

A Level English Literature

Spring Network





Aims and Objectives

In this session, we will:

- discuss how to integrate the AOs into a critical response
- practise using the levels-based mark schemes by looking at some student responses
- provide opportunities to network with other A Level Literature teachers.



Agenda

4:00–4:10 Introductions and contact sharing

4:10–4:45 Component 1 discussion

4:40–5:10 Component 2 discussion

5:10–5:50 Component 3 discussion

5:50–6:00 Questions and close

Networking: Sharing contacts

- Before we start the session, let's take the opportunity for you to share details with each other.
- If you are happy to, please add your name, school name and email address into the chat box.
- After the event, we can send an email with the list of contacts to everyone who would like them so you can share ideas and resources with each other.

Documents for this course

You may wish to take the time to download the following document before we start.

- **SO2 – exemplars for marking (with questions)**
- **SO3 – mark schemes and questions**

Due to time constraints, we will only be looking at 1 exemplar for each section of the papers during the course but there are additional exemplars – with commentaries – in the examiner reports.

Component 1: Shakespeare



Component 1 – Drama

Overview of assessment

1

DRAMA

Paper length: 2 hours and 15 minutes

Section A: **Shakespeare**

One essay question from a choice of two on the studied Shakespeare text. (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO5 assessed)

Section B: **Other drama**

One essay question from a choice of two on the studied drama text. (AO1, AO2, AO3 assessed)

30%

60 marks

Section A
35 marks

Section B
25 marks

Section A – Shakespeare – Summer 2023

EITHER

- 7** Explore how Shakespeare presents the tension between public and private life in *Othello*. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors and ideas from your critical reading.

(Total for Question 7 = 35 marks)

OR

- 8** Explore the extent to which Shakespeare's *Othello* is a play about prejudice. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors and ideas from your critical reading.

(Total for Question 8 = 35 marks)

Key Points

- AO1, AO2, AO3, AO5
- The student must be able to discuss the play in the light of other critical interpretations.
- The student must also explore the play's contexts.

Section A – Shakespeare – Mark Schemes

Level	Mark	AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet point 3
Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO3)				
	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. Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. 		
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. Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes general links between texts and contexts. 		
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. Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Develops relevant links between texts and contexts. 		
Level 4	13–17	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. Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes detailed links between texts and contexts. 		
Level 5	18–21	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. Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts. 		

Section A – Shakespeare – Mark Schemes

Level	Mark	Descriptor (A05)
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	Descriptive <ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows limited awareness of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. Limited linking of different interpretations to own response.
Level 2	3–5	General exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Offers straightforward explanations of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. Some support of own ideas given with reference to generic different interpretations.
Level 3	6–8	Clear relevant exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Offers clear understanding of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. Explores different interpretations in support or contrast to own argument.
Level 4	9–11	Discriminating exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produces a developed exploration of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. Discussion is controlled and offers integrated exploration of different interpretations in development of own critical position.
Level 5	12–14	Critical and evaluative <ul style="list-style-type: none">Applies a sustained evaluation of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. This is supported by sophisticated use of application of alternative interpretations to illuminate own critical position.

Shakespeare – Feedback from the examiner

- In all questions, stronger responses tended to refuse black-or-white readings. That extra layer of complexity is a common element in L4 and L5 answers. Of course, students have to answer the questions as set, but stronger candidates always manage to suggest that there is more in the play than the question might suggest.
- Weaker responses tend to list (features, examples of something, what critics say) and try to extract an argument from that. Stronger ones tend to do it in reverse: they have an argument and seek to exemplify it with material.

AO2:

- A discriminator, as so often, was whether students picked up on the words ‘presents’, ‘presentation’ and ‘uses’ which invited comment on structure and on Shakespeare as dramatist rather than mere character study.
- AO2 evidencing is often weak. Candidates are not referring consistently and regularly to the text in their arguments. This limits potential in AO2 terms whereby close analysis and development of an argument through a pattern of evidence is difficult to achieve.

Shakespeare – Feedback from the examiner

AO3

- Response to context appear to be increasingly discriminating and text specific. Fewer candidates are making sweeping general comments regarding past attitudes and opinions.

AO5

- Brief comments such as: ‘this links to what Loomba believed’ showed an attempt to refer to wider reading, but surface level comments highlighted a detachment between the play and respective critics.
- Candidates should be mindful when planning their responses to be secure in their own argument to avoid simply citing critics and relying on others’ interpretations rather than having their own critical position.

