

Examiners' Report

June 2025

GCSE English Literature 1ET0 01

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Introduction

The GCSE (9-1) English Literature examination (1ET01) consists of two sections and lasts for 1 hour and 45 minutes, with the recommended split of 55 minutes for Section A and 50 minutes for Section B.

The questions require the candidates to show that they have completed a detailed study of two texts.

The total number of marks available is 80.

The paper is assessed across AO1, 2, 3 and 4:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

Section A

One text from a choice of six Shakespeare plays from which the candidate must complete two parts of the question. The maximum marks for the question are:

Part (a) - 20 marks for AO2.

Part (b) - 20 marks for AO1 (15 marks) and AO3 (5 marks).

Total for Section A is 40 marks.

Text choices:

Macbeth

The Tempest

Romeo and Juliet

Much Ado About Nothing

Twelfth Night

The Merchant of Venice

Section B

One text from Post-1914 British Literature. Candidates have a choice from six play texts or six prose texts and have to answer one question from a choice of two for each text.

The maximum marks for the question are 40 with AO1 (16 marks) and AO3 (16 marks) making a total mark out of 32.

There is also a mark out for 8 for AO4.

British Play

An Inspector Calls: J B Priestley

Hobson's Choice: Harold Brighouse

Blood Brothers: Willy Russell

Journey's End: R C Sherriff

The Empress: Tanika Gupta

Refugee Boy: Benjamin Zephaniah (adapted for the stage by Lemn Sissay)

British Novel

Animal Farm: George Orwell

Lord of the Flies: William Golding

Anita and Me: Meera Syal

The Woman in Black: Susan Hill

Coram Boy: Jamila Gavin

Boys Don't Cry: Malorie Blackman

Principal Examiner Comment

This was a very successful series. On the whole, candidates responded to the tasks exceptionally well and the full range of marks were awarded for all questions.

Section A

In Part (a) questions, candidates sometimes lacked a clear focus on language, form and structure with responses sometimes becoming a little narrative. Although this has been highlighted in previous examiner reports, several candidates included contextual points (AO3) in Part (a), which

is not assessed. Candidates should simply demonstrate their understanding of the language, form and structure within the extract in relation to the question. Responses that did well often covered three or more areas from across the whole of their chosen extract.

Responses placed in higher levels tended to:

- focus on the question
- identify a wide variety of language and structural techniques used by the playwright, which were correctly identified, supported with evidence and developed in relation to the question
- examined patterns of language and/or structure in the extract rather than repeating themselves
- use accurate and appropriate terminology
- explain examples in some detail and consider the effect on the reader, demonstrating an assured or perceptive understanding of the extract and the techniques used to present the character/s.

Part (b) responses that did well demonstrated:

- a well-rounded understanding of the rest of the play and the importance of the given theme throughout
- succinct points, with accurate and integrated examples from across the play, which helped to illuminate the point being made
- the inclusion of context which was appropriate to the point being made, developed the argument and was interwoven throughout each paragraph and not included as a bolt-on at the end.

Section B

The most common errors in the play and novel section were:

- not focusing on the question
- not exploring a range of areas within the text to show a secure understanding of the play/novel as a whole - perhaps giving only one or two examples and appearing to muddle the Assessment Objectives - for instance, exploring the language, form and structure and not including context
- using pre-prepared introductions which had no link to the question
- using vocabulary without a clear understanding of what this meant.

Examiners commented on the success of the paper and generally felt that candidates had been well-prepared for the examination. Centres should be congratulated on their hard work.

Question 1

Macbeth

The extract was taken from Act 1 Scene 3, lines 1 to 38.

For Part (a) candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presented the Witches, whilst Part (b) required candidates to explain the importance of symbols elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

Examiners felt this passage offered a range of ideas for candidates to discuss in relation to the Witches and marks were awarded across the whole mark scheme. Most candidates discussed the use of pathetic fallacy at the start of the scene and went on to track through the extract methodically. The majority of candidates centred their discussion on how the Witches were seen as evil and used a variety of evidence to support them in this, notably “killing swine”. Many candidates discussed the use of simile and repetition within the extract, but this was not always developed past an identification of the technique. Some candidates were able to discuss the use of trochaic tetrameter and the structure of the conversation which, when developed, led to some very interesting points about the bond between them and their separation from the other characters / society. Examiners did notice that many candidates referred to context in this question with frequent reference to James I and *Daemonologie*.

Part (b)

Whilst some candidates struggled to understand what symbols they could discuss, many saw this question as an opportunity to demonstrate their range of understanding of symbols from throughout the play. Blood, the hallucination of the dagger, Banquo’s ghost and water were frequently cited in responses with some candidates choosing to develop one symbol and track it through the play and others choosing to discuss a range, both of which were valid approaches. Some candidates interpreted characters as symbols which was also a valid response with many discussing the atypicality of Lady Macbeth in terms of gender roles and the changing nature of Macbeth’s character from the start to the end. Some candidates made some excellent comments on clothing and animals/birds. The use of symbols often naturally led many candidates into discussions of the Divine Right of Kings and Great Chain of Being. There was frequent discussion of the natural order being disrupted and many candidates discussed the inversion of natural order in the horses and earthquakes. Many candidates also discussed Shakespeare’s desire to flatter James I and referenced the Gunpowder Plot in this also.

The following response was awarded a Level 1 for Part (a) and Level 2 for Part (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☐ **Question 3** ☐
 Question 4 ☐ **Question 5** ☐ **Question 6** ☐

Shakespeare presents the witches as sisters
that are trying to defend ^{witch 1} ~~each other~~ from the sailors
wife who was rude to her and in a way
they are sort of childish

(Section A continued) B) Symbols are very important in the whole play but the most important are Macbeth's. "I see a dagger before me" this quote is reinforcing the idea that his mind is already made up and he wants to kill King Duncan with Lady Macbeth so that they can get the crown.

Another symbol would be Lady Macbeth's bloody hands when she was not able to wash out the bloody spots and when she said not all the scents of Arabia would fix this stench.

Another symbol would be when the witches spoke to Macbeth and told him he could not ~~only~~ be lie to anyone born of woman.



Part (a) Level 1 - 2 marks

Part (b) Level 2 - 6 marks

Part (a):

- Even though the response is very short, the candidate does make a brief reference to the extract and the way Shakespeare presents the Witches as 'sisters' and how they are 'trying to defend witch 1'.
- There is a lack of textual reference to support the point made and there is no clear identification of language, form and structure or terminology.
- Considering the length of the response, a best fit approach places Part (a) in a Level 1 at a mark of 2.

Part (b):

- The response for Part (b) is a little longer, goes out of the extract and shows some understanding of the use of symbols elsewhere in the play.
- Whilst the first paragraph does not explicitly explore how the 'dagger' is a symbol, the analysis does imply that the candidate has some understanding of its significance and how it has affected Macbeth: 'his mind is already made up'.
- The second paragraph again shows a little understanding of the way Lady Macbeth's 'bloody hands' act as a symbol of her guilt and how she is unable to 'wash out the blood' or remove the smell, not even with all the 'scents of arabia'.
- There is no explicit link to context, which prevents a mark any higher in Level 2.



References to the text do not have to be quotations.

The following response was awarded a Level 4 for Part (a) and Level 3 for Part (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☐ **Question 5** ☒ **Question 6** ☒

Shakespeare presents the witches as unusual and angry characters. This is shown through the quote, "I'll drain him dry as hay!". This exclamation sentence shows how angry the witches can become. The quote also suggests the witches are extremely evil as the quote shows that they are eager to harm someone. A reader would feel disgusted by the witches due to their unusual and devilish behaviour.

Shakespeare presents the witches as disliked characters. This is evidenced through the quote, "The weird sisters". The adjective weird suggests that Shakespeare is trying to present them as abnormal. This also suggests that they are evil and unwanted. A reader would understand why the witches are described as weird due to their unusual and evil actions and opinions.

(Section A continued)

Shakespeare presents the witches as very evil characters. This is shown through the quote, "And like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do!" In this quote, the simile shows that the witches are aware that what they are doing is wrong as they have compared what they are planning to do with the actions of a rat which is usually used to show evil or ugliness. Also the repetition of "I'll do" shows that the witches are eager to commit ~~sin~~ evil and have no guilt. The audience would be shocked by the witches' personalities and by how evil they are.

1b) Shakespeare uses the quote "Nature is dead" to symbolise the mistake Macbeth has made by killing Duncan. This quote was said after Duncan had been murdered showing that Duncan's death has led to Scotland's nature ~~becoming~~ dying which emphasises that Scotland will die in ~~the hands of~~ ~~the~~ Macbeth if Macbeth is in power. This also shows how evil the murder of Duncan was. ~~A reader would be~~ The audience would be surprised by the consequences of murdering a king. This links to context as

(Section A continued) during Shakespeare's times people in Scotland and England were usually Christians who would be classed as religious. According to Christians at the time the kings were seen as people chosen by God and murdering a king which would break God's chain of being & be killing God's chosen person which would also be breaking the great chain of being. This would be seen as a major sin.

Shakespeare uses the quote "He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust" to symbolise the downfall of Duncan. This quote is said by Duncan in Act 4 after he has been betrayed by one of his thanes. This shows that Duncan is a very naive character and the king showing that he can easily be tricked or betrayed. This also warns the audience that Duncan will die due to his lack of intelligence. An audience would feel worried for Duncan as they would start to realise that he is at risk due to his lack of intelligence. This links to context as during Shakespeare's time kings were seen as extremely precious, valuable and God's gift. They could be naive or stupid but still be respected. However, Shakespeare shows in the play that they are not.

(Section A continued)

reflecting your king is important even though the play is about the murder of a king.

Shakespeare uses the quote - "oh horror, horror, horror!" and "oh good lady, 'Tis not for you to hear" to symbolise the evil nature of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. These quotes were said by Macduff after the death of Duncan. The quote "oh horror, horror, horror!" shows that he is in disbelief and is traumatised by what Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have done. Macduff's reaction to Duncan's death shows the significance of Duncan's murder and how evil Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have become. The second quote "oh good lady, 'Tis not for you to hear" shows that Macduff believes that Lady Macbeth shouldn't even hear about the evil that has happened however the audience knows that her and her husband are responsible for this murder sharing how great of a sin they have committed. The audience would understand the significance of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's crime due to because of Duncan Macduff's reaction. This links to context as the murdering a king during Shakespeare's

(Section A continued) time was seen as one of the
greatest sin you could ever commit.



Part (a) Level 4 - 13 marks

Part (b) Level 3 - 10 marks

Part (a):

- This response is focused on details of language in the extract and analyses effects on the audience: 'A(n) audience would feel disgusted...'.
- There is support for the comments that the Witches are 'unusual', 'angry', 'evil' and 'disliked', using relevant subject terminology: 'exclamative sentence', 'adjective', 'simile', 'repetition'.
- The interpretation is not particularly sophisticated and the references to features are not extensive but there is enough for a mark just into Level 4.

Part (b):

- The response does not show a full understanding of what 'symbolism' is and tends to interpret it as the actions or words of the characters. However, it tries hard to use and support examples which have broad relevance whilst showing a personal response which is soundly related to the text.
- A PEE structure is used for each paragraph throughout and there is an appropriate critical style which employs quotations from the text.
- Comments on context, particularly about the crime of committing regicide and its impact on audiences, tend to be bolted on to the end of each paragraph, but are certainly relevant.
- The response can be described, overall, as 'sound' and therefore it merits a mark securely in Level 3.



Candidates should avoid bolting on context.

The following response was awarded a Level 3 for Part (a) and Level 2 for Part (b).

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒
Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒

In the extract Shakespeare presents the witches as evil when they say, "Killing Swine" this tells us that the witches ~~are~~ like to kill and are often associated with death. The word, 'Swine' tells us that they have ~~as~~ no care or thought about people and that they may look down on them.

Shakespeare also presents the witches as an image for supernaturalness as when they say together, "The weird sisters" this tells us that they the witches are aware that they are not normal and the use of the word 'weird' could suggest that they may be from elsewhere and may not be ^{earthly} ~~earthly~~.

The witches are also presented as omniscient in the extract as when they say "Macbeth doth come" it shows us that the witches are able to predict everything as they show some kind of unhumanly power.

(Section A continued) -ge unlike anyone else on earth. This supports their supernatural image in the extract and how they possess ~~the way~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ a magical essence of knowledge.

In the extract, Shakespeare uses the sound of thunder is used to show the evil nature of the witches as ~~the~~ thunder is often seen as a sign of evil and tormentful nature. This evidently echoes the witches and further shows their disdain for the world and how ~~the~~ the thunder is a reminder to mankind that these witches are no joke.

B)

In the play Shakespeare uses Hecate to ^{symbolise} ~~symbolise~~ the devil and death. The use of the ~~symbolisation~~ ^{symbolise} of the devil fits in in the play as there is a repeating of death and ~~symbolising~~ ^{symbolising} overall of the characters. This shows us that Shakespeare is trying to induce fear and ominousness over the audience as when people are killed in the play there is often a lot to do with someone's troubled and twisted conscience. This may have originally stemmed from the witches causing a placebo effect on Macbeth.

(Section A continued) *Causing a chain reaction and for him to kill Duncan.*



Part (a) Level 3 - 9 marks

Part (b) Level 2 - 6 marks

Part (a):

- This response focuses on language to present a range of points about the nature of the Witches and there is some use of relevant terminology.
- Paragraph 1 deals with their link to death and to evil through the phrase 'killing swine'; paragraph 2 picks out the 'image' of 'weird sisters' to demonstrate their link to the supernatural; paragraph 3 focuses on their apparent ability to 'predict everything' as suggestive of their omniscience; paragraph 4 suggests that their association with thunder is a sign of their links to 'tormented nature'.
- All these points provide opportunities to use subject-specific terms, but these opportunities are largely missed. There is enough understanding of the effects of language to merit a mark just in Level 3.

Part (b):

- Although this is a Level 2 response, it is more than just narrative but obviously very brief and undeveloped.
- The third sentence ('This shows us that Shakespeare is trying to induce fear ... with someone's troubled and twisted conscience') is evidence of an embryonic critical style which would be worth exploring in depth but the candidate does not do so.
- The point about 'placebo effect' is tantalising but remains unclear. The lack of consistent and secure focus, together with the absence of points about context, means that a mark securely in Level 2 is appropriate.



Candidates should balance their time so that they write about both parts of the question in enough detail.

The following response was awarded a Level 4 for Part (a) and Level 3 for Part (b).

Chosen question number:

Question 1 ☒

Question 2 ☐

Question 3 ☐

Question 4 ☐

Question 5 ☐

Question 6 ☐

a.) In this extract Shakespeare develops the characters of the three witches. In the extract, Shakespeare presents the witches as very violent and merciless beings. This is done through the ~~use of~~ violent manner of the conversation that they are having whilst having a calm, serene, almost as if it's a normal occurrence. An example of this would be when witch 1 asks witch 2 where she had ~~been~~ been and she casually replies "killing ~~or~~ ~~swine~~ swine" as if it's something she always does. The ~~idea~~ idea that she sees "killing" as a normal pass-time gives the reader an idea of the cruel, violent nature of her character. The writer includes this in order to show the sheer darkness that these witches possess. At the time this play was released it would have been shocking to a Jacobean audience but to modern audiences it would be even more shocking to them.

(Section A continued)

Another way in which Shakespeare presents them as evil is

Another way Shakespeare presents ~~the~~ the witches in this extract is evil. He does this later in the extract while witch 1 tells the others of what she had done. "here I have a pilot's thumb, Wrecked, as homeward he did come." This quote shows she is evil as it refers to the idea that she caused harm on someone while they were ~~just~~ just trying to return to their home.

This ~~the~~ sense of innocence created around the pilot returning home amplifies the evil nature of the witches and contrasts the 2 types of characters. The adjective "wrecked" shows the extent of the damage she had ~~caused~~ caused. The writer does this in order to show how evil the witches are. ~~and~~ This would make the audience ~~scared~~ ^{amused} fear the character and what it is capable of.

A final way the ~~not~~ not witches Shakespeare presents the witches is magical ~~as a group~~ ^{as a group} ~~and a strong part~~. This is done ~~to~~ at the end of the extract when they talk as a group together.

(Section A continued)

chanting out together. "The weird sisters had in hand..." This group chanting shows their spiritual behaviour and shows the togetherness of the three witches. The idea of them being "weird sisters" shows the strong bonds they have with one another whilst they are "hand in hand" also shows the how close they are to one another. The writer includes this in order to show the collectiveness of the audience the bond these sisters have, making the audience wonder what they could do together. This makes the audience fearful of what is to come later in the play.

b) Shakespeare uses symbols throughout the play in order to ~~show~~ ~~the~~ portray certain ideas. Early in the play the killing of Duncan ~~the~~ symbolises the change in mood from the ~~character~~ character of Macbeth. Another way symbols are used is the ~~dark~~ items that Macbeth sees in the shadows later in the play. The writer uses symbols in order to create the desired atmosphere in the play at that time.

An example of the symbols used would be the killing of King Duncan by Macbeth.

(Section A continued)

This ~~symbolises~~ symbolises the change in character of by the Macbeth, because in the build up to this he ~~is~~ was very reluctant to do it whereas in contrast later in the play he needs no encouragement to kill whoever he needs to. This development shows how his character changes after this symbolic event. The writer does this in order to allow the audience to pin-point the exact events that completely altered Macbeth's personality. This symbolic event shocks the audience, which contrasts how minimal shock there is later in the play when he kills others as it normal for his character later on.

Another way that symbols are used in the play is the ~~object~~ object Macbeth sees in the shadows later in the play. "Is that a dagger I see before me?" This symbol shows ~~the obsession Macbeth~~ Macbeth's fixation on his killings and shows how his mind can't get away from what he has done. ~~Macbeth's mind~~
This shows the guilt and he has for what he did. ~~and also that~~ The ~~or~~ writer ~~includes~~ includes this symbol in order to show the obsession Macbeth has with killing, almost as if it's all he can think about. This makes

(Section A continued)

He reader fearful of ~~what~~ what he
may do next, or how much worse he will
will become.



Part (a) Level 4 - 14 marks

Part (b) Level 3 - 12 marks

*Part (a): *

- In this script, there is less terminology in the traditional sense but it does write about Shakespeare making choices.
- Whilst not offering lots of typical terminology, this candidate does use subject terminology appropriate for writing about Literature e.g. 'develops the character'.
- The response is focused and detailed - there is some development of ideas - e.g. the Witches contrasting to the innocence of sailor.
- There is an understanding of the impression Shakespeare is trying to convey about the Witches - 'this makes the audience fearful of what is to come later in the play'.
- In light of this, the response fulfils all of the requirements of Level 3 and moves into Level 4 because the response is 'focused and detailed'.

Part (b):

- The candidate understands the symbolic nature of what happens in the play and why - for example, Duncan's murder symbolising the change in Macbeth's character.
- This is developed further with the symbol of the dagger which is used to 'show the obsession Macbeth has with killing'.
- There is little context used here with the exception of a comment on the audience's reaction.
- This is a relevant personal response linked with the question.



Candidates need to ensure they can demonstrate understanding of the relevant AOs in the relevant place.

The following response was awarded a Level 2 for Part (a) and Level 5 for Part (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☐ **Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☐ **Question 5** ☐ **Question 6** ☒

1a)

Within the extract, Shakespeare presents the ~~with~~ witches as violent. Witch 1 expresses her anger toward the sailor and his wife, ~~the~~ stating that she will "drain him dry as hay!". The exclamatory emphasises the Witch's anger toward them after she had been insulted, paired with the ~~verb~~ "drain." ~~Shakespeare~~ ~~expresses to~~ the reader the witches capabilities with this powerful imagery, as they are ~~capable of~~ ~~drinking~~ ~~drain~~ ~~contaminating~~ ~~whether or not they should kill him.~~ The verb "drain" ~~the verb~~ "drain" suggests that the witches would kill the sailor after his wife insulted the first Witch, creating a powerful portrayal of their ~~the~~ evil capabilities, which ~~a~~ shows the reader their violent nature.

(Section A continued)

1b)

Shakespeare

~~Shakespeare~~ uses ~~animal~~ ^{Lady Macbeth} Lady Macbeth uses religious symbolism when she tells Macbeth to "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't", linking to the book of Genesis in the Bible. During the Jacobean time period in which the play was created, Christianity was crucial to daily life: when Lady Macbeth suggests that Macbeth should be a "serpent", she asks that he act like the snake from the Garden of Eden, who tempts Adam and Eve - evil. The noun "serpent" highlights the lengths that Lady Macbeth is willing to go to, in order to become ~~king~~ Queen and ~~imposes~~ ^{implies} that she would like Macbeth to kill Duncan while acting "innocent". The animalistic imagery has connotations of violence, which would have shocked the Jacobean audience, as women were stereotypically seen as kind, motherly figures rather than hostile and manipulative, however the contemporary audience may have viewed her statement differently, as in a ~~more~~ modernised setting, women have more power in society, implying that a villainess is not as shocking as it would have been in the Shakespearean era.

devil porter ← ignore
(Section A continued)

Secondly, Shakespeare uses the metaphor of the "travelling lamp" being "strangled by the night", to symbolise how evil ~~Macbeth~~ has overpowered good. The verb "strangled" has connotations of death, suggesting that the "light" ~~was~~ ^{has been} inside of Macbeth has died, and all that is left ~~for~~ ^{evil} is ~~the~~ and darkness, implying that there is no salvation for ~~Macbeth~~ after Duncan's regicide. This would have been shocking for the Jacobean audience as ~~Macbeth~~ Macbeth was now the king of Scotland after committing treason, an act against the king and therefore God, as well as murder. During this time period, any act that goes against God would have been unthinkable, especially during such a heavily religious era. Furthermore, the contemporary audience would have felt similarly: although we are less focused on religion, killing a king is still a very shocking and distressing action, illiciting discomfort into both the Jacobean and contemporary audience. ★

Shakespeare also uses symbolism when the Porter is guarding the gates of Macbeth's castle, referring to it as "hell" and stating he will "devil-porter no further". The nouns "hell" and "devil" further correlate to religious themes, implying that Macbeth's

(Section A continued) castle is hell, emphasising the evil deeds that take place there. The religious symbolising of "hell" ~~could~~ ^{further suggest} ~~also suggest~~ that Macbeth is evil and that he is a devil, which would have been worrisome for the Jacobean audience, especially King James, as kings were expected to be ~~a~~ kind and loyal to his subjects, yet Macbeth has committed regicide and is responsible for his friend, Banquo's murder. This would have been very distressing in this time period, considering that people were supposed to ~~be~~ be loyal to their kings; ~~Shakespeare does this to show King James~~
~~murder~~

★ Shakespeare does this in order to compliment and show King James what happens to those who go against the king: they would be damned and eventually go to Hell. (Paragraph 2)

Lastly, Shakespeare uses ~~symbolic~~ animalistic imagery to symbolise Macbeth's crushing guilt - when he states "on scorpions is my mind, dear wife." The noun "scorpions" implies that he has no control over his own thoughts and that his guilt has taken root; this would have been ironic to the audience, as it contrasts with the fact that Macbeth was now in charge of Scotland, but was no longer in charge of his

(Section A continued) own thoughts. This also would have been surprising as it emphasises that Macbeth is not suitable to be king as he had little control over himself, alongside the fact that he is a murderer.



Part (a) Level 2 - 6 marks

Part (b) Level 5 - 17 marks

Part (a):

- This response is very short with brief comments which are undeveloped.
- It makes two brief points about the Witches being 'evil' and violent.
- A well written and eloquent response with terminology but limited analysis.
- Valid points are made but crossed out and therefore are unable to be awarded.
- A best fit mark is awarded.

Part (b):

- A well developed response with integrated quotations.
- A wide range of symbols are explored including: religious imagery: the serpent, the scorpion, the Garden of Eden and the gates of hell.
- These are juxtaposed with the ideas of guilt, horror and the exploitation of power.
- The response considers the impact on both the Jacobean and the contemporary audience.
- There is consistent development linked to the concept of the metaphysical elements on the events and the impact on the characters.
- Ignore the references to the terminology as we don't deduct marks for errors.
- Some overuse of the context, but this does not detract from the points made or the personal interpretation and critical analysis.



