

The

# EDEXCEL CERTIFICATE

# English Literature

## Teacher's Guide

Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature  
(KET0)

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## Introduction

The Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature is designed for use in schools and colleges. It is part of a suite of qualifications offered by Edexcel.

The Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature is designed as a two-year course. A selection of prose, drama and poetry from around the world allows teachers a wide choice of set texts. The examination questions allow all students to make a personal, informed response to the texts studied. The qualification offers an enjoyable and stimulating study of English Literature. The *Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* is provided for use throughout the course and examination.

## About this guide

This Teacher's guide is for teachers who are delivering, or planning to deliver, the Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature qualification. This guide supports you in delivering the course content and explains how to raise the attainment of your students; it should be looked at in conjunction with the following publications:

- expand on the information about course requirements contained within the specification
- explain assessment procedures
- suggest teaching approaches to the set texts
- suggest teaching approaches to some of the anthology pieces
- provide examples of course planning.

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## Why choose this qualification?

The Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature enables students to:

- engage with and develop the ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary texts from around the world
- develop an appreciation of the ways in which authors use literary effects and to develop the skills needed for literary study
- explore the author's use of language to create effects
- find enjoyment in reading literature and understand its influence on individuals and societies.

## Key features and benefits of the qualification

- Draws on the key features of the Edexcel International GCSE in English Literature and is designed for use in state schools.
- Encourages the reading of literature from around the world.
- A free Anthology, produced by Edexcel, and available for every centre to request copies at the beginning of the course, contains a wide range of reading material.
- Assessment opportunities in January and June examination series.
- Provides progression to Edexcel GCE AS and Advanced Level in English Literature, English Language and Literature or equivalent qualifications.

Go to [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) for more information about this qualification and related sources.

# Support and training

## Edexcel support services

Edexcel has a wide range of support services to help you implement this qualification successfully.

**ResultsPlus** – ResultsPlus is an application launched by Edexcel to help subject teachers, senior management teams and students by providing detailed analysis of examination performance. Reports that compare performance between subjects, classes, your centre and similar centres can be generated in ‘one-click’. Skills maps that show performance according to the specification topic being tested are available for some subjects. For further information about which subjects will be analysed through ResultsPlus, and for information on how to access and use the service, please visit [www.edexcel.com/resultsplus](http://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus)

**Ask the Expert** – To make it easier for you to raise a query with us online, we have merged our **Ask Edexcel** and **Ask the Expert** services.

There is now one easy-to-use web query form that will allow you to ask any question about the delivery or teaching of Edexcel qualifications. You’ll get a personal response, from one of our administrative or teaching experts, sent to the email address you provide.

We’ll also be doing lots of work to improve the quantity and quality of information in our FAQ database, so you’ll be able to find answers to many questions you might have by searching before you submit the question to us.

**Examzone** – The Examzone site is aimed at students sitting external examinations and gives information on revision, advice from examiners and guidance on results, including re-marking, re-sitting and progression opportunities. Further services for students – many of which will also be of interest to parents – will be available in the near future. Links to this site can be found on the main homepage at [www.examzone.co.uk](http://www.examzone.co.uk)

## Training

A programme of professional development and training courses, covering various aspects of the specification and examination, will be arranged by Edexcel. Full details can be obtained from our website: [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

# Section A: Qualification content

## Introduction

- The Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature (KET0) draws on the key features of the Edexcel International GCSE in English Literature and is designed for use in state schools.
- The Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in English Literature (KET0) comprises:
  - 60% written examination paper (Drama and Prose)
  - 40% written examination paper (Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology)
- Paper 1: Drama and Prose is taken by all students, and makes up 60% of the total qualification. The paper is divided into two sections: Drama and Prose. Students must answer one question from each section. There is a choice of two questions for each text in both sections. Texts must not be taken into the examination.
- Paper 2: Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology. There are two sections to the paper. In section A, students must answer either one question set on an unseen poem not in the anthology or one question set on an unseen prose extract from a novel or short story. In Section B students choose one question from a choice of two on Section C of the Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature. (All the poems from the anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper.)

## Literature texts and poems

All students must study **one** Drama text from the prescribed list, **one** Prose text from the prescribed list, and **all** poems from Section C of the Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature.

### Drama

Arthur Miller: *A View from The Bridge*

J B Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

William Shakespeare: *Henry V*

William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*

William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Thornton Wilder: *Our Town*

### Prose

Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*

Harper Lee: *To Kill A Mockingbird*

R K Narayan: *The English Teacher*

John Steinbeck: *Of Mice and Men*

Mildred Taylor: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Nineteenth Century Short Stories (Edited by Mike Hamlin, Christine Hall and Jan Browne, Heinemann New Windmill) – All stories in the collection must be included in teaching and learning.

## **Section C of the Anthology**

*If* – Rudyard Kipling

*Prayer Before Birth* – Louis MacNeice

*Half-past Two* – U A Fanthorpe

*Piano* – D H Lawrence

*Hide and Seek* – Vernon Scannell

*Sonnet 116* ('*Let me not to the marriage ...*') – Shakespeare

*La Belle Dame Sans Merci* – John Keats

*Poem at Thirty-Nine* – Alice Walker

*Telephone Conversation* – Wole Soyinka

*Once Upon a Time* – Gabriel Okara

*War Photographer* – Carol Ann Duffy

*The Tyger* – William Blake

*My Last Duchess* – Robert Browning

*A Mother in a Refugee Camp* – Chinua Achebe

*Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night* – Dylan Thomas

*Remember* – Christina Rossetti

## Section B: Assessment

This qualification comprises two assessments:

60% Paper 1 Drama and Prose (written examination paper)

40% Paper 2 Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology (written examination paper)

### Assessment overview

The table below gives an overview of the assessment for this course.

We recommend that you make this information available to students to help ensure they are fully prepared and know exactly what to expect in each assessment.

#### Written paper

<b>Paper 1</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Written paper Drama and Prose Paper code: KET0/01	60%	60	One hour and 45 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2012
<b>Paper 2</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Written paper Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology Paper code: KET0/02	40%	40	One hour and 30 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2012

## Assessment Objectives and weightings

		% in Certificate
AO1	a close knowledge and understanding of prose, poetry and drama texts and their contexts	20%
AO2	understanding and appreciation of writers' uses of the following as appropriate: characterisation, theme, plot and setting	20%
AO3	understanding of the writers' use of language, structure and form to create literary effects	30%
AO4	a focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal engagement with literary texts	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Notes on the Assessment Objectives

#### AO1

'Close knowledge and understanding' of the set texts (prose, poetry and drama) is essential, especially since the examinations are largely 'closed text'. Students are not permitted to bring copies of the set texts into the examination with them. This is to ensure fairness: it would be impossible for Edexcel to ensure that texts used in an examination did not have additional notes, printed or hand-written, to aid the students.

Close knowledge and understanding may be demonstrated in the way the students range across the text in their answers, showing knowledge and understanding of the whole as well as of the significance of specific incidents or speeches. Students should support their points either by referring to particular moments in the text (*'this is clearly shown when Juliet tells Romeo that...'*), or by including memorised quotations. Examiners look for well-chosen details from the texts, but these need not take the form of direct quotations.

In Paper 2, all the poems from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* will be printed as a poetry booklet additional to the examination paper. Students may not take their copies of the Poetry Anthology into the examination.

The '**contexts**' may be examined through questions which ask about the society in which a text is set. The answer should always be rooted in the text and how the text reveals the social or cultural setting.

## **A02**

**'Characterisation, theme, plot and setting'** refers to the techniques used by the writer to achieve effects. These may be specific to prose, poetry or drama. For example, in prose texts the techniques may involve: how the narrative is developed; whether there is a third or first person narrator; how characters and themes are presented to the reader. In drama texts, the emphasis will be on dramatic techniques: how words and actions reveal character; how dialogue is used in the interaction between characters; how dramatic contrast is used to highlight differences between characters, moods and actions. In poetry, the techniques will include how themes are developed and the way the setting is conveyed to the reader.

**'Understanding'** implies that the student shows a grasp of the techniques.

**'Appreciation'** suggests an ability to explore the effects of those techniques, and an evaluation of their use in the text.

## **A03**

**'Language, structure and form'** refers specifically to the different language techniques used by writers to convey their intentions. These techniques will include: imagery; descriptive skills; language choice; tone and mood; structure and form. For 'structure and form', it is important to look at the overall organisation of the material

In showing evidence of their 'understanding' students will recognise such techniques and how they contribute to the achievement of the writer's intentions.

## **A04**

**'Personal engagement'** is shown when a student engages with a text in an individual way. The questions are designed to allow students to explore, in detail, a specific point or technique, which provides a focus for the student's response. Successful answers will be clearly structured around the keywords of the question; less successful answers will tend to be coached, over-prepared responses which are not focused on the question.

## Assessment summary

Paper 1	Description
<p>Written paper</p> <p>Drama and Prose</p> <p>Paper code: KET0/01</p>	<p>Assessment of this paper is through a one-hour and 45 minute examination, set and marked by Edexcel.</p> <p>The examination is untiered and will result in grading from A* - G.</p> <p>The paper is divided into two sections: Drama and Prose. Students must answer one question from each section.</p> <p>There is a choice of two questions for each text in both sections.</p> <p>This is a closed book examination – texts may not be taken into the examination.</p>
Paper 2	Description
<p>Written paper</p> <p>Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology</p> <p>Paper code: KET0/02</p>	<p>Assessment of this paper is through a one-hour and 30 minute examination, set and marked by Edexcel.</p> <p>The examination is untiered and will result in grading from A* - G.</p> <p>There will be two sections to the paper.</p> <p>In Section A, students must answer <b>either</b> the question on an unseen poem, <b>or</b> the question on an unseen prose extract.</p> <p>In Section B students must answer one question on Section C from the Anthology.</p> <p>All the poems from the Anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to take copies of the Anthology into the examination with them.</p>

# Examination questions

## Styles of questions

These examples of different types of examination question are taken from the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) for the course and from some earlier support material. A few examples of student responses, together with the examiners' comments, are given where these are available.

## Paper One

### Section A: Drama texts

Questions on the drama texts tend to follow a pattern: one question will usually focus on characterisation; the other question will examine another aspect of the play, such as dramatic qualities; theme; structure; social/cultural setting.

#### Example (a)

*A View from the Bridge*: By the end of the play, do you find yourself sympathising with Eddie or criticising him?

This type of question explicitly asks for a judgement, a personal response. It is a good example of how successful students cannot simply regurgitate learnt notes: they need to use their knowledge of the play to respond to a specific question.

#### Example (b)

*A View from the Bridge*: Some audiences feel angry about the behaviour of the male characters in this play.

How far is Eddie presented as unsympathetic in his dealings with other characters?

#### Example (c)

*An Inspector Calls*: 'Sheila is the most interesting character in the play, because the writer allows her to change and develop'. How far do you agree with this comment?

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

#### Student response to Drama – Example (c)

As a character, Sheila certainly changes and develops greatly during the course of the play. At first, she seems frivolous and flippant when faced by the Inspector. When he mentions Milwards, she begins commenting 'archly' to Gerald about her wedding again. Although she does seem concerned about the girl, the audience is shown that she has a temperamental attitude by her having Smith fired in the first place.

After she sees the picture, however, her attitude changes. She 'lets out a half-stifled sob' and admits herself to have behaved wrongly almost immediately. She says to Eric 'I'll never do it again to anybody', showing that she has been affected and accepts a degree of responsibility. She is also very receptive to the Inspector's influence. She exclaims to Gerald: 'Why he knows, of course he knows!', perhaps indicating that she is more susceptible to being changed than the other characters.