Tracking the AOs and development of argument

- Read through the following extract and log what you find in terms of AOs.
- Consider how the candidate is developing their point of argument about prejudice.
- *This point follows one about Othello rising above the stereotype of 'the Moor' via his eloquence.*

Tracking the AOs and development of argument

As the play develops however, it is clear that Shakespeare is attempting to illustrate the impact of prejudice in society, as the impact of a racist and intolerant society develops in the dramatic representation of the characters of Othello. Iago's Machiavellian scheme to manipulate Othello's genetically predisposed 'green-eyed' jealousy, as proposed by Ortelius in the first Atlas, is according to Leavis the result of prejudicial hatred and xenophobia. Though Shakespeare clearly elucidates Iago's racial hatred by use of language and imagery, such as the grotesque and animalistic contrast between Othello as a 'black ram' and Desdemona as the naive and innocent 'white ewe', the playwright also uses wider structural devices to achieve this effect. Many critics, such as Fintan O'Toole have pointed out that the aforementioned 'Othello music' and grand verse 'breaks down' just as Iago's speech becomes 'more triumphant' – a reflection of how prejudice can be almost infectious. The audience can clearly observe the consequences of racial prejudice in Act 4 scene 1 – there Othello's previous eloquence breaks to 'savage madness' – 'Pish! Noses lies and ears! – Handkerchief - Confess? O devil! ' The idea that Iago and Othello melt together' (Fintan O'Toole) starts to develop here as grotesque images of 'noses and lips' mirror Iago's previous use of grotesque imagery. Shakespeare accompanies this speech with Othello 'falling into a trance' as part of the stage direction, so the audience can observe not only the verbal impact of prejudice, but also the physical – almost infectious – impact that racial hatred can have on an individual in a prejudicial society such as Shakespeare's own'.

Tracking the AOs and development of argument

As the play develops however, it is clear that Shakespeare is attempting to illustrate the impact of prejudice in society, as the impact of a racist and intolerant society develops in the dramatic representation of the characters of Othello. Iago's Machiavellian scheme to manipulate Othello's genetically predisposed 'green-eyed' jealousy, as proposed by Ortelius in the first Atlas, is according to Leavis the result of prejudicial hatred and xenophobia.

Though Shakespeare clearly elucidates Iago's racial hatred by use of language and imagery, such as the grotesque and animalistic contrast between Othello as a 'black ram' and Desdemona as the novice and innocent 'white ewe', the playwright also uses wider structural devices to achieve this effect.

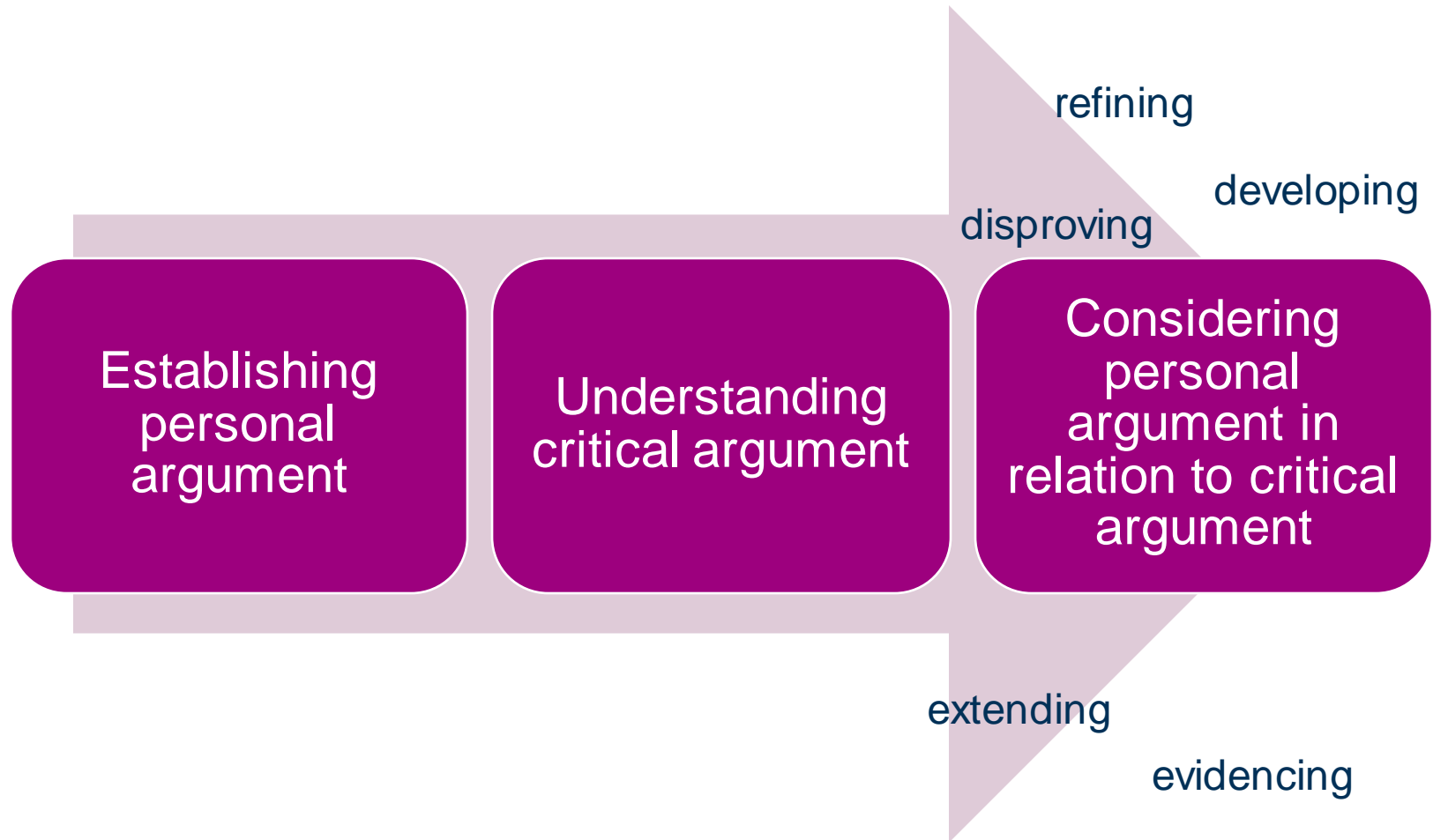
Many critics, such as Fintan O'Toole have pointed out that the aforementioned 'Othello music' and grand verse 'breaks down' just as Iago's speech becomes 'more triumphant' – a reflection of how prejudice can be almost infectious. The

