taken away also and remade anew. Instead, Offred is named after her Commander, Fred with Atwood using this as a device to portray the patriarchal society and how the females are objectified and owned by the men in the regime. The removal of the identity of the Handmaid's is a violation and abuse of power, diminishing the personas of the handmaid's and forcing them to submit to the regime. The lack of individuality in the rooms of the Handmaid's, with "white ceilings" and "blank spaces" are "government proof" and therefore used to oppress individual radical thoughts and ideas, or even the choice to live or die, as the rooms are also suicide proof. Moreover, Offred has no freedom to live in her own way, freedom of voice, identity or death. These basic rights being removed seems unimaginable to the reader and therefore means the novel's shocking impact is even greater. Similarly, Shelley uses the multiple narrators in Frankenstein to represent the oppression of the Monster. As the monster's narrative is enclosed in Walton's letters and Victor's tale, the Chinese box structure implies close links between the narratives. As the monster's tale is embedded in Victor's this shows the inescapable ties between the two characters, but also how Victor will always have power over the monster, as he has the ability to end his narrative. Only

when Victor's tale ends, can the Monster's begin, providing him with a voice and having the ability to constrain it, just as with Offred's power in the Handmaid's Tale. However, it could also be interpreted that the monster's narrative lies at the heart of the tale, representing Conrad's 'heart of darkness', without his narrative, neither Frankenstein's nor Walton's would stand. The monster as a narrator can be seen as the forbidden 'box' at the heart of the tale, which Victor foolishly opens, allowing horror and turmoil to spill out into the world. Therefore, Shelley also uses multiple narrators- a typical gothic feature- who all have contrasting emotions towards each other, creating confusion and chaos. In addition, the shift in narrative perspective affects the readers impressions, as the reader is first introduced to Frankenstein, by Victor, who sees him as a "monster", as "horror and disgust [fills] his heart". As this is the reader's first impression, it limits how much the monster can make an impact within his tale and his emotional plea is restrained, as lingering in the back of our minds we will always remember the horror of the description Victor provides of him. As his "yellow skin", "teeth of pearly whiteness" and "straight black lips", link him closely to a human being, this is more horrifying than if the monster was simply inhuman. Therefore, Shelley's use of Victor's narrative, before the monster's, represses the creature's power to emotionally attach to the reader.

Attwood uses Offred and names her after her Commander to present females being objectified by men in the regime and how they are the property "of" their Commander. The protagonist states how she has "another name, which no one uses now because it's forbidden", the fact that "no one" uses her name emphasises the total patriarchal control of the regime. Additionally, as her real name is "forbidden", the reader understands the serious implications which would occur if someone went against the power of the regime. The reader never knows her name and therefore she represents an everywoman. Attwood said that "the voice is that of an ordinary, more-or-less cowardly woman"; choosing an unconventional heroine, means that she's a character "with whom the reader can identify." Offred is passive towards the regime initially and represses herself. However, her language becomes increasingly agitated as passion takes over and she "[wants] it finished". As the text fills with anxiety, so does the reader as we start to reflect Offred's emotions. Throughout the novel Offred manages to retain her humanity, and "[intends] to last", which is the basis of the reader's relationship with the narrator, differing to the distance created between the reader and the narrators of Frankenstein, as the tale is too shocking for us to attach ourselves too closely.

Additionally, in Frankenstein, the use of various narrators could be a method to add plausibility to a tale which otherwise lacks truth to life and validity. By providing a range of perceptions and responses to events, Shelley allows herself to provide a more rounded view of what occurs, making her story more believable. This sense of dystopian possibilities, and its reliance on horror, parallels to the ideas that Attwood brings with the Handmaid's Tale. By creating a world so far from the reader's own, whilst still attaching parallels to reality, the authors are able to define the science fiction nature, and keep the readers engaged. In this sense, Walton's letters and narrative may have been used by Shelley to validate the idea of the monster, or monstrous effects of scientific pursuits as this was not the norm in the Victorian era or in Victorian literature. However, these tales are much more accepted in the 20th and 21st

centuries as science and technology have advanced, bringing both positive, and horrific results.

Each key narrator Shelley uses may be considered as presenting a message. For instance, as Walton's narrative begins and ends the novel, he can structurally be seen as the narrative present. Below this layer, lies Victor's cautionary tale, which relates to Walton's potential future, and describes the dark path he may take in the future. At the deepest point of the novel lies the monster's narrative, which embodies the darkest psychological forces of the novel. The 'V' structure of the novel may suggest a descent into darkness and a re-emergence from it. Moreover, this also may represent an open-ended conclusion to the tale as there is uncertainty as to the monster's fate and Walton's future. Therefore, Shelley uses her narrators carefully to tell her story and provide key themes for the reader.

A related point on how who is allowed to tell the tale concerns Attwood's presentation of the Handmaids as forbidden to write, as "pen is envy"- an ironic comment by Attwood- and the patriarchy believes that "[their] big mistake was teaching [women] to read"; the men of the regime remove women's voices and consequently their identities. Offred tells her story in secret, and this is how both women are able to retain their identity. Offred slips reflectively into the past, in 'Night' sections of the novel, however the present moments are explicit, creating a contrasting structure. This differs to the structure of Frankenstein, in which the narrators are merged together as each narrative blurs at the edges, creating confusion as to who is speaking at times. Here, Shelley is able to create clear parallels between the monster and Victor, leading the reader to question which character is actually more monstrous, and the extent to which human desire is dangerous. This questioning provides the reader with a profound sense of insecurity and unease which underlies the gothic form itself.

