

Examiners' Report  
June 2016

GCE English Language Literature  
6EL03 01

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# Introduction

This unit is the examined component of GE A2 English Language and Literature.

Students are expected to apply their skills and knowledge of literary and linguistic concepts gained in the AS units, as well as wider reading, to explore varieties of language and literature. They need to synthesise their learning and make observations about how language works across a spectrum of written and spoken production. They choose one of four topic areas and answer two corresponding questions: one on an unseen prose extract in Section A, and one on two prepared literary texts in Section B.

Section A involves the analysis of one unseen extract. Candidates are expected to present a continuous commentary on the writer's or speaker's choice of structure, form and language and draw conclusions on attitudes, values and ideas conveyed in the text.

Section B assesses candidates' knowledge of the contribution made by contextual factors to the understanding of either two chosen drama texts or two chosen poetry texts. Students are expected to compare writers' use of linguistic and literary devices.

A number of candidates need to be reminded to answer both questions relating to their chosen topic (e.g. both questions on "Love and Loss"). Some candidates wasted time by starting a question from the wrong section, crossing out their work and starting again. This can also be self-penalising as candidates will have studied a variety of texts relating to their topic and a candidate who has studied "Love and Loss" might reasonably be expected to have more to say about a love letter than a travel article.

## **SECTION A OVERVIEW**

Candidates are now very well prepared for this section and a lot of competent and excellent answers were seen. There was little evidence of candidates making multiple errors in the use of terminology and there was a secure sense of audience and purpose in most answers for all four thematic strands. Many candidates adopted a clear framework for analysing specific aspects of the texts.

There was less evidence this year of candidates using the rather limiting approach of working chronologically through the extract, sometimes paragraphing their own work in accordance with the structure of the passage and offering an explanation of the content.

This was most frequently seen in "A Sense of Place" and "Family Relationships", in which vital clues to the overall mood and tone of the pieces are placed in the concluding paragraphs. While many lower and lower-middle band answers are now highly adept at detecting linguistic and literary features in the paragraphs they work through, and offer mostly accurate definitions of terminology, there was not always evidence of an ability to articulate the effect of such techniques.

The most successful answers discussed the implications of specific lexical and syntactical choices and showed how attitudes could be conveyed precisely through tone. They were able to move beyond feature-spotting and to explore shifts in register, as well as comment on the effect of irony and humour. They were also clearly familiar with the genres of the pieces and how conventions and expectations were exploited for particular effects.

Again lower-band answers were often characterised by all-purpose introductions to explain generic features but are not integrating this into analysis of the extract and are spending valuable time on generalisations which could apply to almost any piece of writing.

## **SECTION B OVERVIEW**

In Section B, the drama texts were by far the most popular choices but there were many outstanding responses to the poetry questions. Candidates are approaching the AO3 component, worth 40 of the 60 marks, in various ways, though some are more likely to produce successful answers than others. Most candidates attempt some comparison of their texts, although a number simply wrote two separate sections about the two texts and suggested a connection in the final paragraph. A number of poetry answers worked their way through whole poems, sometimes chronologically, although the strongest essays showed evidence of a much more sophisticated selection of material and were sometimes quite wide-ranging. The best answers showed evidence of careful selection of relevant material but many candidates struggled to integrate their contextual material. Although less prevalent than in previous series, there are still a significant number of answers which cover the context on the first page of the answer and then refer to it fleetingly, if at all, in the body of the answer. (The terminology of language and literature is sometimes similarly 'front-loaded'.) Contexts of textual production (socio-historical details, intertextual relationships, staging history, and author biography, e.g.) are more often deployed than contexts of reception, though a blend of both tends to produce the most comprehensive responses. A significant number of candidates present memorised quotations from critics (usually reviews of drama productions) but only receive full credit for doing so when the material is judiciously selected and applied to the task. Too many such quotations appeared regardless of their relevance to the question focus.

There is diminishing evidence of candidates who are merely rehearsing prepared discussions of major scenes, but nonetheless enough to make it worth reiterating that such work is readily detectable by examiners, and tends to have a suppressing effect on scores at both AO2 and AO3.

## **Question 1**

### **A Sense of Place**

Most candidates demonstrated an adept command of language/literature terminology in their analysis of Maconie's chapter from *The People's Songs*. Almost all were able to identify the genre and audience and a variety of language/literature features. For this reason, there were very few answers placed in band 1 for AO1.

A feature of many lower band responses was a lack of full engagement with the concept of place and how Maconie crafts his text to generate a vivid sense of Coventry then and now. Such answers tended to resort instead to his attitudes and values towards the song itself, or to motivations on the song's qualities. Higher band answers were aware of the careful structuring which contrasts Coventry's dynamic past with the tragedy of its destruction in World War II and again during the 1980s recession.