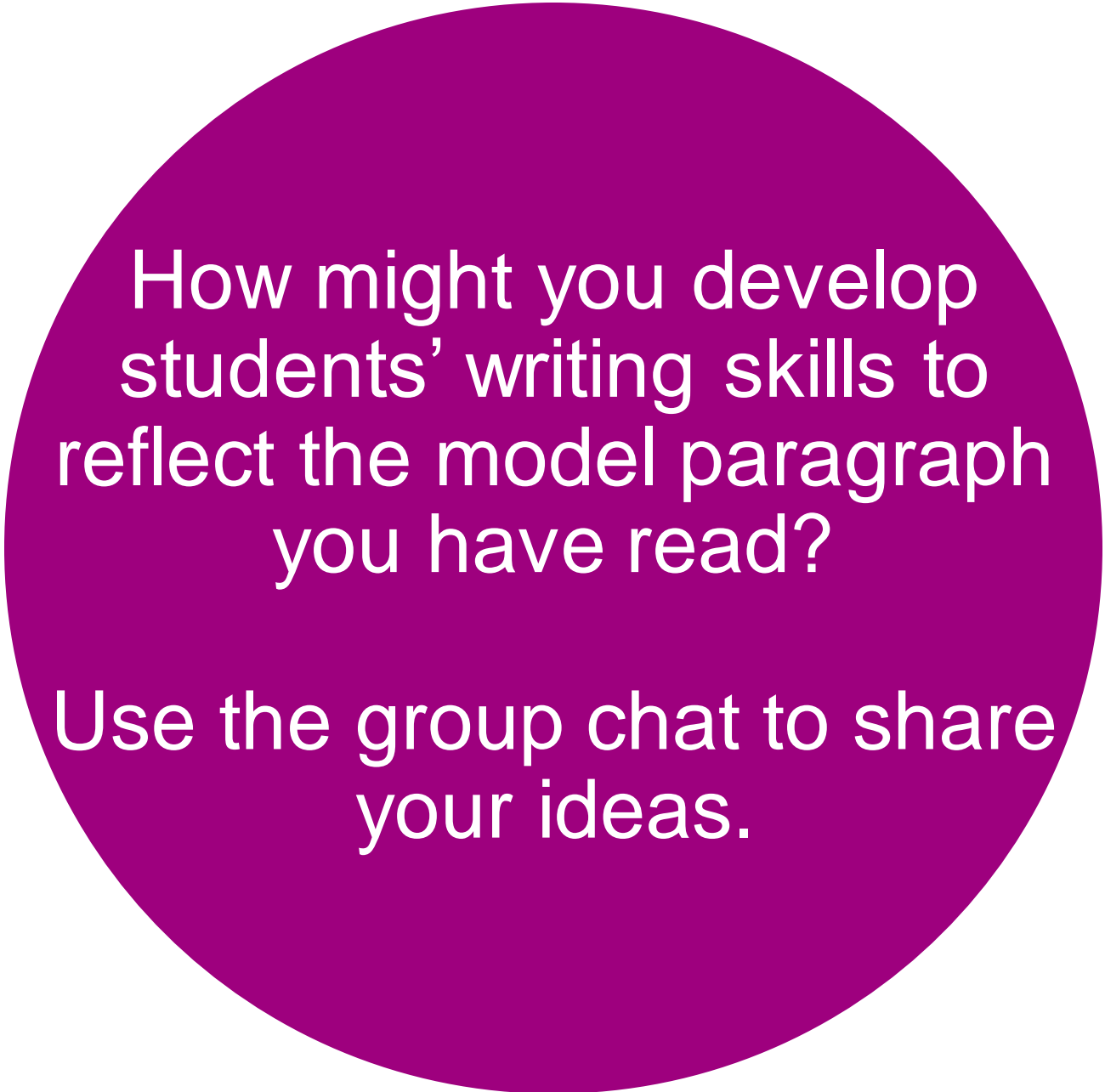
audience can clearly observe the consequences of racial prejudice in Act 4 scene 1 – there Othello's previous eloquence breaks to 'savage madness' – 'Pish! Noses lies and ears! – Handkerchief - Confess? O devil! ' The idea that Iago and Othello melt together' (Fintan O'Toole) starts to develop here as grotesque images of 'noses and lips' mirror Iago's