By the end of the play, Sheila could be said to be a reformed character. She is keenly aware of what she has done and learned from her actions. When she discovers the Inspector's deception, she says 'I suppose we're all nice people now', ironically, which shows that she understands that the moral consequences of her actions reach beyond the consequences that apply directly and only to her and her family, such as the arrest of Eric. In this way she proves that she has developed over the course of the play.

This change stands as a striking contrast to the other characters, who have learned nothing. When Sybil is asked why they shouldn't behave just as they did before, she replies 'Well, why not?' Gerald even offers Sheila her ring back, as if he had not had an affair. In this way the older characters show that they have not developed or changed, while Sheila clearly has.

However, there is another character who learns and changes during the course of the play - Eric. From having quite an unformed personality he also shows that he is penitent by the end of the play. While the others are talking about whether their reputation is in danger, Eric cuts in with 'The girl's still dead, isn't she?' As he says, 'I'll never forget', he shows that the whole affair has changed him. He therefore rivals Sheila in complexity of character.

At the beginning of the play, Sheila seems silly and frivolous. However, the Inspector has a powerful effect on her. By the end of the last act, she has truly learned. The older characters, by contrast, learn nothing. Whether or not Sheila is the most interesting character is debatable, as Eric also develops interestingly during the play. But despite the changes he is still shown to be immature, whereas Sheila's repentance is the equal of his and she has plainly gained more in depth and maturity from the disconcerting experiences she has undergone, even though her own guilt might be seen as much less than that of others.

### **Examiner's comments**

This answer has a very perceptive grasp of character, based on a thorough understanding. The examples that are quoted are apt and support the points in a highly effective way. There is a good focus on the question's requirements throughout. To improve, the comparative analysis of Sheila in relation to the other characters should have been developed more strongly; apart from occasional references, we have little focus on what makes characters interesting or not.

### **Example (d)**

*An Inspector Calls*: Which two characters are most influenced by the Inspector?

Give reasons for your choices.

### **Example (e)**

*Romeo and Juliet*: What do we learn about the character of Romeo as the play progresses?

### **Example (f)**

*Romeo and Juliet*: The contrast of youth and old age is important in this play.

How far do you agree with this statement?

### **Example (g)**

*The Importance of Being Earnest*: Compare and contrast the characters of Algernon and Jack.

A *compare and contrast* question requires students to explore similarities and differences, referring to words and actions in support of their points.

### **Example (h)**

*The Importance of Being Earnest*: What do we learn of the society portrayed in *The Importance of Being Earnest*? Explain what aspects of this society Wilde appeared to dislike.

This question touches on the society of the play as it is revealed by the characters' words and actions. It asks the student to consider how the writer's views are implicitly conveyed in the drama.

### **Example (i)**

*Our Town*: In what ways does the Stage Manager introduce the setting and characters of the town of Grover's Corners?

### **Example (j)**

*Our Town*: How important is the theme of time in *Our Town*?

## **Section B: Prose texts**

Questions on the prose texts follow a similar pattern to the drama questions. One question will usually focus on characterisation; the other question will examine another aspect of the text, such as theme, or social/cultural setting.

### **Example (a)**

*Pride and Prejudice*: Do you think that Austen is more successful in presenting male or female characters? In your answer, you should refer to at least one male and one female character.

### **Example (b)**

*Pride and Prejudice*: Analyse how Jane Austen explores the difficulties to be overcome in relationships between men and women.

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

### **Student response to Prose – Example (b)**

I shall examine this question by referring to two key relationships in the novel, those formed by the central characters, the sisters Jane and Lizzy Bennet. The two sisters Lizzy and Jane are as different as one could imagine, as are the characters and attitudes of Darcy and Bingley. They are introduced in the plot in such a way that we are left wondering for a long time whether the characters will be able to overcome the obstacles in their relationships and find true happiness or be defeated by the difficulties they face.

Jane Austen illustrates the differences through the sisters' attitudes to marriage and to men. She clearly shows that Lizzy is very intelligent and enjoys debating on different issues and giving her opinion, and that she wants a marriage of two minds. She will not marry for money or for convenience, as some other characters in the novel do.

Jane wants to marry purely on love and affection towards her partner, but does not express such strong views as Lizzy. We can also see how different Bingley and Darcy are, as is shown through their attitudes towards the women at the Netherfield Ball. Bingley is shown to be very caring and pleasant towards others and very light-hearted,

'Upon my honour, I have never met with so many pleasant girls'. Darcy however is shown to be very proud and the reader's first impressions of him are quite disappointing, as he says of Lizzy: 'She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me'. This is not a good start for their relationship.

Jane and Bingley are both quiet, gentle and open minded towards others; however, this polite characteristic makes it more difficult for them both to show their feelings towards each other. Bingley's character means he will not tell Jane how he feels about her and therefore Jane does not tell Bingley how she feels towards him; therefore they are both unaware of each other's feelings.

From the moment that Jane and Bingley meet, Jane Austen shows how Bingley really feels about Jane. At the Netherfield Ball Jane and Bingley recognise an instant liking towards each other when they are first introduced. Jane Austen shows Jane's and Bingley's relationship developing as she has to stay at Netherfield with Bingley and Darcy, after visiting the Bingleys. The Bingley sisters are used by Austen to cause problems in the developing relationships between both Bingley and Jane and Darcy and Lizzy.

Darcy's pride and Lizzy's prejudice against his character affect Darcy's and Lizzy's first introduction when Lizzy first hears Darcy insulting her: 'I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine'. Lizzy's stay at Netherfield to comfort Jane during her illness shows the significant differences between Bingley and Darcy. While Lizzy is there, she can see how deeply Bingley cares for Jane. However, she also recognises the jealousy of the sisters and their feeling of superiority.

Darcy's feelings towards Lizzy change as she is able to engage in intellectual conversations with him and Bingley; he appreciates her intelligence and 'the beautiful expression of her dark eyes'. Jane Austen introduces Bingley's sisters and shows how they can be obstacles in a developing relationship. The interference of the sisters is shown as they try to persuade Darcy to turn against Lizzy, remarking on her muddy gown after walking through the fields to visit Jane and her rather unsuitable family.

Wickham's refreshing and charming manner appeals to Lizzy and she is persuaded by his views on Darcy. Just as Darcy was persuaded by the Bingley sisters to turn against Lizzy, Wickham is turning Lizzy against Darcy. 'I hope your plans in favour of the -shire will not be affected by his being in the neighbourhood'. This is one difficulty that Lizzy and Darcy must overcome if they are to find true happiness with each other. Darcy's affection for Lizzy grows and Jane Austen shows this when Darcy asks Lizzy to dance.

Lizzy's difficulties in her relationship with Mr Darcy are influenced by her outspoken views. These are also shown in her wish to have a marriage of two minds. She rejects Mr Collins's proposal of marriage because she knows she will not find happiness with him.

This dilemma reveals how Jane Austen shows how a separate affection by another man can cause difficulties within a relationship, which is also something which her feelings towards Wickham illustrate. After Wickham's failure to turn up to the Netherfield Ball and his subsequent attentions to Miss King, Lizzy realises her feelings for Wickham are not as strong as she had thought they were, but it is Darcy's letter which finally reveals how shallow Wickham is. Lizzy's interest in Mr Wickham is therefore an obstacle which she has to overcome, to secure her developing relationship with Darcy.

Lizzy's strong feelings are revealed, in contrast to the way Jane puts up with Bingley's move from Netherfield. When Bingley stays in London for the winter, Lizzy knows how his sisters were interfering and she is angry for Jane. Because Jane keeps her feelings to herself only Lizzy knows the pain that Jane is feeling: 'Her heart was divided between concern for her sister, and her resentment against all others'. Her anger leads Lizzy to tell Darcy about his cruel involvement in separating Bingley and Jane, and this creates the opportunity for the obstacles to be overcome, as Darcy is able to reveal to Bingley his part in keeping the knowledge of Jane's presence in London a secret.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh is the final obstacle for Darcy and Lizzy. Ironically, however, her visit to Longfield to keep Lizzy and Darcy apart has the opposite effect. Darcy's hopes are raised by Lizzy's determined response to Lady Catherine, and from this point the two are able to pursue their relationship unhindered.

Similarly, despite the obstacles and difficulties that have been put in their way, Jane's and Bingley's relationship quickly develops on his return to Netherfield and they marry, as do Darcy and Lizzy. Through the fact that they are able to achieve happiness in the face of these challenges, Jane Austen has shown the strength of their love and their ability to form a lasting relationship.

### **Examiner's comments**

This is a thoughtful and thorough answer which deals successfully within the time with the two sets of relationships it focuses on. The answer retains clear relevance to the topic. It is strong on using on close reference and evidence from the text to make its points.

### **Example (c)**

*The English Teacher:* What can we learn from a study of Krishna and Susila's relationship?

### **Example (d)**

*The English Teacher:* 'Narayan is very successful at involving the reader in his story.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

### **Example (e)**

*Of Mice and Men:* This book is a study of how power over others can be used or abused.' By reference to the text, show whether or not you agree with this observation.

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

### **Student response to Prose – Example (e)**

In 'Of Mice and Men', there are indeed many examples of the use of power, and also of its abuse.

'Of Mice and Men' is set in Northern California, on a ranch in Soledad, during the depression. The two main characters are George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant workers who arrive in Soledad after being forced to flee from their previous jobs in Weed.

A simple example of power being used is found in the way that George exercises his power over Lennie in order to try to keep him out of trouble. For instance, when Curley first meets George and Lennie he tries to assert his authority by picking on Lennie, an obvious target; however because of George's power over Lennie, he has learnt to keep quiet and

avoid confrontation. George therefore answers for Lennie and his power over him protects him from the potentially abusive power of Curley.

This danger is shown by the way in which Candy says that Curley hates big guys like Lennie, because he himself is a small man and therefore feels threatened by them and is often 'picking scraps with big guys'. Therefore if George had not used his power over Lennie to keep him quiet and out of trouble, there could have been a fight which would have led to Lennie's losing his job.

Eventually it is only the way in which Slim used his power that prevented Lennie from being sacked when Curley succeeded in picking a fight with Lennie, a fight which led to Lennie's crushing his hand. Slim's power was shown in his words to Curley.

As the son of the boss, Curley feels that he has the power over everyone. This is why he feels able to pick on Lennie with no fear of the consequences: he knows he can get Lennie if he retaliates. But he is clearly intimidated by Slim, as his meek reply demonstrates. There is therefore a kind of chain of power on the ranch.

A simple example where power is abused is the Boss's treatment of the black stable buck with the 'busted back', Crooks. Candy tells us that when George and Lenny are late arriving to work on the ranch, the Boss 'gave the stable buck hell'. Black people had virtually no status then and it was normal to call them 'niggers', so bosses and other white people with power commonly abused this in their treatment of their black workers.

Another person who abuses power over Crooks is Curley's wife, although I believe she does this only because Crooks is the only one she has power over, because she is low down the ladder of power. She does not love Curley, who appears to treat her as if she were one of his possessions - a kind of 'trophy wife'. Also, none of the workers will talk to her as they think she is a 'tart' and 'jail bait'. So when she tries to speak to Candy and Lennie, and Crooks tells her she 'ain't wanted here', she flares up and tells him that she could get him 'strung up'.

In fact, the only character who does not abuse power over other people in this book is Candy. Candy does not seem to have any power over anybody, though, so it is not really up to him. Crooks demonstrates his abuse of power in other ways from purely physical. He seeks to frighten Lennie about the idea that George might leave him. And Carlson abuses his power over Candy to allow him to shoot his old, smelly dog.