Only the very best were willing to speculate on Maconie's political sympathies which are subtly revealed in the text.

As in previous series, the best answers looked at the piece as a whole and were able to discuss it as a complete piece of writing, rather than as a series of techniques to be identified without any developed analysis of the shaping of the piece.

### **The Individual in Society**

Almost all candidates were able to detect multiple features of the extract's linguistic and literary features, especially its rhetorical involvement of the reader.

A feature of many lower band answers was a tendency to speculate on the purpose and mode of the article. This strongly suggested that the candidates had not properly read the contextualising introduction, at the head of the extract, which provided vital clues in this regard. Candidates must be urged to read the introductions carefully and how to use the clues provided.

A majority of candidates were able to comment on the use of the research done by the University of California as an authenticating device to establish her scientific credibility. Too many described the data provided as "statistics", however. Fewer candidates detected the opening allusion to the conventional announcement at an AA meeting.

### **Love and Loss**

Candidates responded very well on the whole to a passage that dealt with an unusual kind of love: the love of a mid-nineteenth-century Sunday School teacher for his enslaved students. Many candidates showed an unanticipated degree of contextual knowledge of American slavery; perhaps the recent featuring of slave narratives in several Hollywood films accounts for this.

Candidates were able to detect the different types of love discussed in the passage, which included friendship bonds forged in adversity spiritual love, and a love of knowledge and learning and self-improvement.

A feature of several higher band candidates was the detection of a preacherly tone in the autobiography, detecting rhetorical and tonal features that suggested this. Some even speculated on how remarkable the achievement of such a voice was, in the light of the extreme social restriction the author endured. The very best students were also alert to the presence of loss as well as love, sensing the author's despair in leaving his students and friends behind in slavery after obtaining his own freedom.

Lower band candidates were mostly able to identify and account for a variety of aspects of Douglass's style, though were less able to explain how such features related to his audience and purpose.

On the whole, this was the most successful set of Love and Loss answers for a number of years.

### **Family Relationships**

This was again the most popular of the four unseen extracts and many excellent, integrated answers which showed an awareness of genre, purpose and audience were seen. However, just as in 2015, the 'Family Relationships' extract tended to produce the most polarised range of answers: as well as many exceptional responses, there was once again much more evidence of work in the lowest bands compared to that done on the other three extracts.

A key discriminator in this regard was the approach taken to the passage of reported speech included to lighten the mood at the end of the extract as McGahern and his siblings parody their father's verbal tics to musical accompaniment. The better answers were those which detected the parodic element, and the very best could link this to McGahern's skills as a novelist, who tends to be adept at capturing voices in compelling dialogue. Such answers were not common. Other candidates vaguely detected the satiric element, but a greater number felt that the children were appealing to God for help. This was suggestive of too hasty a reading of the passage. Only by reading carefully to the very end of the extract could one realise that the voices of the children were mimicking that of the father. Candidates must be urged in future to be more careful in their reading of the passage, because a number of otherwise apparently able candidates were lured into this erroneous interpretation by not reading carefully.

Given that last year's Examiner's Report explicitly commented on the importance of being alert to tonal shifts from complaint to humour, it was somewhat disappointing to find so many candidates again unable to hear the shifting voice of an author.

A full answer on the 'Family Relationships' passage:

**Answer TWO questions, the question from Section A and ONE question from Section B.**

**You must answer on the same topic in each section.**

**SECTION A: UNPREPARED PROSE**

**1** Read the text in the Source Booklet that accompanies your topic title.

Write a critical analysis of the text you have read.

You should analyse how effectively the writer's or speaker's choices of structure, form and language convey attitudes, values and ideas in the writing.

In your response, you should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of literary and linguistic concepts.

(AO1 = 10, AO2 = 30)

In the extract which is an autobiography written by the novelist John McGahern, the piece has a purpose to express and entertain the audience who are fans of his work. The writer uses many literary and linguistic devices throughout the piece in order to explore many attitudes, values and ideas.

A key theme running through the extract is the exploring of the relationship between the writer and his father. The relationship is expressed as a deeply troubled one due to the way in which the father responds to his children. When the writer expresses "if any of us went to him with a complaint against another, or even tried to carry favour, they were ostracized.", the use of the conditional clause ~~shows~~<sup>conveys</sup> the lack of sympathy the father had for his children and also how he had little patience with them. The use

of the parenthesis of the idiom also ~~shows~~ implies the extent to which their father was uninterested as they couldn't even try and get any emotions out of ~~their~~ <sup>him</sup> father. This conveys the idea of emotional connection between the father and his children. The parenthesis also gives a more personal tone which is important to the piece as it shows more of the writer's personality which may of the readers <sup>interest</sup> ~~interest~~ if they are fans of his.