previous use of grotesque imagery. Shakespeare accompanies this speech with Othello 'falling into a trance' as part of the stage direction, so the audience can observe not only the verbal impact of prejudice, but also the physical – almost infectious – impact that racial

hatred can have on an individual in a prejudicial society such as Shakespeare's own'.

Use of critical reading – the process





How might you develop
students' writing skills to
reflect the model paragraph
you have read?


Use the group chat to share
your ideas.

Discussion 1 – Shakespeare

- We are now going to look at the full *Othello* exemplar in document **SO2** in your pack.
- Look at **Script 1**
- Read through the script using the **MS (pp.2–4 in SO3)**
- Put any comments or questions into the group chat.

Think about

- How well the student has addressed the question.
- AO2 achievement – how well have they discussed how meanings are shaped and the dramatist at work?
- AO3 – is context integrated?
- AO5 – how well has this been used to illuminate the student's own position?



Script 1 – marks

Script 1

This response fulfils all Level 5 criteria on both grids. It was awarded **21** for grid one and **14** for grid two.

AO1–AO3: Level 5 – 21 marks

AO5: Level 5 – 14 marks

Component 1: Other Drama



Section B – Other Drama – Summer 2023

A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

EITHER

23 Explore how Williams makes use of light in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 23 = 25 marks)

OR

24 Explore Williams' presentation of class differences in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 24 = 25 marks)

Key Points

- AO1, AO2, AO3
- The student must explore the play's contexts.
- There is NO requirement to engage with other interpretations.

Section B – Other Drama – Mark Schemes

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	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. Shows limited awareness of contextual factors.
Level 2	6–10	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. Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes general links between texts and contexts.
Level 3	11–15	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. Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Develops relevant links between texts and contexts.
Level 4	16–20	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. Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes detailed links between texts and contexts.
Level 5	21–25	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. Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts.

Other Drama – Feedback from the examiner

- AO1:** The best answers answered the question asked closely and referred to the key term of the question regularly and considered how the question term developed over the course of the play. Answers which considered how gender, for example, in *The Duchess of Malfi*, progressed over the play were more successful.
- AO2:** Many candidates appeared to focus too heavily on addressing AO3, with AO1 and AO2 left underdeveloped. Whereas context is a key factor in understanding character roles and a shift in attitudes within 1940's America, when studying *A Streetcar Named Desire*, candidates must be made aware that each AO is equally weighted.
- AO3:** As this specification has matured, candidates have got much better at handling context and there are many fewer responses that now overly focus on the personal lives of writers. However, candidates need to avoid making sweeping generalisations and actually analyse how contextual factors play a role in aiding a deeper understanding of a play's themes or writer's craft – as demonstrated by those candidates attaining higher level. Above all, contextual comment needs to be relevant and well-embedded in the argument of the essay.

‘How novels work’ by John Mullan making AO2 explicit in classroom teaching.

1. Beginning

The title 16 • The prologue 28 • The framing device 31
• The opening 36

2. Narrating

First-person narration 45 • Recollection 47 • The inadequate narrator 50 • A man writing as a woman 52 • Multiple narrators 55 • Skaz 57 • The self-conscious novel 60
• Addressing the reader 62 • The omniscient narrator 64
• Point of view 67 • Tense 71 • Tense shift 74 • Free indirect style 76

3. People

Characterization 84 • Motivation 86 • The anti-hero 90
• The villain 93 • Real people 97 • The alter ego 101

4. Genre

The thriller 108 • Romance 112 • Satire 115
• Magical realism 117 • The novel of circulation 119
• The *conte* 122 • The historical mystery 124

5. Voices

Dialect 130 • Dialogue 133 • Languages 137
• Translation 140 • Phone conversation 142 • Clichés 147
• Swearing 149

6. Structure

Chapter headings 157 • Chronology 160 • Inset narratives 164
• Parallel narratives 167 • Plot 169 • Revelations 172
• Split narratives 175 • Metanarrative 178 • Montage 180
• Prolepsis 183

7. Detail

Facts 193 • Location 195 • Setting 197 • Weather 200
• Meals 203 • Brands 206 • Research 208

8. Style

Plain prose 216 • Antique prose 218 • Parataxis 220
• Paragraphs 224 • Diction 228 • Amplification 233
• Parentheses 236 • Hyperbole 239 • Pastiche 241
• Heteroglossia 244 • Streams of consciousness 247

9. Devices

Letters 255 • Email 257 • Newspaper articles 260
• Ekphrasis 263 • Lists 266 • Natural description 269
• Similes 272 • Names 275 • Coincidences 278

10. Literariness

Intertextuality 286 • Epigrams 290 • Quotation 292
• Symbolism 295 • Novels within novels 297

11. Ending

The denouement 308 • The false ending 311 • Epilogue 314
• The postscript 317


Create your own list for drama...Add
your ideas to the group chat.