However, at the end of the book George uses his own power over Lennie to spare him from Curley and the other workers, after Lennie has accidentally killed Curley's wife. In this final moment of Lennie's life, George uses his power over Lennie in a positive manner, to enable him to feel happy, turn his head and die while thinking happy thoughts, as George shoots him once in the head from behind, to prevent his suffering. This final example of George's use of power may seem negative in one sense, because he actually shoots his old friend when he is dying, but it is a really positive act which shows the deep sympathy between the two characters, even to the end.

### **Examiner's comments**

This script takes a very broad view of the way in which power features in the novel, and the examples which are given are handled thoughtfully. There is a sustained and very effective focus on the question, and the ending explores the fact that the line between the use and abuse of power can be a very fine one. To improve, the writing would have needed slightly more depth of treatment of the examples, analysing closely what particular events showed about the nature of relationships between individuals and groups.

### **Example (f)**

*Of Mice and Men*: The book offers us a range of sad, and sometimes pathetic, characters. How, in your view, does the writer make us feel particularly sympathetic towards any of them?

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

### **Student response to Prose – Example (f)**

I think the writer makes us particularly sympathetic towards Curley's wife. She is a very young, lonely, isolated character, who has no real identity or status and is misunderstood or ill-treated by everyone. She is really trapped in a marriage without love to a man who is not very sympathetic at all.

When first introduced in the novel, she looks like a doll, with hair 'in little rolled clusters.' This gives a picture of someone very young and fragile.

Although she is quite an attractive woman, no one dares to talk to her because they are afraid of Curley. So people never knew what she was like as a person.

'Ever'one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you.' She confronted the men in the bunkhouse because she didn't want them to be scared of her, but should feel free to talk to her.

Another reason for her isolation is that she is the only woman on the ranch. Her husband is not interested in her either and the men on the ranch think she is trouble. This makes her the loneliest character in the novel, and this is another reason why readers feel sympathetic towards her.

Like all the characters, she has a dream too; to be rich, to be a Hollywood star. 'Coulda been in the movies... coulda sat in... big hotels'. After marrying Curley, not only did she lose her identity, but also the dream of becoming someone. Her future was to stay as Curley's wife and spend her time alone in the house. When, near the end of the book, she is killed accidentally by Lennie, her death is as if she has been freed from her misery.

The writer makes us feel sympathetic to most of the characters. Most of them are lonely and all have dreams of wealth or fame. The lack of fulfilment of these dreams is a major theme in the book. In the case of Curley's wife, however, we do feel particular sympathy because she is vulnerable and has not done anything to deserve the other characters' treatment of her. We feel for her in her life and we feel for her sad and pointless death.

### **Examiner's comments**

This is a good response, which looks closely at the circumstances of Curley's wife and draws on relevant evidence from the text. It remains a little general in the comments offered, and could have a slightly more analytical approach.

### **Example (g)**

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*: With close reference to the novel, show the different ways in which the theme of prejudice is explored.

### **Example (h)**

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*: Explain the importance of Melvin, R W Simms and TJ in the novel.

**Example (i)**

*Nineteenth Century Short Stories:* Some stories have the effect of making the reader feel uncomfortable and even distressed. Choose two stories which aim to do this, and show how the writers achieve these effects.

**Example (j)**

*Nineteenth Century Short Stories:* Show how suspense is built up in 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' and in one other story in the collection.

## Paper 2: Unseen Texts and Poetry Anthology

### Section A

Students will answer either question 1 or question 2.

### Question 1

The first question (Question 1) asks students to write about a poem which they **have not studied** (an **unprepared poem**), which is printed for them on the paper with the accompanying questions. The question below is taken from the sample assessment materials.

#### Example (a)

Read the following poem.

### Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves  
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.  
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired 5  
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells  
And run my stick along the public railings  
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.  
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain  
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens 10  
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat  
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go  
Or only bread and pickle for a week  
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats and things in boxes. 15

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry  
And pay our rent and not swear in the street  
And set a good example for the children.  
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practise a little now? 20  
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised  
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

*Jenny Joseph*

Consider this poem carefully. Write about it as fully as you can. In planning your writing you should consider the following:

- the poet's attitude to her subject
- the poet's descriptive skills
- the language used
- the poem's effect on you
- any other aspects you consider to be of importance. (20 marks)

There are no student responses as yet, since this is sample material. The mark scheme indicates that, to secure a high grade, the poem must be appreciated in a critical way. Valid comments and observations must be made which are accompanied by evidence of a degree of personal response. It is not sufficient to summarise or paraphrase, nor simply to list literary devices. The key to a successful answer is the interpretation of **the poet's attitude to the subject**: this can be seen as a celebration of independence; a reflection on stereotypical roles people often feel they have to conform to; a defiant and positive response to ageism and a humorous approach to the serious subject of growing old. Students may well appreciate a rebellious streak in the person of the woman, together with a refusal to be bothered by what others may think of her and an unconventional approach to life. The poet's use of language should be analysed closely: this might include such points as the tone of voice she adopts, her use of very graphic images, the way she employs tenses and modes of verbs (shall, can, must, ought) and her use of contrast, including contrasting views, times and colours, for example. In their own response, they may discuss whether they warm to or are repelled by such an unusual approach to life, and why.

### **Example (b)**

The following example of a response to an unprepared poem comes from one of the earlier specifications, and is followed by an actual student response.

Read the following poem.

### **Incendiary**

That one small boy with a face like pallid cheese  
And burnt-out little eyes could make a blaze  
As brazen, fierce and huge, as red and gold  
And zany yellow as the one that spoiled  
Three thousand guineas' worth of property  
And crops at Godwin's Farm on Saturday  
Is frightening – as fact and metaphor:  
An ordinary match intended for  
The lighting of a pipe or kitchen fire  
Misused may set a whole menagerie  
Of flame-fanged tigers roaring hungrily.  
And frightening, too, that one small boy should set  
The sky on fire and choke the stars to heat

Such skinny limbs and such a little heart  
Which would have been content with one warm kiss  
Had there been anyone to offer this.

*Vernon Scannell*

Consider this poem carefully. Write about it as fully as you can. In planning your writing you should consider the following:

- the poet's attitude to his subject
- the poet's descriptive skills
- the language used
- the poem's effect on you
- any other aspects you consider to be of importance. (20 marks)

### **Student response to Poetry Question 1 – Example (b)**

The poem has no definite rhyme scheme and is in a single block of text or stanza. The language used is rather difficult, with a great deal of imagery used to describe the event. It is also clearly modern in style.

The subject matter concerns a boy who started a fire. His attitude towards the subject is that of surprise that one small boy can do so much damage; he observes that there is no one to offer love or comfort to the boy, and reflects on the effect on him. The poem begins with the writer describing the boy's face which is like 'pallid cheese' and 'burnt-out little eyes'. This boy started a fire that destroyed three thousand guineas' worth of property and crops on a farm. He says that it is frightening 'as fact and metaphor' that a match which had been intended as a source of light for a pipe or kitchen fire when misused can release a huge fire. It is also frightening that one small boy should set the sky on fire and choke the stars to heat. And then all this could have been prevented if the boy was loved.

The poet's descriptive skills in this poem are very good. He is able to portray the fire using a variety of imagery. He first describes the fire as 'brazen, fierce and huge as red and gold and zany yellow'. This portrays an image of a huge fire.

He also describes the fire as 'a flame of fanged tigers roaming hungrily'. Here he compares the fire to hungry tigers. This is used to illustrate to us what the fire does. It roams around and devours everything in its path, sending out flames which are compared to hungry tigers. The writer also comments that the fire rose to a great height: 'to set the sky on fire and choke the stars to heat'. This means that the fire reached very elevated places and even, in a metaphorical sense, choked the very stars.

As has been said earlier, the boy is described as having a face 'like pallid cheese with burnt-out eyes'; the description also refers to his skinny limbs and small heart. The description emphasises his small stature - and yet he was capable of starting a fire that destroyed a great amount of property - all because of the lack of love he experienced in his life.

The poem evokes pity through the focus on the small boy, and I feel sorry for him because he ended up causing a great amount of damage, simply because nobody loved him. The other principal emotion that is aroused is one of fear. Fire is always a fearful thing because of the damage it can cause, and the fear is increased by the hatred that accompanies it.

This poem focuses on love, or rather its lack, and on education. The lack of love was linked to his lack of education, and it was this that led to his misusing a matchstick which had such devastating effects, including the destruction of property and crops. If the boy had been loved, all of this could have been prevented.

No matter how small or young a person is, it is important not to underestimate the effect that person can have on events.

### **Examiner's comments**

This answer addresses the main themes of the poem in a sound way, and there is relevant use of text to support points. It is, however, an answer which could have been improved considerably by a closer analysis of the language and purpose of the poet's thoughts on the subject. Expression is sound and accurate, with occasional flashes of good, interesting choice of words, but the range of ideas could be developed rather more fully. To secure a higher mark, the analysis needs to be more incisive and the interpretation more fully developed. Although evidence from the poem is used, there are a number of highly pertinent examples of language which are not dealt with: for example, the vivid use of colour surely merits more attention.

## **Question 2**

The second question in Section A gives students the option to assess an unseen prose text from a novel or short story which they will not have prepared. The extract is printed in the examination paper and will be accompanied with a structured question which states the nature of the response that students should make.

The text will be preceded, where appropriate, with a contextualizing statement which will state the provenance of the text and provide any information for the student that is required but not explicit in the text. The extract will include no more than 400 words.

The following example is printed in the Sample Assessment Materials.

Read the following extract from *The Woman in Black*.

*Kipps (the narrator) has had a terrifying encounter with the woman in black in the past.*

*In this extract he sees her again just before meeting his wife and child.*

I looked directly at her and she at me. There was no mistake. My eyes were not deceiving me. It was she, the woman in black with the wasted face, the ghost of Jennet Humfrye. For a second, I simply stared in incredulity and astonishment, then in cold fear. I was paralysed, rooted to the spot on which I stood, and all the world went dark around me and the shouts and happy cries of all the children faded. I was quite unable to take my eyes away from her. There was no expression on her face and yet I felt all over again the renewed power emanating from her, the malevolence and hatred and passionate bitterness. It pierced me through.

At that same moment, to my intense relief, the pony cart came trotting back down the avenue, through the shaft of sunlight that lay across the grass, with my dear Stella sitting in it and holding up the baby, who was bouncing and calling and waving his little arms with delight. They were almost back, they had almost reached me, I would retrieve them and then we would go, for I didn't want to stay here for a second longer. I made ready. They had almost come to a halt when they passed the tree beside which the woman in black was still standing and, as they did

so, she moved quickly, her skirts rustling as if to step into the pony's path. The animal swerved violently and then reared a little, its eyes filled with sudden fright, and then it took off and went careering away through the glade between the trees, whinnying and quite out of control. There was a moment of dreadful confusion, with several people starting off after it, and women and children shrieking. I began to run crazily and then I heard it, the sickening crack and thud as the pony and its cart collided with one of the huge tree trunks. And then silence – a terrible silence which can only have lasted for seconds, and seemed to last for years. As I raced towards where it had fallen, I glanced back over my shoulder. The woman had disappeared.

Explain how the writer uses language to create a frightening atmosphere in this extract.