Candidates need to remember that both parts of the question are equally weighted.

Question 2

The Tempest

The extract was taken from Act 5 Scene 1, lines 1 to 32.

For Part (a), candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presents the characters of Prospero and Ariel, while Part (b) required them to explain the importance of punishment elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

The extract allowed candidates to explore the relationship between Prospero and Ariel, particularly the dynamics of power and emotional contrast between the two characters. Most responses identified Prospero's control over Ariel and the way this is reflected in his authoritative language. Many candidates also commented on Ariel's increasing independence, especially his emotive description of Gonzalo's sorrow and the idea that Ariel displays more compassion than Prospero initially does.

Stronger responses tracked the development of the extract and commented on the shift in Prospero's tone, especially in the moment where he acknowledges the humanity of Ariel's emotions and ultimately resolves to show mercy. The phrase "the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance" was frequently cited as a turning point in Prospero's characterisation. Candidates at the top end explored this moment in relation to Prospero's transformation and the broader theme of forgiveness. There was also some thoughtful commentary on Ariel's role as a moral compass or as a symbol of Prospero's conscience.

Weaker responses tended to describe the characters without close textual reference or drifted into generalised accounts of their relationship across the play. Some neglected to explore Shakespeare's methods in any real depth, missing opportunities to comment on language choices or stage directions.

Part (b)

Part (b) was accessible to most candidates and produced a wide range of responses. Many focused on the punishment of Caliban and Ferdinand, often linking these examples to themes of control, justice, and redemption. A number of candidates explored the broader moral consequences of revenge and justice in the play, and many were confident in identifying the play's emphasis on mercy and transformation.

More developed responses discussed Prospero's own experience of punishment through exile and considered how this shaped his treatment of others. Some responses also commented on Ariel's earlier imprisonment by Sycorax, recognising the theme of unjust suffering. These candidates were able to draw nuanced comparisons between different forms of punishment, whether magical, emotional or social.

Contextual references were generally sound, with many candidates linking punishment to themes of colonisation and control. Prospero's domination over the island and its inhabitants was often seen as reflective of European colonial attitudes. While most candidates acknowledged this

aspect, fewer explored the moral complexity or ambiguity of Prospero's actions in detail.

Overall, the question offered a strong opportunity for engagement with character and theme. The best responses demonstrated confident textual knowledge, insightful analysis, and secure integration of context.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for both Parts (a) and (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒ **Question 5** ☒ **Question 6** ☒

In A) Throughout the extract Shakespeare presents the characters of Ariel and Prospero in multiple ways using a variety of techniques. One of the earlier instances of the characters relationships is with Ariel reminding Prospero about the freedom he promised which can be seen as begging showing how the two characters have a power imbalance. The declarative, "On the sixth hour - at which time, my lord, you said our work should cease" highlights the fact that Ariel is weaker than Prospero as he has to remind him about the freedom Ariel was promised in a way that could be seen as persuasive to Prospero. The use of the honorific vocative, 'my lord' emphasises to the audience that Ariel is trying to gain his freedom by embedding compliments into his request to show Prospero has power.

A second example of the characters relationship later in the extract when Ariel

(Section A continued) tries to further persuade ~~per~~ Prospero again through the use of flattery. This time, instead of asking for his freedom, he compliments Prospero's ways which may be seen as an attempt to make the other treat people better or this could be argued this is being said out of fear based on the power Prospero holds. After informing ~~the~~ Prospero about how the noblemen are doing Ariel states "Your charm so strongly works 'em," the declarative informs the audience of the play that Ariel looks highly upon Prospero, or is pretending to ~~for~~ so he can get what he wants. This presents Ariel in a different, more cunning way from elsewhere in the text as he is usually obedient whereas when presented with his freedom which is being held by ~~per~~ Prospero we are informed about the more trickster side of the character.

Near the end of the extract we see a change in Prospero's tone ^{from Shakespeare} to a more forgiving and kindhearted one. ~~The character is presented this way by Sh.~~ When taking into consideration the feelings of Prospero's captives and his ~~star~~ servant, Ariel, Prospero declares "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." which highlights the evil nature of man trying to get

(Section A continued) ^{for self gain} vengeance rather than do a good deed and could emphasize a shift in Prospero's nature.

Throughout the extract, both characters are seen as equal to each other by Shakespeare based on how much they talk. Just from a glance you can tell both characters say similar amounts showing that although Prospero holds power over Ariel, he respects the other enough to share control over dialogue. This is also shown with the various questions he asks Ariel, such as the interrogative "Dost thou think so spirit?" which further emphasises ~~pro~~ Prospero's hidden but ~~kind~~ kind hearted nature shrouded by his desire for power and his magic as it effectively conveys the fact that Prospero values Ariel and his opinion, taking what he says into consideration instead of just blindly leading by himself.

(Section A continued) B)- Elsewhere in the play, punishment is mainly used to show order and power by Shakespeare with a variety of characters receiving some form of Punishment. The first time we ever see punishment in the play is with the tempest making the boat crash at the beginning. We know this is a form of ~~the~~ punishment and not a cause of nature as when we see Prospero and his daughter Miranda watching the ~~the~~ scene she ~~says~~ asks her father to stop the tempest which informs the audience that Prospero has the power to stop the tempest and for some reason he isn't which we later find out is that he is using the storm to get them to the island so he can punish and get revenge on them. Miranda asking her father to calm the tempest would be seen as strange to a Jacobean audience as usually women wouldn't have the power to order their father to do something but here it is okay to do which shows the close bond Prospero and Miranda have.

Later in the play we are introduced to another character by Shakespeare called Caliban who is living as a slave to Prospero. We later find out the reason he is a slave

(Section A continued) is a form of punishment from Prospero for attempting to violate Miranda. The name Caliban could refer to Montaigne's report 'On Canibals' which is about the inhabitants of the new world and how at the time they were 'uncivilised' but this report takes into consideration their societal norms and how the 'modern world' may be the ones getting it wrong. This is seen in Caliban as he was never taught the ways Prospero was and acted on his animalistic nature once he saw Miranda because he didn't know any better.

A third instance of punishment we see in the play is with Ferdinand also ~~becoming~~ becoming Prospero's slave. Although unlike the other two being for Prospero's sole benefit he has done this for his daughter. Prospero believes that for Ferdinand to earn his daughter's hand in marriage he needs to work for it and this is later revealed when Prospero frees Ferdinand and sets up a party for the two. Working to impress the father of whom you want to marry was seen as normal ~~in~~ when James the 1st ruled and occasionally is now as men were supposed to be able to provide for

(Section A continued) the family whilst the wife stays at home and is still, although rarely, seen that way today. This shows that although Prospero and his use of magic is evil, he still cares deeply for his daughter and wants her to be with someone deserving of her.



Part (a) Level 5 - 18 marks

Part (b) Level 5 - 17 marks

Part (a):

- This response demonstrates a secure and developed understanding of how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Prospero and Ariel in the extract.
- The candidate shows thoughtful interpretation, particularly in analysing Ariel's persuasive strategies ("honorific vocative," "declarative") and Prospero's eventual softening.
- There is effective use of textual reference, with appropriate quotation integration and some exploration of language and structure.
- The identification and discussion of the power imbalance and Ariel's flattery are sustained and insightful in places. There is some commentary on tone, motivation and character development, although not always consistently explored in detail.
- The final paragraph about dialogue balance is a perceptive observation, though it could be more closely linked to authorial craft.

Part (b):

- The candidate offers a thoughtful response to the idea of punishment elsewhere in the play, showing good knowledge of the text and its events.
- The discussion of Prospero's use of the tempest and his manipulation of Ferdinand and Caliban demonstrates a secure grasp of character motivations and thematic links.
- There is some attempt to explore contextual ideas, particularly in the paragraph on Caliban and Montaigne's "On Cannibals," which is a linked idea.
- The references to gender roles and the Jacobean context in Miranda's plea are valid and appropriate, though they would benefit from further exploration and clearer connection to Shakespeare's craft.
- The writing demonstrates coherence and some critical insight and does enough to move into Level 5.



Where possible, candidates should discuss the writer's intention.

Question 3

Romeo and Juliet

The extract was taken from Act 3 Scene 1, lines 68 to 104.

For Part (a) candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presented Mercutio, whilst Part (b) required candidates to explain the importance of revenge elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

The extract was accessible and familiar to the majority of candidates, who recognised the significance of Mercutio's role in the scene. There were numerous confident and lively responses that explored his aggression, loyalty, and humour. The most popular quotations included the repeated 'A plague o' both your houses' and the insults directed at Tybalt. Candidates frequently explored Mercutio's language, referring to metaphor, repetition, and provocative tone, although the technical terminology was not always applied accurately. Stronger responses focused on the tonal shift within the extract, comparing Mercutio's humorous start to his anger at the end. There was also perceptive discussion of dramatic irony and the idea that honour is compromised due to Romeo's behaviour. A number of candidates interpreted Mercutio's outburst as reflective of broader concerns around masculinity and the need to appear strong in public. Weaker responses tended to offer a limited, two-dimensional view of Mercutio, often overlooking the interplay between humour and loyalty. Some responses were descriptive and lacked depth, with limited or misused subject terminology. A small number were sidetracked by historical context, which was not required for this part of the question.

Part (b)

The theme of revenge was widely recognised and candidates were able to refer to key incidents such as the deaths of Tybalt and Mercutio. Many responses focused on Romeo's vengeance, while stronger answers explored Juliet's inner conflict, the Friar's attempts to resolve the feud, and broader references to honour and civil disorder. Some candidates also drew on the Prologue and Capulet's anger in Act 3 Scene 5 to support their interpretations. The best answers maintained a clear thematic focus, examining how revenge drives the action and comparing different characters' responses – such as Benvolio's peacekeeping versus Tybalt's aggression. There were also some thoughtful explorations of how revenge intertwines with fate, including Juliet's choice to fake her death as a subversion of parental control. Weaker responses often struggled to identify examples of revenge beyond the obvious, or attempted to force less relevant plot points into the argument. Some drifted into contextual discussion without clearly linking it to the theme, while others gave narrative accounts lacking in textual reference or analysis. Context was frequently introduced using the phrase 'Contextually', which could become formulaic, though it did help some candidates remember to include it. Overall, the more successful responses offered a personal interpretation supported by well-chosen textual references and a clear sense of the theme's significance.

The following response was awarded a Level 2 for both Part (a) and Part (b).

mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 1 ☒

Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

Question 4 ☒

Question 5 ☒

Question 6 ☒

Paragraph 1

3A

Shakespeare presents Mercutio as a trusting friend to Romeo as he defends Romeo against Tybalt as he draws his sword out, "Alla stoccata carries it away" trusting Romeo ~~it~~ will do the same standing up against Tybalt but Mercutio get betrayed as Romeo doesn't want to fight as he has a relation with Tybalt, he married Juliet which Mercutio is unaware of. Romeo does the opposite "Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up" still trying to a great friend he tells him to put the ~~sword~~ sword away. The worst happens Mercutio got betrayed by his own friends which he trusts the most, he tells ^{them} to "ROMEO Draw, Benvolio! Beat down their weapons" neither of them do anything but warning them to stop and Mercutio ends up getting stabbed.

Paragraph 2

(Section A continued)

Shakespeare presents Mercutio in the middle of the play as still joking while he's ^{End} stabbed, trying to be stoic. Mercutio after getting stabbed says, "a scratch, a scratch" which links back to the Elizabethan where the play took place as the upper class men supposed to be stoic faced in any situation. Romeo confirms this as he says "Courage, man: the hurt cannot be much" telling Mercutio to man up like the stereotype normalised in the ~~the~~ Elizabethan era. Mercutio repeats "A plague o' both your houses" a line which later becomes true as Mercutio dying in the builds up towards other characters death causing him to be trigger to causing series of death in the play.

Introduction

Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet in the Elizabethan Era where society was a patriarchal society being run by men but in his play he based Juliet on Queen Elizabeth not needing a man and be able to her own choices and showing her to be smarter than the men in the play and having an open mind for her choices.

make



P 7 9 5 7 4 A 0 3 2 0

3

Turn over ►

(Section A continued)

3B

Shakespeare presents revenge after Mercutio's death, and Romeo as after killing Mercutio Tybalt runs and Romeo swears to get revenge for his best friend's death, "thy snake Tybalt" calling Tybalt a coward for his action, after what he did to Mercutio when Romeo and Tybalt are face to face, Romeo says "I will put thy rapier inside you" Romeo saying ~~the~~ informing Tybalt of his own death, threatening him of his doom.

Another way revenge is presented by Romeo being exiled. After Romeo kills Tybalt he goes into hiding in the friar's cell and the Prince is looking for him and Romeo is informed of his exile. Friar to Romeo, "thy Prince has exiled you from the city" This is considered as revenge Romeo killed a Capulet so as revenge to the Capulets Prince has exiled him from the city since Romeo is a higher class he got saved from not being killed as the Prince said before any more killing in my city will lead the Montague and Capulets

(Section A continued)

death.



Part (a) Level 2 - 7 marks

Part (b) Level 2 - 7 marks

Part (a):

- It is unclear if the introduction (at the end of Section A) is linked to Section A or B. If B, it can be included as containing some contextual information.
- The response does respond to the question.
- The quotations selected are relevant, but the analysis is not of language, form and structure and there are some references to contextual information.
- There is no use of analytical language.

Part (b):

- There is some simple implied contextual references including: social class and the use of death for committing sin.
- A largely narrative response but with apt material.
- The points do deal with the idea of revenge but are underdeveloped.



Part (a) always assesses language, structure and form.

The following response was awarded a Level 5 for both Part (a) and Part (b).

Chosen question number:

10:19

Question 1 ☒

Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

Question 4 ☒

Question 5 ☒

Question 6 ☒

a) In the beginning of the extract, Shakespeare characterises Mercutio to mock Tybalt, and have an aggressive demeanor. This is his aggressive tone but behaviour is seen through the descriptive adjective "rat-catcher". Here Mercutio is presented to ^{provoke} Tybalt in order to further anger him. His dehumanisation further acts as a challenge on Tybalt's status, ~~which later~~ which is used to mentally control and manipulate him. He is further presented to dehumanise to Tybalt by calling him ~~a~~ the "king of rats" with "nine lives". The adjective noun "king" connotes wealth, ~~health~~ and a good lifestyle however the noun "rats" suggests to ~~the Tyb~~ the audience that he is worthless. The oxymoron here ~~a~~ is used to emphasise the fact that he is considered to be ~~was~~ almost worthless as Mercutio. Perhaps his characterisation of Tybalt to be nearing the bottom of the great chain of being. Shakespeare depicts Mercutio in this way in order

(Section A continued) to portray to the audience that Mercutio is not only serving as a comedic character, seen in previous acts, but also a symbol of ~~as~~ the ideal man in ~~or~~ the Elizabethan era as he is short fused but also protecting his friend from danger by duelling with Tybalt, a stark contrast from the "calm" of Romeo. The contrast also signifies how ~~more~~ the character of Mercutio is ~~seen to~~ portrayed as provoking and ready to fight.

Once the ~~the~~ brawl is over however, ~~More~~ we learn that Mercutio is injured. Towards the ~~end~~ of the extract, Mercutio is depicted to be a positive but angry character. He remarks that the wound is "a scratch". ~~the~~ ~~The noun "scratch" connotes only~~ mild injury. He further says how "it's not so deep as well" ~~and~~ the semantic field created here of a mild, and bearable injury suggests how Mercutio's insouciance conveys a sense of relief to ~~be~~ everyone. However the dramatic irony is purposefully used by Shakespeare ~~in order to~~ as ~~as~~ the audience at the time would've known the stab from Tybalt was fatal. This highlights that even through times of hardship, Mercutio is presented to make light of dark situations. He ~~however, contrast~~ Contrastingly however, Mercutio's is

(Section A continued) Presented to also serve as an angry and bitter character. He repeats "O plague O' both your houses!" The repetition emphasises the plague that has been infected both the Montagues and the Capulets as this very "ancient grudge" ~~made~~ infected many generations in which has led to the ~~dec~~ downfall of Mercutio - the exclamation further emphasises the ~~severe~~ severity of this "grudge". The listing "O dog..." ~~As~~ also is used to present Mercutio to further mock the "Villain" Tybalt in order to still show hatred towards him. ~~as~~ The ~~scene~~ is presented in his dying moments here to be irrational in his speech due to his ~~la~~ vocabulary being consumed by the hatred he feels towards Tybalt. He further states how he will be "worms's meat", signifying his acknowledgement of his fate - he knows he will die as ~~he~~ the noun "worm" suggests he will be buried in a grave, ~~As~~ the worms will come and use him for nutrients. ~~His~~ ~~acc~~ His acceptance is poignant here.

b) In ~~Romeo~~ Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, ^{the importance of} revenge is depicted shown through many characters. The reasoning for the revenge felt by many is due to an "ancient grudge" where "civil blood [made] civil hands unclean". The grudge has effected so many to the point where even the servants want revenge and feel anger towards the other house.

We are first met with the servants, Sampson and Gregory. ~~The first~~ During the first scene, they feel anger towards the ~~to~~ opposite house as they begin to sexualise the ~~or~~ maids of the other house by saying ~~that~~ they would "thrust" them against a wall. The talk about rape ~~and~~ sexual assault was common in the ~~a~~ Elizabethan era as women were seen to be of lower class in the great chain of being compared to men ~~as~~

(Section A continued) Men had control of the patriarchal society, they were able to have such conversations of abuse. Their hate and revenge is further seen when ~~one~~ ~~see~~ one of the servants says he will "bite [his] thumb at them". This act would ~~be~~ ^{act} have been seen as a very disrespectful thing towards the other house. ~~We~~ ~~are~~ Shakespeare however deliberately does this in order to portray the idea that even the lower class servants feel the need to serve and honour the family name. Honour was a big aspect of the patriarchal society as honouring your family name was seen as a great act of respect for the family. Therefore even though the servants do disrespect the other house, they are in reality, subjects of the society they live in and feel the urge to defend their house for revenge against the "grudge". Shakespeare characterizes them in this way to show that aggression and revenge was spread throughout the ~~the~~ social ranks, making its way down to the servants - highlighting to the audience that this was the norm in Elizabethan England.

However, revenge isn't just depicted by lower social class men, but also higher social class men, seen through Shakespeares characterization

(Section A continued) of Lord Capulet. As Juliet denies the offer of marrying Paris the "valiant Paris", by ~~or~~ saying that she "It is an honour that [she] dream not of", Lord Capulet, her father, he proceeds to call her a "wretch" and a "green sickness carion" as well as a "young baggage". Lord Capulet here is presented to express his anger and revenge through verbal abuse towards Juliet. The dehumanisation and aggressive tone all show how just one disapproval from a daughter, ~~as~~ ignites a spark of anger and revenge in the father. The audience of today would have expected him to ~~show~~ convey his parental love for her, however he does ~~a~~ not and ~~instead~~ instead embodies hatred towards her denial. In the patriarchal society of Elizabethan England this was considered to be normal as the ~~man~~ father in the house was expected to have full control over the daughter, as shown here by the character of Lord Capulet. ~~His~~ His revenge and anger plays an important role in the play as Shakespeare depicts Lord Capulet in this way to emphasise that in the patriarchal society many women in the house experienced feelings of no self control due to the control of the father's decisions. Lord Capulet wants to marry Juliet and Paris for selfish reasons such as wealth, status and to be able to have an heir, all of which

(Section A continued) were normal desires seen at the time, Lord Capulet's outburst of rage here depicts the portrays how many men of the time were unable to achieve their desires were forced to act aggressively towards others.



Part (a) Level 5 - 18 marks

Part (b) Level 5 - 18 marks

Part (a):

- The response constructs a consistent interpretation of Mercutio by evaluating the language used in the extract.
- The response begins by showing how Mercutio is 'aggressive' and provocative in the language he uses to dehumanise Tybalt: 'descriptive adjective "rat-catcher"' and the discussion of 'king of rats' as an 'oxymoron', which may be debatable. There is also mention of the structural point that he is acting as a 'contrast from the calm of Romeo'.
- Moving to the end of the brawl and Mercutio's injury, there is a discussion of the 'semantic field' which makes light of the wound ('scratch', 'not as deep as well') and his bitterness, as expressed through his repeated curse of the feuding houses.
- The response is sufficiently cohesive and the subject terminology is sufficiently precise and integrated to deserve a mark securely in Level 5.

Part (b):

- This is an assured and perceptive response which also merits a mark in Level 5.
- In the first paragraph, it is argued that the vengeful feud permeates all social classes contained within a household, as does an acceptance of misogyny of sexual violence in a patriarchal society.
- The idea is developed in a discussion of how Capulet, hurt and angered by Juliet, wreaks vengeance on her by threats and verbal abuse. The role of marriage in Elizabethan society is effectively woven into this discussion.
- A mature critical style is employed throughout, supported by some discerning references.



The best answers use their essay to develop an idea in detail.

Question 4

Much Ado About Nothing

The extract was taken from Act 1 Scene 1, lines 40 to 73.

For Part (a) candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presented Beatrice's opinion of Benedick, whilst Part (b) required candidates to explain the importance of conflict elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

The extract was well received and accessible to candidates across the ability range. Most candidates were able to identify Beatrice's mocking tone and understood her witty dismissal of Benedick's reputation. Many recognised that Beatrice's exaggerated insults and comic comparisons suggested not genuine dislike, but a deeper emotional complexity. Her lines such as "he is a very valiant trencher-man" and the extended metaphor comparing Benedick to a disease were frequently explored as examples of her sharp wit and disdainful affection.

Stronger responses analysed the language closely, commenting on Shakespeare's use of metaphor, wordplay, and hyperbole to construct Beatrice's scornful persona. The best answers explored the layering of humour and criticism, showing how Beatrice both undermines Benedick's military achievements and mocks his masculinity. Her comments about his loyalty being as changeable as "the fashion of his hat" were frequently examined to suggest Benedick's perceived superficiality. Some responses also discussed structure, such as the exchange of dialogue and how Beatrice's dominance in the conversation reveals her quick intellect.

Weaker responses tended to paraphrase the extract or focus solely on Beatrice as a character without referring to language, form, or structure. Some drifted into general summaries of Beatrice and Benedick's relationship rather than analysing how her opinion is crafted within the extract. A number of responses used limited or incorrect terminology, while others missed the opportunity to explore the humorous or performative aspects of Beatrice's speech.

Part (b)

This was tackled with confidence by many candidates. Most recognised the idea of conflict as central to the play's comedic and dramatic tension. Don John's schemes were a frequent focus, particularly his efforts to ruin Hero and Claudio's relationship. Many candidates explored the theme of social conflict, especially in relation to gender, with some perceptive answers commenting on Leonato's internal conflict between his reputation and his love for Hero after the accusation of infidelity.

Stronger responses linked different types of conflict: verbal, emotional, and societal, and considered how these drive the narrative forward. There was also thoughtful exploration of how conflict is used for comic purposes, especially in Beatrice and Benedick's exchanges, and how it shifts to something more serious in the second half of the play. Contextual references were generally sound, with common links to patriarchal expectations and the honour culture of Shakespeare's time.

Overall, candidates engaged well with the extract and demonstrated a secure understanding of the characters and themes. The best responses were analytical, precise in their use of evidence, and showed a good awareness of Shakespeare's dramatic methods. Less successful responses were more narrative or character-focused, but still often showed a good grasp of plot and intention.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for both Parts (a) and (b).

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒
Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒

In this scene, which is situated at the outset of the play, the primary characters and their relationships are established, ~~at~~ against the Messenger with Beatrice's ~~first~~ incessant verbal assault ^{transgressing} what is deemed polite manners in the Elizabethan era. However, the audience will delight in her jarring ridicule of Benedick, enjoying an atypical representation of a ~~man~~ woman belonging to the contemporary era.