The relationship with his father is also explored through the harsh methods the father used on his children. When the writer uses the asyndetic of "he had no defence against the sudden rages, the beatings, the punishments, the constant scolding," creates a quickened pace to the exact and conveys the simulation of the quickness of the attack. This also carries <sup>on</sup> ~~of~~ the semantic field of war which runs throughout the piece with the abstract ~~word~~ noun "defence" creating an image that there is no <sup>peace</sup> ~~peace~~ in the household and that the unsettled nature of the father impacts and casts a shadow over the house. The use of the asyndetic listing also bluntly reveals the actions taken by the father which were previously hedged in the exact when stating "while it did not protect us from his worst excesses, it did much to soften and make them tolerable".

The euphemistic revelation of how they dealt with their father's anger and beating conveys the idea that the writer didn't want to openly state what his father did to start of with, possibly because he is so use to having to keep it a secret to protect himself when he was younger from more of his father's harshness ~~moments~~. This gives great insight into the writer and how the actions of his father have impacted him.

The writer also explores in the extract how he and his siblings adapted in order to lessen the impact of his father's anger. When the writer expresses "send out warnings in an instant so that we could vanish or take some defence," continues the semantic field of war ~~back~~ and how unsettled their family home was. The use of the adverb of manner "in an instant" indicates how quickly the writer and his siblings had to react to his father's moods and conveys the unreliable character of their father. The writer then continues to state "This was instinctive and perfected over time," the use of the stative verb ~~is~~ "perfected" and the abstract noun "instinctive" indicates how the siblings had to endure their father's temper regularly and so naturally adapted to his ways. This conveys how the writer has had to

adapts to his father and the way he was treated.

The use of religion is also explored in the extract. When the writer ~~is~~ uses the direct speech in order to time shift the extract <sup>directly</sup> back to his childhood, he uses the memory of him and his siblings performing together. The use of the lines "O God, O God, O God," and "I'll have peace at last," explore religious imagery. This conveys how desperate the siblings must have been because people normally turn to religion in their toughest time in order to gain support. This implies how desperate the writer was and so what a great impact the father had on them. The use of the direct speech also gives a very true and reliable insight into the writer which is important as many of the readers will be interested in gaining more insight into the writer and his personality.

The writer also explores the father's view of his children as well as the children's view of him.

When the writer states the father "roared" the ~~also~~ dynamic verb creates animal imagery and conveys that the children do not see him as human showing the distance in the relationship. This is also conveyed when the writer

expresses through his father's direct speech "is there no work to be done in this house?". The use of the interrogative conveys how the father doesn't see the children as kids who should play, but treats them like his workers who should be getting on with a job. This shows the distance in the relationship and the view of the father about his children.

The influence of the father's work is also explored by the writer. The use of the semantic field of prison/crime is conveyed when the writer says "I must have committed some great crime in a former life" ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~idea~~ as well as "the harsher laws of the word." The use of this semantic field shows the impact that is occurring due to the children being surrounded by the law due to them living in police barracks as it is infiltrating into their ~~the~~ dialect. The children are continually surrounded by this influence, especially with their father's temper and so conveys how the writer has been ~~affected~~ <sup>changed</sup> by this.

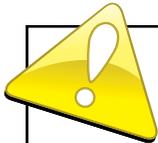
Overall, many attitudes, values and ideas are explored in the extract including how heavily influenced the ~~the~~ writer has become due

to his father's unsettled and disturbing temper.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a successful answer which scores quite highly despite making a significant error in missing the parodic function of the dialogue that closes the passage as well as one or two minor errors in identifying language features. However, there is so much else about the answer which meets both of the assessment objectives - a wide range of lang/lit terminology, fluent expression, and a secure grasp of some of the contextual factors which shape the text - that the reward was a placing at the bottom end of the top band for both AO1 and AO2.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Ensure you read the passage in full carefully to avoid errors of interpretation. The final lines of an extract often contain vital information required for a full understanding of the entire passage.

A full answer for the 'Love and Loss' extract

**Answer TWO questions, the question from Section A and ONE question from Section B.**

**You must answer on the same topic in each section.**

**SECTION A: UNPREPARED PROSE**

1 Read the text in the Source Booklet that accompanies your topic title.

Write a critical analysis of the text you have read.

You should analyse how effectively the writer's or speaker's choices of structure, form and language convey attitudes, values and ideas in the writing.

In your response, you should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of literary and linguistic concepts.