In conclusion, Attwood uses Offred as her narrator in order to present how the abuse of power by the hierarchy depends upon the repression of most of the population, therefore creating a dystopian novel. Attwood presents a woman which the readers can relate to, and therefore can attach themselves too emotionally, creating an engaging narrative. On the other hand, Shelley uses multiple narrators, which interlink and blur together, in order to create an uncertainty for her reader, and enforce the gothic form of her novel. By using three different narrators, Shelley provides distance between her tale and the reader. This means that the Victorian reader at the time of production was potentially not as shocked or horrified by the narrative as they could have been. Shelley had to ensure that her story was engaging enough to be read, and not off-puttingly horrific as without this, there was no profit from her narrative. In both narratives, it is clear that the narrators play a defining part, not only in conventionally telling the story, but also as a mechanism to bring the reader deeper into the tale.

Markers comments:

Critical and evaluative about writer's craft, although expression lacks the sophistication of a very top band. Makes discriminating comparisons between texts but there's limited focus on context especially with Frankenstein (Victorian?!)

17+14= **31**

Level 5	17-20	Critical and evaluative <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained textual examples. Evaluates the effects of literary features with sophisticated use of concepts and terminology. Uses sophisticated structure and expression.• Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft.
Level 4	13-16	Discriminating exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes detailed links between texts and contexts.• Analyses connections between texts. Takes a controlled discriminating approach to integration with detailed examples.

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE C

The Supernatural - (Dracula & Beloved)

Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts create a sense of fear in their works. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

Both Toni Morrison and Bram Stoker use very different methods to convey a sense of fear in their works, due in part to the different time periods in which they were writing, but also the core subject of their respective novels. Dracula is a gothic novel, a type of writing very popular in the late 18th/19th century. Bram Stoker capitalises on a number of gothic conventions in his novel in order to create an atmosphere of suspense and fear. Stereotypically, gothic writing is set in medieval castles with secret passageways and dungeons, however Stoker makes a point of describing all the then up-to-date high tech technology and transportation to make the novel feel like it was happening contemporaneously, bringing in an all important element of possibility. It is possible that the crowded maze-like streets of London were of inspiration to Stoker, as they were to many writers at the time, invoking a sense of awe but also one of fear and potential danger.

While the sense of fear in Dracula is very much in the present, in Beloved the majority of fear felt by the characters is that of the past. The novel explores the physical, emotional and spiritual destruction wrought by slavery, which continues to haunt the former slaves even in their freedom. Fear is prevalently shown through repression, for example how Paul D develops self-defeating coping strategies to protect him from emotional pain. He locks his feelings away in the rusted "tobacco tin" of his heart, concluding that one should love nothing too intensely for fear of being hurt. Sethe is similarly repressed and spends her life trying to avoid encounters with her past. It is perhaps this fear of the past that prevents her from acknowledging who Beloved really is. Indeed, once she does realise Beloved's identity, she allows herself to be enslaved by her past as she is consumed by Beloved's demands. It is only when Sethe learns to confront the past and extricate herself from its oppressive power over her that she is able to truly live freely.

In Sethe's confrontation of Beloved, the importance of community solidarity becomes apparent as the Cincinnati community come together to help Sethe exorcise Beloved. Similarly to this, Van Helsing and Lucy's three suitors team up to destroy Lucy after she changes and ensure her soul will return to eternal rest. In both situations the characters join together to give support to those facing their fears. Lucy's suitors destroy her in order to save her; Sethe takes a similar perspective with her act of infanticide, expressing her love for her children by murdering them in order to protect them from the destruction inflicted by slavery that she most fears.

One of Stoker's most implicated scare techniques is through the use of the narrator Johnathon Harker. As the story is in the form of a journal, Harker writes about his feelings of dread and foreboding – "I grew dreadfully afraid". The repetition of statements of fear build up a vivid picture and almost tell the reader how they should be feeling through this simple yet effective technique. The picture built by Harker in his journal is key, his detailed use of descriptive writing utilising techniques such as pathetic fallacy – "the crazy coach rocked... and swayed like a boat tossed on a stormy sea" – and the use of stereotypical

indicators of the supernatural to introduce the disturbing aspects of Dracula's appearance.

Bram Stoker utilises a number of simple literary techniques to great effect in his stereotypical gothic horror. His novel creates a sense of fear that is very much in the present, possibility creating doubt and fear within the mind of the reader. Contrastingly, while the fear in Dracula is that of both the narrator and the reader, in Beloved it is predominately that of the characters in a fear of the past shown through their various forms of repression. In both novels the facing of fear and its resolution shows the importance of community solidarity in times of need.

Marker's comments:

Rather thin. Just beginning to show awareness of writer's craft. Limited on context. Makes clear but simple comparisons between texts.

9+8 = **17**

Level 3	9-12	Clear relevant application/exporation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers a clear response using relevant textual examples. Relevant use of terminology and concepts. Creates a logical, clear structure with few errors and lapses in expression.• Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts with consistent analysis. Shows clear understanding of the writer's craft.
Level 2	5-8	General exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes general links between texts and contexts.• Identifies general connections between texts. Makes general cross-references between texts.