The ~~the~~ conversation succeeding Beatrice's interruption was in verse, and ~~she~~ she deflates the pompous atmosphere, demanding ^{by changing to prose.} that attention be paid to her. As her ~~own~~ condemnation of Benedick is unusually vicious, the ~~Messenger~~ ^{"He hath done good service"} sententious messenger attempts to defend Benedick's honour, unwittingly involving himself in this ~~verbal~~ verbal battle. This is indicated by the structure, ^a ~~the~~ tight Stichomythia indicative of fast and ~~rapid~~ rapid back-and-forth. Beatrice begins her onslaught ^{by} ~~by~~ jesting ^{at} ~~at~~ Benedick ~~as~~ as a glutton, "he hath an excellent stomach", negating the Messenger's comments about his valour. When the Messenger ignores her comment ~~and attempt~~ ^{graciously} to remain ~~polite~~, he asserts that he is a "good soldier too, lady." However, Beatrice, ~~in~~ in her typically witty manner, converts the adverb "too" into a preposition, ~~and~~ turning his own words

(Section A continued) against him. ~~and~~ She states, ~~that~~ ~~he is~~ "good soldier to a lady. But what is he to a lord?", showing her knowledge of him as a womaniser, which may perhaps ^{hint at it being} ~~be~~ one of the reasons she is so opposed ~~to him~~ to him. The second part also undermines his status as a soldier, ~~and~~ revealing her dislike of his characteristic pride. ~~But~~ However, the messenger does not relent, and proclaims that Benedick is "stuffed with all honourable virtues", to which she parodies, quipping that he is "no less than a stuffed man." This is a crude slight on his virility and moral hollowiness, traits of him that he seems to disdain the most. ~~But~~ Finally, the verbal skirmish is interrupted by Leonato, who ~~and~~ reveals that there is a "merry war" between the two. Beatrice ~~and~~ ^{and} patently enjoys ~~a~~ a show of her wit, as she delivers an overblown, comically barbed depiction of Benedick's character, invectives targeted at his "wit", his "wealth", his fickle loyalty that "changes" ~~at~~ at the "fashion of his hat". These are all qualities that would be prevalent in a gentleman of the era, and as she purports his lack of all, ~~and~~ she is insinuating his unlikability. ~~and~~

In the end, she uses a series of metaphors and similes, ~~to~~, "devil", "like a disease" to prefer her preferred distance from him, but her ~~and~~ incessant inquiry ~~at~~ of him ironically communicates interest and, possibly, affection for him. ~~Any~~ Any notice, noting is attention, and this scene sets the precedent for ~~the~~ the evolution of their relationship beyond this point, marked by a matched repartee and ~~and~~ love disguised in jest.

(Section A continued) b) ~~The importance of~~ Shakespeare's comedy "Much Ado about Nothing" (is set in 16th century Messina, a male dominated town governed with the values of Elizabethan England). The importance and prevalence of conflict ~~is~~ may be seen in the way ^{both} it divides and ~~by~~ unites characters. Conflict is a necessary barrier to a happy resolution; only through conflict may secrets be uncovered, truths be revealed. ~~The story~~ ~~is~~ In so structured a society such as Messina, the foundations of conflicts rest appropriately on concerns such as honour, chastity and loyalty. ~~Once~~ Once conflicts have been surmounted, the characters must have a happy denouement, ~~and~~ celebrating the triumph over ~~a~~ ~~and~~ animus.

The "merry war" between Benedick and Beatrice is one of the most constant ~~and~~ and sustained show of conflict throughout the play. From the outset, Beatrice butts in to a conversation with a politely phrased question about "Signor Mountanto", meaning upthrust or stick-up, bawdily and ~~and~~ undermining Benedick's valour. It is reciprocal, however, as Benedick personifies her as "Lady Disdain", ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ^{teases} her of her spinsterhood and age. They are equally matched in this conflict, and it is but another form of courtship amongst ~~these~~ unconventional lovers. Conflict in this case, even in the early stages of their relationship hints at latent affinity, pointing at an eventual reconciliation ^{expected of the comedic} ~~which the audience~~ genre. ~~Then~~ A more insidious representation of conflict, ~~however~~ ^{nevertheless}, is presented later on, in Don John's successful ruination of Hero. Conflict is inextricably linked with male allegiances, honour and female ~~and~~ ~~of~~ purity, as Claudio is gulled with

(Section A continued) ease to believe in the infidelity of his betrothed "from afar" in the orchard. Shakespeare uses the maternity with which conflict arises to ~~the~~ critique, human folly and anxieties, as Claudio would rather believe a bastard "composed and framed of treachery", whose downfall he had a part in supplanting, rather than a woman, his spothless Hero. The conflict is not remedied, as it runs counter to vanity, with Claudio immediately vowing to "shame" Hero at her wedding. His betrayal to her is not only public but a personal one, ~~as~~ as a woman's worth was contingent on the views of society, subject to male interpretation. ~~and~~ Leonato, Hero's own father, prefers her death over her supposed indiscretion, ~~the~~ dwelling incredulously on his dishonour, rather than her suffering: "but mine I loved, and mine I praised...". Repetition and profuse imagery, "O she hath fallen / Into a pre-ordained ink" are indicative of a mind veered to insanity by conflict, and ~~his~~ reasons for his ruthless treatment of Hero is ~~the~~ central to him. ~~The~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Conflict brings out the latent aggression that underlies his courtly and senile mask, as does for Claudio: His love is possessive and authoritarian, ~~the~~ in his prolonged lamentations, ~~the~~ the proliferation of the "I" and "mine" ~~the~~ possessive, ~~the~~ revealing an egocentricity ~~the~~ and self-righteousness. Claudio, similarly, discards who he once proclaimed a "jewel", condemning the discrepancy between her "outward graces", ~~the~~ ~~the~~ as chaste as Diana ~~the~~ - ironically true - and her unruly and corrupt heart - ironically

(Section A continued) ~~a~~ a fallacy. Claudio has the ability to reduce people into their most primitive sense of indignation and scorn, which is ~~also~~ ^{exhibited} so ruthlessly by all the male characters.

~~Through~~ It is only through conflict that Claudio's ~~narcissistic~~ narcissistic projection of ~~a~~ male ideal onto Hero can be seen, ~~at his death~~ ~~indicating of her surrounding~~ ~~that the remaining men~~, as ~~a~~ Hero's death is necessary to resolve ~~the~~ it — only through her symbolic death & Claudio's repentance. In contrast to the changeability of ~~these~~ Claudio and Leonato, conflict empowers Bea and Ben, as she demands him to extirpate Hero's dishonour with the imperative "kill Claudio". Though Benedick tamponises internally, he ultimately chooses to stand with his loved one ~~of~~, with ~~the~~ ethics against his previous blind solidarity with the men.

Therefore, ~~a~~ through Shakespeare's multifaceted prerogative of conflict, its ability to reveal truths and reconcile relationships may be shown, and ~~a~~ at the end conflict is ~~an~~ always closely linked with love and loyalty.



Part (a) Level 5 – 20 marks

Part (b) Level 5 – 20 marks

Part (a):

- This is a mature and assured response that meets all the Level 5 criteria. The candidate demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how Shakespeare presents Beatrice's opinion of Benedick, analysing both language and structure to great effect.
- There is an excellent handling of terminology throughout, with precise use of subject-specific vocabulary.
- The analysis is richly evaluative and interpretative, e.g. the discussion of Beatrice's wordplay ("too... to") and her "overextended comically barbed depiction" of Benedick's fickleness ("fashion of his hat").
- Language, form, and structure are integrated into the discussion: the response evaluates the switch from verse to prose, the "tight rhythmicity" of the exchange, and the use of metaphor and simile in shaping tone and character relationships.
- The final paragraph is especially insightful, exploring the idea that Beatrice's wit paradoxically reveals affection, making a convincing connection between form, theme, and character development.



Part (b):

- The candidate develops a conceptual and coherent line of argument about conflict across the play, moving confidently between comic and tragic aspects, and demonstrating mature insight into character, structure, and theme.
- AO1 is consistently high-level: the response traces the development and implications of conflict with perceptive commentary on how it functions both to divide (Claudio/Hero, Leonato/Hero) and to unite (Beatrice/Benedick).
- Contextual understanding (AO3) is integrated seamlessly, e.g. the discussion of 16th-century Messina and Elizabethan gender expectations, the notion of female chastity, and how conflict arises from honour-based social codes.
- The interpretation of Don John's treachery and Claudio's vanity is sophisticated, particularly in the analysis of dramatic irony, egocentric projection, and the social role of marriage and honour.
- There is clear command of language and expression, with precise references to the play and deft handling of Shakespeare's wider intentions.
- The candidate presents judicious, conceptual insights into how conflict reveals truth and propels relationships, with the final evaluative statement linking conflict to love and loyalty.



This answer demonstrates how integrated AO1 and AO3 can form a conceptualised argument.

Question 5

Twelfth Night

The extract was taken from Act 3 Scene 4, lines 222 to 256.

For Part (a), candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presents Sir Toby Belch in this extract, while Part (b) required candidates to explain the importance of marriage elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

The extract allowed candidates to explore Sir Toby Belch's role as both a comic instigator and a manipulator. Most seemed familiar with this scene and recognised that Sir Toby is exaggerating Sir Andrew's capabilities in order to provoke fear and confusion in Viola/Cesario. Many candidates commented on the absurdity and theatricality of Sir Toby's language, recognising the extract as an example of dramatic irony, where the audience knows more than Viola.

Stronger responses analysed Shakespeare's use of simile and metaphor, particularly in the phrases "bloody as the hunter" and "souls and bodies hath he divorced three", to show how Sir Toby creates an intimidating and deliberately false image of Sir Andrew. Some candidates also explored the use of mock-heroic language and hyperbole to highlight Sir Toby's comic excess. There were perceptive comments about his manipulation of Viola/Cesario, and how this moment reveals both his capacity for mischief and his disregard for others' wellbeing. A few responses considered how this scene builds tension while maintaining the play's comic tone.

Weaker responses tended to paraphrase the extract or focused on Sir Toby's personality without closely analysing Shakespeare's language. Some candidates described Sir Toby as "funny" or "mean" but offered limited exploration of how these impressions are constructed. A number of responses also confused elements of the plot or misidentified character motivations, which weakened the overall analysis or suggested they may have answered the question by mistake.

Part (b)

Part (b) was generally well handled, and many candidates were able to comment on the significance of marriage within the play. Most recognised marriage as a central plot device and discussed how it is used to create confusion, drive deception, and ultimately restore order. There was frequent reference to the multiple mistaken identities and the final pairing of characters in the last act.

Stronger responses considered the transactional and political nature of marriage, particularly in relation to Olivia, who is pursued by Orsino, Sir Andrew, and eventually marries Sebastian. Some candidates also explored how Viola's disguise complicates the marriage plot, and how marriage is used as a form of social resolution. A few perceptive answers considered the contrast between genuine affection and self-serving intentions, as seen in the difference between Viola's love for Orsino and Sir Andrew's pursuit of Olivia.

Contextual understanding was generally secure, with most candidates referencing Elizabethan attitudes to marriage, gender roles, and social status. Some linked Olivia's independence to

contemporary concerns about women and inheritance. However, a number of responses included only superficial references to context or bolted-on remarks about patriarchal society without fully linking these to the play's events.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for both Parts (a) and (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒ **Question 5** ☒ **Question 6** ☒

~~Question 5, part a:~~

Plan:

→ cunning

→ deceitful

→ Manipulative

Question 5, Part a:

Plan:

→ cunning

→ direct speech

→ deceitful

→ word choice

→ manipulative

→ metaphors

→ listing

In this extract Shakespeare presents Sir Toby Belch as, cunning, deceitful and manipulative using a range of literary techniques and style of writing ~~de~~. Shakespeare does this to help develop the character of Sir Toby and the way we portray him in our minds.

(Section A continued) Firstly, in this extract ~~we can~~ Shakespeare Presents Sir Toby Belch as deceiptful. Shakespeare has presented Sir Toby as deceiptful with the ~~the~~ use of conversation with Viola, who is disguised as Cesario, and how Sir Toby describes Sir Andrew Aguecheek. In this extract Sir Toby is describing Sir Andrew as a "bloody as the hunter", Shakespeare uses this simile to show how deceiptful Sir Toby is as we know that Sir Andrew is not that brave and how later in the play Sir Andrew is easily beaten by Sebastian. Shakespeare also uses listing "quick, skillful and deadly" to show how Sir Toby has lied about Sir Andrew and how Sir Toby is trying to deiere Viola into scaring her out of a fight.

Secondly, Shakespeare presents Sir Toby as cunning. Shakespeare has done this by the use of word choice and how Sir Toby is trying to ~~scare~~ ~~Viola~~ scare Viola and get his way and get what he wants, as in the play we know

(Section A continued) Sir Toby doesn't actually want Viola and Sir Andrew to fight. So Shakespeare shows he's cunning as ~~he~~ ^{Sir Toby} uses Sir Toby uses words "wrath can furnish man withal" to scare Viola into admitting defeat against Sir Andrew. Shakespeare also uses metaphors to show Sir Toby's cunningness "Satisfaction can be none but by pangs of death" to scare Viola and so that Sir Toby can get his way in the end.

Thirdly, Shakespeare presents Sir Toby as manipulative in this extract. Shakespeare does this using simile "strip your sword stark" to create a type of hissing sound, like one of a snake to show how he is being manipulative and is how Sir Toby is trying to manipulate Viola. Shakespeare also presents Sir Toby as manipulative with the use of ~~metaphors~~ listing "awaited" is quick, skillful, and deadly", "youth, strength, skill and wrath" to show how Sir Toby is trying to manipulate Viola into giving up the fight and surrendering.

(Section A continued) ?

In Conclusion, Shakespeare presents Sir Toby as Cunning, delectful and manipulative in this extract with the use of a multiple of literary techniques such as listing, similes, metaphors etc, to show us how Sir Toby Belch always wants to get his way and will do whatever it takes to achieve it.

(Section A continued)

Question 5, Part B:

Plan:

→ The ending of the play:

- Olivia + Sebastian

- Maria + Sir Toby

- Viola + Orsino
 - ↳ (promise of marriage)

→ Orsino wanting to marry Olivia at the beginning

→ unrequited love

↳ "It must be the food of love play on"

In twelfth night Shakespeare shows the importance of marriage from the very beginning.

Firstly, Shakespeare shows the importance of marriage with the character of Orsino and how he is in love with Olivia and wants to marry her, but she has sworn of men for "7 years" as a result of her brother's death.

(Section A continued) Shakespeare uses Orsino to present how in the Elizabethan society marriage was seen as a necessity and how most men wanted it. Shakespeare uses the character of Orsino to present the effects of marriage as we can see how much of a reaction to ~~show~~ how thinking Cesario has married Olivia "you deceived me now die".

Secondly, marriage is important in this play as Shakespeare uses it to show to create comedy within the sub plot and how Malvolio, a puritanical character, is acting foolish and out of character so that he can gain Olivia's favour and marry her and gain power and wealth as he starts imagining himself as "Count" and now he would "set rid of" Sir Toby. In the end it is revealed that Olivia never intended to ~~to~~ marry or ever had feelings for ~~Sir~~ Malvolio and he is made a fool of, and storms off the stage saying "I will have my revenge" to Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Feste and Maria. ~~So~~ Shakespeare does this to show how significant marriage was in that time and how

(Section A continued) It affected one's status and wealth, he also used it in this way to make a fool of Malvolio to entertain the Elizabethan Society as Malvolio represents the Puritans who were trying to get rid of theatre and since Shakespeare made a fool of Malvolio it will make the audience laugh and enjoy it due to their disdain of the Puritans.

Thirdly, Shakespeare presents marriage as something that happens between ~~2~~ two people who love each other / due to a person's love. We see this with Olivia and Sebastian and how Olivia was in love with Cesario (Viola), who is Sebastian's twin sister and how she settled for Sebastian and married him, showing how love caused her to do so against what she previously said about being "chaste" and not looking at a man for "7 years".

In Conclusion, Shakespeare shows us the importance of marriage throughout the play using it to create comedy.

(Section A continued) and make the audience laugh,
also showing how love is very
fickle.

x



Part (a) Level 3 - 12 marks

Part (b) Level 3 - 12 marks

Part (a):

- This response shows a sound understanding of how Shakespeare presents Sir Toby Belch in the extract, with some valid and relevant ideas supported by quotation and discussion.
- The candidate clearly identifies character traits (cunning, deceitful, manipulative) and makes some effective links to Shakespeare's use of language, including simile, listing, sibilance, and metaphor.
- There is a solid grasp of textual meaning and some engagement with how literary techniques contribute to characterisation, e.g. "as bloody as the hunter" and "wrath can furnish man withal." Terminology is used, although not always fluently. There is some mechanical application of terms, rather than evaluating their function.
- Form and structure are touched upon.
- The conclusion summarises points without extending the analysis.

Part (b):

- The response gives a relevant and personal interpretation of how Shakespeare presents the importance of marriage in *Twelfth Night*.
- There is a clear attempt to address AO1, with examples drawn from across the play (Orsino, Malvolio, Olivia and Sebastian). Some analysis is thoughtful, especially the link between Malvolio and Shakespeare mocking Puritans, which also shows some engagement with AO3.
- The response shows an understanding that marriage is a source of comedy, power, and status, and references are generally accurate.
- There is less consistent analysis of character motivations or deeper themes (e.g. disguise, gender, identity) that would elevate the response to Level 4.
- Contextual understanding (AO3) is present but a little superficial at times. The Puritan reference is relevant, but could be better integrated with discussion of authorial purpose.
- The argument develops clearly across three paragraphs and ends with a reasonable conclusion, though it does not fully synthesise ideas or engage with Shakespeare's broader commentary on love or society.



Candidates should look for where they can push discussion further to move from Level 3 to Level 4.

Question 6

The Merchant of Venice

The extract was taken from Act 1 Scene 1, lines 73 to 104.

For Part (a) candidates were asked to explore how Shakespeare presented Gratiano, whilst Part (b) required candidates to explain the importance of loyalty elsewhere in the play.

Part (a)

Although fewer responses were seen for this text, those that were marked showed a solid understanding of the character relationships in the extract, particularly between Gratiano and Antonio. Most candidates engaged with the tone of the scene and were able to explore the use of humour and kindness, with some linking this to the theme of male friendship. Some candidates saw the extract as an opportunity to discuss homosexual love between the characters but this was not always well exemplified. While character understanding was generally sound, in some responses there was a noticeable lack of accurate technical terminology. Some responses made vague or incorrect references to language features, and opportunities to comment on the specific use of language were often missed. There was a tendency in some responses to drift into narrative retelling, which limited the level of analysis. More successful answers focused on the interaction between characters and identified key shifts in tone, though few candidates explored structural or rhetorical techniques in detail.

Part (b)

Loyalty was an enabling question for candidates and most could identify key relationships that reflected this, particularly Antonio's loyalty to Bassanio and Portia's to her husband. The relationship between Jessica and Shylock also featured in many responses, often used to explore tensions between familial loyalty and personal freedom. A small number of stronger responses examined the bond between Portia and Nerissa, although this was less frequently discussed. Contextual understanding was mixed. Many candidates showed awareness of antisemitism and patriarchal expectations within Venetian society, and these ideas were often used to frame character behaviour effectively. However, weaker responses struggled to integrate context meaningfully, and few made reference to the economic backdrop of the play, such as loyalty between merchants or the significance of financial bonds. Overall, responses demonstrated a general understanding of the play, with some candidates offering insightful and personal interpretations. However, more consistent integration of contextual knowledge would have strengthened many answers.

The following response was awarded a Level 3 for Part (a) and Level 5 for Part (b).

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ☒ **Question 2** ☒ **Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒ **Question 5** ☒ **Question 6** ☒

6.a)

In this extract, Gratiano is clearly shown to be a good friend of Antonio.

This extract shows Gratiano to attempt to make a significantly dramatic situation cheerful and light hearted. This is clearly demonstrated when Gratiano requests 'let me play the fool'. In saying this, Gratiano is referring to a jester and jesters are widely known for comedic acts and entertainment henceforth, showing the reader he is a good friend and wants to assist Antonio through entertainment and comedy.

Shakespeare shows Gratiano to be respectful and caring for Antonio. This is made clear at the beginning of the extract when Gratiano addresses Antonio as 'Signior Antonio'. With the use of the word 'signior', this demonstrates respect and creates a warm environment for Antonio to open up to Gratiano in as Gratiano is looking to provide advice and comfort. Therefore, this shows the reader that Gratiano is pure of heart and thoughtful of those around him which is the image Shakespeare purposefully provided.

(Section A continued)

Additionally, Shakespeare, within this extract, presents Gratiano as well educated. This is due to the fact that in Gratiano's speech, he is speaking with ten syllables and verse. ~~This is clearly done by Shakespeare as for~~ example 'with merrth and laughter let old wrinkles come'. This is one line that consists of well spoken language with ten syllables effectively arranged together. This is clearly done by Shakespeare to show to the reader that Gratiano is wise and well educated and is someone you can trust with delicate information.

6b)

Throughout the Merchant of Venice play, there are plenty examples of loyalty but not always towards friends or even family.

In the Merchant of Venice, ^{Antonio} ~~Shylock~~ demonstrates loyalty to himself and his own words. For example, Shylock sticks with the terms of his bond and Antonio does the same by instead of attempting to argue the terms in the court, he clearly tells Shylock to get on with it a claim a pound of flesh and being true to his word, Antonio shows little resistance in being compliant with Shylock's bond. Antonio is showing clear loyalty to the bond alongside immense bravery in providing minimal resistance against Shylock. However, this can also show Antonio to have a lack of judgement as he accepted the terms of the bond without any real thought or even a moment of hesitation. Therefore, this shows Shakespeare's audience during 1600, that both Jews and Christians can be loyal to the same thing, which in this case is Shylock's bond, and helps to the predominantly Christian audience in Shakespearean times to realise that they share something in common with Jews and ease anti-semitic views.

(Section A continued) Additionally, Shylock demonstrates exactly where his loyalty lies, with his wealth. An example of Shylock's loyalty to his fortune is when his daughter, Jessica, runs away and Shylock exclaims 'oh my ducats, o' my daughter, ~~oh~~ o' my ducats'. With Shylock being in emotional stress, his thoughts instantly turn to his own financial situation as he clearly prioritises his money over his own daughter. Also, Shylock only briefly mentions his daughter but not in much of a sympathetic tone, he says this to almost cover up the fact that he worries more about finance than family because after thinking of his daughter, he instantly refers back to his ducats again. This fits in with the anti-semitic stereotypes that Shakespeare's audience shared of Jews at the time, being that Jews are only bothered about finance and wealth instead of family and love but due to Venice being a merchantile city in the 1600s, many people would have agreed with this stereotype.

On ~~the~~ the other hand, Portia shows clear loyalty to her romantic partner in the play. Portia clearly says 'first, come to church and call me wife and then, to Venice in aid of your friend'. This quote clearly shows that love and devotion to romance is at the top of Portia's priority list and this evidently shows she is

(Section A continued) loyal to Bassanio. Again, this fits in with anti-semitic stereotypes of 1600 as this time it is the Christians who show love, loyalty, and devotion to romantic love, family and a sense of togetherness. Due to this, many people at the time would agree with Shakespeare on these stereotypes but because they agree with this, they also listen to Shakespeare's political message within the play about Christians' mistreatment of Jews which would have been shocking to Shakespeare's audience.

Finally, loyalty is clearly demonstrated when Portia confronts Bassanio about his lost wedding ring. During this scene, Portia had pretended to be an important Duke during the courtroom scene as a man in position of power and saved Antonio's life. In return, she requested the wedding ring of which Bassanio wore at the time. Reluctantly, he gave it away not knowing that the Duke was Portia. Now, Portia is taking the mic out of Bassanio as she has the ring but confronts Bassanio for giving it away to a Duke. Bassanio is truthful as he admits he gave it away but with 'displeasure' and 'reluctance'. This scene shows the women to have control and dominion of the situation while the men are mocked and embarrassed because of this. This scene goes against society in 1600, as it was a patriarchal society where men were in control and had dominion of such situations.