(AO1 = 10, AO2 = 30)

~~The form of this piece~~

- \* well educated ✓
- \* Love for his 'fellow-slaves'
- \* love for helping them
- \* Respect he had for them
- \* dislike toward religious masters ✓
- \* Strong moral compass ✓

The form of this piece is an ~~extra~~ extract from what I believe is an autobiography written by Frederick Douglass, detailing his life as a slave. In particular, how he led a secret Sunday School for his fellow-slaves. The audience for this piece could be those who are interested in what the life of a slave was like, or what it entailed, those who are particularly interested in Frederick Douglass or someone who was interested in religion at that time and how it affected peoples lives. Finally, I believe the purpose of this ~~the~~ piece to be a means of informing others of ~~the~~ what Douglass encountered as a

Slave.

Firstly, it is clear that Douglass is well spoken/educated due to his use of lexis. For example, he uses low-frequency lexis such as 'digressing', 'imprudent' and 'ardently'. This may be unexpected for the audience as there are certain connotations attached to slaves which give the impression that they wouldn't be well-spoken or educated, due to their circumstances.

In addition to this, it is ~~clear~~<sup>clear</sup> that Douglass has a good moral compass. This is shown through his ~~wishing~~  
~~as his fellow-slaves~~ wanting the best for his fellow-slaves. For example, he states that their religious masters would rather see them engaged in degrading sports. The adjective "degrading" highlights his disregard for these activities and thus shows that his attitude is one of a civilised being, who ~~values~~<sup>values</sup> religion.

The metaphor "my blood boils" emphasises his distaste toward his class-leaders. He uses proper nouns for their names, "Messrs. Wright Fairbanks" and "Garrison West" which fulfill the convention of informing the reader, but also shows his fearlessness to name the individuals which were once 'above him'. It also displays his passion and genuine care for the other slaves as he comes across as protective.

We can see this at the end of the first paragraph with his use of exclamatives 'calling themselves christians!' and 'Lord Jesus Christ!' where it is clear that as he is writing and reminiscing it still angers him. Which, again, highlights his passion and protective nature over 'his fellow-slaves'.

However, he refrains from getting more angered and ends ~~the~~ the first paragraph in a calm and collected manner through a declarative, 'But, I am again digressing'. This shows his attitude to them as being though he doesn't hold them with high importance, therefore doesn't wish to dwell, but it still infuriates him years later.

Furthermore, Douglass places large emphasis on informing us of the love he had for the slaves. For example, he uses the first person personal pronoun 'my' when describing the slaves, he also makes himself relatable, with the \_\_\_\_\_, fellow, as he doesn't try to place himself of greater importance, but just as one of them. Also, he further shows respect for the slaves through the aside, "it might embarrass him greatly", showing consideration. Note, he mentions no name here (Proper Noun) but, however, does earlier on when mentioning their class-leaders, showing that he doesn't mind embarrassing them. He also speaks fondly of his 'Sundays' with the slaves, which can be seen through the declarative 'They were great days to my soul', unlike his other sentence structures it is concise and to the point. He gets across that he was very fond of these slaves and thoroughly enjoyed

what he did.

The use of archaic lashes 'given thirty-nine lashes' is representative of the time the piece was written and quite plainly highlights how brutal slavery was. Douglass does not sugar coat what life was like for he and his slaves but rather found positives in whatever he could. He displays his disapproval of the slave trade with the semantic field of oppression, ~~such as~~ "starved, cruel and mental darkness".

However, toward the end of the extract it comes across as though he has now prospered and thus looks back on it as a thoroughly rewarding time in his life. For example, the use of graphology, in particular italics "till I became my own master" shows that he did indeed become prosper. However, despite no longer being indebted to the slave trade, he felt he still was to his slaves. The use of the second personal, personal pronoun highlights this, such as 'we' is used in translation and emphasises how he felt they were as one and united, he ~~he~~ was and still is no better than them.



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### Examiner Comments

This candidate has identified a number of linguistic and literary features, and writes with accuracy for the most part. However, the structure of this answer, which works through the extract paragraph by paragraph, means that it never fully reveals a thorough understanding of the passage as a whole. The achievement would be placed in a higher band had more attention been paid to the aspects of 'love and loss' in the passage, since this was the candidate's chosen theme.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Working through the extract, paragraph by paragraph, does not generally make for a very successful answer. Ensure that you read the entire passage carefully, more than once, before you begin your planning and writing.

## Question 2

This remains, numerically, the least popular question and again the majority of responses were to the drama texts. The question required candidates to discuss places that prompt conflicting feelings. The question successfully discriminated between higher and lower band candidates.

Lower achieving drama candidates were able to discuss conflict in Ireland and in Iraq, often at great length, but rarely investigated how specific places inspired mixed feelings.

Many such answers became so fixated on conflict, that obvious set pieces like Yolland's compromised feelings towards Ireland, or Maire's towards America, in *Translations*, were overlooked. These, and other less routine examples, such as the Bush administration's mixed feelings towards the UN based in New York, did feature in more successful responses. A majority of candidates were able to produce a significant quantity of contextual material, including historical, biographical and production-history material. But unless it was tied to the terms of the question, such work could not be fully rewarded.