In your answer you should consider:

- the writer's descriptive skills
- the writer's choice of language
- the writer's use of structure and form

Support your answer with examples from the extract. (20 marks)

There are no sample answers to this question as this is a new addition to what previously existed in the International GCSE Paper 2. However, Examiners will be expecting answers that show the candidate's ability to respond with well-reasoned comments that show their engagement with the required elements for **Assessment Objective 3**, as indicated by the focus of each of the bullet points. A successful answer will therefore show a perceptive grasp of the writer's effects and show discriminating understanding of how techniques are used to present themes and ideas. For example, in exploring the writer's descriptive effects, the candidate may well point out the way the language focuses on fear and terror in words such as 'in cold fear' and the sense of despair in 'the world went dark around me and the shouts and happy cries of all the children faded'. They may also note the contrast between the happiness of the children and the darkness of the apparition. When they write about the language, they may draw attention to: the use of abstract nouns used such as 'astonishment' and 'incredulity'; striking verbs such as 'paralysed' and 'rooted to the spot'; and onomatopoeic words such as 'whinnying', 'shrieking' and 'sickening crack' in the account of the accident. Features of 'structure and form' include the writer's use of the first-person narrator and the short sentences that underline the speed of reactions and the breathless sense of panic.

## Section B

Students will answer either question 3 or question 4.

### Questions 3 and 4

One question will name one poem from Section C of the Anthology. Students will be invited to write about that poem and at least one other, which may be named or may be chosen by the student from Section C of the Anthology. The other question in Section B will name two poems in the Anthology. Students are not permitted to take copies of the *Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* into the examination with them. All poems from Section C of the Anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper. Copies of the Anthology will be available for each Edexcel centre to download, or request free copies at the beginning of the course from the Edexcel website: [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

The question below is taken from the sample assessment materials.

#### Example (a)

*Piano* and *Half-past Two* portray two different experiences of childhood. Show how successful each poet has been in presenting an aspect of their childhood and explain which one you consider to be more effective.

20 marks)

In this example both poems are named and would be included in the poetry booklet.

#### Example (b)

In the poems *War Photographer* and *Prayer Before Birth*, show how the two poets have expressed a strong personal response to the nature of the society in which they live.

In this example, taken from earlier materials, the student wrote well about two poems from the Anthology, in response to the question. An example of the student response to this example is given below.

#### Student response to Poetry Question 2 – Example (b)

'War Photographer' and 'Prayer Before Birth' reveal to the reader poets who are fascinated by aspects of society and at the same time are concerned to explore the effects society has on individuals. Both poems are striking in their language and challenging in their subject-matter.

In *War Photographer*, the reader is given a graphic portrait of a man whose profession is war photography. The poem deals with the experiences he encounters when witnessing the cruelty of war, in parallel with his life back at home.

When he is at home, his darkroom is his sanctuary. Disturbed by all the sights of war which he has encountered in the killing fields of Asia, he is brought face to face with the nightmare scenes he has witnessed as they emerge on the film, trapped in eternity. He thinks of the mourning woman whose permission 'he sought without words to do what someone must' in order to take her dead husband's picture, to bring this image of war's horror back home.

As he travels from one realm to the other, from the everyday society in which he is living, with its ignorance and apathy, to the warfields where people suffer and die pointlessly, he is deeply saddened: he starts to hate his work and those, like him, who make a living out of recording the misery of others.

That man is the tragic image of our reality. All human values are lost. Wars are fought over wealth, hatred and greed; innocent people die and suffer over causes that have no value. He faces it, he lives it. He takes these moments of despair - 'A hundred agonies in black-and-white' and captures them for ever in his film and heart, only so that an 'editor will pick out five or six/ for Sunday's supplement'. The typical man will look at them and shed a hypocritical tear 'between the bath and pre-lunch beers', thinking he understands and sympathises. Society lives careless of what happens in other parts of the world to people just like us. The war photographer, however, lives both kinds of reality - the mundane life at home in what Duffy describes as 'Rural England', a place where 'fields don't explode beneath the feet of running children', and the remote, war-torn existence he records. The tension of these two worlds eats him up inside. He gives a picture of how we go on living, careless with our lives, while others suffer for futile reasons and excuses and ends the poem with the strong comment 'they do not care'.

In *Prayer Before Birth* the poet presents us with a yet to be born child who despises humanity and prays for death. The child's words, from the outset, vividly present a picture of a society of demons and horrors: 'the bloodsucking bat.... club-footed ghoul'. The effect is reinforced by assonance and harsh alliteration: 'bat', 'rat', 'bloodsucking bat'. Such striking sound effects recur throughout the poem; the unborn child fears that humanity may 'with tall walls wall me'. At times, the horror is softened by softer reflections on what life might be, especially in the third stanza, where the harshness of the opening stanzas is replaced by a gentle view of nature and 'a white light ...to guide me'. However, this tranquil mood does not last, and the inhumanity of humanity rapidly returns to haunt the unborn child, with fears of death and depersonalisation. He fears society will turn him into 'a lethal automaton or a 'cog'.

The images are especially tragic because of the fact that we think of newborn children as innocent, so a child not even born yet ought to be even more free from cares: it has no knowledge or understanding of the world or life, but despite this prays not to have anything to do with it. 'Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me/Otherwise kill me.' The poem takes the form and style of a prayer in its use of an initial repeated phrase, rather like the responses used in many prayers. The fact that the unborn child prays to a god whom we, with our experience of life, can barely comprehend, makes it even more chilling. To find such despair on the lips of someone who has not lived highlights emphatically the deep flaws in society which MacNeice feels. The human race, he shows, is one of sin and cruelty, and the pure words of a soul not yet delivered into this world tell the truth with a frightening and disturbing honesty.

The two poems are profoundly unsettling in their imagery. They set out to present a strong contrast between a peaceful and simple society and one which is full of horrors: MacNeice's ghouls are matched by Duffy's 'half-formed ghost'. Both paint dark scenes where life becomes unbearable. Death is never far from the surface, and the settings with their religious imagery and intense feelings highlight the fears of what society is becoming.

### **Examiner's comments**

This is a good answer, because of the quality of the interpretation and insight. The student has seen into the poems in a convincing way and made some very apt comparisons, linking them together effectively. It could still have been improved, however, and although quotations are used in a number of places to good effect, there is some of the writing where the comments seem rather too general because the examples are not given.

### **Using the mark scheme**

The mark scheme gives the responses we expect from students. Indicative answers are given but during the standardisation of examiners process the mark scheme is updated and expanded to cover unexpected, but acceptable student responses.



# Section C: Planning and teaching

## Course planner

### How long should the course take?

Although the course is designed to be taught over two years, or five terms, it is possible to prepare students adequately over one year. This will depend on the students' prior experience of literature, and the amount of curriculum time devoted to English Literature on the timetable. If the students are used to the serious study of literature and have come across basic literary terms, then they should cope with a prose text, a play, a collection of fifteen poems and skills to answer on an unseen text in one year. Since there are two examination sessions per year, there is flexibility about the length of the course. It would, for example, be possible to start teaching the course in September and to enter students for the examination in the January of the following year. Note however that students must be entered for all assessments in the same session – in this regard the Certificate differs from other 'modular' qualifications.

Running the course over two years allows for more background work about literary study in general, and for more examination practice the set texts.

### An example of course planning

The following table shows a possible five-term course, with some suggestions of texts and approaches that might be adopted at particular times. This could be adapted to a shorter time-scale if required. This is not intended to be prescriptive. There then follows a blank planning sheet, on which teachers could devise their own course plans.

## Term 1 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 1	The short story as a genre	<p>Use one short story to illustrate some basic literary terms: plot, character, viewpoint, mood/atmosphere and style.</p> <p>Students discuss or write about these terms in relation to another short story.</p> <p>(Short stories from any suitable anthology can be used for this exercise. For example, <i>Old Man at the Bridge</i> by Ernest Hemingway works well as an example of writer's techniques.)</p> <p>Students should practise the techniques they have found in their reading of short stories in their own creative writing. They could write freely on a choice of titles provided by the teacher.</p> <p>This practice could develop into preparation for the unseen prose assessment for Paper 2.</p>

## Term 2 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 2 (first half)	Prose text: <i>Nineteenth Century Short Stories</i> (from Section B, Prose)	Once students have gained an understanding of the potential and craft of short stories as a genre, they can begin to study the stories in the set text.
(second half)	Drama text: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (from Section A, Drama)	<p>Background: the historical setting and events.</p> <p>If possible, use a video version of the play, or live performance, to give students an appreciation of character and plot before a detailed reading of the script.</p> <p>Shakespeare's language: a study of one speech from near the beginning of the play, illustrating features of language such as archaic words; using a glossary; blank verse.</p>

### Term 3 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 3	Drama text (continued) <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (from Section A, Drama)	A scene by scene reading of the play, supplemented by viewing of video/live performances.  <i>Other possible activities:</i>  Class discussion: How are the central characters affected by fate?  Students in small groups discuss the words and actions of the main characters, and report back to the class. These discussions become the basis for character notes.
	End of year examination	An interim examination on the two set texts studied so far. Questions devised by the teacher, but based on the style of questions in the sample assessment materials.

### Term 4 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Poetry Anthology</li> </ul> <i>Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature</i> (Section C of Anthology)	<p>Use some poems to illustrate poetic techniques such as imagery, tone, style, verse form. These might include some unprepared poems (to provide preparation for this question in paper 2) and also poems with similar themes to those in the Anthology.</p> <p>In groups, students discuss a given poem from the anthology, then present their views on that poem to the whole class.</p> <p>Connections and links found between the poems. Students might, for example, construct a grid that links poems together thematically and gives some key examples from the text.</p> <p>Students could also be encouraged to study a range of prose extracts for language, structure and form if they are preparing for to answer the unseen prose question in paper 2.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mock examination</li> </ul>	Use the published Sample Assessment Materials, including the Mark Schemes.

## Term 5 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cover any remaining subject content</li><li>• Final revision</li><li>• Practice questions</li></ul>	

## Blank planning sheet

Class..... Teacher.....

Texts chosen:

Paper 1

Section A, Drama:.....

Section B, Prose: .....

Paper 2

Unseen texts (sample texts to be studied in preparation for attempting Section A of Paper 2.

.....

Poetry (include a 'plot' of which poems would be covered when and how, eg pairs or groups of poems)

.....

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 1		
Term 2		

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 3		
Term 4		
Term 5		

## Teaching ideas

This section contains a part on the Drama and Prose set texts and one on poems in Section C of the Anthology.

### Drama and Prose Set Texts

The following pages give notes on four of the set texts.

Two of the drama texts and two of the prose texts are explored in some detail, to illustrate the kinds of topics on which teachers may wish to focus when presenting these to their students. There is background information on each text, and some ideas on such features as theme and language. While the following section does not deal comprehensively with every one of the texts to be studied, the examples included are intended to give a number of approaches that can be adopted as appropriate with all of the other prescribed texts.

These notes represent some teachers' views on the texts. They are provided only to stimulate ideas for teachers; they are not intended to be handed out to students as revision notes. They will not inform the setting of questions or mark schemes.

### Teaching the drama texts

#### Arthur Miller: *A View from the Bridge*

##### Context

In 1947, whilst researching the disappearance of a longshoreman (a worker who loads and unloads ships) who worked on the waterfront at Red Hook, Brooklyn, Miller was told the story of another longshoreman who informed the Immigration Bureau about two of his own relatives, to prevent one of them marrying his niece. *A View from the Bridge* is therefore based on a true story. Miller wrote two versions of the play, a one-act version in 1955, followed by a reworked two-act version which was first performed a year later. The playwright himself worked for almost two years in the Brooklyn navy yards and therefore experienced first-hand the daily lives of the Italian workers and their struggle to compete for jobs every day, always at the mercy of the hiring boss. He recognised this system as both humiliating and open to corruption, as if the usual regulations of American society did not apply there. The title of the play therefore implies a cosy, middle-class America is observing events from a privileged and distanced location, viewing the practices of an unfamiliar world.