(Section A continued) However, Portia's actions go against the sexist views of Shakespeare's audience as it was a woman who put the men in their place. At the time, this was completely shocking and revolutionary.



Part (a) Level 3 - 12 marks

Part (b) Level 5 - 17 marks

Part (a):

- The response shows understanding of the character of Gratiano, commenting on his relationship with, and attitude to, Signior Antonio.
- Gratiano is identified as a "good friend", trying to be cheerful and lighthearted, while showing through the verse of his speech that he is well-educated.

There is a considerable distinction between the achievement in Parts (a) and (b).

Part (b):

- There is engagement with a range of thoughtful material which shows assurance and the style is confident throughout.
- The response begins by discussing how both Antonio and Shylock show "loyalty" towards the bond, with context indicating that Jews and Christians can be loyal to the same thing, thus easing antisemitic feeling.
- Shylock's loyalty is then seen to be to money, his "ducats", rather than his daughter, suggesting more usual antisemitic stereotypes.
- Finally, Portia's loyalty is shown to her husband Bassanio and his friend Antonio. After her success during the trial, there is a further twist involving Bassanio's wedding ring, which he has given away. Portia controls and dominates the situation, both in and out of court, against the accepted view of the role of women.

Question 7

An Inspector Calls

The question asked candidates to explore how the treatment of the working class is significant in the play.

This was a very popular question and produced a wide range of essays, many of which demonstrated a clear understanding of the position of the working class within *An Inspector Calls*. The concept itself appeared accessible to most candidates, and a substantial number of responses showed good knowledge of Priestley's politics and his intentions in writing the play. Many candidates were able to link this effectively to the treatment of Eva Smith and, increasingly, to the role of Edna. Her appearance in essays was often prompted by the question's quotation, but it also reflected thoughtful teaching on the significance of minor characters. While quotations were sometimes fabricated, these usually made clear reference to recognisable moments in the play.

Some responses tended to adopt a more narrative approach, focusing on how each character mistreated Eva Smith and thereby the working class more broadly. Stronger responses took a more conceptual approach, interrogating the structure of society, the limitations placed on working-class individuals, and the systemic injustices embedded within capitalist ideology. These answers also explored unusual quotations or moments – particularly the ending and theories relating to time and social responsibility – to offer perceptive interpretations. Several candidates confidently drew connections between Priestley's 1945 message and the inequalities present in modern society. While these comments were sometimes ambitious, they often remained rooted in the play and added thoughtful insights around social mobility and the unequal distribution of wealth. However, a minority of responses relied too heavily on political rhetoric, referring to the “evils of the bourgeoisie” or the “downtrodden proletariat”, without anchoring such claims in the text itself. Similarly, some essays described Edna's mistreatment in emotive terms without textual reference.

There was general success across AO4, with high-level vocabulary featuring regularly, although punctuation and paragraphing remained weaker. A number of responses misunderstood some contextual terminology, with occasional references to a “Jacobean” or “Victorian” audience, but these did not detract significantly from otherwise well-argued essays. A few essays introduced concepts from literary criticism, including Freud, which although imaginative, were not always appropriately applied and often detracted from the candidate's own view or argument.

The best responses balanced thoughtful context with textual evidence, offered sophisticated interpretations of Priestley's intentions, and considered audience response, irony, and structure. Even weaker responses generally remained focused on the question and showed secure understanding of the author's message.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 2 for AO1/3 and Level 2 for AO4.

there not cheap about there people

SECTION B

Post-1914 Literature

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

Chosen question number:	Question 7 ☒	Question 8 ☒	Question 9 ☒
	Question 10 ☒	Question 11 ☒	Question 12 ☒
	Question 13 ☒	Question 14 ☒	Question 15 ☒
	Question 16 ☒	Question 17 ☒	Question 18 ☒
	Question 19 ☒	Question 20 ☒	Question 21 ☒
	Question 22 ☒	Question 23 ☒	Question 24 ☒
	Question 25 ☒	Question 26 ☒	Question 27 ☒
	Question 28 ☒	Question 29 ☒	Question 30 ☒

~~Inspector calls was written by J.B. Priestley in 1945 and acted in 1945 and set in 1912. During this time social class was very important in this time. The working class was very important.~~

Inspector calls was written by J.B. Priestley in 1945 but set in 1912. Before WW2 social class was a very big thing in this time. People who worked in the social class probably didn't have a lot of money. Because the upper class people didn't want to pay them ~~enough~~ ^{live} enough to live on.

(Section B continued) "There not ^{cheap} ~~keep~~ labour there people" this quote was said to be a sense of support for people struggling with their money life. This actually says that working class were ~~less~~ less prioritised in ~~unfortunate~~ ^{the} ~~these~~ classes. On the titanic kids and women were just first ~~from~~ from the higher class.



AO1/3 Level 2 - 8 marks

AO4 Level 2 - 4 marks

- Despite this being a short response, it does show some understanding of the play and its contextual setting.
- The response makes reference to social class and how those who 'worked in the social class probably didn't have a lot of money' showing some understanding of the impact of how one's position in life can impact you financially.
- There is an appropriately chosen example selected, which is used to show some critical understanding of the theme and there is some attempt to critically analyse how it gave a 'sense of support for people struggling with their (sic) money life'.
- There is a brief link to context at the start of the response and how the play was written in '1945 and set 1912'
- AO4 – although the response is short, when taking into account the context of demand, the range of vocabulary, punctuation and sentence structure is fairly accurate and meets the requirements of a Level 2 and a mark of 4.



Candidates should try to balance AO1 and AO3 on this question.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number: Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒ Question 9 ☒
 Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒ Question 12 ☒
 Question 13 ☒ Question 14 ☒ Question 15 ☒
 Question 16 ☒ Question 17 ☒ Question 18 ☒
 Question 19 ☒ Question 20 ☒ Question 21 ☒
 Question 22 ☒ Question 23 ☒ Question 24 ☒
 Question 25 ☒ Question 26 ☒ Question 27 ☒
 Question 28 ☒ Question 29 ☒ Question 30 ☒

An Inspector calls serves as a allegorical morality play that drives the ^{didactic} ~~message~~ message of ~~collective~~ social responsibility and encourages a reform within society. The working class - who is ~~heavily~~ ~~not~~ represented by Eva Smith and Edna - are heavily exploited by the ~~the~~ intrasigent, conservative & bourgeoisie. The ~~Inspector~~ Inspector - who acts as Priestley's ~~the~~ mouthpiece - ~~as~~ represents ~~the working class's~~ ~~voit~~ the proletariat's voice, propagating the need for social justice.

The Inspector ^{exposes} ~~advocates~~ ^{industrialised exploitation} ~~for~~ the ~~working class~~ ^{of the masses} ~~by~~ by confronting Birling's business-first, apathetic ~~an~~ attitude. "We've employed ~~a~~ several hundred girls here, y'know, and they keep changing"

(Section B continued) This dismissive remark unveils how capitalist ~~ideate~~ ideology ~~is~~ views workers - particularly women - as faceless, interchangeable commodity. The Inspector, however, doesn't accept Birling's excuses and instead pushes him to see the human cost of ~~his~~ his actions, revealing the ~~is~~ dehumanisation of the proletariat and thus dismantling the mindset that justifies profit ~~of~~ over people. Through this confrontation, Priestley exposes society's inhumanity by ~~attent~~ attempting to absolve themselves ~~of~~ of responsibility.

Priestley purposefully aligns Sheila and Eva Smith to show how differing class can either lead to a privileged bubble or a life of ~~squalor~~ squalor. Sheila is described as a "pretty girl in her twenties". ^{Similarly,} ~~and~~ Eva is also described as "a rather pretty girl" ~~is~~ "aged 24". ~~However~~ ~~this~~ However, their perceived mindset for the ~~per~~ future differs significantly. Sheila is "excited" for her future with Gerald, whereas Eva ~~is~~ cannot bear to live and raise her child in an unjust community so she commits suicide. This parallel between the two allows the audience to see that the only differing factor is class - which condemns Eva to a life of suffering. Priestley therefore ~~illustrates~~

(Section B continued) evokes the need for a re-evaluation of power structures, otherwise society will perish. Alternatively, Priestley may have aligned the characters to allow Sheila to see the events through the & desperate perspective of Eva. ~~But~~ This made her unable to dismiss her role in the chain of events that drove Eva to suicide. Priestley emphasises that ~~see~~ the ~~aud~~ audience and society must imagine the ~~the~~ working class classes perspective to avoid regressing to pre-war, capitalist ideals.

In Act 3, the Inspector becomes increasingly forceful with his condemnation of the Birlings as he intensifies the moral consequences of their abhorrant actions. "You made her pay a heavy price for that, and now ~~she~~ she will make you pay a heavier price still.". The power shift to the once helpless Eva implies that guilt and conscience should ~~be~~ burden them, regardless of the legal outcome. ~~But they do not feel this burden, then~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ The Inspector temporarily lowers himself to their ideological plane by adopting the use of financial language. Here, he is mocking the Birlings and exposes how their ~~perceive~~ perceived view of the working class is absurd and cruel.

(Section B continued) This employs a greater need for communal responsibility. ~~It is saying, we~~ "If nothing else, we must share our guilt". The requirement to shift from sanctimonious, dogmatic is more than ever now, emerging from a war period and a vulnerable society. Priestley wishes to mold society into ~~a~~ a fair one by exploring the idea of a ~~welfare~~ welfare state - instead of the working class having to rely on charity organisations such as Mrs Birling's.

Overall, Priestley presents a need for reform by presenting the voiceless working class as commodity that you can ^{exploit to} "lower costs" ^{and} ~~it is~~ "higher prices".

If we do not learn from our ~~at~~ mistakes, society will perish in "fire, blood and anguish", reflecting Priestley's belief in ~~the~~ Ouspensky's theory of time: we will be born to relive the same lives if we do not change - a cycle.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an assured response which shows a high level of engagement.
- The candidate uses a wide range of textual references which show a discerning choice when approaching this task.
- There is a critical style which is developed and maintained throughout and deals with the text with a sense of maturity.
- The understanding of the text is perceptive with many interesting and thought-provoking comments made (for example, the underlying ideologies behind workers being seen as a 'commodity').
- The integration of context is convincing and helps to drive the argument. There is a focus throughout on Priestley's message (e.g. 'represents the proletariat's voice propagating the need for social justice').
- This response meets all of the requirements of Level 5.
- There is a very high level of accuracy throughout, including some impressive vocabulary which is used accurately.



Effective use of context should drive a candidate's argument forward.

Question 8

An Inspector Calls

The question asked candidates to explore the ways secrets are important in the play.

This question was less popular than Question 7 and, on the whole, produced less successful responses. While most candidates were able to engage with the idea of secrets on a basic level, many became overly focused on concrete plot details such as the hidden photograph or individual revelations, and lost sight of the broader conceptual implications. There was a tendency towards narrative retelling, with some essays listing each character's secret in turn without linking them to Priestley's message or the dramatic structure of the play.

Stronger responses explored the idea that secrecy operates thematically across the play, with one particularly insightful essay suggesting that *everyone* in the play carries secrets, from Eva Smith to the Inspector himself, whose identity is ultimately the greatest mystery. These candidates were more adept at connecting the theme of secrecy to wider ideas of social hypocrisy, patriarchy, and the importance of public reputation. Some also considered how Priestley uses secrecy to challenge audience assumptions and gradually dismantle the respectability of the Birling family. However, many responses lacked analytical depth and struggled to integrate context meaningfully. While there was general awareness of Priestley's political views and the societal pressures of the time, these were often overemphasised without sufficient reference to the text. Some essays confused characters or attributed quotations inaccurately – particularly between Gerald and Eric – which weakened the overall argument.

Despite these limitations, most candidates achieved at least Level 3 for AO4, with generally accurate spelling and a commendable attempt to use high-level vocabulary. As with other questions, punctuation and paragraphing were less secure, but did not impede communication. A number of candidates recognised the significance of the Inspector's mysterious identity, and this became a productive point of discussion for many essays. The best responses combined thematic focus with thoughtful textual evidence and a clear understanding of Priestley's purpose.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 2 for AO4.

Plot
Evidence
Explain
Intention
Cause
Effect
Context

SECTION B

Post-1914 Literature

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

Chosen question number:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Question 7 ☒ | Question 8 ☒ | Question 9 ☒ |
| Question 10 ☒ | Question 11 ☒ | Question 12 ☒ |
| Question 13 ☒ | Question 14 ☒ | Question 15 ☒ |
| Question 16 ☒ | Question 17 ☒ | Question 18 ☒ |
| Question 19 ☒ | Question 20 ☒ | Question 21 ☒ |
| Question 22 ☒ | Question 23 ☒ | Question 24 ☒ |
| Question 25 ☒ | Question 26 ☒ | Question 27 ☒ |
| Question 28 ☒ | Question 29 ☒ | Question 30 ☒ |

In an ~~aspect~~ Inspector calls secrets are important as the plot is built around secrets ~~being~~ being dug up. This can be seen as early as when MR Birling fired the girls for staying at the AS. He never told his family that he fired some girls for staying at the AS. Sheila is shocked when she hears all this out. The intention of this was to highlight that even if you look ~~like~~ like a good person you will ~~always~~ have secrets. This causes the viewer to question is MR Birling as nice as he seems. This affects us as after we ~~learn~~ learn.

(Section B continued)

About that our idea of MR Birling's character and his reputation comes across as back in 1912 reputation meant what people so. Having a bad reputation meant good status so he would want to keep it a secret.

Another point that makes an Inspector calls that makes secrets important to ~~the plot~~ ^{their} reputation when everyone finds out about what Eric did with Daisy Renton or when the details are put together by Mrs Birling they find out Eric had kept the secret that he slept with her and got pregnant then he ~~kept~~ kept another ~~secret~~ secret by taking £50 from MR Birling's company that caused her charity appeal to be denied. The intention of Priestley making the plot a bunch of secrets is to ~~show~~ ^{teach} people lying. Leads to a domino effect. This causes the audience to think back about the birling and this further affects their reputation as back in 1912 reputation meant so much. Losing a good reputation would have negatively affected the family.

(Section B continued)

Secrets are ~~also~~ important to ~~the~~ An Inspector Calls as the Inspector uses secrets to make the birlings talk about their this is seen when the Inspector shows the photo of the girl he only ~~shows~~ shows her at a time and ~~stuff~~ for all the ~~from~~ the pictures could have been the ~~from~~ people. the intention of this is to increase ~~importance~~ ~~the~~ tension and keep a mysterious aura about the Inspector this causes the viewer / audience think ~~was~~ how many people has he done this to as He seems to be perfect at building tension to make the ~~the~~ birlings speak when they don't need to this affects us as we ~~then~~ learn the Inspector is a manipulator of ~~sorts~~ sorts so that makes us question why did he ~~the~~ decide to target the birlings specifically. Back in 1912 there was only really word of mouth that you would hear something but you wouldn't know if it was ~~was~~ true you had to just believe it. so it would be better for the person to not agree with it but the Inspector was given verbal confirmation from MR Birling that it happened so the Inspector ~~so~~ now knew -

(Section B continued)

in full story.



AO1/3 Level 3 – 13 marks

AO4 Level 2 – 5 marks

- The quality of the handwriting does make the response a little difficult to read.
- The response meets all the requirements of a Level 2 and is starting to demonstrate a sound understanding of the play, which places it just into a Level 3 at 13 marks.
- The candidate explores the way secrets are presented and mention is made to the secret Eric kept about his relationship with Eva and how he 'slept with her and made her pregnant', and later stole '£50 from Mr Birling's company'.
- The other key secret discussed is that of the Inspector and how he 'only shows the photo of the girl' to each member of the family 'one at a time'.
- There is a lack of textual referencing to support the points made. However, it does move beyond narrative and there is some critical discussion.
- Context is included, although it is not always integrated throughout the response. The context at the end of paragraph 2 is the strongest part of AO3.
- Although there are some inconsistencies in the AO4, it was felt that there is sufficient complexity of language and structure to place this in Level 3 at 5 marks.



Candidates should try to be as precise as possible when it comes to referencing the text. They are not expected to be word-perfect, but it can be helpful if they can reference specific events or exchanges between characters.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 4 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number: Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒ Question 9 ☒
 Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒ Question 12 ☒
 Question 13 ☒ Question 14 ☒ Question 15 ☒
 Question 16 ☒ Question 17 ☒ Question 18 ☒
 Question 19 ☒ Question 20 ☒ Question 21 ☒
 Question 22 ☒ Question 23 ☒ Question 24 ☒
 Question 25 ☒ Question 26 ☒ Question 27 ☒
 Question 28 ☒ Question 29 ☒ Question 30 ☒

Priestley uses ~~the~~ An Inspector Calls as a political diatribe critiquing the society especially the capitalist ideology of the time which caused people to be narrow minded. Priestley ~~is~~ ~~plays~~ portrays secrets as important ~~the~~ through Gerald who acts as a metaphor for the consequences of deception, Eric who acts a metaphor for immaturity and Mr Birling who acts as a metaphor for ignorance. ~~in~~ Priestley ~~does this to~~ ~~encourage change~~ and uses his play as a means of propaganda to persuade society to change their attitude.

In An Inspector Calls, ~~Priestley~~ ~~presents~~ Gerald is seen as ~~as~~ a 'well-bred, young man

(Section B continued) about town' however, this isn't the case as ~~then~~ Gerald adopts a genial facade to make him seem ~~per~~ perfect and therefore more likeable. However, his facade is discovered in Act 2 when the Inspector questions him. due to his lies in Act 1 about being 'awfully busy at the works' causes Sheila to break off the engagement as 'We're not the same people... we'd have to start all over again' showing how because of Gerald's lies and secrets he kept, Sheila broke up with him as she knew she couldn't trust him anymore as he would ~~keep~~ ^{and hide more secrets} keep putting up ~~as~~ a new facade. This would be familiar to a 1945 audience as many people lied ~~and~~, pretended and acted like different people during the World Wars, this would also be familiar to a modern day audience as many people ~~lie~~ lie and are deiefful to get what they want, like Gerald who is sycopantic.

In, An Inspector Calls, Eric is seen to be a heavy drinker who is often 'squiffy' ^{which is drunk} However, his parents are unaware of this as Eric hasn't told them 'but you're not that type you don't get drunk' because of his parents

(Section B continued) ignorance, who act as a metaphor to show the ignorance of the upper class, Mrs ~~Birling~~ Birling in Act 2 says she 'blames the young man who got her pregnant' and believes that he should be made an example of which makes Eric's telling his part of the story harder. Due to the ignorance of Mr and Mrs Birling the ~~Bir~~ Birling family ^{due to secrets being revealed} bickerⁿ a lot which annoys the Inspector and makes him impatient as he tells them 'you can adjust your family when I'm gone' which highlights his ~~easy~~ eagerness to leave as his time is running out before the next ~~the~~ Inspector arrives this represents Priestley's urge for society to change their ways, as their time is running out. This causes both a 1945 and modern audience to understand how necessary it is for society to change their ~~the~~ actions to help make the world a better place to live in.

In *An Inspector Calls*, Mr Birling is quick to cover up the case as he has 'a special reason for not wanting a public scandal' as he doesn't want to ruin his image so he wants to keep the case a secret and is joyful when he finds out it was a 'hoax'.

(Section B continued) ~~It~~ However, Mr Birling didn't learn his lesson so the events will repeat themselves. The Inspector said in Act 3 that 'if men will not learn that lesson' ~~the~~ the use of 'man' and not 'mankind' shows how it is men that have to change, this is seen as during the World Wars women changed and adapted to take on the roles of men, however men didn't accept or like the change, so it's them to have to change ~~which~~, this represented through Mr Birling's ignorance of the case and hopes that he can cover it up. This would cause hatred from a 1945 audience as Mr Birling is trying to pretend that Eva's death didn't happen ~~and~~ and is similar to saying that the people who died in the World Wars never existed or mattered and that it should be covered up.

Overall, Priestley presents secrets as a negative thing that shouldn't be kept as it breaks society's trust, makes life harder and causes hatred due to dismissed events. The cyclical emphasises the importance ~~for~~ of learning from mistakes and is ~~mirrored~~ mirrored by the play being written in 1945 but set in 1912, and through the two World Wars that were linked as

(Section B continued) society ~~has~~ didn't learn its lesson.

① which emphasises his immaturity



AO1/3 Level 4 - 20 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

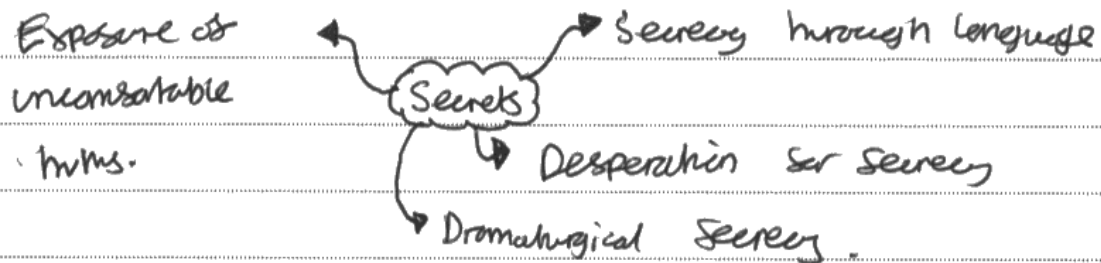
- The response's introduction provides an interesting overview describing some characters as 'metaphors' in Priestley's use of the play as 'propaganda'. This hints at thorough engagement with the text.
- There is discussion of several characters and the secrets they hold, supported by textual references.
- There are comments on context, although some of these are sweeping and not always convincing.
- The response meets all the requirements for Level 3 and there is a sufficiently developed personal response to merit a mark just in Level 4.
- Language use is consistently accurate and merits full marks for AO4.



Candidates should avoid making sweeping generalisations when referencing context.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number: **Question 7** ☒ **Question 8** ☒ **Question 9** ☒
Question 10 ☒ **Question 11** ☒ **Question 12** ☒
Question 13 ☒ **Question 14** ☒ **Question 15** ☒
Question 16 ☒ **Question 17** ☒ **Question 18** ☒
Question 19 ☒ **Question 20** ☒ **Question 21** ☒
Question 22 ☒ **Question 23** ☒ **Question 24** ☒
Question 25 ☒ **Question 26** ☒ **Question 27** ☒
Question 28 ☒ **Question 29** ☒ **Question 30** ☒



In Priestley's ¹⁹⁴⁵ ~~1945~~ Chekovian drama "An Inspector Calls", Priestley powerfully utilises the exposure of uncomfortable truths to push his didactic message (a common feature of many Modern reality plays ^{which} ~~that~~ gained traction in the fin-de-siècle period). However, Priestley simultaneously mocks the Edwardian bourgeoisie for their ~~desperate~~ desperate attempts to conceal their exploitative practices.

(Section B continued)

Priestley strategically highlights a ~~new~~ dramatical break down of secrets to expose the self imposed myopia of the 1912 Edwardian upper crust. Concerning to the unity of place, Priestley ~~generates~~ ^{generates} a ~~a~~ feeling of entrapment not only ~~in~~ a feeling of separation between the Birlings and the proletariat ~~as~~ ^{through} a physical manifestation of a "wall" of ignorance, but it ~~simultaneously~~ ^{prefer} the choice to use the dining room arguably represents how the Birlings are trapped and metaphorically digested to critic reveal their exploitation. This is furthered ~~by~~ ^{when} Priestley presents the dichotomy of realistic and expressionistic theatre. The ~~shift~~ ^{shift} from the "pink and intimate" lighting to become "brighter and harder" not only ~~expose~~ portrays how realism is required to expose the secrets of the bourgeoisie but could also simultaneously be a use of ~~but~~ ^{Verbrüderungssatz} from Brechtian theatre as the harsh switch of tones depicts to an audience how despite this story being a play, its secrets are found in ~~even~~ the normalised capitalism of the 1912 period.