Poetry answers grappled with the premise of the question more successfully on the whole. The beauty of Cornwall vying with the painful memory in Hardy, and Betjeman's site-specific staging of his mixed feelings towards Christianity and economic development featured heavily among the many possible ways of approaching the question. However, a too-limited range of supporting contextual materials suppressed the scores of many poetry answers, which typically fail to move beyond Hardy's relationship with Emma or Betjeman's interest in architecture.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box  and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 2  Question 3

Question 4  Question 5

In both Thomas Hardy and John Betjeman's poetry, there is an overarching theme of their love of the places around them. This is because of Hardy's background as an architect ~~passing~~ and Betjeman's love of old architecture to the point of ~~campaigning~~ campaigning to and successfully saving St. Pancras Station. This love of places can be seen in poems across both of their work, with Betjeman often echoing Hardy as he was a large inspiration for his poetry.

In Thomas Hardy's poem 'The self-unseeing', places prompting conflicting feelings are presented as Hardy returns to his childhood home. The conflict arises ~~was~~ as he remembers his old house when he was a child and to see it ~~was~~ now as it is in much worse condition. The quote "footworn and hollowed and thin" shows this as Hardy describes it almost as someone would describe an elderly person ("hollowed" or "thin"), showing his attachment to the old house.\* His Conflict

<sup>as in a stylistic list here</sup>  
\*The use of "and" shows Hardy believes the negative qualities are piling up against ~~positive~~ <sup>positive</sup> ones from his memories.

comes from his memories of his old house as he remembers <sup>sights such as of his mother:</sup> "She sat here in her chair, smiling into the fire", which causes a conflict between his memories and the feelings they cause, and now the house looks to him now after the death of his father. The line "Yet we were looking away" shows his conflicting feelings. Concisely as Hardy tries to show the reader that they should appreciate their memories and the people around them while they last. The rhyme scheme in this poem is very simple, showing Hardy's childlike nature ~~at~~ at the time of the poem; meaning that as his memory was in his childhood, he wrote the

poem as simplistic, as he would have been a child when he remembered it. This means the conflicting feelings would have strengthened over time as the house would have gradually worn down and his memory would not have changed, causing conflict in what Hardy remembered happening in the house and how the house is now silent as his father is no longer "bowing it higher and higher", playing the violin.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate is clearly able to answer the question (on places that prompt conflicting feelings) adeptly, making a judicious selection of 'The Self Unseeing' by Thomas Hardy. However, the distinct lack of lang/lit terminology suppresses the AO1 achievement and has an impact on AO2 scoring also. There is some biographical context provided, but it is rather general and lacks the specificity needed for a higher band answer.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Use lang-lit terminology to probe the text and answer the question asked.

## Extract from an answer for question 2

Two key characters which face conflicting feelings within themselves are Powell and Yolland. Powell is conflicted between his loyalty to his administration and his dedication to pursue diplomacy. His political stance is a direct result of his experiences in Vietnam where he witnessed his country fail to impose their ideological beliefs on a communist country and saw how thousands of lives were lost. As a result he doesn't wish to enter into "half-hearted warfare for half-baked reasons." His parallel phrasing emphasises his strong view on the matter. Due to this view, conflict arises within the White House between Powell and the aggressive hawks. Powell becomes increasingly isolated as the hawks become more intent on war, this is reflected in the staging, "Powell stands, now alone." This is a metaphor for the fact he is also now alone in his political views. A projection of "the White House glows in the night" which effectively emphasises how Powell has become separate from his colleagues within the White House. This links to the character of Yolland in 'Translations' because he is conflicted between his love and respect for the love of Ireland and its culture and his need to work with the British army to oppress this country. He feels, "something is being eroded" through his work with the place names. He longs to learn the language and preserve it and ironically it is the Irish characters such as Owen and Maire who have a desire to learn English. For example Maire uses inclusive pronouns, "We should all be learning to speak English" which shows how she wishes to see this change spread across the whole community. Owen also shows his support for English through his frustration at Yolland's desire to hold on to the old place names, "Back to the romance again. All right! Fine!" his

exclamations demonstrate this. Interestingly in 1995 Kiberd commented that the play should be a reminder that it is not up to the Irish which language they speak in. Ireland's support Friel's purpose to urge the Irish people to hold on to their culture even if they have to express it through the medium of English. Therefore it is ironic that the key advocate for the

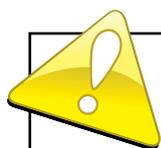


**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This candidate meets all the assessment objectives in this extract. We have a comparison of key moments from the plays which directly answer the question; there is rich contextualisation in the form of a quotation from the critic Declan Kiberd; there is a range of lang/lit terminology being deployed in service of better understanding the plays and in answering the question.