## Plot Summary

The arrival of Beatrice's two Italian cousins (illegal immigrants) causes problems in the Carbone household. Eddie is unhappy with the developing relationship between his seventeen-year-old niece Catherine and Rodolpho, the youngest cousin. Eddie grows to dislike Rodolpho for several reasons, mainly because in his view he acts in an effeminate manner, and therefore hints at his possible homosexual inclinations. Despite earlier registering his disgust at the story of a man who 'snitched' on his own uncle to the Immigration authorities, Eddie nevertheless informs them about his two relatives, who are later picked up, along with two other recently arrived immigrants. Beatrice and Catherine are convinced of Eddie's guilt. Marco, the elder cousin, also accuses him and spits in Eddie's face during his arrest. But Eddie's denunciation has been in vain, since Catherine's marriage can still go ahead, and Rodolpho's resulting American citizenship will ensure he remains there. Marco, however, must return to Italy. Whilst on bail, Marco seeks revenge and stabs Eddie with Eddie's own knife.

## Some Themes

- **Fate:** Alfieri communicates the inevitable outcome, as we are warned of Eddie's destiny from the start and reminded of it during the play: 'powerless as I...run its bloody course'.
- **Jealousy:** Eddie's over-protectiveness towards Catherine appears to exceed the natural concerns of an uncle. His frequent derogatory labelling of Rodolpho as 'that' so as to avoid using his name 'That's gonna be her husband?' attempts to undermine his status as a rival. Eddie's complaint to Catherine is redolent of a resentful lover, 'I don't see you no more', and his 'reasons' for Rodolpho's unsuitability as a potential husband are mostly unsound. Alfieri hits a raw nerve when he tells Eddie 'She can't marry you, can she?' as Eddie's response is one of anger '[furiously]. What the hell you're talkin' about!'
- **Homosexuality:** Eddie fails to articulate adequately what it is he dislikes about Rodolpho. It is clear he is hinting at homosexuality - 'gives me the heeby-jeebies...weird...wacky hair...chorus girl' - using himself and Marco as his benchmarks since he believes the latter is 'like a man'. In the lawyer's office Alfieri, who like us remains unconvinced by Eddie's logic, elucidates that American law cannot prevent their relationship. Alfieri is perceptive, also suspecting 'there is too much love for the niece' and attempts to warn Eddie about it. In a scene which parallels that of Beatrice giving advice to Catherine, Alfieri twice counsels Eddie to 'Let her go'.
- **Masculinity:** Different versions are offered by the three main male characters, each of which is valid, despite Eddie's attempts, concerning Rodolpho, to insinuate otherwise.
- **Differing Views of Law:** Alfieri represents the criminal law of America, which Eddie mostly subscribes to, whilst Marco's law is based on family loyalty, believing that justice is in the hands of man, not God. Yet Eddie goes against the Italian code of honour by denouncing the cousins, then conveniently tries to take the law into his own hands in the last scene.

## Playwright's Craft/Dramatic Conventions

- **Use of a Narrator:** Alfieri's role is two-fold, since he also enters into the drama. He tries to remain objective, portraying Eddie in a positive light: 'He was as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even'.
- **Language:** Eddie's family speaks mostly colloquially, using grammatically incorrect phrases which are frequently abbreviated – this adds a realistic texture to the play. Notice Eddie employs biblical references at the moment of Marco's challenge, as if to elevate and purify his position. Eddie's barrage of questions concerning Catherine's job is reflective of his need for authority and his pessimistic outlook, such as his prediction her new job will lead to her moving out and seldom visiting. This is coupled with negative language 'no...not...never...nowheres'. Although as a lawyer Alfieri's language is more refined, it does not alienate Eddie during their scenes.
- **Euphemism:** such as Beatrice's 'When am I gonna be a wife again', in reference to her lack of intercourse with Eddie.
- **Song Lyrics:** the words of Paper Doll are pertinent to Eddie's relationship with Catherine: 'tough to love a doll that's not your own'.
- **Irony:** Eddie's advice to Catherine is unconsciously ironic: 'you can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole than a word that you gave away'. Likewise, Eddie's denunciation achieves nothing; not only has he failed to prevent the wedding, but also he has lost Catherine's love and respect – which we suspect he values above all else.
- **Structure/Form:** Alfieri plays a major role in furthering the action and offers ideas on how the audience should receive it. Events are cleverly linked in both acts, each of which is carefully structured, despite the lack of scene divisions, with parallels evident. Miller manipulates pace for optimum effect; for example, after the officers arrest the immigrants, the pace quickens as other characters quickly exit as a sign of Eddie's guilt and subsequent ostracism. Dramatic tension is heightened at the end during the fight scene, emphasised by Marco's drawn out insult 'Anima-a-a-!!' and an abundance of exclamation marks.
- **Setting:** Most of the action takes place in the Carbone's apartment where the outside world is brought in via their conversations. This intensifies and heightens the drama, especially since it represents Eddie's domain.
- **Symbols:** such as Catherine's 'new high heels' with their onomatopoeic 'clack, clack, clack' which in Eddie's mind represents a version of femininity he tries to protect her from.

# Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest

## Context

By the close of Queen Victoria's reign (she lived from 1819 to 1901 and reigned from 1837 to her death), the British Empire had reached its highest point. The English aristocracy prospered, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Published in 1895, Wilde's comic play satirised and parodied the upper echelons of society (to which he too belonged), by criticising their false values, shallow interests and superficial lifestyles. Wilde's own stated philosophy for his play '*we should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality*' is reflected in the petty concerns of his characters.

## Plot Summary

Jack Worthing, known as Ernest when in town, has arrived there to propose to Gwendolen and visits Algernon Moncrieff (her cousin). Early on we are aware of a mystery surrounding his birth, since he was found in a handbag at Victoria Station. Lady Bracknell (Gwendolen's mother) snobbishly refuses the attachment. Meanwhile Algernon, now aware of the existence of Jack's eighteen-year-old ward called Cecily, discovers his address in the country and plots to see her. As the scene shifts to the country, Miss Prism (Cecily's tutor) advances the action by confessing she once wrote a novel. Algernon arrives, declaring himself Jack's younger brother Ernest (who is actually fictitious). Jack then also appears, dressed in mourning suit, announcing the death of his brother Ernest! Much to his chagrin, he finds him alive and well and thus orders him to leave. Algernon ignores this request and proposes to Cecily. When Gwendolen enters, she and Cecily mistakenly believe they are both engaged to the same man – named Ernest. Jack is therefore forced to admit the truth. The women forgive them – but each still insists on marrying a man named Ernest. Lady Bracknell's arrival is to prevent her daughter from marrying Jack. Yet the disclosure of his true birth origins (revealed via Miss Prism who confesses to having mistakenly left him at the station instead of her novel), leads to a happy ending for all, since he is in fact Algernon's older brother, named Ernest.

## Some Themes

- **Superficiality/Criticism of Marriage:** Algernon satirises the traditionally sacred state of wedlock, calling it 'business' rather than 'pleasure', and therefore hints at the aristocratic tendency to treat it as a commercial transaction. This view is reinforced by Lady Bracknell who tells her daughter 'I...will inform you of the fact' if she becomes engaged. Cecily's statement that 'a really serious engagement' should be 'broken off at least once' ridicules and undermines the importance of marriage. Even happiness within matrimony is mocked, since the fact that Mary Farquhar 'always flirts with her own husband' is described as 'scandalous'.
- **Absurdity and Shallowness of Manners:** Algernon's belief that 'it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock' demonstrates an adherence to insignificant routines. Wilde pokes fun at the overstated insincerity with which people become attached to each other without prior knowledge via Cecily and Gwendolen's polite exchanges: 'I like you already more than I can say'.

- **Triviality of Concerns of Upper Classes:** Jack's missing cigarette case has led him to write 'frantic letters to Scotland Yard', which is ironic, since it depicts the aristocracy as believing the police exist exclusively for their own minor problems. Jack's notion of self-importance is inherent in his words.
- **Critique of the Values of the Day:** Wilde mocks literature (especially French and English), general society, universities and religious traditions, such as christenings.
- **'Bunburyism':** Adopting another identity, being mistaken or deceiving others, is central to the plot.
- **Ignorance of people in High-Society:** Gwendolen's 'I had no idea there were any flowers in the country' ridicules the upper-class mentality.

## Playwright's Craft/Dramatic Conventions

- **Setting/Stage Directions:** Setting is typically elegant, eg 'Half-Moon Street' is in Mayfair (London's most fashionable area) and 'the Manor House', the backdrop for the remaining Acts, suggests affluence. This upper-class environment is reinforced by the stage directions: 'Morning-room...luxuriously and artistically furnished'.
- **Humour:** Both verbal and visual humour permeate the play. At times the humour is farcical, as in Jack's melodramatic 'Yes...mother!', or Algernon's theatrical 'horror' at the absence of cucumber sandwiches. Jack's entrance in Act 2 'dressed in the deepest mourning' is visibly amusing and heightens the audience's enjoyment since we anticipate a conflict between Jack and Algernon. The blowing of kisses between Jack and Gwendolen behind her mother's back represents a comic triumph since this romantic and spontaneous exchange is in contrast with Lady Bracknell's controlling and unsentimental manner. Characters' movements also provide a source of hilarity, such as when Jack almost chases Algernon over the sofa in a bid to retrieve his cigarette case.
- **Irony:** Ironic quips surround the issue of identity, eg Algernon tells Jack 'I'll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever...' Cecily's diary is a great source of irony, as she has been engaged to Algernon three months prior to their meeting. Algernon magnifies this absurdity as he enters into her fantasy and discusses it as if it is reality.
- **Language:** The play is enriched by verbal witticisms, which are carefully woven within each scene.
- **Pun:** The play's title advocates sincerity, yet instances of flippancy abound.
- **Word Play/Reversal of Clichés:** Wilde frequently overturns the usual and expected to mock accepted norms, eg Algernon's 'washing one's clean linen in public' or Lady Bracknell's 'she looks quite twenty years younger'. The language of the working classes is also parodied, as Lane refers to his marriage as 'a misunderstanding' rather than an understanding.
- **Biblical Phrases:** These are usually associated with Miss Prism, hinting at her puritanical side: 'As a man sows so let him reap', which is in contrast with her enjoyment of flirting with Dr Chasuble.
- **Euphemism:** Miss Prism talks of 'intellectual pleasures' when referring to education (here German grammar) to encourage Cecily to learn.
- **Paradox:** Jack's 'passionate celibacy' hints at an inability to remain chaste in a world full of temptation.
- **Structure:** Dramatic tension builds throughout the play. Act 1 builds Cecily's character, with our expectation magnified by Algernon's eavesdropping, who (true to the traits of farce) 'reads his shirt-cuff, and smiles', hinting at his next move. Fluency of plot is then maintained since she is introduced immediately in the next act. Wilde's sense of timing and pace works well, as events can move speedily from one to another. The dénouement in the final act, despite Lady Bracknell's assurance that it will be received negatively, is of course ironically welcome, since Jack really is called 'Ernest'.

- **Parallel Structure:** Wilde's verbal pairing of the couples underlines the insincerity of their words and therefore perhaps emptiness of their thoughts and feelings, as one character's phrases can be easily substituted for another. Pairing Cecily with Gwendolen, and Algernon with Jack, they speak almost identical lines at times, which become more frequent and closer together as the drama and tension increase. Indeed, the two females actually act as a chorus at one point, speaking one line together.