Discussion 2 – Other Drama

- We are now going to look at a *Streetcar* script in document **SO2** in your pack
- Look at **Script 2**
- Read through the script using the **MS (pp.5–6 in SO3)**
- Put any comments or questions into the group chat.

Think about:

- AO1 – how well the student has addressed the question and constructed an argument.
- AO2 achievement – is there sufficient coverage of the AO?
- AO3 – is context integrated and relevant to the question?
- Is there a balance across the AOs in the response?



Script 2 – marks

Script 2

Overall, this is certainly in Level 4 response but it's not yet 'knocking on the door' of Level 5. There's evidence of discrimination across all the AOs, particularly 2 and 3.

The expression perhaps lacks sophistication – some weak paragraphing; abrupt ending; occasional infelicities of style – but the argument is nevertheless controlled.

Level 4 – 18 marks



Round up and discussion

- What are the key hurdles to success in this component for your students?
- How do you approach AO2 for the drama component? Does it need further focus?
- When and how do you start to introduce the anthology texts for Shakespeare?
- Do you have any ideas or resources you would like to share with the group?

Component 2: Prose



Component 2 – Prose

	Overview of assessment	
2	<p>Prose</p> <p>Paper length: 1 hour 15 mins</p> <p>One comparative essay question from a choice of two on the studied prose texts text. (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 assessed)</p>	<p>20%</p> <p>40 marks</p>

Paper 2 – Prose – Summer 2023

Texts

Pre-1900: *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley; *The War of the Worlds*, H G Wells

Post-1900: *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro; *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood

EITHER

- 7** Compare the ways in which the writers of your **two** chosen texts explore death in their narratives. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

- 8** Compare the ways in which the writers of your **two** chosen texts present the experience of learning. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)

Key Points

- AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 equally weighted.
- Students must explore the contexts of the novels.
- An additional focus is on making connections between the texts – ‘Compare’ will be a command word in the question.
- One of the texts must be pre-1900.

Paper 2 – Prose – Mark Schemes

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 structure 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.

Paper 2 – Prose – Mark Schemes

A03 = bullet point 1		A04 = bullet point 2
Level	Mark	Descriptor (A03, A04)
	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.

Paper 2 – Prose – Feedback from the examiner

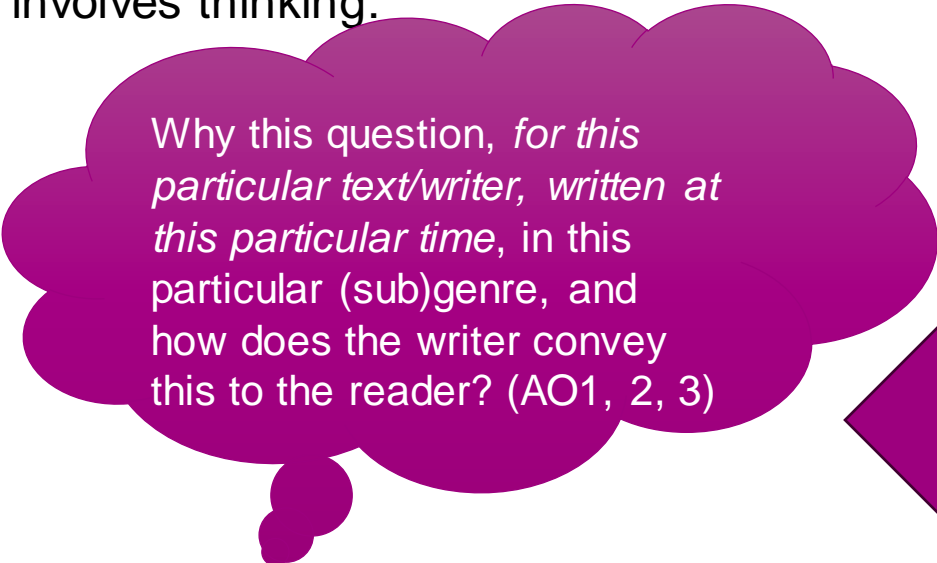
Based on their performance on this paper, students should:

- Avoid trying to include pre-prepared material in their answers.
- Answer the question directly and signal this in their introduction and conclusion.
- Focus on the writer and their intentions, rather than on characters as autonomous or real people.
- Plan their response to ensure they can make their overall ideas clear from the start.
- When writing about contexts, avoid generalisations about social and cultural conventions of a particular time period. Try to give specific details and think about how they have influenced the text and writer.
- When evaluating, consider the different possible meanings a text, character, quote or idea can have. Keep an open mind about alternative perspectives.