This answer, which extended to 9 pages in length, scored very highly at AO1 (9 marks), AO2 (10) and AO3 (35).



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**Examiner Tip**

Integrate context into the body of your answer rather than front-loading it at the start of your answer, or adding it at the end.

### Question 3

This question required candidates to discuss the presentation of individuals struggling to find fulfilment in their world, which was eminently suited to all the drama texts and a wide range of poems by Gunn, Hughes and Eliot. Some excellent work was seen on Gunn in particular, with particular focus on the motorcyclist as a metaphor for roving discontent; Prufrock also featured regularly, with occasional references to the relevant episodes in 'The Waste Land'. Question 3 poetry candidates tended to be better than those for Question 2 in terms of both contextual knowledge and lang/lit terminology.

The question was always very well suited to *Othello* and *Equus*, though many candidates surprisingly tended to prioritise Othello's lack of fulfilment over Iago's. The many aspects of unfulfillment in *Equus* – professional, personal and spiritual – were more thoroughly covered. A number of answers used Jill and Emilia as a focus of comparison, fulfilling the A03 requirement to compare in an interesting way. Contextually, the by-now familiar repertoire of historical facts about racism in *Othello*, or Dysart and R.D. Laing were used by most candidates; access to the higher bands was restricted to those who were able to tailor such contextual knowledge to the precise aspect of the question.

The use of the dash and exclamation mark portray to the audience Dysart's frustration and desperation at the fact that he knows he will never gain satisfaction and fulfilment in the same way as Alan.

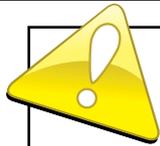
In *Othello*, Iago's character is shown to be mainly driven by his desire to get revenge on Othello for numerous reasons, chief among these being the fact that Othello promoted Cassio over Iago, as well as Iago's own paranoia about his wife's fidelity. "When devils will the blackest sins put on, // They do suggest at first with heavenly shows // As I do now." This shows how Iago is taking great satisfaction from the fact that he is outsmarting and outplaying Othello and everyone else, proving to himself that he is superior. The stark contrast between light and dark imagery "blackest sins... heavenly shows" also helps to parallel the majority of characters' views on the relationship between Desdemona (pure and innocent) and

Othello (black and evil.) At the time, ~~Q~~ <sup>to</sup> this may not have been at all surprising, with one contemporary critic stating the play should "serve only as a caution for women to not run away with blackamoors." Also, Iago can also be considered a typical stage machiavel, driven by little more than his own desires and with little motive for his actions whilst taking pleasure and fulfilment out of his own successes.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is an extract from an answer that scored in the upper-middle range for each of the AOs. The candidate uses some lang-lit terminology, though there are obvious opportunities for more; the candidate uses some potentially relevant contextual material, but seems unaware that the famous quotation is from Thomas Rhymer's very satirical 1622 review, which the candidate has interpreted literally. There is an obvious missed opportunity for comparison here with the passage in *Equus* concerning Dysart's lack of professional fulfilment. The following paragraph begins with Iago, but neglects to note his comparable frustration in his own professional life.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Careful planning before you begin your answer can help you to make the most of connections and contrasts between the texts, and boost your AO3 score.

## **Question 4**

This was a popular question which asked candidates to discuss the obstacles in the path to love, which was approached well on the whole by both poetry and drama candidates.

Drama candidates tended to do particularly well on *The Glass Menagerie*, linking the difficulties experienced by Tom and Laura to the author's biography and to wider socio-economic forces in mid-twentieth-century America. *Betrayal* proved a little more challenging, but some of the better answers were impressively alert to the status of language itself an obstacle, in addition to the more obvious aspects of existing partners and friendships. Generally speaking, there was less evidence of relevant contextualisation for *Betrayal*, and candidates tended to resort to the by now familiar details of Pinter's affairs and Billington's reviews. Poetry answers saw better contextualisation for Plath than for the metaphysical poets but many successful answers were seen, using a range of appropriate lang/lit terms and concepts.

In the June 2015 series, it was noted in the Examiner's Report that some candidates choosing poetry for Question 4 were producing pre-prepared responses and apparently lacked the flexibility to adapt their knowledge to the specific question focus. This year there was little evidence of this. Candidates were able to provide a wide range of possible obstacles, including the death of a loved one, spatial distance, clothing, spirituality/morality, and Satanic temptation, making some ingenious comparisons in the process.

## Question 5

In this question, candidates were asked to discuss the effects of communication breakdown on family relationships. This was, by far, the most popular question. The vast majority of the answers addressed the drama texts, and although the poetry responses were few in number, the work on Chaucer/Harrison was often, as in previous series, very strong and candidates responded thoughtfully and with insight into Harrison's relationship with his parents and the Wife's relationship with Jankyn in particular. As in previous series, candidates appear to be more comfortable when writing about Tony Harrison (and again, as in previous series, often skated over the specifics of Chaucer's language.)