(Section B continued)

Additionally, Priestley ~~is~~ successfully unifies the sanitisation of language as a ~~major~~ ~~can~~ ~~major~~ ~~for~~ the desperation of secrecy. This is shown by Gerald, a vehicle to portray the hypocrisy of the Edwardian patriarchy. When Gerald deliberately focuses on Meggarty as a "notorious namer" coupled with his use of chance as he "happened" to enter the Blocherer ~~undoubtedly~~ which undoubtedly presents ~~the~~ Gerald as a revisionist as a method of conceal secrets. ~~This is furthered with his extremely euphemistic description of~~ This description of Meggarty ^{is} being heavily ironic as he ~~thinks~~ himself is truly the "man about town". Furthermore, Gerald's euphemistic description of "dough soaked" women whilst initially appearing to be a truthful account, ~~since~~ similarly is heavily secretive as it only vaguely hints at true patriarchal exploitation (with the "dough" being incredibly ~~directly~~ ~~shapable~~ and materialistic). Through this, ~~thereby~~ Priestley creates a conduit to ~~expose~~ how physical action is not the only method of ~~conceal~~ concealing disturbing secrets.

(Section B continued) & However, Eva Smith is also ~~Priestley's~~ ~~summer uses~~ presented by Priestley to be highly deceptive. This is shown with her "diary" coupled with her ~~then~~ "renting" of personalities. This, in contrast to the upper class strategically reveals how the proletariat's secrecy is a method of survival rather than financial gain and respectability. This heightens the exposure of the ~~bourgeois~~ bourgeoisie's secrets of their action results in the seemingly moral Eva Smith having to ~~resort~~ ^{turn} to immoral ~~actions~~ simply to ~~survive~~ ^{to exist} in 1912 society.

Priestley also portrays how mouthpieces for socialism are required to break down the secrets of the upper class. This is evidenced by the Inspector (a ~~the~~ zeitgeist for the 1945 ~~Labour victory~~ Progressive Society society). It is extremely significant that Inspector Goole is seen as a higher moral court above the Birling household as his ethereal nature perhaps exacerbates the plight of the proletariat as without an almost supernatural strength of "fire, blood and anguish" the secrets of the ~~Edwardian~~ capitalism could not be exposed.

(Section B continued) This is further proven with the character of Sheila whose own self - conflict allowed her perception that "he inspected us alright". This acknowledgement that ~~the~~ capitalist secrecy cannot be desperately reversed is incredibly powerful especially to a 1945 audience as (following Dostoevsky's theory of crime) without a release ~~from~~ from a cycle of greed and secrecy such as war or revolution, societies can never evolve.

In "An Inspector Calls", Priestley ~~uses~~ ~~secrets~~ portrays how secret ~~are~~ despite seeming synonymous with the immoral, one ~~proach~~ simply method of capitalist exploitation as a pitiful method to remain myopic about societal struggles.



AO1/3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an ambitious and perceptive response that demonstrates a high level of engagement with the play.
- The candidate develops a mature critical style and sustains an assured argument that explores secrecy as a thematic vehicle for Priestley's socialist message.
- There is a strong conceptual grasp of the play's dramaturgy, with insightful references to form (e.g. realism vs expressionism), staging (e.g. lighting and setting), and the influence of Brechtian techniques, which are integrated into a nuanced analysis of character and message.
- Discerning references are made throughout, and there is confidence in using the text to support interpretation, for example, through sophisticated discussion of characters such as Gerald, Sheila, and Eva, and how secrecy operates as a mechanism for social critique.
- Contextual understanding is impressively integrated: the candidate considers the play in relation to its Edwardian setting and 1945 context, alongside dramatic and literary traditions such as Chekhov and fin-de-siècle realism, reflecting excellent understanding of the relationship between text and context.
- While occasionally the expression becomes overly abstract or syntactically awkward, this does not significantly detract from the depth of interpretation or conceptual sophistication. This response is well-deserving of full marks.



Whilst this candidate achieves success with literary critical terms, there is no requirement for these to be referenced for an answer to achieve full marks.

Question 9

Hobson's Choice

The question asked candidates to explore how Victorian life is presented in the play.

Though few candidates answered on this text, this was an accessible question that allowed candidates to show their knowledge of the play's historical setting. Most responses engaged with the social and cultural expectations of Victorian life, particularly in relation to gender roles, class, and family hierarchy. Candidates often explored the limitations placed on women, the structure of working life, and the dominance of the father figure within the household.

Many responses focused on the role of women, using Maggie's experiences to highlight the restricted opportunities available to women during the period, and her defiance as a challenge to those norms. Some candidates discussed Hobson as a symbol of patriarchal control, and how the expectations of daughters to obey their fathers were embedded in Victorian family life. Others explored the importance of marriage as a financial and social transaction, drawing on the treatment of Maggie, Alice, and Vicky.

Stronger responses explored ideas about class mobility and the dignity of labour, particularly in relation to Willie Mossop's journey from bootmaker to business owner. These candidates were often able to comment on the contrast between Hobson's declining authority and the rise of working-class self-determination, seeing this as a reflection of shifting values in late Victorian society. Some responses also referenced the significance of setting, such as the shop or cellar, to reinforce ideas about working conditions and social class.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

Brighouse presents Victorian life as bound by social conventions, constricted by societal expectations. He uses the characters who attempt to challenge these norms to advocate progression in society.

A huge theme in the play is social class. Brighouse portrays members of all classes in the play. Hobson is "middle-class and proud of it," showing the audience he has prestige from his position as a businessman. Brighouse uses Hobson to portray the stereotypical views of Victorian society. Hobson ~~sees the lower class~~ disregards the lower class, by "underpaying" Willie and dismissing him as a "workhouse boy." During the Victorian era, many employers mistreated their employees, forcing them to work in ~~these~~ horrible conditions for very little pay. ~~However, by the~~ This led to an ingrained prejudice against the poor. However, Brighouse would

(Section B continued) have been influenced by changes in the 1910s. One to men of all classes going off to fight in WWI, the previously rigid social structure was loosening and there were more ~~chances~~ chances for people to become socially mobile. Therefore, Brighouse is mocking Hobson's outdated ideas and attempts to show his audience that the Victorian societal structure ~~is~~ was harsh and inhumane. Mrs Hepworth, a member of the rich upper class, represents progressive ideas, by ~~praising a workman~~ "praising a workman to his face." This would have been previously unknown, and the audience is amused by Hobson's inability to fathom such an act. Therefore, the Victorian societal hierarchy is presented as unreasonable and out-dated.

Brighouse uses marriage in the Victorian era to represent how society conventions are changing. Alice and Vicky hold old-fashioned views on marriage, wishing to marry well to elevate themselves socially. Alice's fiancé, Albert, is "the son of an established solicitor, whilst Freddie, Vicky's suitor, is a "respectable tradesman". ~~These appearances would tell the audience~~ This tells the audience that they are considered profitable marriages for Alice and Vicky. Marrying into a higher class would have been common practise in the 1800s, but Brighouse chooses to advocate Maggie and Willie's marriage as more honourable. Their union is based off ambition to improve their quality of life, plus ~~they~~ their natural affection for each other. ~~to tell the audience~~ The play ends with the two

(Section B continued) exchanging loving words, such as "the peace I have in thee." This shows they have ultimately found happiness and joy in their marriage. In contrast, the last image of Vicky and Alice show them leaving in "silent anger". Brighouse is clearly trying to influence his audience into appreciating marriage as a chance for love, rather than as a means of effortless social elevation.

Brighouse portrays Victorian parenting as constrictive and controlling. Hobson, "a parent of the period", conforms to the old-fashioned view that fathers should be the ultimate authority in the household. He says, "I'll choose a pair of husbands for you." This quote ~~seems to~~ stimulates the audience's sympathy for Hobson's daughters, as they are controlled by the domineering unreasonable Hobson. In the 1800s, women were supposed to be governed and supervised by their fathers or husbands. However, a ~~new~~ growing level of rebellion in the younger generation in the 1910s influenced Brighouse to show how the girls defy their father. Vicky makes a stand in one example by saying "we shall continue to dress fashionably, father." Brighouse is contemptuous of Hobson's dislike of new fashions, instead ~~encouraging his audience to~~ ~~reflect~~ influencing his audience to encourage potential in the new generation.

Finally, the play represents Victorian gender roles as illogical.

(Section B continued) Alice and Vicky conform to the stereotype of weak, unintelligent Victorian women, having no knowledge of how to run a business. As Alice says, she "doesn't know what to do." It is clear Brighouse condemns this lack of expertise. ~~The audience observes the downfall of the shop since Maggie left, and concludes that Alice and Vicky~~ In contrast, Maggie challenges these norms by being a "maverick in the shop". Brighouse appears to use Maggie to praise the work of women in WWI. Previously ~~unable to gain employment~~ unallowed to gain employment, during WWI women had to take over many jobs to prevent economic collapse in Britain when the men left to fight. The writer appears to advocate the cause of women's suffrage through presenting Maggie's independence and business expertise. Maggie also challenges Victorian gender norms by dominating Will in their relationship. ~~She~~ She states "when I make arrangements, my lad, they're not made for upsetting." This may appear amusing to the audience, but ultimately Maggie gains the respect of the audience through her actively supporting Will and defeating ~~the~~ the blustering, incompetent Hobson. Therefore, Brighouse shows ~~that~~ that Victorian gender norms were outdated and attempts to champion progressive ideas in society.

Overall, I think it is clear that Brighouse intends to show how Victorian ~~society~~ life and societal norms are out-dated. He uses characters to challenge old-fashioned ideas about

(Section B continued) Marriage, social class, parenting and gender roles,
instead advocating the progressive ideas of a more broad-minded
generation.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an assured and conceptually driven response which explores how Brighouse uses *Hobson's Choice* to critique restrictive Victorian conventions across multiple domains: class, marriage, parenting, and gender.
- The candidate demonstrates mature and sustained engagement with the text, offering detailed analysis of character, plot, and theme. Each paragraph is sharply focused on a distinct aspect of Victorian life and how it is challenged by progressive figures such as Maggie and Willie.
- There is excellent integration of context throughout. The essay situates Brighouse's 1910s perspective clearly in contrast with the 1880s Victorian setting, using contextual points purposefully (e.g. social mobility post-WWI, women's roles during the war, and changing attitudes to marriage and patriarchy).
- Quotations are well-chosen and embedded seamlessly, and textual evidence is used effectively to support interpretive points.
- Interpretations show a high level of insight, particularly in evaluating Brighouse's authorial intent, for example, recognising that Brighouse positions Maggie as a celebration of women's wartime contributions and a challenge to patriarchal norms.
- The structure is logical and controlled, with each point building toward a cohesive conclusion.
- AO4 is comfortably within Level 3 – writing is clear and well-expressed throughout, with only very occasional lapses in phrasing or minor slips, none of which compromise clarity.



Balancing the contexts of when a text is written versus when it is set is often important when considering context.

Question 10

Hobson's Choice

The question asked candidates to explain the significance of Maggie's relationship with her sisters in the play.

Though very few responses were seen on this text, the question was generally well understood and produced a range of confident and thoughtful responses. Many candidates were able to engage with the key idea of contrast between Maggie and her sisters, particularly in terms of independence, ambition, and gender roles. Most recognised Maggie's representation as a strong, capable woman and used her relationship with Alice and Vicky to explore wider themes of societal expectation and family duty.

Stronger responses considered how Maggie acts as a foil to her sisters, practical where they are frivolous, assertive where they are passive, and used this comparison to explore the changing role of women in Victorian society. There was some insightful analysis of how Maggie's maturity and selflessness contrast with the sisters' concerns about appearances and romance, and how her sense of purpose drives the narrative forward. Many candidates also linked this to Maggie's wider impact on others in the play, particularly her father and Willie Mossop, positioning her as the catalyst for change.

A number of responses made appropriate contextual points, noting the limited options for women at the time and how Maggie's assertiveness breaks social norms. Some were able to comment on how the sisters represent more traditional or superficial views of femininity, while Maggie challenges those expectations.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

Throughout the play, Maggie's relationship with her sisters evolves from conflicting to mutual, and by the end of the play, Maggie has clearly retained control. This essay will explore the development of the relationship.

At the start of the play, Maggie and her sisters share a mutual despol of their father, however, Maggie is significantly more willing to display this. Hobson clearly lacks control as when he attempts to quell their disrespect, remarking on the "gradual increase in uppishness towards me," and telling them that he'll "find a pair of husbands for them." Hobson's choice is set in the 1880s, and so this controlling attitude would have been traditional of the patriarchal society. forced marriage was not uncommon so this would have been typical of the time. Despite Hobson's attempts, Alice contradicts him and says,

(Section B continued) "It's not immodest," while Maggie defies him by proposing to Will because "my brain and your hands, hands 'll make a working partnership." This results in a development in the sisters' relationship from a mutual agreement against their father to conflict, because Alice and Vicky "won't own Willie Massop for a brother-in-law." Thus Maggie's unreleasing attitude would have been typical as she was the eldest sibling, however, Maggie plans to marry "down" in social status. ~~For an 1880s~~ This was very unconventional in an 1880s society because social status was mainly static. In contrast, for the 1916 audience, social mobility had become more widely accepted. Brighouse may have presented the sisters' relationship in this way to show support for social mobility and promote it while recognising a change in society.

In the middle of the play, Maggie ~~and her sisters'~~ becomes more ^{significant} ~~key~~ in the ~~the~~ sisters' relationship. Her absence is clear as Vicky and Alice struggle to run the shop, but Maggie is uninterested and asks why they are showing the books to a "rival shop." However, she clearly understands their difficult positions as she helps them to get settlements by defying their father in an ingenious plan which ensures the money "stays in the family". Maggie's clear role in helping her sisters and Fred and Albert would have been untraditional of the 1880s society - men were usually in control due to the patriarchal society and women were not expected to be

(Section B continued) intelligent. Maggie and her sisters are clearly acting in an unconventional way towards their father, who ~~attempts to~~ states "I've been diddled." A 1916 audience would have been more accepting of Maggie's actions ~~as~~ because the war had led to women taking on men's roles and a rise in ~~the~~ equality and the suffragette movement. Enghouse may have presented the relationship between the sisters as plotting against their father to demonstrate the ~~ingenuity~~ intelligence of women and to show support for women's rights.

At the end of the play, ~~Maggie becomes more significant in the~~ the relationship between the sisters is peaceful because Alice and Vicky are grateful that Maggie is caring for Hobson. Unbeknown to them, Maggie knows she has come out on top as she now has the shop "Mossop and Hobson". Despite the fact that Alice and Vicky have married into a higher social class, Maggie and Willie have been able to "take the high-class trade" and "carriage park" which has aided their social gain. ~~The role~~ Maggie has clearly got the most influence in the relationship and tells Willie, "in twenty years you'll be thought more of than either of your brothers-in-law". ~~Allegedly~~ and Willie remarks "we'll make the step again". The futuristic and open mindset of the couple would be very untraditional for the 1880s society, because Albert is a ~~last~~ lawyer and ~~high on~~

(Section B continued) upper-middle class, so Willie would be greatly increasing his social status. However, in 1916, the audience would have been impressed at the ~~forward~~ Maggie's forward thinking and ~~the~~ her move up the social ladder, because social mobility was becoming more normal as the social structure lessened. Bagnhouse may have portrayed Maggie's relationship with her sisters as her ^{having most influence} ~~being in control~~ to show support for social mobility and the role of women.

Overall, Bagnhouse presents Maggie's relationship with her sisters in a collaborative light sharing mutual feelings against their father to show support for women's role in society. However, he also adds conflict between the sisters to show his support for social mobility and forward thinking.

* which they were unwilling to do. They have also ^{become accepting of} ~~accepted~~ Willie ~~and~~, ~~he~~ both ^{kissing} ~~kissed~~ him "under protest", and attending their wedding. Maggie



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an assured and perceptive response that directly and consistently addresses the development of Maggie's relationship with her sisters, maintaining conceptual focus throughout.
- The candidate demonstrates a confident grasp of character development and thematic content, exploring how Brighouse uses this relationship to explore key issues such as social mobility, patriarchy, and changing gender roles.
- Contextual knowledge is secure and well-integrated across the essay. The contrast between 1880s Victorian society and the play's 1916 production context is used effectively to explore Brighouse's authorial intent, particularly in relation to women's rights and class fluidity.
- Textual knowledge is strong, with relevant quotations embedded and well-explained. The candidate uses dialogue and stage direction effectively to support their argument.
- There is a clear and evolving argument: each paragraph charts a different stage in the sisters' relationship and interprets how Maggie's increasing influence reflects Brighouse's wider message about social change.
- The response also shows a good understanding of form and audience response, especially in its awareness of how a contemporary audience might view Maggie's actions differently to a Victorian one.
- AO4 is clearly within Level 3. The writing is fluent and largely free from error, with a confident academic register and precise phrasing.



Candidates should try to focus on the writer's intention.

Question 11

Blood Brothers

The question asked candidates to explain how children are significant in the play.

This question was generally accessible but proved more challenging for some candidates than others. Many candidates focused on the social divide between Mickey and Edward's childhoods, often commenting on the differing opportunities presented to each boy. This was typically used to highlight Willy Russell's commentary on class-based inequality and the influence of nature versus nurture. These responses demonstrated a sound, if sometimes surface-level, awareness of the play's context, with frequent references Margaret Thatcher. However, this was often the extent of contextual knowledge, which could have been more developed in many cases. While most were able to identify relevant characters and moments related to childhood, a number of responses became unfocused, drifting towards broader themes such as class, parenting, or education without directly addressing the concept of childhood itself. In weaker responses, this led to narrative retelling or general commentary on Mrs Johnstone without linking ideas clearly to the question.

Stronger answers explored specific childhood experiences in more depth, analysing the boys' early innocence, the games they played, and the contrast between Mickey's awareness of hardship and Edward's sheltered naivety. These responses often integrated relevant quotations and considered how Russell used childhood as a lens to explore identity, aspiration, and inevitable disillusionment. There was some thoughtful exploration of the boys' transition into adolescence, and how growing up in different environments exposed the structural unfairness of their lives.

A number of candidates also commented on the role of mothers in shaping childhood, with particular focus on Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons. These essays often reflected on parenting styles and the emotional impact of separation. Some interesting interpretations emerged around the notion of 'keeping face' in difficult circumstances and how childhood was framed as both fragile and politicised.

AO4 was generally secure, with most candidates able to write clearly and use ambitious vocabulary, although some struggled with spelling. Despite some confusion in focus, the majority of candidates showed a sound understanding of the play's characters and themes. The best responses offered thoughtful interpretations supported by precise evidence and linked the concept of childhood to Russell's broader social critique.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ✕

Question 8 ✕

Question 9 ✕

Question 10 ✕

Question 11 ✕

Question 12 ✕

Question 13 ✕

Question 14 ✕

Question 15 ✕

Question 16 ✕

Question 17 ✕

Question 18 ✕

Question 19 ✕

Question 20 ✕

Question 21 ✕

Question 22 ✕

Question 23 ✕

Question 24 ✕

Question 25 ✕

Question 26 ✕

Question 27 ✕

Question 28 ✕

Question 29 ✕

Question 30 ✕

In the play Blood Brothers, children are shown to ~~play as~~ ^{be} significant, ~~throughout the play~~ as the play ~~highlights~~ ~~highlights~~ highlights Mickey and Edward before birth and them growing up to realise their difference in social class.

Firstly, ~~in~~ in the play Blood Brothers Mrs Johnstone is working as a cleaner in Mrs Lyons house. Mrs Johnstone reveals the news to Mrs Lyons that she is having twins, but can not financially support them. Mrs Lyons ~~then~~ is unfortunately is infertile, so she

(Section B continued)

~~unhappy~~ ~~unhappily~~ says to Mrs Johnstone "give me one". This shows that Mrs Lyon's is desperate for her to start a family, as she would not ask ~~another~~ a random woman. Mrs Johnstone is reluctant at first, but Mrs Lyon's uses her manipulation skills to trick her into giving her baby. This is shown when she says "you're already been threatened by the welfare". This shows that Mrs Lyon's is ~~convincing~~ ^{manipulating} Mr. Johnstone into giving her a baby. Eventually Mrs Johnstone agrees to give her baby to Mrs Lyon's with the promise that "I would still be able to see him everyday wouldn't I". But after the baby is given to Mrs Lyon's she ~~so~~ fires ~~Mrs Lyon's~~ Mrs Johnstone so she can keep the baby. ~~This~~ This evidently shows that ~~social~~ ^{working} class such as, Mrs Johnstone can not financially support ~~there~~ ^{her} kids because of the situation of ^{mass} unemployment and the discrimination of the working class people.

(Section B continued)

Secondly, ~~more~~ In the play blood brothers Mickey and Edward are shown to meet again when they are 7. They become friends and they say "we were born on the same day that means we can be blood brothers". This shows that both twins are unaware of them two actually being ~~brood~~ ^blood ^brothers. This has a big impact on the play as the Blood Brothers meet again. ~~They play~~ ^{games} . Mickey and Edward then play gun games. This is shown when Willy Russell says "I got y, I shot y". This shows the iconography of the play as the audience know that the story ends with both twins killed by guns. Both twins are unaware of their differences in social class which becomes evident ~~in~~ at this age ~~but~~ but it comes more evident throughout the play.

(Section B continued)

Thirdly, In the play Blood Brothers Willy Russell presents Edward going to university & look at the differences in opportunity. This is shown when Edward states "I'm going away next week to university". This shows that Edward has massive opportunity's to develop and build his education, when Mickey is working in a factory trying to make money for his soon to be child and wife. When Mickey loses his job Edward says "who needs a job anyway". This shows that Edward is unaware of the real problems in the world and he becomes aware of it when Mickey says "you're still a kid and I wish I could be as well". This shows that the both boys that were once children who were close and unaware have become aware of these differences. ~~This shows that children are significant as being~~ This shows that opportunity is different when you are working class and social class which is unfair as everyone has a right to a good

(Section B continued) education. Children is significant in the play as because when Mrs Thwaites gave her baby to Mrs Lyon's you can see the differences in opportunity both boys have which is what ~~Ed~~ Willy Russell intended for it to become aware of the difficulties of being ~~social~~ working class when he was young and the difference in opportunity.



AO1/3 Level 3 - 16 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The main argument of the response is set out in the introduction: the children grow up to recognise the differences between social classes. The conclusion returns to this idea to state that Russell intended the play to demonstrate this.
- There is a reliance on narrative in recounting the giving away of Mrs Johnstone's child, but the response quickly shows how this is indicative of 'the discrimination of the working class people'.
- The response considers how Mickey and Edward come together as friends in childhood and also how their paths diverge due to social class, although there are missed opportunities to explore the relationship between text and context.
- The response is generally sound, therefore, and is worthy of a mark in the middle of Level 3.
- Meaning is clear throughout so full marks are appropriate for AO4.



Candidates do not have to write about a text in the chronological order and can instead selectively choose the elements they wish to talk about.

Question 12

Blood Brothers

The question asked candidates about the ways fate is important in the play.

This question attracted slightly fewer responses overall but was generally well received by those who attempted it. Many candidates found the theme of fate accessible, and there was clear engagement with the structure of the play and the idea that the ending is revealed from the outset. The most successful responses explored how the sense of inevitability is built through the narrator's repeated warnings and through the contrasting life paths of Mickey and Edward.

Candidates frequently commented on the significance of the prologue and the idea that the audience watches events unfold with the knowledge of the tragic outcome. Many also examined how fate is shaped by social class, with stronger essays arguing that Russell presents class-based determinism as a modern reworking of classical tragedy. There was also some perceptive discussion around the motif of superstition and the idea that characters, particularly Mrs Johnstone, attempt to explain their circumstances through fate as a way of coping with powerlessness.