## **Approaches to teaching the prose texts**

### **Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice***

#### **Context**

Although written at a time of great upheaval in world affairs, the focus in Jane Austen's (1775-1817) novel is social, not military. Despite Great Britain's continuous military action in Europe (the Napoleonic wars), Ireland (Irish Rebellion) and India (Maharatta wars) during the author's lifetime, she chooses instead to highlight 'three or four families in a country village' as she advised her niece Anna, who aspired to be a novelist. Military activity is therefore a backdrop to her novel, as any spotlight on the regiment is in terms of its effects upon Meryton's social life, such as the dancing partners it provides for the Bennet sisters. The society that Austen depicts is one of strict class divisions, defined by family connections and wealth. Since female advancement was chiefly via marriage, the pursuit of a husband is seen as a major occupation, particularly for the mother of a large family of daughters like Mrs Bennet. Throughout the novel, Austen wittily mocks the conduct of the middle and upper classes, constantly lacing her observations with humour, sarcasm and irony.

#### **Plot Summary**

The arrival of a rich, upper-class male tenant at Netherfield Park causes great excitement in the Meryton neighbourhood and is particularly good news for Mrs Bennet who immediately begins planning Jane's (her eldest daughter) introduction to Mr Bingley, with a view to securing her marriage. At the next ball, Jane does indeed dance with Mr Bingley, whilst her sister Elizabeth is slighted by his friend, Mr Darcy, who is generally regarded to be a proud and arrogant man. The attachment Jane forms with Mr Bingley is deliberately broken by Darcy, which he later reveals was motivated by his desire to protect his friend from an unsuitable match (largely because of Jane's middle-class roots and family 'defects'). Elizabeth's growing prejudice towards Darcy is further fuelled by his supposed misconduct towards Mr Wickham. Darcy, however, overcomes his earlier prejudice towards Elizabeth to the extent that he proposes to her – albeit in an unromantic manner. Her refusal and explanation for her reasons prompt him to re-evaluate his general behaviour. His letter to Elizabeth explaining his recent conduct concerning her sister Jane and Mr Wickham sets in motion the transformation of her own feelings towards him, particularly when she learns he arranged her younger sister Lydia's marriage to Mr Wickham after their elopement brought shame on their family. The novel therefore witnesses Elizabeth and Darcy stripped of their pride and prejudice to form a happy marriage, matched by the nuptials of Jane and Mr Bingley.

## Some Themes

- **Views on Marriage:** Austen contrasts those marriages that are based on financial gain with those based on love, trust, friendship and understanding (like Elizabeth and Darcy). The author uses Charlotte Lucas to voice her sceptical views on matrimony 'Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance'. For Charlotte, marriage is a necessity and therefore she cannot afford to be choosy. Financial insecurity for females was often the result of a lack of male heirs in their direct family, since tradition dictated the path of inheritance. Likewise, men like Wickham who lack their own fortune are equally unscrupulous in courting women with money to advance and secure their own position. Wedlock is also seen as a competition, as Mr Bennet teasingly adds 'if we do not venture, somebody else will'. Mr Collins epitomises the fickle male suitor. The author takes great delight in mocking the shallow way in which his choice of a wife is decided at the same speed as a mundane, domestic chore, since he 'had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth – and it was soon done – done while Mrs Bennet was stirring the fire'.
- **Love:** At times cynically portrayed, relationships stemming from love are rare in the novel, suggesting that true love can only be achieved once society's superficial expectations of marriage are surpassed and difficult circumstances are overcome. Not only must Elizabeth and Darcy master their pride and prejudice, they must also rise above several obstacles, such as Lady Catherine's interference.
- **Pride and Prejudice:** Whilst Elizabeth and Darcy are guilty of both, several other characters also display these characteristics, such as Bingley's sisters and Lady Catherine.
- **Expectations of Behaviour:** Both sexes are expected to live according to a strict code of conduct. Mrs Bennet fears that Mr Bingley might be an unsuitable tenant, since his constant departures means he will 'never be settled at Netherfield as he ought to be'. Mr Darcy gives offence at the ball as he dances only twice. Elizabeth's decision to walk three miles in the rain, alone and on foot, exposes her to disapproval from both her own mother and Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley, who find it 'incredible' that a woman should behave in such a way. All three criticise her resulting appearance. Lydia's elopement with Wickham understandably brings disgrace on her family and her actions unfairly threaten the fate of her other sisters, since they are all publicly tarnished by her selfish and thoughtless act.
- **Class:** Divisions existed *within* classes, as well as *across* them. Members of the 'true' upper classes acquired their wealth via land, title or inheritance. Those whose fortunes had been made by other means, such as trade, were viewed as inferior, such as the Bingleys, as snobbery was rife. Mrs Hurst highlights Jane's 'low connections' and Austen reminds us of Darcy's position concerning Elizabeth 'were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger'. The author satirises the condescending and patronising attitude of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, who is shocked by the Bennet girls' upbringing and news that all five daughters are 'out [in society] before the elder are married!', because it does not adhere to her strict interpretation of social convention. Indeed, Lady Catherine is so superior and full of self-importance that she is even credited with predicting the following day's weather!
- **Insincerity:** Content to criticise the Bennet family openly amongst themselves, Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley nevertheless feign 'a renewal of tenderness' towards Jane in public. Mr Collins's blatant lie that he chose Elizabeth as his wife as soon as he saw her emphasises his hollow nature.

- **Social Conventions:** Strict rules and regulations govern society. Unless Mr Bennet makes the first introduction to Mr Bingley, his daughters could not possibly entertain the idea of visiting their new neighbour. Once the Netherfield ladies have visited the Bennets, the favour must be returned. Miss Bingley has to be prompted by her brother to 'say what the occasion required' during Mrs Bennet's visit to Jane's 'sick bed', as Austen hints at the false, theatrical nature of such civilities 'She performed her part...' Protocol must be followed during balls, as tradition dictates only a married woman may chaperone unmarried ones.

### Author's Craft

- **Light-hearted Tone:** Austen often employs humour or sarcasm to mock her characters, such as Mr Bennet's display of dry wit towards his wife when discussing her nerves: 'They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least'. She makes fun of society's preoccupation with insignificant detail, such as the Bennet girls' 'fortunate' discovery that Mr Bingley 'wore a blue coat and rode a black horse'.
- **Plot:** The use of journeys in the novel advances the plot and serves as a catalyst for change. Elizabeth's journeys allow Austen to present her with Darcy, and we witness the dramatic alteration in her feelings for him by comparing these two isolated encounters.
- **Setting:** The author presents a microcosm of society, venturing only infrequently into other counties. The majority of the action takes place inside, reflecting the private concerns of the characters. Pemberley, however, is described in great detail, with some of its qualities reminiscent of its owner Mr Darcy since they are repeatedly described as 'handsome'.
- **Irony:** Austen pokes fun at the society in which she lived, as exemplified by the supposed 'truth universally acknowledged' of her opening line.
- **Language:**
  - Darcy's initial romantic interest in Elizabeth is depicted in a comically tongue-in-cheek fashion using the vocabulary of imprisonment, as his discoveries are described as 'mortifying' and he is '**forced** to acknowledge' some of her attractive qualities, feeling '**caught**'.
  - The abundance of dialogue in the novel allows us to experience the diversity of characters and their speech mannerisms, such as Mrs Bennet's tendency to overdramatise, Mary's dry, logical explanations devoid of feeling and Lady Catherine's haughty, superior air.
- **Narrative Viewpoint:** Elizabeth's previously unbiased view of Darcy has been clouded and misguided by Wickham, as she is too quick to believe him, and thus lacks our objectivity. Austen provides us with subtle hints that Darcy is not as arrogant or proud as our heroine presumes. He avoids joining in with Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley to criticise Elizabeth and is later sensitive to the rude manner in which they exclude and isolate her during a walk, actively suggesting they take another route to allow all four to continue together. The inclusion of letters in the first person narrative widens the narrative voice and deepens our understanding of certain characters. Darcy's lengthy letter allows us a first-hand, honest insight into his character, which, whilst confirming some of Elizabeth's accusations, also contrasts with them.

## R.K.Narayan: The English Teacher

### Context

By Narayan's own admission, his novel is highly autobiographical in content. His own personal tragedy occurred in 1939, when his wife Rajam died from typhoid just five years after they were married. Like Krishna, he chose to bring up their only child Hema alone and also attempted to contact his wife spiritually. The author chooses to set his novel in the fictional southern Indian town of Malgudi, and published it in 1945. It would be a further two years until India gained independence from its colonial ruler, Great Britain.

### Plot Summary

After a ten-year period of living in a hostel whilst working as an English teacher in a college (having previously been a student there himself), Krishna feels increasingly dissatisfied with the routine of his daily life and the mundane manner in which his subject is taught. The arrival of his wife Susila and seven-month-old daughter Leela inject new life into his monotonous and mechanical existence, leading him to rent a house and live in domesticity with them, surprising himself by the enjoyment he gains from this new experience. Whilst house hunting with Susila, she inadvertently steps into an insanitary 'toilet' and soon falls ill. Sick with typhoid, she dies, leaving Krishna to bring up Leela, which he chooses to do alone, despite offers of help from his relatives. His psychic contact with Susila via a medium temporarily serves to lift him from his loneliness and depression and initiates a new way of viewing the world, aided by his friendship with the headmaster of a local infants' school. After becoming increasingly discontent with his career, he resigns from his position in order to work with the headmaster. Shortly after, he achieves his first independent psychic communication with Susila, since his self-imposed release from the shackles of his everyday life has led to a previously unobtainable level of spiritual receptiveness.

### Some Themes

- **Purity of Childhood versus 'Curse of Adulthood':** The headmaster believes that we have a great deal to learn from children and reveres their innocent state to the extent that he appears to find it difficult to function in adult company. He holds a low opinion of the adult world: 'Helpless fools...'.
- **Western Education:** Krishna relates the mundane way in which English is taught: 'admonishing, cajoling and browbeating...mug up Shakespeare...secure high marks', lacking creativity, with the goal of merely passing exams. Even the poem he produces for Susila is plagiarised. After his wife's death, the futility of his job only increases. Likewise, the headmaster feels that schools 'put blinkers onto us'.
- **The Spiritual World:** Krishna's psychic communication with Susila transforms his mood 'I felt as if a dead load had been lifted' and comforts him. The headmaster accepts his astrologer's predictions of his death date – which happens metaphorically rather than physically, since he is in fact 'reborn' after the date passes to live a life of his choosing, rather than one of obligation.