Again, *A Doll's House* tended to be the more fully contextualised of the two drama texts, but again mainly in terms of socio-historic details. Too many of these were rather bland, routine, unnuanced statements about gender in nineteenth-century (or, quite inappropriately, 'Victorian') Norway. More successful answers were able to provide instances of how the theme of broken communications was translated into staging decisions made by specific directors. *All My Sons* was analysed well but relatively few candidates had a command of textual specifics to enable the pinpointing of how communication breaks down and most crucially, the effects of such breakdown. There was in the higher band candidates a willingness to investigate specific linguistic features indicative of broken communication, using skills acquired in 6EL01 to impressive effect.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box  and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: **Question 2**       **Question 3**   
**Question 4**       **Question 5**

In both *A Doll's House* and *All My Sons*, communication is a key element in exploring different relationships and how the breakdown of these communications can <sup>impact</sup> affect the relationships. Both playwrights use literary and linguistic devices in order to craft and shape the relationships.

In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen uses the breakdown of communication as the ultimate ~~breakdown~~ ending of Nora and Helmer's relationship. In Act three, Nora expresses "Hasn't it struck you this is the first time you and I, man and wife, have had a serious talk together?". The use of the interrogative conveys how Nora is questioning the lack of communication and why it has occurred. The use of the parenthesis "man and wife" also implies that Ibsen is trying to make the point and emphasis that a husband and wife should communicate their issues even though in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Norway, it was not seen to be important. This is conveyed in Helmer's reply when he uses the interrogative "Get you involved in worries you couldn't possibly help me to bear?". The modal auxiliary verb of "couldn't" ~~shows~~ conveys how certain Helmer is in believing that Nora is too weak to deal with the ~~deeper~~ depth of communication that ~~Nora~~ <sup>she</sup> is asking for. This shows how Ibsen conveys the bourgeois values of the time in which women were seen as weak and susceptible to mental illness so should be there for looks rather than for any real purpose. This is also ~~an~~ explored in ~~A Doll's House~~ *All My Sons* with Kate when Chris says to Keller "We've made a terrible mistake with mother."

when revealing that they have "been dishonest with her" in order to protect her because she is seen as too weak. Miller was heavily influenced by Ibsen so many of his ideas are explored in Miller's plays. By Nora wanting more from the marriage and to be involved more in more in depth issues conveys the strength of Nora which Ibsen used to imply the true character of women in his plays ~~strongly~~ which lead him to be deemed a feminist. However, Helmer is not in agreement with Nora due to his strong bourgeois values and so the breakdown of their communication ultimately ends their marriage.

Similarly, the view that women cannot hold up

the depth of communication is also explored in *All My Sons*. A breakdown in communication occurs when Kate reveals "Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead, your father killed him." The use of the blunt declarative "your father killed him" conveys how Kate has given up on keeping Keller's secret and cannot keep up the lie. This ~~indicates~~ <sup>indicates</sup>

Now Kate is too weak to keep up this dishonesty,  
supporting the ~~old~~ patriarchal view that women  
couldn't deal with heavy issues. This revelation of  
the ~~old~~ secret and thus the breakdown of communication  
impacts on the relationship between Chris and Keller  
and ~~will~~ so ultimately leads to Keller's death ~~showing~~  
conveying the <sup>most</sup> <sup>magnitude</sup> of the <sup>of</sup> communication breakdown.

In A Doll's House, communication breakdowns in  
the past are also explored. Krogstad and  
Mrs Linde reveal their past relationship in Act  
three and ~~the~~ convey how communication  
breakdown in the form of stopping correspondence  
lead to the end of their relationship. When Krogstad  
states "A heartless woman throws a man over ~~the~~  
moment something more profitable offers itself.", indicates  
by the <sup>evaluative</sup> adjective "profitable" that he believes that  
Mrs Linde was only interested in money. This is true  
to an extent ~~by~~ ~~but~~ ~~only~~ occurred due to the

conditions at the time in which ~~people~~ <sup>women</sup> had to  
marry for money as they adopted the wealth  
and status of their ~~family~~ <sup>husband</sup> and Mrs Linde  
~~was~~ <sup>had</sup> a "helpless mother and two young brothers"  
to care for. When Krogstad questions Mrs Linde  
with the interrogative "Why did you write to me  
as you did?" followed in the adjacency pair

with the response "I felt a duty bound to destroy any feeling that you had for me." Conveys how Mrs Lindel broke down communication to stop the ~~communication~~ <sup>relationship</sup> and overall resulted in the end of ~~the connection~~. Connection.