[Examiner report p.74](#)

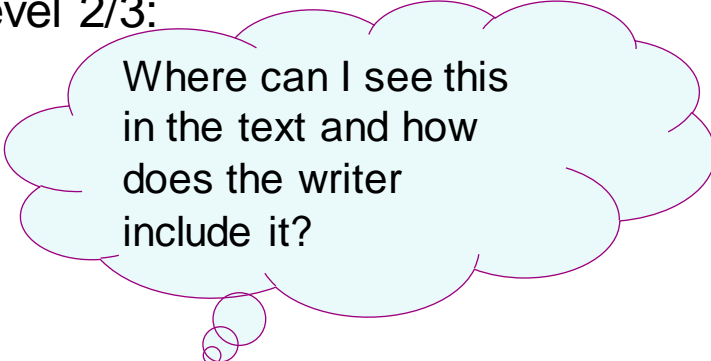
Prose – planning and thinking for Level 4

In response to an exam question,
Level 4 planning involves thinking:

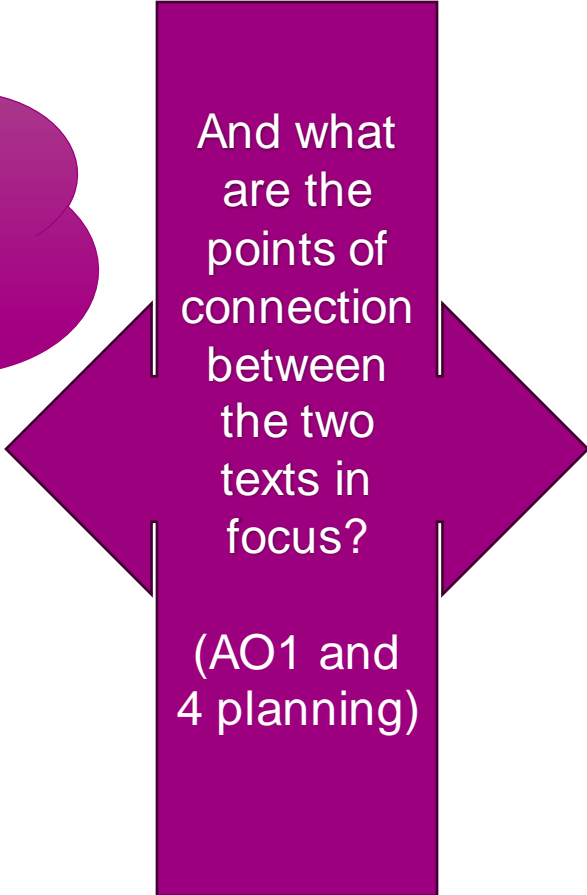


Why this question, *for this particular text/writer, written at this particular time*, in this particular (sub)genre, and how does the writer convey this to the reader? (AO1, 2, 3)

Rather than typical Level 2/3:



Where can I see this in the text and how does the writer include it?



And what are the points of connection between the two texts in focus?

(AO1 and 4 planning)

Discussion 3 – Prose

- We are now going to look at a *Science and Society* script in document **SO2** in your pack.
- Look at **Script 3**
- Read through the script using the **MS (pp.7-9 in SO3)**
- Put any comments or questions into the group chat.

Think about:

- AO1 – how the student has expressed themselves and the strength of the introduction/conclusion.
- Is their plan successful?
- AO2 achievement – is the focus writers and their craft?
- AO3 – is context integrated and relevant to the question?
- AO4 – how well has the student evaluated and linked the two texts?

Script 3 – marks

Script 3

This Level 5 essay has a really good sense of what the writers are doing and why. A very good exemplification of a constantly evaluative approach ('perhaps the writer is...') – there is an open-minded discussion of different readings of the texts, developing the students' critical voice. Contexts are very well integrated into the essay and there is detailed analysis of the writers' craft for AO2.

AO1/AO2: Level 5 – 18 marks

AO3/AO4: Level 5 – 18 marks



Round up and discussion

- How do you approach comparison (AO4) in the classroom?
- How do you ensure that context is integrated into your teaching?
- How do you ensure that knowledge about AO3 is used with control and discrimination by students?
- How do you ensure and encourage AO1 – in particular in relation to focusing on the question – in this component?
- Do your students focus enough on AO2 in this component and think about the different ways in which novelists shape meaning?