- **Predictability versus Unpredictability:** Krishna's transition from a life of certainty to one of spontaneity is initiated not only by the arrival of his family, but by Susila's getting rid of his old alarm clock. Even though the clock is unreliable and when it goes off unexpectedly he always stifles its cries with a book, it nevertheless represents a part of his former life: one filled with the familiar, the routine, the habitual. It is unsurprising therefore that her actions cause conflict between them, as she has unwittingly removed a symbol of the predictability and comfort of his previous lifestyle. Susila at times adds an unrestrained and impulsive air, such as when she 'pleaded recklessly' to walk along the river before viewing the new house. Despite his reservations, Krishna actually finds himself enjoying this unpremeditated decision 'a most exhilarating walk'. Unfortunately it is Susila's unpredictable venture into the unsanitary lavatory that causes her illness.
- **Eastern Culture versus Western Culture:** Narayan mocks the trivial concerns of colonial settlers, such as Mr Brown who feels 'shock' that a student had misspelt 'honours' by omitting the 'u' (ironically the student might have been using the American spelling, highlighting even further Mr Brown's narrow-minded view that the 'British' way is the only acceptable one). Krishna's sarcasm feels justified when he notes that, during his thirty years in India, he doubts Mr Brown can say one phrase correctly in any of the two hundred Indian dialects – highlighting his boss's superior air and cultural ignorance. The arrival of the *Swamiji* (Holy Man) and his subsequent rituals (invited by Susila's mother to rid her daughter of the 'Evil Eye') make Krishna feel 'ashamed' enough to apologise to the doctor (who practises western medicine), since he does not appear to hold his culture's traditional beliefs in high regard. Ironically, he later totally immerses himself in them via meditation, since it brings him not only closer to Susila, but also to inner peace.
- **Indian Traditions:** Rituals and customs are important to the characters, such as Krishna's mother using vermilion at the entrance to their house to welcome her daughter-in-law. Susila twice has a vermilion dot (*bindi*) applied to her forehead which is a blessed symbol used to protect women and their husbands (and thus ironic here since it neither protects her from illness nor Krishna from grief).
- **Philosophy:** For Krishna, death is the ultimate reality: 'There are no more surprises and shocks in life...Nothing else will worry or interest me...hereafter'. Krishna later tells one of his students not to be anxious about an academic concern, since 'they are trash...all the time the problem of living and dying is crushing us...' His reality now exists outside the realm of literature and exams, since their rules are inadequate to deal with the larger questions of life. Likewise, he shuns life's 'illusions' to absorb himself in 'the barest truths and facts'. Krishna finds comfort in his theory of 'the law of life', meaning that the moment the umbilical cord is cut, we are alone and continue to be so until death. Narayan's own philosophical viewpoint seems to underpin two incidents: the doctor's certainty of Susila's recovery and the headmaster's conviction of his own death date. Here the author conveys the notion that no matter how much confidence and belief you may invest in the future, it is impossible to predict.

## Author's Craft

- **Irony:**
  - Krishna is initially amused by Susila's worship of the gods, calling it her 'deep secret life', and he lightly mocks her beliefs, teasingly calling her a 'yogi'. Yet his former amusement and joking soon evaporate once he realises he can contact her spiritually after her death, recognising for himself the immense peace those 'magical words' can bring.
  - Despite acting as a 'father figure' to the children in his school, the headmaster appears to fail in his own duties as a father.
- **Foreshadowing:** The poem that Krishna 'writes' for his wife ironically prefigures later events, as it contains spiritual vocabulary: 'phantom...apparition...angel-light'. In Chapter Three Krishna's prophetic simile regarding Susila as 'like a vision' and referring to her 'unearthly loveliness' also subtly hint at forthcoming episodes.
- **Language:**
  - Krishna's use of impersonal forms (rather than the possessive 'my') when first referring to his daughter ('the child') and his wife ('that girl') feels remote. It reflects a fear of responsibility and maintains a distance from them – since he recognises that the academic world he inhabits is far removed from the domestic world he envisages. Once gaining sole responsibility for Leela, however, he mostly refers to her as 'my child'.
  - **Repetition:** This is used to convey the doctor's misplaced confidence and optimism 'nothing to worry about...'
  - **Present Tense:** Narayan momentarily switches to this tense from the past tense immediately after Susila's death via Krishna's diary extract in order to keep her memory alive. It also conveys the immediacy of this tragic event 'I am blind, dumb, and dazed' and helps us to identify with his intense pain and suffering.
  - **Style:** The author employs an uncomplicated, direct style in his novel which is echoed in the headmaster's words 'Children have taught me to speak plainly'.
- **Contrast:** Narayan contrasts Krishna's hurried panic at the railway station in Chapter Two with Susila's calm and composed actions. His frantic movements are communicated by the numerous questions and exclamation marks, inclusion of short, jerky sentences and persistent dialogue, whilst Susila is 'sitting serenely... merely smiled... unconcernedly moved on'.
- **Setting:** Both the hostel Krishna has been living in at the start and the college he has been working in depict a stifled academic world, where routine has become monotonous. Clearly the attraction has been one of comfort and security. In contrast, his rented house exudes energy, enhanced by the presence of Leela and Susila's fresh approach to life.
- **Structure:** Narayan's narrator Krishna relates events as he experiences them, in the first person singular, giving us a direct, yet subjective insight into events. The story unfolds effortlessly in a seemingly day-to-day basis, as we follow him in his spiritual, mental and emotional journey.

## Section C Anthology Poems

The following section contains some detailed teaching points relating to a number of the poems from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature*.

Five poems are explored here in some detail, to illustrate the kinds of topics on which teachers may wish to focus when presenting these to their students. There are a summary and introduction to each poem, and some ideas on structure and form, language and comments. While the following section does not deal comprehensively with every one of the poems to be studied, the examples included are intended to give a number of approaches that can be adopted as appropriate with all of the other prescribed poems.

These notes represent some teachers' views on the texts. They are provided only to stimulate ideas for teachers; they are not intended to be handed out to students as revision notes. They will not inform the setting of questions or mark schemes.

## Teaching the Poetry Anthology

### If – Rudyard Kipling

#### Summary

Kipling's famous poem about human nature offers a catalogue of thoughtful advice to a young male, consisting of the many qualities he feels are essential to become a man, such as self-belief, modesty, humility and truthfulness.

#### Introducing the Poem

'What advice would a father give to a son who is ready to leave home and venture out into the world on his own? Explore the different areas of life you think the father feels are important enough to guide his son through. Imagine the conversation between them.'

#### Structure and Form

Kipling's guidance takes the form of a series of opposites, for example, 'keep...lose' and 'trust...doubt'. These slowly build up in the course of the poem to reveal only in the concluding line the main reward for doing so, that is, as a symbol of having reached manhood. The alternate rhyme scheme maintains the momentum of the counsel and, since this lengthy poem appears to be merely one sentence long, this implies that the spiritual and mental journey to manhood is a long, complicated and challenging one.

## Language/Comments

- The long list of qualities that Kipling suggests lead to manhood are numerous (and, viewed realistically, appear collectively unattainable). This is why the future conditional tense is repeatedly used (signalled by 'if') as it expresses the sheer difficulty of the task. Yet the rewards offered justify any sacrifices made 'Yours is the earth...you'll be a Man'.
- By constant repetition of the second person singular 'you' (with implications of a plural address too, encompassing us all), the narrator achieves a direct appeal and maintains our interest. By the end of the poem we are intrigued to discover where his lengthy advice leads.
- The imperatives issued do not feel commanding, but friendly and good-natured 'don't deal in lies...don't give way to hating'. The focus is on avoiding excesses in life (notice they are largely inner qualities and values, as material excesses are only briefly mentioned 'winnings'). The advice is to approach all things moderately, with a degree of patience and maturity.
- Poetic techniques strengthen the counsel. Fulfilling every moment in as energetic and enthusiastic manner as possible is advocated in the metaphor 'fill the...minute/With sixty seconds' worth of distance run'. Personification is used to promote caution against 'impostors', such as 'Triumph and Disaster'.
- Although the majority of the guidance is sensible and prudent, there are hints of recklessness too, as in the area of gambling 'risk it all', suggesting that chances can be taken and that life should not be mundane but lived to the full. The important aspect is not to publicise any losses.
- The crux of the poem, revealed in the final two lines, expresses the huge rewards that can be expected. Significantly, being 'a Man' is perceived as infinitely better 'which is more' than acquiring 'the earth and all that's in it'. The final exclamation mark can be viewed as a closing symbol of encouragement.

## Half-past Two – U. A. Fanthorpe

### Summary

A primary school child is made to stay behind after school, but his concept of time does not yet include numerals, only daily time modules such as 'TVtime', so he therefore does not really grasp when he can go home. There is a clear contrast in this event's significance: whereas this punishment represents a big moment in the boy's life, his teacher has forgotten about it and when she sees him waiting in the classroom for her, dismisses him home in an instant.

### Introducing the Poem

'Memories of Primary School: Remember your early days there: what were they like? Try to recollect some experiences: your hopes, fears or even your relationship with a particular teacher. Is there one memory in particular that you will never forget?'

### Structure and Form

An eleven stanza, free verse poem of equal line length written in the third (and occasionally first) person singular. These small three-lined 'chunks' of narrative, aided by enjambment, resemble the small boy's tendency to compartmentalise his day into time modules, as mirrored in Fanthorpe's presentation of his words, which lack spaces.

### Language/Comments

- The fairy-tale opening 'Once upon a' builds our expectations of a narrative and links perfectly to a child's experience at primary school, aptly delivered in a child-like tone. This is one technique Fanthorpe uses (and later we find echoes of in the poem) to encourage us to identify with the boy's experiences and see the world through his eyes.
- The points of view and voices of different characters are established through language and successfully blended. Capital letters differentiate the teacher's voice 'Very Wrong' and the drawn-out emphasis she places on these words, to the extent that they are magnified in the boy's mind as having a great consequence. Ironically the enormity of the 'offence' is immediately undermined and trivialised by the narrator in line three ('I forget what it was'), whose own voice is distinguished via brackets.
- Fanthorpe's language choices match the vocabulary stereotypically heard in primary schools ('cross...wicked') and help locate our imaginations within that setting. The lack of spaces in the boy's language 'Gettinguptime' communicate his interpretation of their visual representation, as this is exactly how he hears these words spoken. To a small boy these are indeed 'important times' since they dictate his daily life – he has as yet no comprehension of numeric time. The theme of childhood innocence is heightened here, but we are not invited to laugh at him, merely understand his predicament and comprehend how small matters can adopt a huge significance for a child.

- Stanza six marks a move away from conversational to more poetic language, with the use of personification 'little eyes...two long legs' and the onomatopoeic 'click'. Yet despite the elevated mood of this verse, the language still remains child-like in tone, as the vocabulary demonstrates a teaching method commonly used to tell the time. Enjambement carries the element of fantasy introduced here into the next two verses, as if we too are soaring with his imagination 'once upon a ... time for us...escaped'. The pattern of four repetitions of 'into' appeals to our senses of smell, sound (with the oxymoron 'silent noise') and touch, retaining the dream-like quality already introduced, as if he himself is daydreaming.
- Italics express the teacher's direct speech and express how trivial the matter was for her too, like the narrator earlier. Notice she speedily releases him from his prolonged waiting in a mere two sentences, as if his 'detention' was really of little consequence to her. Fanthorpe attempts to portray his teacher in an unfavourable light as she describes her as 'scuttling in', just like a small animal. The teacher has also remained nameless and is subsequently depersonalised throughout the poem, often referred to as 'She...Her'. The poet therefore possibly uses her as an example to criticise adults who are dismissive of children in this manner, reinforced by the casual way 'she slotted him back'.
- The nostalgic quality at the end of the poem ('he never forgot') emits a refreshing feeling of freedom, a temporary world lacking time restrictions, with the lovely fantasy image of a 'clockless land' and the personification of the final line 'Where time hides tick-less waiting to be born'. Living in a modern world of schedules and appointments, we too can empathise with this euphoric state once in a while.

## Piano – D. H. Lawrence

### Summary

The narrator mentally returns to the warmth and comfort of childhood days at home with his mother by the piano. Yet he appears to berate himself for doing so, viewing himself as less masculine for giving in to his nostalgic impulses.

### Introducing the Poem

'Recall one positive childhood memory spent with your family (eg a birthday party, the arrival of a new puppy, etc). Try to bring it alive in your imagination by using the different senses. Describe the moment or event, adding as much detail as possible.'