The meeting of the two brothers and the fallout leading to their deaths was a common focus. Most candidates showed a sound understanding of plot, although some responses became overly narrative. Weaker answers listed key events without clearly linking them to the theme of fate, or offered confused interpretations of what fate meant.

A few responses touched on ideas around luck, the role of employment, and economic injustice, for example, comparing the security of Edward's middle-class job with Mickey's redundancy. This was used by some to suggest that fate is less about supernatural control and more about systemic inequality. However, while most candidates mentioned context, references were often bolted on rather than fully integrated. There was less confident discussion of Thatcherism or 1980s working-class struggles in comparison to Question 11.

AO4 was generally secure, with candidates making use of appropriate vocabulary and quotation. A small number confused contextual references or focused too heavily on storytelling. However, the best answers maintained a clear focus on Russell's intentions, linked character experiences to the play's structure, and explored how the inevitability of fate reflects broader societal failings.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 2 for AO1/3 and Level 2 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☐

Question 8 ☐

Question 9 ☐

Question 10 ☐

Question 11 ☐

Question 12 ☐

Question 13 ☐

Question 14 ☐

Question 15 ☐

Question 16 ☐

Question 17 ☐

Question 18 ☐

Question 19 ☐

Question 20 ☐

Question 21 ☐

Question 22 ☐

Question 23 ☐

Question 24 ☐

Question 25 ☐

Question 26 ☐

Question 27 ☐

Question 28 ☐

Question 29 ☐

Question 30 ☐

←  something that you are
101 away from
Is from birth what you
are destined

(Section B continued)

Firstly in the beginning of the play Willy Russell presents fate as something you ~~desse~~ destined to be. In the opening we see that the narrator tell us what the fate is going to be for the twin brother when he says "born from the ~~mother~~ but ~~split~~ ^{split by birth} by birth" thus show how they ~~never~~ ^{never} knew they were brother till last day. This would make the audience feel sad because they only knew that they were brother for a short while.

Secondly throughout the play Willy Russell presents fate as something you can't change. This is shown when ~~Mrs Johnson~~ ^{Mrs Johnson} ~~is forced~~ ^{is forced} to give her boy to Mrs Lyons because she ~~quote~~ ^{quote} "on the bible" this means that she was always meant to give one of the boys away this would make audience ~~try~~ ^{try} to sympathise with Mrs Johnson since she a working class ~~mom~~ ^{mom} with a lot of mouths to feed.

Thirdly throughout the play Willy Russell present fate as ~~your~~ ^{your} destiny. This is evident when ~~Mrs~~ Mickey and Eddie meet when

(Section B continued) they do ~~not~~ ^{this} impress how

they are destined to see of each other.

This is shown when they make a blood

brother pact ^{Midway} tell Eddie cut his together

so that they become blood brothers. This ~~is~~ ^{would}

be ironic to the audience since they know that

Midway and Eddie are in ~~the~~ ^{fact} actual brothers

Furthermore throughout the extract we see Willy Russell

show how fate is important. This shown when

Eddie meet Mrs Johnson and Mike meet Mrs Lyons "Are you ^{Lyons} Eddie

this show the ~~two~~ ^{were} ~~met~~ ^{met} to know it. each

other ~~at~~ even if they don't know they brother or

separated. This would make the audience glad they

know of each other and be also ~~that~~ ^{that} they meet

of these class

Furthermore throughout the extract we see Willy

Russell show how fate is important being connected

this show when ~~the two~~ even when ~~they~~ ^{if}

Eddie moved away they were still connected through the

locket Mrs Johnson had given Eddie to wear.

Moreover this show how they were still ~~more~~ connected

This would make audience feel ~~so~~ sad of

how Mrs Lyons lost Eddie away twice

(Section B continued)

Throughout the extract we see Willy Russell show how ~~important~~ fate is important. We see its evident when Mickey moves to the new estate in Liverpool and meet Eddie once again this show how fate brought them back together again. This would make the audience in surprise because they would of never thought they would meet again as per

Throughout the extract we see that fate is unescapable. We see that when Linda and Mickey start dating when Eddie goes to university and has a child and goes to the boss his car goes to the boss. This show how the lower class can't escape the fate of poverty the cycle goes on and always continues especially in the 1900s because Margaret Thatcher was the prime minister she made load of lower class people lose their job. The audience would feel sad because they

Lastly throughout the ~~play~~ ^{play} extract Willy Russell show fate more the twin Leon we see that when the twin Leon that were born after Eddie

(Section B continued)

harvey light romance with his wife ~~and~~
after getting at the ~~at~~ antidepressant pills he
got mad then Mrs Jirober tell him this
signify how ~~to~~ when they know d it ~~at~~ other
they would have to die. This would
make the audience ~~has~~ ~~the~~ order towards ~~under~~
and Mrs Lyons.



AO1/3 Level 2 - 12 marks

AO4 Level 2 - 3 marks

- A plan is often encouraging, but here it is limited.
- The answer has a clear but repetitive structure. Each paragraph begins with a reference to fate, the theme of the question, and a point on that theme follows, although the points are not always developed fully.
- Each paragraph concludes with an estimate of the reaction of the audience to the material identified.
- There are many errors for AO4, including words omitted, weak spelling and a lack of sentence control. However, the length of the answer, the clear paragraphing and the level of demand of the question, have been taken into consideration.



Planning can be a great tool for candidates to structure their answer and this candidate may have benefitted from spending some more time on their plan.

Question 13

Journey's End

This question asked candidates about the ways working as a team is important in the play.

This question was the least popular one out of the two, but it was generally accessible to those who attempted it. Most candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the plot and were able to engage with the context of World War I, often referencing trench warfare, shell shock, propaganda, and the pressures placed on young men. These contextual insights were usually well integrated and used to frame character behaviours and dramatic choices effectively.

The question on teamwork prompted a range of responses. Many candidates identified moments of camaraderie between the soldiers and were able to comment thoughtfully on how characters such as Stanhope and Osborne supported others under pressure. However, some weaker responses only referred to the theme of teamwork briefly before drifting into general storytelling or character study, which weakened the overall focus. While candidates clearly knew the play well, there was a tendency in lower-level responses to retell key moments without analysing their significance in relation to the question.

A number of responses struggled to analyse the language of the play appropriately, with some mistakenly discussing poetic techniques such as enjambment, which are not applicable to this question. Most candidates were able to reference key dialogue and character interactions. Comparisons between Raleigh and other characters such as Stanhope were used effectively to demonstrate contrasting responses to war and pressure.

Overall, contextual knowledge was a strength across most responses, but language analysis and consistent focus on the question varied. The best answers offered thoughtful interpretations of key scenes, linked character development to the harsh realities of trench warfare, and considered how Sherriff presented the psychological strain of war through dialogue, stage directions, and relationships.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

✖, "Oshorne",
himself, and more.

Question 7 ✕

Question 10 ✕

Question 13 ✕

Question 16 ✕

Question 19 ✕

Question 22 ✕

Question 25 ✕

Question 28 ✕

Question 8 ✕

Question 11 ✕

Question 14 ✕

Question 17 ✕

Question 20 ✕

Question 23 ✕

Question 26 ✕

Question 29 ✕

Question 9 ✕

Question 12 ✕

Question 15 ✕

Question 18 ✕

Question 21 ✕

Question 24 ✕

Question 27 ✕

Question 30 ✕

In 'Journey's end' by R.C. Sherriff,
the theme of teamwork is used to emphasise
the importance of realities of PTSD, to
show the poor leadership of commanding
officers, and to highlight the horrors of
war to the audience.

The theme of teamwork is shown with Stanhope
and Hibbert, ~~and~~ Stanhope ~~and~~ uses the
support of the Company to persuade
Hibbert to stay, yet also showing the ~~reality~~
the reality of PTSD. This is shown in
Hibbert who, at first, was ^{the} suicidal, telling
Stanhope "Come on, then ^{the}, Shoot!" "I swear
I'll never go down these trenches

~~He is asking if Hibbert could 'ever look another man in the face again' and mentioning how Hibbert fails not in that alone, in the face again and~~
(Section B continued) ~~again. showing to the audience that~~

Hibbert would rather die than spend more time in the trenches. This is indicative of shellshock, a deep-rooted - rooted psychological conditions causing soldiers exposed to war to break down because of it. Hibbert, as he was willing to die, clearly presents that this issue is deep-rooted, highly suggesting ideas of shellshock to the audience. The notion is furthered when Hibbert explains "I've tried like hell" (a notion supported by Osborne, who also says "I think he's tried hard") which ~~far~~ explains how ~~shellshock~~ ^{shellshock} has been truly detrimental to Hibbert ^{and} psychologically, cannot go on. Yet Stanhope, through understanding and support ^{emphasises saying} ~~explains how~~ "we all feel like you do sometimes" and "we every little piece up there makes me feel - just as you do," ~~showing~~ ^{through empathising with} using teamwork ^{with} Hibbert to try and bring him back. The reciprocation of the emotions Hibbert feels also suggests to the audience that Hibbert is a microcosm for wider issues. It was not just Hibbert who was psychologically damaged; ~~over~~ ^{around} 250000 cases ^{of shellshock} were reported in World War One, ^{yet} ~~brushed off as~~ ^{dismissed} ~~which~~ ^{shows} how the issue was widespread.

† by reminding him of the wider Company, who are there with him
(Section B continued) By ~~exposure~~ exposing audiences to the truth of shellshock, and how it affects soldiers, *Sherriff* battles misconceptions of cowardice. *Stanhope's* empathising with *Hibbert* is also reflective of good leadership in the war, making it clear to *Hibbert* that he is not the only one who is struggling in the war, and understanding, but gently putting down *Hibbert's* worries*. This scene is a reflection of *Sherriff's* beliefs, who says "youth swell to deliver the goods" in his autobiography - highlighting to the audience, that the younger leaders can be the best ones, due to their ability to understand and sympathise.

However, *Sherriff* also presents poor leadership, in the war, highlighting to the audience how the ~~fake~~ teamwork was misused to push selfish or useless agendas by higher officers. This is shown in the S.M. who ~~was~~ the one to tell *Stanhope* to select two men from his company, by "tonight", as commanded by the Brigadier. *Stanhope*, instantly dismisses this as "absurd", with the S.M. agreeing, by saying "I told him so", instantly presenting the incompetence of the higher ranking officers.

^{to the audience}
(Section B continued) ~~from the start. This is~~ ^{idea} ~~This is used~~
~~to demonstrate how~~ is pushed further when
Osborne and six others end up dying as
a result of the raid later on, ~~making~~
them work together only for the ~~workers~~ ^{tasks}
result of a "German boy" who had
"a bit of string... a stick of chocolate" ; not
explicitly shown to be useful. ~~Now~~ This
shows how the higher ranking officers
have clearly had a lapse in judgement
and misused the lives of the team who
went in the raid, highlighting the futility* of
However, this is still described as "a
feather in our cap", depicting how the
priorities of the officers have shifted from
protecting British lives and winning the war
to shallow rank upgrades. This is clearly
exposed to the audience by Starhope in
his sarcastic comment "How nice - if
the Brigadier's pleased", ~~clear~~ a display to
the audience of this idea.

* ~~This scene~~ is Shariff uses this scene to
mirror the incompetence of other commanding officers
such as Field Marshal Bag in the war,
who despite visiting front lines uses officers

(Section B continued) reported instant to the men, and was blamed for the unnecessary loss of life due to poor tactics, again, representative of the raid. The public also blamed

P.C. Sheriff uses the ineffective use of teamwork as a symbol for the horrors of war. When Raleigh After the raid, there is a scene of bathos, where Stanhope, Trotter and Hibbert "giggle", "drink champagne" and talk about "bags" to try and forget about Osbourne. However, the Initially, they the audience may see them to be happy due to their joyful facade, however, as the scene progresses, Sheriff presents the cracks in their psyche. This is shown in Stanhope, who looks out at Hibbert, ^{staring} ~~saying~~ multiple times "clear out of here!" despite Hibbert not only doing something relatively minor - jokingly telling Stanhope to "go to bed". This is a clear exposure of how ~~Hibbert~~ Stanhope, despite trying to hide his emotions with a team celebration, cannot truly subdue the emotional turmoil of Osbourne's death. The idea is furthered when he ~~go~~ talks badly about Hibbert to Trotter, reverting back to his previous

(Section B continued)

self where he would hate Hibbert for being "a worm trying to wriggle its way back home". This later culminates in Stanhope's anger at Raleigh ~~in the final scene~~, whom he expected to be at the dinner, but instead is told "How can I sit down and eat that - when - when Osborne's lying - out there." This ~~causes~~ ^{exposes} Stanhope's emotions ^{of grief} clearly to the audience, saying "To forget - you little fool - to forget! You think there's no limit to what a man can bear?", ~~highlighting~~ ^{underscoring} the suppressed grief he was feeling. Now that the audience can clearly see this grief, Stanhope's efforts of teamwork, to overcome this grief, are in vain. The ~~fact~~ ^{fact} Osborne was the "one man" he could "talk to", ~~and~~ ^{and} reflecting strong bonds made ^{between} ~~in~~ soldiers in trenches at the time, and the fact he lost Osborne makes it the source of his turmoil, and the fact he ^{cannot hide this} ^{shows the lack of} ^{effect teamwork!}

In conclusion, teamwork is deftly used by Storriff to present the horrors of war - as the men fail to recover, the ^{the} effects of PTSD (shell shock) to the audience and the poor leadership at the time of the war.



AO1/3 Level 5 - 27 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an assured personal response which demonstrates a high level of engagement with the text, a developed critical style and an excellent understanding of context.
- The candidate sets out their terms of reference in the introduction and develops each idea (PTSD, leadership and the horrors of war) in some detail with extensive support from the text.
- Although the response strays away from the idea of teamwork at times, there is an underlying thread which considers Stanhope's effective leadership of the team despite being challenged from a range of sources such as the strain felt by the men, the acute distress experienced and the incompetence of senior officers.
- Language use is accurate and meaning is clear throughout.



Candidates can thread ideas together to form an effective and cohesive argument, rather than relying on methodically working their way through the text.

Question 14

Journey's End

The question asked candidates to explore how Raleigh changes in the play.

This question was well received, and many candidates responded with thoughtful and sensitive essays focused on Raleigh's character. There was generally a strong understanding of his role in the play and of how his development reflects the wider psychological and emotional impact of war. Most responses identified his initial naivety and idealism and traced his growing disillusionment as he begins to understand the brutal reality of life in the trenches.

Many essays drew effective contrasts between Raleigh and Stanhope, with some also referencing Hibbert to explore how different men coped with stress and trauma. In weaker responses, the focus shifted too far towards general relationships between characters rather than addressing the specific question. A number of responses offered perceptive comments on how Raleigh's experiences challenge both his personal ideals and the public image of war promoted through propaganda.

Contextual understanding was generally sound, with most candidates able to make reference to World War I conditions, the effects of shell shock, and the recruitment of young officers. However, contextual links were often generalised, and only a few responses explored the differing impacts of war across social classes. More developed answers could have extended this by examining how Raleigh's privileged background influenced both his expectations and the responses of other characters to him.

The best answers showed clear awareness of Sherriff's anti-war message and how Raleigh is used to represent the vulnerability and sacrifice of an entire generation. There was secure textual knowledge across most responses, with relevant references to key scenes such as Raleigh's first arrival, the raid, and his reaction to Osborne's death. AO4 was generally well met, with accurate spelling and a confident use of vocabulary. Some responses would have benefited from more discerning quotation choices.

Overall, candidates engaged well with Raleigh's character and the emotional power of his journey. Stronger responses combined focused analysis with well-integrated context and a clear understanding of Sherriff's dramatic intentions.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☐

Question 8 ☐

Question 9 ☐

Question 10 ☐

Question 11 ☐

Question 12 ☐

Question 13 ☐

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☐

Question 16 ☐

Question 17 ☐

Question 18 ☐

Question 19 ☐

Question 20 ☐

Question 21 ☐

Question 22 ☐

Question 23 ☐

Question 24 ☐

Question 25 ☐

Question 26 ☐

Question 27 ☐

Question 28 ☐

Question 29 ☐

Question 30 ☐

At the beginning of the story Raleigh arrives in the trenches excited to participate in the fun adventurous side side but does not know the side effects it ~~has~~. This can be seen when it says "everybody... calls me uncle" suggesting that Osborne is trying to protect Raleigh from knowing the true reality of war so that it everyone does not panic. Later when Raleigh writes the letter Stanhope thinks he's being criticised he panics

(Section B continued)

This is, reinforced when it says "give me that letter" suggests that Stanhope is sensitive about the letter being sent by Margaret, and gets angry at Raleigh. Finally when it says "Don't Deny me..." Stanhope's, my name" suggesting that Raleigh, thinks he has done something wrong.

Context: At the time propaganda was used to, deceive the men, by joining the war without them noticing but other men have awareness

In the middle of the story after Osborne's death, he knows what the side effects are costing his innocence of himself. This can be seen when it says "Walking... asleep" suggesting that he has been deceived the men start cel-

(Section B continued)

celebrating the success of the raid ~~and~~ Raleigh does not eat and drink because of Osborne's death during the raid. This can be seen when it says "I can't sit and eat that... Osborne lying down there" suggesting that he cannot cope without Osborne being there.

Context: At the time men used to rely on friendship so that they can cope and trust their true feelings to each other.

At the end of the story Raleigh gets hit by a fragment of the bomb into his spine. Stanhope puts him to bed and calls the hospital to take Raleigh home but he refuses. This can be seen when it says, "I can't go home... knock in the back" suggesting that

(Section B continued)

he has become more stoic, and wants to fulfill his duty no matter what injury he has because he doesn't want to disappoint those who have fallen in the war. This is reinforced when it says "I feel rotten lying there", suggesting that he ~~wants to fight~~ and he is slowly dying by the fragment stuck in his back draining his life away slowly.

Context: Men had to keep an upper stiff lip to not show any weaknesses or seen as a coward.



AO1/AO3 Level 3 - 14 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This response moves methodically through the text ('In the beginning', 'In the middle' etc).
- The response meets and moves past the Level 2 descriptors and becomes 'relevant', highlighting some interesting points: Raleigh's initial excitement, Raleigh post-raid and Raleigh at the end of the play.
- There is a clear attempt to comment on some relevant parts of the play and a demonstration of an appropriate critical style.
- There are some comments on the relationship between the text and contexts, but this is quite 'bolt-on'. The response could have integrated these into the response, for example looking at how 'propaganda was used to deceive the men' and tying this to Raleigh more closely.
- There is very accurate control of AO4 throughout. This meets the requirement for 8 marks.



Candidates should always try to integrate context into their answer.

Question 15

The Empress

The question asked candidates to explain how lascars are significant in the play.

Examiners felt that this was a more confidently handled question than its counterpart (Question 16), and responses came from across the ability range. Many candidates found the singular focus on the lascars easier to structure and were able to build their arguments around clear examples of hardship, mistreatment, and resistance. The specific nature of the question allowed candidates to stay focused, and most were able to address “importance” and integrate at least some relevant context.

Most responses correctly explored how the lascars were portrayed as a marginalised group within the British Empire, with several discussing key scenes such as their introduction on the ship or Hari’s confrontation with the Serang. Better responses commented on the contrast between the camaraderie of the lascars and the brutality they endure, often drawing thoughtful conclusions about how this reflected British attitudes to race, class, and colonial hierarchy. A number of responses made assured use of textual references and examined the significance of Hari as a representative of resistance and ambition within this group.

Contextual understanding was frequently evident, particularly regarding the historical treatment of lascars under British rule. However, integration of context varied. While stronger responses wove contextual points seamlessly into their analysis, many others simply tagged context onto the end of points, often following a rigid structure. While this sometimes limited the discursive quality of high-level essays, it did support more methodical and secure responses from mid-level candidates, helping them stay on track.

Weaker responses tended to broaden the discussion into a more generic commentary on the themes of the play, with only passing reference to the lascars. These essays often lacked focus and relied on pre-prepared content that was only loosely connected to the question. In such cases, textual references were either thinly used or only partially relevant. Some candidates also struggled to evaluate significance, instead offering descriptive accounts of the lascars’ experiences.

Overall, this was a well-received question. The best responses were analytical, precise, and contextually aware. A more flexible and less formulaic approach would have improved some otherwise strong answers, while weaker responses would have benefited from clearer focus on the specific wording of the task.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

"The Emperor" is a tragicomic play which criticises the old history of the British Empire whilst celebrating modern day multiculturalism and Lascars are extremely significant as they are key in Gupta's aim to criticise the British Empire as their experiences illustrate key themes of prejudice and empire, which Gupta comments on the unjustness by displaying their friendship as well, particularly through the character of Hari.

Lascars are sailors of African or Asian descent and were often paid next

(Section B continued)

to nothing for their work and treated extremely poorly as they were almost viewed as expendable) on account of their race which highlights the key theme of prejudice. At the beginning of the play, the lascars are working on the ship which the characters come over to Britain on and Hari, who whilst talking to Ravi briefly, is ordered to "get back to work" and is labeled "a lascar to a black man". This demonstrates their incredibly low status in society as they seen as subservient to all. This highlights the theme of prejudice, but also introduces the widespread institutional racism that was rife in Victorian Britain and had been prevalent ever since the golden age of exploration in the 1600s which led to many figures such as Charles Cornwallis presenting a policy of Eurocentrism which aimed to disregard foreign culture in places such as India - where lascars are from - and "improve" them with British culture. All this disney now lascar experiences are significant in demonstrating the key theme of prejudice.

Additionally, the Lascars are extremely significant in presenting the theme of empire in its true light. Many people, including Indians held the widespread belief that "English justice and fair play will be triumphant" which was likely due to the jingoistic, patriotic view of the Empire that newspapers published, as opposed to the reality, such as over 100 million Indian people dying of famine between 1880 and 1920. However, Gupta's presentation of the Lascars helps illustrate the ~~very~~ true nature of the Empire and furthers her goal to criticise the previous actions of the British Empire. This is perhaps most prevalent when Hari and the other Lascars demand to be respected as members of the human race. The fact they are not even considered humans by those running the ships and the British Empire demonstrates its true nature of racist, prejudicial and ignorant, with a complete disregard for the life of its subjects, which is displayed with the Indian Famine. Furthermore, Gupta's

inclusion of "The White Man's Burden" by Rudyard Kipling - an imperialist poet - implies the British almost saw their colonialist actions as an arduous, that they doing as a favour to the subjects such as the lascar which demonstrates the hypocritical, racist, nature of the Empire which lascar are crucial in exposing. All this displays how lascar are significant in forwarding Gupta's goal of presenting the Empire in its true light and criticising its history.

Gupta further utilises the lascar - particularly Hari - to demonstrate the injustices of these prejudicial, racist views by illustrating Hari's friendship and good nature with others. He promises Hari that "I will always be there for you" after they reunite which illustrates his kind and caring nature which makes the treatment of him previously seem even more unjust and forwards Gupta's goal of criticising the Empire and celebrating multiculturalism as she

demonstrates how lascars are people, just like everyone else and that they deserve to be treated the same as all others. Furthermore, Hari's good nature and friendship as a lascar is demonstrated in his commitment to Ravi by sending her letters constantly after being expelled from his ship at the Cape after making the "Lascar Demands". The dedication and clear affection Hari is demonstrating here emphasises Gupta's aim to display him and other lascars as good people through their friendship with others - highlighting a key theme - and further criticise the history of the British Empire as lascars are presented by all accounts as genuinely good people - no different from the British who discriminated against them constantly. All this demonstrates how lascars are significant in displaying the key theme of friendship and proving the injustice of the British Empire.