Component 3: Contemporary Poetry



Component 3 – Poetry

	Overview of assessment	
3	<p>POETRY Paper length: 2 hours and 15 minutes</p> <p>Section A: Contemporary Poetry One essay question from a choice of two comparing an unseen modern poem and one named poem from the studied collection. (AO1, AO2, AO4 assessed)</p> <p>Section B: Poetry Collections One essay question from a choice of two on the studied poetry period or author. (AO1, AO2, AO3 assessed)</p>	<p>30% 60 marks</p> <p>Section A 30 marks</p> <p>Section B 30 marks</p>

Paper 3 – Contemporary Poetry – Summer 2023

- 1** Read the poem *Now We Are Things Invisible* by Vahni Capildeo on page 3 of the source booklet and reread the anthology poem *History* by John Burnside (on pages 4 and 5).

Compare the ways in which both poets explore thoughts and feelings evoked by places.

(Total for Question 1 = 30 marks)

OR

- 2** Read the poem *Now We Are Things Invisible* by Vahni Capildeo on page 3 of the source booklet and reread the anthology poem *The Gun* by Vicki Feaver (on page 6).

Compare the ways both poets present transformations.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)

Key Points

- AO1, AO2, AO4
- All modern poetry (post 2000).
- Students must compare poems.
- BOTH poems will be printed in the A Level paper, i.e. the unseen poem and the optional studied comparative poems.

Paper 3 – Contemporary Poetry – Mark Schemes

AO1 = bullet point 1		AO2 = bullet point 2	AO4 = bullet point 3
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO4)	
	0	No rewardable material.	
Level 1	1–6	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. Demonstrates limited awareness of connections between texts. Describes the texts as separate entities. 	
Level 2	7–12	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. Identifies general connections between texts. Makes general cross-references between texts. 	
Level 3	13–18	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. Makes relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated approach with clear examples. 	
Level 4	19–24	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. Analyses connections between texts. Takes a controlled discriminating approach to integration with detailed examples. 	
Level 5	25–30	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. Evaluates connections between texts. Exhibits a fully integrated approach with sophisticated use of examples. 	

Paper 3 – Contemporary Poetry – Feedback from the examiner

- Embrace ambiguity and difficulty in poems, particularly the unseen poem, and analyse if an image or phrase is unclear to you. Better answers always probe the text rather than rush to judgement on what something means.
- Think about the themes, messages and overall impact and effect of a poem before rushing to analyse specific words or structural points.
- Focus on key imagery in the poems and how this fits in with overall ideas and messages.
- When writing about structural points use specific examples, rather than making general comments. Enjambment and caesura do different things in different poems, and need to be considered in terms of your exploration of the impact of each poem as a whole.
- There is time in the exam to allow for reading and analysis of the unseen poem and planning a response. This is rarely wasted. A clear introduction which indicates a sense of direction for your response and a sense of overview of the poems will help the examiner understand where you are taking them. Higher level responses are ‘controlled’ and ‘critical’.
- Do remember to read the question carefully. This forms part of your critical response to the poems and you will be limited if you don’t answer the question and only make vague points. The purpose of the unseen poetry comparison is to draw out new ideas and insights into the anthology poems. Use what you have learned and been taught, but be alive to new ideas and readings of the anthology poems.

Developing independence with Contemporary Poetry – Tips for the classroom

Listen to poems – [The Poetry Archive](#)

[Poetry Unbound Podcast](#)

The Guardian – ['The Saturday poem'](#)

[The Forward Prizes For Poetry and related shortlists](#)

Ruth Padel's selections and essays (The Poem and the Journey; 52 Ways of Looking at a Poem')

Anthony Wilson's site ['Lifesaving poems'](#)

Past Unseen Poems

Two Trees

They were trees, and trees don't weep or ache or shout.
And trees are all this poem is about.

by Don Paterson

When Six O'Clock Comes and Another Day Has Passed

When the sun has risen and set over the same dishes
and the predicted weather is white cloud,
the baby steadies her head which is the head of a drunk's
and holds me with her blue eyes,

by Kathryn Simmonds

Selection of Unseen Poems for A Level Students

Let us choose the unresolved,
the oblique, the unknowing, the
'no right answer'.

Teaching focus: conscious selection of texts with multiple/open potential readings.

Note the examples of such poems in Pearson Edexcel resources:


- [Unseen Poetry preparation anthology II](#)
- [Summer 2020 webinar \(poems that resist a single reading\)](#)

Discussion 4 – Contemporary Poetry

- We are now going to look at a script for contemporary poetry .
- Look at **Script 4**
- Read through the script using the **MS (pp.10–14 in SO3)**.
The two poems are also there if you would like to use them for reference.
- Put any comments or questions into the group chat.

Think about:

- AO1 – how the student has expressed themselves and structured their response. Is the introduction clear? Have they focused on the question asked?
- AO2 – how well have they analysed the poems as a whole for themes, messages, effect and impact?
- AO4 – are the links and connections supported with use of examples?