### Structure and Form

The uniformity of this poem, with its rhyming couplets, equal number of lines per verse and regular syllable count, matches the sense of harmony and security the childhood memories bring. Despite the hints of negativity shown by the words 'insidious...betrays...weeps', the rhyme and rhythm remain upbeat, reminiscent of the many references to music and its power to uplift.

### Language/Comments

- Initially the mix of first and third person singular feels curious, as the narrator begins using 'me...I' but then appears to refer to himself as 'A child' for the memory, adding distance, as if it is not really him. We soon realise, however, that this is a deliberate ploy by the narrator to express the internal battle he is feeling – as if he is fighting the memories and the sentiments of personal weakness they will bring.
- Allusions to sound are echoed throughout the poem and in the first stanza the calm of 'Softly' is contrasted with the powerfully, musical onomatopoeic 'boom of the tingling strings' (which is enhanced and prolonged by the internal rhyme), as he advances in his memory. This technique is later repeated in 'tinkling' in stanza two. Song is a powerful tool here (further evoked in 'insidious mastery of song'), capable of transporting him into childhood 'taking me back...vista of years'.
- The narrator's description of his mother in line four, though short, speaks volumes. His relationship with her is a physically close one 'pressing', and suggests a devoted bonding. Her feet are 'poised', implying elegance, sophistication, dignity and precision and her mood is one of happy 'smiles'.
- Despite his attempts to be strong and fight the memory, it is too compelling and reverberates to the very core of his being 'the heart of me weeps to belong'. Lawrence's language choice here 'weeps' suggests the emotional state the narrator has been reduced to: one of intense sadness and poignancy. This is further reinforced in the final line 'I weep like a child' indicating the internal struggle has been lost, since here, unlike earlier, the first person singular 'I' is openly associated in this simile with 'a child'. Yet the recollection's setting is positive, bringing familiarity and comfort 'old Sunday evenings...hymns in the cosy parlour'.

- Feeling defeated in verse three, yet strangely elated, the narrator accepts his fate: 'my manhood is cast/Down in the flood of remembrance'. He is overwhelmed by the unstoppable waves of emotion he has experienced, intensified by the use of the present tense throughout the poem, and is inconsolable 'I weep'. The juxtaposition of man and child appears at odds for him, as if loyalty to both cannot co-exist in his world.

## Poem at Thirty-Nine – Alice Walker

### Summary

Memories of a deceased father and her relationship with him are brought to life by Walker in this (seemingly autobiographical) celebratory poem as she details the qualities she admired in him and how much he taught her about life. Revealing her age in the title suggests maturity and brings a better, more knowledgeable appreciation of parents in this exploration of paternal love.

### Introducing the Poem

'What qualities do you most admire in one of your parents/guardians? Detail the ones you believe you share, explaining why. Are there any qualities that others say you have inherited that you are not so happy about?'

### Structure and Form

Free verse suits the mood of this six-stanza poem, as Walker's tone is quite conversational (yet coupled with lively poetic phrases), flowing freely on the page as she flits from memories in the past, to her subsequent actions in the present. Enjambement appears more abundantly in some verses than others, as at times her thoughts are more spontaneous, whilst at others she uses punctuation to consciously pause and reflect on her father.

### Language/Comments

- The direct opening line 'How I miss my father' is echoed later in the fourth stanza with one addition which reinforces it: an exclamation mark. Both lines are the only ones in the poem to appear as full sentences, highlighting the sadness she continues to feel at his loss and her blatant refusal to feel ashamed about it, as age is no barrier to grief. This repeated euphemism for death (along with 'before the end') serves to comfort her as, despite the fact his death could have happened several years before, the pain of bereavement is still deeply felt.
- Regret and sadness are communicated in stanza one as the implication is that he had little time for her from the start of her life, probably because of work commitments have continually exhausting him.
- Walker's present actions in verse two evoke imagined past memories of her father dealing with his finances, as he seemingly tried to set a good example by following the correct procedures. Her parents were descendants of freed slaves and lived as share-croppers. (A share-cropper is a tenant farmer who pays a large percentage of the crop value as rent, after being provided with all his equipment by a landowner.) Thus Walker could be hinting at using education as a means to move on from this difficult agricultural existence ('to escape/the life he knew') and has learnt from an early age the importance of being as financially independent as possible.
- Physical abuse is indicated in verse three, suggested by 'beating', which has connotations of violence and brutality. Yet she does not judge him and commends the advice he gave her as being honest, highlighted by the alliteration 'taught...telling the truth'. Ironically she applies the word 'grieved' to her father, not herself, as she feels guilty at her past actions and how they must have upset him during his life.

- The dark mood which began to settle in stanza three now changes to one of happiness and celebration of both her father and herself until the poem's close. The original simile 'He cooked like a person/dancing/in a yoga meditation' reflects the joy and passion he felt whilst preparing food, which totally absorbed him, and communicates his delight in sharing it.
- Assonance across the verses 'cooked...good food' links her father's past actions with her present ones 'Now I look....cook'. She is proud of their similarities and aptly chooses a culinary metaphor to express how she lives her life, which hints at a carefree 'tossing this and that' and generous existence (another connection to her father), 'happy to feed/whoever strays my way'.
- In the final stanza we again sense the regret she felt at the start and she reveals, as was hinted earlier, that she wasn't the 'perfect' daughter during his lifetime, as expressed in the phrase '**grown** to admire'. The qualities she advocates at the end are homely, active ones which achieve a balance: at times she is energetic, at other times she is contemplative and peaceful. These are in keeping with the characteristics she admired in her father.

## **A Mother in a Refugee Camp – Chinua Achebe**

### **Summary**

An emotionally touching, heavily descriptive poem narrating the utter devotion of a refugee mother towards her son, making her moments with him even more distressing and precious since she knows his time is limited, due to the effects of disease or malnutrition.

### **Introducing the Poem**

Visual Stimulation: showing either newsreel, newspaper photographs or charity leaflets, discuss and describe the shocking situations witnessed across the world, via the media, of some refugees and the conditions they endure.

### **Structure and Form**

In the first three lines, Achebe manages to summarise the entire poem. The second section, which follows the dots, includes much descriptive detail, shocking us with its honest portrayal of daily life for these refugees. Economical with punctuation, this free verse poem deliberately employs varying line lengths and enjambement which reflect the continual suffering and catalogue of pain these refugees endure – as if there is so much suffering to relate, Achebe finds it hard to know where to stop.

### **Language/Comments**

- By referring to the revered 'Madonna and Child' in the first line, Achebe instantly evokes religious images of purity and worship, therefore automatically raising the status of the refugee mother and child. It suggests her devotion far surpasses anything previously witnessed and also attaches a sacred, spiritual quality to her love for her son. The opening is full of pathos – but the poem invites us to admire her courage and dedication in the face of adversity, rather than to pity her.
- The fourth line introduces negative, intentionally repulsive language portraying the awfulness of the situation for these refugees. An appeal to our senses of smell, sight and touch is strong 'odors of diarrhea...blown-empty bellies...combed the rust-colored hair'. Achebe's language is powerfully direct and harsh, as he wants us to experience the cruel reality of the effects of war or political persecution, that is, the suffering of thousands of innocent victims. Physical descriptions of skeletal children visually appall us, 'washed-out ribs...dried-up bottoms'. Alliteration here ('bottoms...behind blown...bellies') commands our attention – we are not allowed to turn away from this sickening sight.
- The vocabulary of death, 'ghost', is associated with the mother's preparing us, as at the start in the phrase 'soon would have to forget', for the inevitable outcome of loss she will encounter and maybe even hinting at her own mortality as she too is probably physically frail. We greatly respect the mother's positive spirit, 'smile...pride...humming in her eyes...carefully', as her actions are untainted by the horrific circumstances enveloping her. The devotion and love she feels towards her son are unconditional as she tries hard to maintain a daily, normal routine in a situation which is far from normal. This heart-breaking, simple gesture is imbued with sadness – he has barely any hair left on his 'skull' (another skeletal reminder), yet she meticulously combs it anyway, in preparation for his death.

- Achebe sharply reminds us of their previously normal existence 'breakfast and school', bringing them closer to the reader as these are part of our everyday routine too. Although the closing simile returns to the son's forthcoming death and is heavy with foreboding, we are left with an absolute admiration for the mother's human spirit. Her love is stronger than the devastation around them, even though she is realistic enough to know she cannot prevent its fatal consequences.

## Remember – Christina Rossetti

### Summary

Rossetti's sonnet explores the theme of grief experienced after a partner's death; initially the narrator advocates the partner mourning her, but then changes her mind and advises that it is better for him to forget her and get on with his life.

### Introducing the Poem

Descriptive Writing: Imagine you are one partner from a relationship, perhaps a husband or wife, who knows he/she is going to die from an illness. Write a short letter to your remaining partner, which details the difficult thoughts and heart-breaking feelings of being close to death.

### Structure and Form

Rossetti was fond of experimenting with the sonnet form, which is why she changes the rhyme scheme at the end of this poem from the two most commonly used at that time. She uses ABBA twice, but then, instead of following the pattern of using CDE twice, she changes it to CDDECE. Significantly, she deliberately does so, as the meaning of the poem changes in the sestet to the possibility of forgetting and being happy, rather than instructions to remember, which occur in the octave. The use of iambic pentameter aids the softness of the rhythm and message that Rossetti is trying to convey.

### Language/Comments

- Patterns of repetition are an important feature of this sonnet, such as 'Remember...gone...no more'. The first 'Remember me' is addressed directly to her loved one, and although it is an imperative, does not feel in any way imposing or commanding. The personal pronouns signal this is a very personal, emotional poem.
- The euphemism for death, 'gone away', is sadly touching and its power is heightened by the addition of distance: 'gone far'. Rossetti's metaphor 'silent land' portrays a calm, peaceful afterlife and serves to lessen the pain of her departure for him.
- The alliteration of 'hold me by the hand' makes clear their relationship and hints at the physical contact that will be lost, coupled with the monosyllables in line three which add an air of finality. The poignant tone is increased here by the allusion to their future, with even the possibility of a wedding 'that you planned'.
- Rossetti's punctuation break of a semi-colon in line seven indicates the change of meaning she advocates in the sestet, as she hints at an unselfish love, with the potentiality of forgetting her. She would rather he forget her and be happy than wallow in grief for her - 'darkness and corruption'. The ending is therefore optimistic as the poem allows for the opportunity of moving on and forgetting, in contrast to the opening which requested his remembrances of her.

## Resources

Please note that while resources are correct at the time of publication, they may be updated or withdrawn from circulation. Website addresses may change at any time.

### Anthology

Students will be provided with the *Edexcel Anthology for International GCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* which will be available to download free of charge from the Edexcel website.

Many English course books used in schools contain sections which relate to literature. Additional helpful guidance may be found in the books/series listed below.

### Textbooks

Taylor P – *Edexcel International GCSE English Literature and Certificate Student Book* (Pearson 2011) ISBN 9780435046750

### Study guides

Letts Literature Guides (study guides on specific individual texts)

York Notes (study guides on specific individual texts)

### Websites

The internet offers sites with background information on selected texts and authors. Teachers may also find relevant teaching material on these sites. A selection of websites is listed below.

<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/">www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/</a>	GCSE revision site for English Literature
<a href="http://www.englishresources.co.uk">www.englishresources.co.uk</a>	Free teaching and revision resources
<a href="http://www.novelguide.com">www.novelguide.com</a>	Free online literary guides to texts
<a href="http://www.teachit.co.uk">www.teachit.co.uk</a>	Teaching and revision resources for teachers

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