In conclusion, lascars are extremely significant in the play as, through them,

Gupta is able to further her aims to criticise the history of the British Empire and celebrate modern multiculturalism by ~~also~~ illustrating the key themes of prejudice and empire through their experiences and by contrasting that with through displaying their friendship and commitment to others to highlight the injustice faced by Indians in Victorian Britain.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 29 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The response presents an assured and well-developed personal response, clearly focused on the significance of the lascars in *The Empress*. There is a strong conceptual understanding of Gupta's authorial intention throughout.
- Context is consistently well-integrated, with confident references to historical figures, Kipling's *White Man's Burden*, and the Indian famines. These are used purposefully to deepen interpretation of the lascars' significance.
- The candidate analyses the lascars through multiple themes: prejudice, empire, and friendship, showing a sophisticated understanding of how Gupta critiques the British Empire while humanising marginalised figures.
- The discussion of Hari's kindness and loyalty is particularly effective in supporting the theme of friendship as a counterpoint to injustice, and the explanation of how this links to Gupta's celebration of multiculturalism is mature and persuasive.
- The response clearly meets the 'assured' descriptor for Level 5, with detailed engagement and interpretation maintained throughout.
- There is a high level of accuracy throughout.



Candidates should use context to support and drive their argument further.

Question 16

The Empress

The question asked candidates to discuss how cultural differences are important in the play.

This question was the more popular question of the two. Many candidates could confidently identify examples of contrasting behaviours and beliefs between British and Indian characters and some could then take this further by evaluating their significance.

Most candidates were able to identify examples of cultural contrast including: Queen Victoria's interest in Indian customs, Abdul Karim's arrival and progression at court, and Rani's experiences as a servant, but many stopped short of exploring the *importance* of these differences within the wider narrative. Contextual references were usually present, with many candidates making accurate comments about British imperialism, attitudes to race, and Queen Victoria's role as Empress of India. However, these were sometimes bolted on and not fully integrated into the analysis, suggesting some overreliance on writing frames or planning structures.

Stronger responses took a more thematic approach, considering how cultural differences created tension, misunderstanding, or empathy between characters. A few candidates explored how these differences highlighted the rigidity of British class structures or the alienation experienced by Indian characters such as Rani or Abdul. The most perceptive responses linked these contrasts to power dynamics and the broader colonial backdrop, offering insightful comments on how the play critiques British superiority and celebrates cultural richness.

However, some wrote in comparative terms without linking points to the *importance* of cultural differences, while others focused too narrowly on individual characters without considering the implications of their experiences.

Overall, candidates engaged with the text and could identify appropriate material. The best answers explored the broader consequences of cultural contrast within the Empire and how it influenced identity, relationships, and resistance. However, weaker responses remained descriptive or lacked a clear evaluative thread, and context was often underdeveloped.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

At the start of the play, cultural ~~differs~~ differences between England and India highlight how Britain was viewed through a romanticised lens during the rule of the British Empire when Rani expresses wonder towards life in England. This is shown in the first Act when she ~~asks~~ asks, 'what is England like?' and expresses excitement at the prospect of breathing the same air as Queen Victoria. This highlights the consequences of and ~~cultural differs~~ importance of cultural differences as it implies that Rani is admiring England through an idealised view-point and is completely unaware of the way that people like her are treated in British society. This naïve nature is contrasted by Hari who says, 'they like to look down at us from great heights.' This shows that unlike Rani, he is aware of the cultural differences between India and Britain and he has experienced the prejudice of British society first-hand. These two

(Section B continued) Contrasting views on life in England work to expose cultural differences as they show a clear distinction between the reality of Britain and the expectation that has been influenced by ~~the~~ ignorance, excitement at the chance of experiencing a new ~~to~~ culture and Ravi's own experiences in India, as shown in a later scene where she claims that guests are treated like gods (~~in~~ India). The stark difference in Indian and British culture is a result of the British Empire ~~and~~ which was an empire which had ~~over~~ political ~~cent~~ and colonial control over many countries around the world until the early twentieth century, under the rule of Queen Victoria. Because Britain held power over many nations, the British considered themselves to be superior to other nations and races which was reflected in British culture where foreigners and immigrants were less welcome than Western immigrants due to their perceived lower status in British society. As a result, ~~the~~ ~~may~~ ~~be~~ ~~increasing~~ to use Ravi's ignorance towards the different culture and society of England expose the prejudice that ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~p~~ was and still is so prevalent in British society. Additionally, by having Ravi be excited for England and having a very positive outlook on her new life, ~~the~~ ~~may~~ ~~also~~ ~~be~~ showing to the audience how society should treat others ^{highlighting} and that discrimination towards ~~foreigners~~ foreigners is not a universal practice. The audience may ~~also~~

(Section B continued) therefore question how cultural differences shape the way they behave and may sympathise with characters like Hari who have been victimised due to having a ~~different~~ different cultural background.

As the play progresses, cultural differences expose the casual racism that people of different backgrounds face in society through the eyes of the ~~perpetrators of~~ perpetrators of injustice. This is shown when Lady Sarah describes Abdul Karim's wife as being 'so un-English'. This highlights how Lady Sarah views the world through a very Eurocentric viewpoint and does not understand practices and cultures that do not fall within that scope. This can lead the reader to assume that prejudice and discrimination stems from lack of education and simple ignorance due to the fact that Queen Victoria responds to Lady Sarah's ~~views on~~ confusion over Mrs Karim's headscarf with, 'It is the custom'. This indicates that due to being educated in Indian culture by Abdul, Victoria is a lot more open-minded and accepting towards different ~~cultural~~ cultural practices that oppose the British way of life she is accustomed to. Crompton may therefore be using this scene to highlight how different cultures can ~~co-exist~~ co-exist in a society ~~where~~ that is educated and exposed to different lifestyles. The importance of exposure to different cultures is highlighted however when ~~at~~ Queen Victoria says to Abdul 'but a

(Section B continued) beloved pet'. By playfully referring to Abhim as a 'beloved pet', she believes she is expressing affection but is in fact perpetuating discrimination towards him as he is being objectified and treated as 'other' to her. This is important as it shows that while Victoria is educated on Indian culture and admires it, she lacks actual exposure and experience and therefore is always going to be prejudiced and influenced by acts of casual racism. This is important because the real life Queen Victoria did have a nurse called Abdul Karim but never travelled to India ~~in~~ on her lifetime, despite being the Empress of India. This can therefore cause the reader to assume that while Victoria is actively trying to be more accepting than Lady Sarah, she is a product of her time and will always be influenced by learned prejudice which shapes her perspectives on other cultures.

At the end of the play, cultural differences are celebrated through Ravi's redemption from being a fallen woman and finding her place in British ^{society} ~~society~~ despite the ~~adverse~~ adversity that her background brings. This is shown when the stage directions state that she is in a 'bridal sari'. This highlights the importance of cultural differences as it shows that Ravi has learned through the play to embrace her culture and to not try to fit into ~~British society~~ ~~society~~ by changing herself to be more 'acceptable' in British society. This is significant

(Section B continued) at the start of the play Rani is described as being 'dressed simply in a sari' as she has not yet experienced experienced British ~~culture~~ culture and has not been judged for her culture. As the play progressed and Rani got a job working for the oil company, she was dressed like a British woman and was stripped of her heritage, as shown when she asks, 'Do I look English?' Rani's need for validation and her desire to be viewed as English shows that her experiences in England have led her to believe that her culture is not welcome. By wearing a bridal sari at the end however, it shows that Rani has matured and learned to appreciate and ~~and~~ embrace her culture despite the society she finds herself in, because she has found a community through the Ayah's Home, Dadabhai and his ~~party~~ political party and now Hari and her daughter. This is significant because institutions like the Home for Ayahs existed in Victorian society to ^{assist} ~~aid~~ ~~those~~ who had been dismissed by ~~then~~ their British employers and ~~where~~ ~~where~~ they were able to appreciate each other's cultures in a safe space with other ayahs like themselves. Additionally, Rani was also defected from society due to being a 'fallen woman' due to getting pregnant before marriage but now has people around her who will accept her. Gupta may therefore be intending to express to the audience the importance of not feeling shame over their culture and encouraging them to ~~and~~ embrace their differences and to find communities of people who they can

(Section B continued) relate to and be accepted by if they feel unaccepted by society. This can cause the reader to feel pride in their culture and to celebrate characters like ~~the~~ Ravi who were able to find their happiness in a culture different to their own.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This is an assured, insightful and conceptually focused response that fully meets the demands of the task, exploring how cultural differences are used by Gupta to expose prejudice, challenge imperialism, and promote cultural identity.
- The candidate makes perceptive links between text and context, consistently weaving in references to Queen Victoria's historical role, real-life figures such as Abdul Karim, and the social expectations of British and Indian women during the Empire.
- The response is logically structured and shows strong textual knowledge, with relevant, embedded quotations and accurate use of dramatic and stage directions.
- Interpretation of character is nuanced, for example, the analysis of Queen Victoria's affection for Abdul as well-intentioned but unconsciously patronising shows a high level of critical engagement.
- The candidate explores character development over time, especially in the third paragraph which effectively traces Rani's cultural journey and links this to themes of empowerment, identity, and community.
- Contextual understanding (AO3) is consistently integrated and purposeful, enhancing the candidate's argument throughout.
- AO4 is secure at Level 3 – the writing is controlled and clear, with only minor lapses in fluency or phrasing, but these do not hinder meaning or insight.



Candidates should examine characters as constructs used by the author to achieve a purpose.

Question 17

Refugee Boy

The question asked candidates to explore the ways the relationship between Ruth and Alem is significant in the play.

This text has risen in popularity since last series. This question, whilst less popular than its counterpart, was generally well understood and allowed candidates to explore emotional and thematic elements of the play. Most responses demonstrated a clear awareness of the developing relationship between Ruth and Alem, recognising its importance in offering comfort, stability, and a sense of belonging amidst Alem's wider experiences of displacement and trauma.

Many candidates focused on how Ruth supports Alem through his most difficult moments, with references to her visits, her gifts, and her emotional encouragement. Stronger responses considered how this relationship contrasts with Alem's separation from his parents, positioning Ruth as a source of connection and hope. A number of essays also discussed how Ruth helps Alem find his voice, giving him confidence and reinforcing the play's emphasis on friendship and empathy.

A notable number of responses merged elements of the other question on suffering, broadening their discussion to include Alem's relationships with his mother, Themba, and Sweeney. While these were often insightful, they occasionally lost focus on the specific significance of Ruth, leading to less precise analysis. However, many candidates did use these other relationships to frame the importance of Ruth more clearly, contrasting her consistent support with the instability Alem faces elsewhere.

Contextual understanding was limited in many responses. While some candidates referenced the refugee experience in broad terms, there was less detailed exploration of the political or legal background that might have strengthened the analysis. Instead, some candidates focused effectively on the writer's message, identifying how Lemn Sissay uses the friendship between Ruth and Alem to highlight the power of compassion in the face of adversity.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ✕

Question 8 ✕

Question 9 ✕

Question 10 ✕

Question 11 ✕

Question 12 ✕

Question 13 ✕

Question 14 ✕

Question 15 ✕

Question 16 ✕

Question 17 ✕

Question 18 ✕

Question 19 ✕

Question 20 ✕

Question 21 ✕

Question 22 ✕

Question 23 ✕

Question 24 ✕

Question 25 ✕

Question 26 ✕

Question 27 ✕

Question 28 ✕

Question 29 ✕

Question 30 ✕

Plan : →

Deport No way ←
weo Must stay
Ruth + Alem → ticking time bomb
Thembu
hugging crying

Suffering

In the play 'Refugee Boy' written originally by Benjamin Zephaniah and adapted to a play by Lemn Sissay, we can see the significance of Alem and Ruth's relationship and how they evolved over time.

At the beginning of the play Ruth dislikes Alem's company and claims that Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald didn't ask her if it was okay for Alem to stay with

(Section B continued) them on part time fostering. She goes as far as saying that Alem got "a ticking time bomb strapped to him" which no one but her can see. Alem shows no retaliation to her words yet we as readers sense an obvious dislike ~~towards her~~ between both characters. This can link to Benjamin Zephaniah and ~~however~~ his separation from his siblings. He talks openly about the abuse, physically and verbally, that his Mother ~~also~~ felt at the hands of his father ~~and~~ which eventually led to him leaving with his Mother, leaving his siblings behind. This ~~may~~ disconnection and unfamiliarity that Ruth and Alem share could possibly link to that of Benjamin and his siblings shared after being reunited later on in life, making Alem and Ruth's relationship significant throughout ~~however, despite Ruth~~ the play.

However, despite Ruth's initial dislike toward Alem, she later opens up to him after discovering ~~as~~ about the passing of Alem's Mother. Ruth's name means 'friend' which we see her be towards Alem as she empathises with him later on. She discusses the past foster children they have housed, and openly ~~admits~~ admits how she 'fell for one'.

(Section B continued)

We as readers know this to be Themba, a past child in care who took his own life. Ruth cannot discuss her grief with her parents as they refuse to mention his name, yet to Alem she confides in and finds a secret solace in their relationship. Alem also tells her of his mother who was killed and how he grieves her. Ruth is understanding towards this grief and empathetically says, "You can trust me. Like I'm your sister, right?" This change in relationship shows a clear change in the significance of their relationship as they now refer to each other as 'Brother' and 'Sister', meaning that this shared grief has bonded them and brought them closer together, causing Alem to "Hug his sister and uncontrollably sob".

We as readers and watchers of the play can then see Alem and Ruth's relationship deepen when Alem and his Father are refused asylum in ~~the~~ the UK. ~~Ruth~~ Ruth's parents, Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald tell Alem and his father, Mr Lealo, that they can appeal the courts ruling, which is commonly

(Section B continued) done as ~~9~~ over 7300 unaccompanied asylum seekers entered Great Britain in March 2024. Most of which had to appeal the courts original rulings to stay in Britain. During Alem's ~~resisting~~ re-training, Ruth ~~persuades Alem to~~ instructs Alem to start a peaceful protest, ~~in~~ in which she comes up with the slogan ~~DEPORT~~ "DEPORTATION NO WAY, THE KELOS MUST STAY!"

This really shows the love and admiration that Ruth and Alem share as without Ruth's push to protest Alem may not have had as good a chance to being allowed to stay in the country. Ruth's willing to fight for him which shows a clear significance in their relationship as Alem trusts her and ~~takes~~ takes her advice, despite his father's words of disapproval. This idea of someone fighting for you could link to Lemn Sissay's lack of love from his family as he was ~~left~~, abandoned in England from Ethiopia. Much like Alem who's father is Ethiopian and Mother Eritrean. Lemn didn't receive any endearment from his birth family, or his adopted family. ~~At a young age~~ ~~on~~ At a young age he was adopted by

(Section B continued)

a white family, much like Aunt
and the Fitzgeralds who foster him. Yet he
was kicked out and put back into the care system for
~~unknown~~ unknown circumstances. This lack of
love and want from Dennis' adoptive family
could be why he writes of Ruth and the Fitzgeralds
so nicely. Ruth is the person he wanted to have
when he was young. Making the relationship
significant.



AO1/AO3 Level 3 - 17 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 6 marks

- The response shows a clear understanding of the relationship between Alem and Ruth, with relevant focus on how it changes over time and why that is significant.
- There are some developed ideas, particularly around the emotional growth of both characters and the supportive role Ruth plays, especially in the protest scene.
- The analysis is generally clear and appropriately supported with references to the text. For example, the “ticking time bomb” and “like I’m your sister” are well chosen to illustrate turning points in their relationship.
- However, the response does not quite meet the criteria for Level 4 because analysis lacks precision at times, and although some contextual links are included, they are not always securely integrated or consistently relevant to the argument.
- There is an attempt to explore authorial intention, particularly in the final paragraph, but it tends to drift into generalisation or over-explanation.
- AO4: Level 3 (6 marks) is appropriate as the writing is mostly clear and coherent, with some control of expression. There are moments where awkward phrasing or spelling mistakes affect fluency, but overall the response is readable and communicates meaning effectively.



Candidates should use context to develop their argument.

Question 18

Refugee Boy

The question asked candidates to explore how suffering is important in the play.

This was a popular question that allowed candidates to engage with the central themes of the play. Most responses demonstrated clear understanding of the many ways suffering is experienced and presented, particularly in relation to Alem's personal journey. Candidates were able to identify a range of causes, from political conflict and family separation to the emotional toll of alienation and loss.

The strongest responses explored how suffering is used by Lemn Sissay to develop empathy in the audience and raise awareness about the challenges faced by young refugees. These candidates moved beyond listing events and considered how suffering shapes Alem's identity and relationships. They often discussed the psychological impact of his father's departure, the uncertainty of the legal process, and the pain of being torn between two countries.

Many responses included well-chosen references to specific events and characters, such as Sweeney's home life and parents, Alem's experiences in foster care, and his reaction to his mother's death. There were also some thoughtful explorations of the suffering of other characters, including the loss of Themba and the impact this has on Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald and Ruth, showing how the play presents suffering as something that can connect individuals across cultural and social divides.

Contextual references were present in some responses, with some candidates commenting on the asylum process, attitudes towards immigration, and the realities of the refugee experience in the UK. It was very common for candidates to comment on Lemn Sissay's personal experiences and how events in the play are inspired by his upbringing. However, in many cases, context, where included at all, was either superficial or bolted on, with stronger answers integrating it more fluently into their analysis of character and theme.

Weaker responses tended to list examples of suffering without evaluating their significance or impact. These essays were often narrative in tone and lacked analytical depth. Some candidates drifted into general discussions of Alem's experiences without clearly linking them to the theme of suffering, or confused plot details, which limited their ability to form a cohesive argument.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

In ~~Refugee~~ Refugee Boy, there are many parts in which suffering is important. One of these moments are when a Alem runs away from the children's home. Alem tells himself that ~~he~~ ^{his} is "home is not broken". This quote is important because it shows how Alem is attempting to hold on to the past and is in denial, believing that everything is going to go back how it was. It also highlights how Alem feels ~~that~~ ^{upset} ~~he~~ ^{about} feels how things turned out.

(Section B continued) He also tells himself that he is not a refugee boy! This is significant to the theme of suffering as refugees have connections to suffering and war. This implies the alien does not want to believe he is suffering and that he is running away from his problems. Zephaniah has done this to show how war can cause extreme suffering to someone and can cause extreme trauma.

Another example of the importance of suffering is when Sweeney tells Alan that his dad was abusive and "beat" him. This is important because suffering caused Sweeney to become violent as his trauma stemmed from violence. It also highlights how Sweeney is violent and could further emphasise that Sweeney does not want to phrase his trauma and suffering alone so he isn't causing suffering so he doesn't feel as helpless.

(Section B continued) Another part in which suffering is important is when Ruth argues with Mrs Fitzgerald and asks ~~"why does"~~ Mrs Fitzgerald says "I can't ~~at~~ talk about it. I can't think about him every day. Every God-forsaken day". This is very important as it shows how they are unable to handle the pain and suffering which losing Themba caused. It also highlights how they were suffering in silence, attempting to avoid the trauma inflicted on them. Benjamin Zephaniah included this to highlight how ^{loss} ~~griefing~~ can cause suffering and how it is important to face grief instead of running away from it.

Another area in which suffering is important is when Musrapha talks about a "car". This is important as Musrapha's father was kidnapped in with a ~~car~~ car, so

(Section B continued) Mustapha spent all his time learning about cars in hope of seeing the car which kidnapped his father. This highlights how in order to cope with his suffering, Mustapha holds onto the fantasy or dream that the car will bring his dad back in which in reality it will not.

Another area in which suffering is important is when Alen's mother is hit and he shouts "Mother!". This is important as this is a horrible sight to see for Alen as he is unable to forget what happened to his mother and causes trauma.



AO1/AO3 Level 3 - 18 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 6 marks

- The response offers a clear personal response and addresses the task with some relevant and supported ideas about the theme of suffering in *Refugee Boy*.
- There is a general line of argument that suffering is shown through a range of characters including Alem, Ruth, Sweeney, and Mustapha.
- Understanding of the text is evident and appropriate, with some developed references. Examples such as Alem denying being a “refugee boy” or Mustapha obsessing over cars are used with relevant explanation.
- However, the response remains largely explanatory, with limited analysis of how ideas are communicated.
- There is some awareness of contextual ideas such as war, trauma, and the refugee experience, but connections to authorial intention and wider context are generalised. For example, the mentions of Zephaniah’s (Sissay’s) purpose are brief and undeveloped.
- There are some lapses in fluency and some mistakes which prevent higher in Level 3 AO4.



Candidates should try to discuss the writer’s intention.

Question 19

Animal Farm

The question asked candidates to explore the ways Squealer is important in the novel.

This was a popular and well-received question that produced a large number of confident and well-structured responses. Candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of the novel's allegorical nature and were generally secure in linking Squealer's role to the mechanisms of propaganda used by totalitarian regimes. Contextual references to Stalinism, Pravda, and figures such as Molotov were widespread and often well integrated into the analysis, supporting thoughtful exploration of Squealer's function within the novel.

Most candidates were able to identify key episodes involving Squealer, including the justification for the pigs consuming the milk and apples, the manipulation surrounding Boxer's fate, and the alteration of the commandments. These examples were frequently used to comment on Orwell's critique of state control and media manipulation. However, in some cases, these episodes were overused at the expense of more discerning or varied references. The strongest answers moved beyond plot summary to consider Orwell's use of persuasive language, euphemism, and repetition in Squealer's speeches.

A number of responses demonstrated a high level of vocabulary and conceptual engagement with the allegory, although in some cases theoretical frameworks were introduced that did not fully support the candidate's argument. While context was generally a strength, a few candidates missed opportunities to explore the ideological roots of the novel more fully, for example, by neglecting to mention Old Major as a Marxist figure or to explore his vision for a better society.

Weaker responses tended to focus more on narrative retelling than character analysis, occasionally losing sight of the question's emphasis on Squealer. These answers often lacked precise reference to language or literary techniques, with generalised comments about manipulation or control rather than detailed analysis. Nonetheless, even these responses typically showed some awareness of historical parallels and Orwell's intentions.

The best essays were confident and analytical, offering thoughtful interpretations of Squealer's role in the novel and connecting his actions to Orwell's broader political warning. Quotations were used frequently and effectively, and AO4 was generally well met, with ambitious vocabulary and secure control of written expression.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 3 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

Orwell portrays Squealer as an important character in the novel. This is shown in the quote "The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into ~~the~~ white" This shows ~~g~~ how great ~~is~~ ^{he} is at persuasion, he manages to turn already known facts to whatever he wants and the animals would believe it. The phrase "black into white" is an example that 'black' is dark, way darker than white ~~by~~ but Squealer could change that if he wanted to, implying how he can make the pigs' evil activities ~~look~~ look pure and a benefit to the animals and the farm. A reader would ~~be~~ almost be impressed ~~see &~~ seeing how ~~persuasive~~ persuasive and witty he is. This is emphasis on the the times of the Soviet Union when the propaganda was used to make the public believe how their country's state was in a developed ~~st~~ and positive state compared to the fact.

(Section B continued)

~~moreover~~ moreover, Orwell ^{shows} ~~presents~~ Squealer ~~in~~ being so important in the novel. This is shown in the quote "~~It~~ (...) ~~is~~ scientifically proven." Orwell presents Squealer as intelligent character who uses his language skills to fool the animals he uses statistics to show how they are taking the milk and apples for the other animals benefits. He shows how he is upset to be mistaken as greedy to make the other animals feel guilty for their 'negative' ~~a~~ thoughts of their 'comrade'. The reader would be shocked how Squealer keeps the animals in line. This emphasis on how the Soviet Union government published ^{fake} ~~fake~~ statistics on their economy and ~~the~~ daily life to have changed ~~to~~ for the better fooling the majority of illiterate citizens.

Finally, Orwell presents Squealer as an important character. This is shown in the quote "surely you don't want Jones back, ~~again~~ comrades?" Orwell shows ~~to~~ how Squealer manipulates the animals comparing themselves to Mr. ~~Jane~~ Jones who didn't leave on a positive note to make the pigs look more heroic and moral. He asks them the question to make them think about the events ~~that~~ that occurred ~~with~~ with Jones to make the look better almost using ~~Jane~~ Jones as a ~~Scapegoat~~ scapegoat. A reader ~~the~~ would be astounded Squealer ~~for~~ powerful language skills.