Script 4 – marks

Script 4

This is a controlled response that compares the two poems from the start, demonstrating a focus on the task. References to the texts are relevant and the candidate uses their previous knowledge of the named poem to offer pertinent connections and some discriminating understanding of the unseen poem.

However, at times the analysis focuses on the word level, and does not have the range seen in the very best responses. Nevertheless, the candidate fulfils a number of the criteria for Level 4 and sits squarely in the middle at 22.

Level 4 – 22 marks



Round up and discussion

- How do you approach teaching the contemporary poetry?
- Do your students feel confident with the unseen element?
- How do you ensure that students engage with the unseen poem as a whole rather than simply ‘feature spotting’?
- What hints and tips would you like to share about covering the content of this section?

Paper 3 – Specified Poetry – Summer 2023

English Romantic Verse, editor David Wright

EITHER

- 11** Explore the ways in which the power of the creative mind is portrayed in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* by John Keats and **one** other poem. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

OR

- 12** Explore the ways in which poets present innocence in *Songs of Innocence: Holy Thursday* by William Blake and **one** other poem. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 12 = 30 marks)

Key Points

- AO1, AO2, AO3
- Students need to engage with contexts.
- No comparisons required

Paper 3 – Specified Poetry – Mark Schemes

AO1 = bullet point 1		AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet point 3
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO3)	
	0	No rewardable material.	
Level 1	1–6	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. Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. 	
Level 2	7–12	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. Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes general links between texts and contexts. 	
Level 3	13–18	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. Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Develops relevant links between texts and contexts. 	
Level 4	19–24	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. Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes detailed links between texts and contexts. 	
Level 5	25–30	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. Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts. 	

Paper 3 – Specified Poetry – Feedback from the examiner

- Centres are reminded that AO4 is not assessed on this section and, while comparison might well be a natural feature of a controlled and critical argument, candidates are encouraged to put their focus on their analysis of the poems, rather than on comparisons.
- Contextual factors are assessed in this section, and whilst some poems and poets do encourage a level of biographical detail, this is unlikely to ever be as relevant and useful as literary context, or socio-cultural factors. This should always be interweaved into the response and related to the text of the poems. Some examiners did note that they often felt like they were reading history essays, rather than literature responses. Students should also be wary of making blanket statements, such as about what Romantic poets thought – as there is a wide difference in the beliefs of Blake and Shelley, for example. The best responses always used contextual factors as a way into discussing the relevant aspects of the poems.
- Examiners noted that, as with the Section A responses, better candidates looked at the themes of the poem and explored these, rather than a discrete analysis of language, form and structure. Students can lose the essence of the poems where there is so much focus on listing and short sentences, for instance. There was also a sense that some students were determined to write on poems they knew and liked from the collections, regardless of the questions. Centres are reminded to prepare students for all poems and any range of question that may be posed.

Discussion 5 – Specified Poetry

- We are now going to look at a script for *Romantic Poetry* in document **SO2** in your pack.
- Look at **Script 5**
- Read through the script using the **MS (pp.15–17 in SO3)**
- Put any comments or questions into the group chat.

Think about:

- AO1 – how the student has expressed themselves and structured their response.
- AO2 – how well have they analysed the poems as a whole for themes, messages, effect and impact?
- AO3 – is the context relevant and integrated?

Script 5 – marks

Script 5:

This response deals with the named poem and their choice of poem in separate sections and it is worth remembering this is a valid approach to the question as AO4 is not rewarded for Section B answers. The candidate keeps a focus on the question at all times, making this a clear response, and there is analysis of the poems as literary constructs with an understanding of the writer's craft. It is perhaps weakest on AO3, as context is general and not always linked to the text or explored in the depth expected of a better response. However, it should be rewarded for what it does well, which puts this in the middle of level 3.

Level 3 – 15 marks



Round up and discussion

- How do you approach teaching the specified poetry?
- Do your students feel confident with the number of poems?
- How do you ensure that students engage with the requirements of the question?
- What hints and tips would you like to share about covering the content of this section?

Support



Website

- ☒ All
- ☐ DOC (4)
- ☐ DOCX (1)
- ☐ PDF (108)
- ☐ ZIP (73)

 **Paper 2 - November 2021 exemplars**
A level
| PDF 6.6 MB | 21 March 2022

Mocks Marking

- Available for GCSE and A level English.
- Two exam options:
 - **paper-based** Pearson-marked for GCSE, AS & A level
 - **onscreen** Pearson-marked with papers available for GCSE English Language (2.0 included) and Literature.

[Find out more](#)



Subject Advisor contact details

Clare Haviland

Pronouns: She, her, hers



- 0333 016 4120
- qualifications.pearson.com/contactus
- Email: teachingenglish@pearson.com
- [Linkedin](#)
- [Sign up](#) to regular subject advisor updates
- [Book an appointment with Clare](#)

Find out more

For more courses see our [Pearson Professional Development Academy](#).



Professional
Development
Academy

Transforming
training for
everyone.



Pearson