This breakdown of communications to stop relationships is similarly explored in All My Sons. When George comes to visit the Kellers and discuss the situation <sup>about</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>Steve</sup> ~~Steve~~ Deaver, George expresses "Annie... we did a terrible thing." The use of the unvoiced pause shown through ~~the use~~ ~~of~~ the ellipsis conveys how George is too embarrassed to reveal what he has to say, indicating how disappointed he is about the breakdown of communication with his father. Also the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun "we" creates a collective tone in which he is involving Annie. <sup>in the blame</sup> When George goes on to express "Not even to send a card at Christmas" the adjective phrase "not even" conveys the extent of the breakdown of communication and how he feels guilt for the decline in that relationship. Also, the use of the time adverbial "Christmas" shows a link between the two plays as they both <sup>indicate</sup> ~~show~~ an emphasis that Christmas is a

time for family and connecting and so the fact that communication is breaking down at this time shows its severity.

The way in which characters communicate with each other also shows the breakdown in communication and the consequences of this. Ibsen uses Helmer's idiosyncrasy when talking to Nora to explore attitudes towards women and also explore how this leads to the breakdown in the relationship.

When Helmer says "is that my little shy-lark chirruping out there?", the use of the animal imagery conveys Helmer's view of Nora. Shy-larks are commonly beautiful birds that are used to perform songs and are often caged. This reference is used to indicate Nora and her worth and position <sup>in society</sup>. Also the use of the possessive pronoun "my" also conveys how Nora is owned by Helmer which is true for 19th Century Norway in which women were the

property of men and had no real rights of their own. This form of communication used by Helmer to Nora is repeated throughout the play and leads to the end of their relationship as Nora stands up for her rights and to be treated more fairly. The theme of freedom is a recurring theme throughout Ibsen's plays due to Ibsen being a patriot of the revolution in Norway which made it independent from Denmark.

The breakdown of communication is also explored in *All My Sons* through Kate and Keller not being able to keep up with their lies. When Kate and Keller are talking to George in Act two, Kate breaks down the secret communication between herself and Keller when she reveals to George that Keller "hasn't been laid up in fifteen years...". The use of the idiom shows that this is Kate truthfully speaking and so has revealed a big secret to George. Keller interrupts Kate and states "except my ~~time~~ <sup>recover them</sup> flu during the war.", the use of the interruption shows how Keller is trying to keep up the secret and the private communication and ~~get them out~~ <sup>recover them</sup> from a sticky situation which may lead George to ~~convince~~ <sup>convince</sup> Keller's ~~secret~~ <sup>secret</sup> and so ~~find~~ <sup>prove</sup> Keller guilty. This shows how the breakdown

in communication and not being able to keep up with the lies could've ended Keller in serious trouble, which inevitably it does at the end of the play.

This is similarly explored in *A Doll's House* in which Nora nearly breaks down her secret communication and impact her relationship with Helmer. When Helmer questions Nora in Act one about whether anyone has visited she replies "Here? No.", the use of the interrogative followed by her own response in the form of the minor declarative "No" shows how Nora is trying to act certain in her answers in order to have some respectability. However, she is then caught out when Helmer says "That's funny. I just saw Krogstad leave the house.", the quick, blunt, declarative reply shows how Helmer knows she has caught her out although is partly mistaken for the reason and so Nora gets away with her lie. The fact that Nora would lie to her husband would be very shocking for the audience at the time, as foreshadowed by Mrs Linde who is a mouthpiece for the bourgeois perfect wife women, who too is shocked when she finds out Nora would do such a thing as lie to her

husband. By Nora nearly getting caught up in her lie it conveys how easily communication can be broken when lying is involved.

Overall, in ~~both~~ both *All My Sons* and *A Doll's House* relationships are affected by the consequences of communication breakdown, especially with the added ~~stress~~ impact of lies.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This is an example of competent, upper middle band achievement, scoring 7 + 7 + 27. It is written with fluency and has a fair range of terms (though over-reliant on sentence types, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns). The context provided is relatively thin, but comparisons are strong, and crucially relevant to the question asked.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Be adventurous in the range of lang/lit terminology you use. Always ensure that is used to make points that are relevant to the question asked.

## Paper Summary

Based on performance on this paper, future candidates are offered the following advice:

- When planning your answer to Section A, don't just work through the extract in order; select your material carefully and think about the whole text.
- Use a wide range of terminology to identify ways in which writers create meaning; discuss the effect of these techniques on the reader or audience.
- In Section B, plan your work so that you are comparing what the writers are doing.
- Don't just copy out lots of context material in Section B; use it to support what you are saying about the play or poem and tailor it to the precise terms of the question.
- Read the exact wording of the question carefully and answer *this* question, rather than one you practised before the exam.
- Enjoy your writing and share your enthusiasm with the examiner.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>



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