AO1/AO3 Level 3 - 15 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The response begins with an overview of Squealer explaining the quotation included in the question. There is also mention of how much readers are impressed by 'how persuasive he is' and there is a link to context – the use of propaganda in the Soviet Union.
- This is developed to highlight Squealer's language skills and use of statistics, followed, again, by comment on the effect on the reader and a link to context.
- The final paragraph follows a similar pattern, with comment on how Squealer invokes Jones as a scapegoat and how the reader reacts. This is therefore a secure Level 3 personal response with an appropriate critical style (using quotations), a sound interpretation and sound comment on contexts.
- AO4: vocabulary is carefully chosen and there are few errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar.



Candidates can further their response by looking closely at the writer's intention.

Question 20

Animal Farm

The question asked candidates to explore how suffering is significant in the novel.

This question was slightly less confidently handled than Question 19, though it still produced a range of thoughtful responses. Most candidates were able to identify key examples of suffering within the novel, particularly the hardships faced by Boxer, the general oppression of the working animals, and the brutal executions. These examples were often used to comment on the cruelty of the regime and the manipulation of the masses.

Many responses were narrative in nature, with some retelling the events of the plot without clearly linking examples to the question's focus on the theme of suffering. While most candidates recognised Orwell's critique of totalitarianism, only the strongest answers developed this into a more conceptual exploration of suffering as a tool of political control or systemic abuse. Some more perceptive responses extended the discussion to lesser-discussed characters such as Mollie or Benjamin, using these figures to explore the theme in more nuanced ways.

Contextual knowledge was evident across most responses, particularly around the failures of communism and the betrayals associated with Stalin's regime. There were appropriate links to real-world suffering under Soviet rule, such as forced labour and famine. However, in weaker responses, context was inconsistently applied or bolted on without fully supporting the argument. The most successful essays embedded contextual knowledge fluently, using it to frame Orwell's authorial purpose.

Quotations were used in most responses, though not always with development or analytical depth. A number of candidates selected relevant textual references but did not explore Orwell's choices or their effects in detail. In contrast, higher-level responses considered Orwell's presentation of suffering as deliberate and systematic, and examined the emotional impact on the reader.

Overall, while most candidates showed a solid understanding of the novel and its message, fewer offered sustained and analytical responses compared to the more character-focused Question 19. AO4 was generally well met, with competent written expression, though a number of essays would have benefited from a more consistent structure and tighter focus on the question.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 2 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

In Animal ~~farm~~ ^{the} Farm, Napoleon saw himself as a leader and therefore ~~all~~ he didn't do much hard work himself while on the farm. 'Throughout the spring and summer, they worked a sixty hour week..... work on ~~Sa~~ Sunday afternoon as well', in this, ~~the~~ Napoleon extended the work time on the farm even though he didn't understand ~~that~~ why the animals already disliked the idea of how much work time they had. Napoleon wasn't a good leader, he didn't listen to ideas, and he didn't do well in leading the farm to victory after Mr Jones and ^{Pilkington} ~~Pilkington~~ left. During the Russian Revolution, Stalin ~~wasn't~~ also didn't have many good leadership ~~qual~~ qualities. For anyone, human or animal, working ~~the~~ sixty hours per week ~~feels~~ not only feels ~~like~~ like it's never going to end, but also ~~that~~ working for that many hours per week in summer and spring feels ^{like your} ~~like~~ working longer due to the heat, which usually

(Section B continued) results in less work being done. ~~due to the~~ ~~fact~~. Readers may ~~feel~~ believe ^{Napoleon} ~~Napoleon~~ was being a selfish leader by only making the other animals work, instead of helping them.

In Animal Farm, suffering is significant when all the animals work together ^{to} build a windmill to help with their work on the farm. The windmill ~~is~~ is allegorical for ~~the animals' hopes~~ ~~and~~ Stalins five year plans. Napoleon ~~does~~ didn't help with the windmill, instead he 'urinated on the plans' meaning it was built wrong and when a storm came, the whole thing got destroyed. Napoleon is a ~~very~~ harsh, impolite ~~and~~ pig who doesn't try to help on the farm, instead he ruined ~~the~~ ~~the~~ plans for the windmill. ~~and~~ The other animals on the farm had to work ~~together~~ together to rebuild the windmill without Napoleons help. Readers may feel ^{ashamed} ~~ashamed~~ of ^{Napoleon} ~~Napoleon~~ for being a bad and dishearted leader who refuses to help.

Also, suffering is shown when the commandments change after revolution on the farm. There were very little ^{some} ~~some~~ animals on the farm, ~~the~~ ^{some} pigs and Benjamin the horse, Boxer couldn't get past the letter 'D'. The commandments were originally set as a way of keeping equality on the farm without the humans, however after the Battle of the Cowshed and the pigs taking the milk and apples, the seven commandments changed to suit the pigs' lives. ~~For~~ For example, 'all animals are equal' became 'all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others'; 'no animal shall drink alcohol' became 'no

(Section B continued) animal shall drink alcohol to excess'.
 The Seven commandments on the farm have religious connotations to the ten commandments set by God in Christianity. These commandments are meant to keep everyone equal and ensure everyone abides by the rules. ~~Some even~~ An example of a Christian commandment is 'no person shall commit adultery'.
 On the farm, when the commandments change, the pigs convince the other animals that they have always been like that, and because the other animals can't read or write, they just listen to what they were told.



AO1/AO3 Level 2 - 12 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- Although this response mentions 'Suffering' at the beginning of each paragraph, there is limited focus on the theme of the question.
- The response does focus on the character of Napoleon and makes relevant comments with some quotations which are valid - however, the comments and analysis are linked to Napoleon and not the suffering they could relate to.
- The 2nd paragraph contains little rewardable material. Although the rebuilding of the windmill causes significant suffering (particularly to Boxer), the comments relate to Napoleon's actions and how these create errors for the building of the windmill.
- The spelling, paragraphing, punctuation and sentencing are to a high standard and despite the occasional slip, these are not significant.



Candidates should always focus on the question throughout.

Question 21

Lord of the Flies

The question asked candidates to explore how Simon contrasts with the other boys in the novel.

This was a popular and generally well-understood question, producing a wide range of confident and thoughtful responses. Most candidates demonstrated a strong grasp of Simon's symbolic significance in the novel, often contrasting him with the other boys to highlight his spiritual, moral, and psychological role. Many candidates recognised Simon as a Christ-like figure and explored the idea of his death as a sacrificial moment, offering interpretations that were at times genuinely moving and well supported with accurate quotation.

The best responses demonstrated excellent textual knowledge and offered discerning references to key episodes, including Simon's solitary encounter with the pig's head and his death at the hands of the group. These were linked effectively to Golding's commentary on the innate savagery of mankind. Contextual knowledge was frequently strong, with thoughtful references to Golding's wartime experience, religious allegory, and the philosophical underpinnings of the novel. Some responses included references to Golding's own quotations about human nature.

A number of candidates used Freudian theory (id, ego, superego) to support their arguments. While this was more appropriate here than in responses to other texts, such as *An Inspector Calls*, it was often most effective when used briefly to frame character behaviour rather than as the main analytical focus. Some candidates introduced wider theories or philosophical frameworks, but the strongest essays stayed closely tied to the text and used these ideas to enhance rather than dominate their argument.

A small number of responses lacked secure knowledge of Simon's role in the plot and struggled to recall key events in detail. Others offered generalised religious or symbolic comments without clearly linking them to specific moments in the text. The literary context of *Lord of the Flies* as a dystopian or allegorical novel was rarely discussed, which could have added a further dimension to some answers.

Overall, this question enabled candidates to write with confidence, and most were able to engage meaningfully with Simon's significance. The best answers blended perceptive analysis with precise textual reference and well-integrated contextual understanding, showing a clear appreciation of Golding's moral message and the wider implications of Simon's role in the novel.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 4 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

Published in 1954, William Golding wrote ~~a~~ ^{the} novel 'Lord of the Flies' based off of the popular book 'Coral Island'. After fighting in World War II and working in a public school, Golding claimed to see the 'darkness in man's heart' in everyone, even young school kids. This is why he chose to adapt Coral Island, to show that young children still had the 'capacity for evil', and would not live a perfect, trouble-free, innocent life on an island with no adults.

We are first introduced to Simon when he is part of the choir. He immediately stands out from the crowd due to his epileptic fits/constant fainting. However, although having been an outsider, he manages to have a pure heart, and more empathy than the

(Section B continued) other boys in the group. This is first presented when one of the first times in which we see Simon's soft nature, is when he hands the little children fruit. This is a biblical reference, and isn't the only time that Simon is described as a Jesus figure. Throughout the ~~play~~ novel, Simon contrasts from the boys as he ~~is~~ has more sympathy, strong morals, and tends to keep to himself. Simon is a private person, and even finds a private location where he escapes to ~~the~~ throughout the novel. The spot is described as a tranquil, soothing area and he solidifies that Simon is "at one with nature". This event is a contrast from the other, savage boys who are finding an interest in murder, and are covering their bodies in war paint, ~~slowly~~ ^{their} ~~become~~ their civilised, innocent minds slowly spiralling into terror. ~~✗~~

A monumental moment is when Simon discovers 'the Lord of the Flies', which is a pig's head, mounted on a stick. The name 'the Lord of the Flies' translates to 'beelzebub', meaning devil. This is another biblical reference, empathising on Simon's Jesus-like actions.

~~One~~

~~✗~~ Another event that explains the boys' descent into savagery is when 'the beast' is created. This due

(Section B continued) to his intelligence and due to having an open mind, Simon discovers that ~~maybe~~ the beast isn't a physical being, and that "maybe the beast is inside of us". This leads to Simon's curiosity about the beast, meanwhile Jack is brainstorming on how they are to kill the beast.

Simon's interest in understanding the beast leads to him venturing up the hill. Here, he finds the dead parachutist, tangled in its parachute, being thrown around in the wind. Simon frees the 'beast' of its tangled strings and lets it leave it to lay peacefully, being gentle with the body. This is a ~~to~~ drastic contrast from the other boys, who wanted to murder the beast, and were too nervous to face it in the first place.

One of Simon's last contrasting moments to the boys is his murder. Rushing to inform the boys on the beast, he is caught in the cult-like behaviour of the boys on Castle Rock, who believe that Simon is the beast.

The boys mindlessly claw into him, as Simon screams in agony, screaming that the beast ^{was} ~~is~~ not real.

Simon's body is disposed in the ocean, and is described ~~as~~ as floating away beautifully, as if nature was reclaiming him as its own. This description is a contrast from Piggy's short, disturbing death, in which he falls from a height, splatting into a rock.

In a conversation with Ralph in the beginning of

(Section B continued) the play, Simon envisions that he will not make it out alive, and that Ralph will. Simon's death was a tragedy, yet, unlike the other boys, Simon had predicted this was to happen.

William Golding would have chosen to include a character, such as Simon, to bring in the idea of the 'survival of the ~~fittest~~ fittest', and that characters such as Piggy and Simon were destined to die on the island, yet only because of the evil that the other boys contained.



AO1/AO3 Level 4 – 26 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The response offers a developed personal response to the task and makes several strong points about Simon and how he contrasts to the other boys.
- There are some sustained comments on relevant contexts and their relationship with the text. For example, Golding as an author, 'a biblical reference' and authorial intention in the conclusion: 'Golding would have chosen to include'.
- The response does everything needed from it in Level 4 but doesn't quite meet the descriptor of 'assured' which prevents it from moving up into Level 5. You can compare this script to the one included for Q22 which is more assured.
- The context is not always integrated into the response and the response would've been stronger if it had been more consistently linked.
- The AO4 mark reflects the consistent accuracy and control shown in the response.



Candidates should always integrate context into their response.

Question 22

Lord of the Flies

The question asked candidates to explore the importance of survival in the novel.

This question was generally accessible and allowed candidates across the ability range to engage with the text, though responses were more variable in quality than those seen for Q21. While many candidates were able to form an argument around the importance of survival, a number of weaker responses became overly descriptive or repetitive, listing survival moments or hardships without linking them to Golding's wider message or the novel's structure.

That said, the broad nature of the theme allowed candidates to approach it from different angles. Stronger responses explored survival as not only physical but also emotional, mental, and moral. These answers frequently commented on how characters adapt (or fail to adapt) to the island environment, with some insightful analysis of decision-making, leadership, and the breakdown of civilisation. There was also some thoughtful reference to sacrificial behaviour, particularly in relation to Piggy and Simon.

Key symbols such as the conch, the fire, and Piggy's glasses were used effectively in many responses to explore the group's shifting priorities and the conflict between survival and savagery. More perceptive essays linked these symbols to the boys' psychological state and Golding's commentary on human nature. A few particularly strong essays positioned the novel within the context of the adventure genre or considered how survival is framed through a class-based or political lens.

Contextual understanding was better integrated here than in some other responses. Many candidates drew links to Golding's wartime experience and the allegorical nature of the novel, though only a few referenced the literary context of dystopia or Golding's own comments about the darkness of man's heart. Some responses attempted to use psychoanalytic theory or philosophical frameworks such as Freud, but where this lacked understanding, it weakened the argument and distracted from more relevant textual analysis.

The best responses were mature, focused, and analytical, often moving beyond the surface level of who survives to ask what survival costs the characters, both individually and collectively. AO4 was generally secure, with many responses demonstrating control of language, a good range of vocabulary, and secure quotation use. Weaker essays tended to lack cohesion or relied too heavily on generalisation.

Overall, this question allowed for breadth and depth, and most candidates were able to access the theme. The most successful answers combined confident textual knowledge with thoughtful interpretations and well-integrated contextual insight.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

In William Golding's arguably allegorical novel, "The Lord of the Flies", he uses the idea of survival to symbolise the control that the boys have over their innate evil. As the novel develops and the boys descend into violence and savagery, the prospect of rescue becomes less important to them.

Immediately, the idea of survival is established through the logical, ^{rational} ~~democratic~~ leadership of Ralph who instantly decides that they "need to build a map." His ^{democratic} ~~democratic~~, elected form of leadership is

(Section B continued) focused on being rescued as quickly as possible and relies on people co-operating and staying calm. The necessity of fire is quickly discovered and it symbolises hope, the only thing keeping them alive on the island. We can suggest that Golding uses the idea of democracy being vital to survival as a metaphor for the political situation ^{after world war 2.} ~~at the time of him writing.~~ We know that Hitler's tyranny caused anarchy and suffering - similar to how following Jack's rise to power, evil began to take control*. Throughout the novel, the opposing forms of leadership within the microcosm cause tension and can be argued to force the boys to violence as they see that overpowering Ralph's influence is more important than rescue, "you let the fire go out". Here we can see Ralph is concentrating on blaming Jack and the hunters for their negligence as opposed to rectifying the problem.

Similarly, the boys' descent into savagery represents man's capacity for evil gaining control of their ~~mor~~ conscience. At the

(Section B continued) beginning of the novel, Jack and the choir are established as the hunters, recognising how they will need meat to survive on the island. However, Jack finds himself unable to kill the pig due to "the enormity of the knife cutting into flesh... the unbearable blood". This demonstrates how even though he knows they need meat, Jack is still controlled by the conditioning of civilised society. We see this soon change however, ^{as} the boys kill a mother sow in a barbaric, primitive slaughter, representing the end of ~~civilisation~~ ^{civilised behaviour}. We can suggest here that Golding is exposing the fragility of human nature as the boys easily succumbed to the innate evil he believed resides in us all. As a soldier ^{and took part in} in World War 2, Golding witnessed the malicious violence that humans are capable of. He knew that in a ~~crisis~~ crisis, the rules and expectations of society are forgotten and violence takes precedence. During the hunt, the pig "squealed and bucked and the air was full of noise and sweat and blood and terror". The polysyndetic listing demonstrates the cacophany of

(Section B continued) horrific things occurring at once, evoking shock and fear in the reader that previously educated, civilised boys are capable of such evil, easily having forgotten the idea of rescue and going home.

Another way in which survival and rescue is presented as important is through the symbol of the conch. The ~~"delicate"~~ "delicate", "white" conch shell was a vital part of Ralph's democracy and aided in the organisation of the boys to build huts and the fire also. However as Jack's autocracy was formed^{and boys followed him in an example of}, the ^{mod} mentality rationality and intelligence that the conch symbolised in order to be rescued was soon ~~for~~ forgotten. Jack even claimed that "the conch doesn't count on this side of the island", developing the idea that they are creating a ~~new~~ society without rules and morals. This is shocking to a reader as it is often thought that children symbolise innocence, but Golding wanted to criticise this. He was an English teacher and saw the cruelty that children are capable of,

therefore
(Section B continued) ~~and so~~ he wanted to oppose ideas in novels like "Treasure Island" and "Coral Island" that boys would stay civilised and stay focused on rescue and going back to a society where they were forced to act a certain way.

Finally, at the end of the novel, when the boys are eventually discovered by people in boats, Ralph realises that ^{the} rescue is not a moment of unequivocal joy as they expected. "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, for the darkness of man's heart" demonstrates that although they ~~were~~ were finally going home, the price they had all paid was catastrophic. They had fought and killed and murdered, they had given in to their dark desires and Ralph knew that they would never be the same as a result. Furthermore, fire had become a weapon as opposed to the symbol of hope as it had been at the start of the novel, representing how evil can corrupt anything. This leaves the reader with a sense of fear and sadness as we can see the detrimental effect that

(Section B continued) our innate dark desires that

Golding believed we all possessed as a result of the Original Sin, can have on everything around us.

* - and so to a contemporary reader, the loss of Ralph's influence would induce fear.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 – 28 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- Although this is a fluent and developed response which shows perceptive understanding of the novel, it is weakened by its lack of sustained focus on the idea of 'survival'.
- The response begins by stating that survival is used to 'symbolise the control that the boys have over their innate evil', a questionable statement that leads into a discussion about Ralph's and Jack's contrasting ways of exercising control ('democracy' vs 'tyranny' or 'autocracy').
- This is developed into an exploration of how the boys descend from civilised control into primitive violence, before discussing the symbolism of the conch. Along the way, there are relevant contextual references to Golding's own experiences and the impact of 'Hitler's tyranny'. The conclusion includes a comment about how the fire became a 'weapon as opposed to the symbol of hope'. Had these ideas been explicitly linked to the idea of survival, the mark awarded would be higher in Level 5 than the 28 awarded for the high level of engagement with the text and the mature critical style.
- The AO4 mark reflects the consistent accuracy and control shown in the response.



Candidates should always bring their discussion back to the question.

Question 23

Anita and Me

The question asked candidates to explore the importance of Anita's relationships with others in the novel.

This was an accessible question that generated a wide range of responses across the ability spectrum, despite there being so few responses on this text. Candidates engaged well with the opportunity to explore Anita's character through her relationships, with many using Meena's evolving perspective as a lens through which to evaluate Anita's significance and impact. Examiners noted that there were some excellent responses to both questions on this text.

Most responses focused on Anita's relationship with Meena, exploring how it shapes Meena's understanding of identity, loyalty, and cultural belonging. Many candidates discussed how Anita's influence initially appears exciting and liberating, but is later revealed to be damaging, especially as Meena becomes more aware of casual racism and social prejudice. This led to thoughtful commentary on Meena's personal growth, with stronger responses positioning Anita as a catalyst in Meena's journey toward self-awareness and independence.

A number of essays also referenced Anita's interactions with other characters, including her family and peers to explore how she seeks power and attention, often through provocative or exclusionary behaviour. These responses considered the social context of the novel, with some candidates commenting on poverty, lack of education, and the pressures of growing up in a rural working-class community during the 1970s.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☐

Question 8 ☐

Question 9 ☐

Question 10 ☐

Question 11 ☐

Question 12 ☐

Question 13 ☐

Question 14 ☐

Question 15 ☐

Question 16 ☐

Question 17 ☐

Question 18 ☐

Question 19 ☐

Question 20 ☐

Question 21 ☐

Question 22 ☐

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☐

Question 25 ☐

Question 26 ☐

Question 27 ☐

Question 28 ☐

Question 29 ☐

Question 30 ☐

Anita and me is a ~~novel written~~ semi semi-autobiographical novel written by Meera Syal in 1996. Syal purposefully presents Anita's relationships with her friends as unequal and cruel, to highlight how Anita seeks control over those she deems to be below her, as a result of the lack of control Anita has in her disjunctive family relationships. Syal uses this to ~~to~~ show how children growing up in 1960s black country were shaped by their changing environment.

At the beginning of the novel Anita is first introduced in chapter one and is shown as a bully towards Meena. She tells Meena ~~about how her~~ outside Mr. Ormerod's shop that the sailor in a poster was her father, Roberto. She says that her dad killed 'Jemie'

(Section B continued) in the war, which confuses Meena, who naively ~~wonders~~ thinks she was talking about men named Jerry. This immediately sets up Anita as a deceitful bully as she is shown taking advantage of nine year old Meena in order to create entertainment for herself and her friends. This foreshadows the imbalance in Meena and Anita's friendship as the first time they meet Anita seeks control over her. In addition, Anita is shown as malevolent and ~~purposefully creating~~ and controlling through her relationship with Shemie and Fat Sally. She is cleverly plays one girl ^{mean} against the other by linking arms with one girl whilst the other trailed behind. This ~~shows~~ highlights how Anita deliberately causes harm to others in her need for control. This initial display of Anita's cruelty in the novel causes the ~~audience~~ ^{reader} to dislike her character after seeing her mistreatment of others. After meeting Meena outside of her house, Anita is described destroying butterfly eggs on a branch. This further highlights her cruel nature and foreshadows her lack of emotion later in the novel when Anita she almost kills her family dog. ~~After~~ This leads to the reader questioning her actions and why she seems to find joy in acts of cruelty. After destroying the eggs, Anita 'tests' Meena by throwing the sharp stick at her and waiting for a reaction. However, Meena

(Section B continued) doesn't react ~~with~~ which sets up a unique ~~relationship of friendship~~ where, although Anita still takes advantage of Meena, she sees her as superior to Shemie and Fat Sally. However, it is hinted that the control Anita seeks in her friendships is a result of the lack of control she has in her household, which is revealed when Anita and her friends visit the fair.

Towards the middle of the play, Meena, ~~and~~ Anita, Shemie and Fat Sally visit three boys at the fair. ~~Meena~~ Anita, although only being around thirteen, reacts excitedly when one of the boys tells her he wants to 'shag the arse off her'. This highlights Anita's distorted view of sex due to her ~~family~~ relationships. In addition, after this ~~the~~ Anita's mother's Deidre is seen going into a 'coveen' with the boy Anita was with. This hints at Deidre being a sex worker, which is backed up by Meena's interpretation 'she was awfully busy for a woman who claimed not to have a job'. This Syal portrays Deidre in ~~the~~ his way to highlight the fact that due to the closing of mines, there was a lack of work in old mining towns like the fictional village of Tollington. This led to desperation and may be why Deidre is seen in this line of work. This hints at ~~the~~ Anita's difficult home life, as Deidre is married to her father, Roberto, signifying that

(Section B continued) Anita is left neglected along with her sister, Tracey. Anita shows her need for control in the 'peeing contest' where she bullies Tracey and forces her to pee in front of everyone. This abuse is common of from abuse victims, as they feel a lack of control and decide to gain it by bullying others. Furthermore, Anita and Tracey's abuse is further hinted when Tracey's thighs have 'imprints of ten angry fingers', which shows how they receive physical abuse from Roberto.

However, Syal ends the novel in a melancholy way, by showing how everyone who cared for Anita has now left her. Syal sets up ~~the~~ a feeling ~~of~~ of sympathy from the reader by showing Anita's potential to become ~~a~~ successful through the way she treats Sherie's horse. She is described as good at riding the horse, which shows that despite being from a broken home and not succeeding academically (she didn't pass her 11+ exam) Anita has talents that due to her environment have been left undiscovered. Anita's caring side is shown in her treatment of Sherie's horse, she 'whispers lover's endearments' to it, showing how despite her bullying nature and her need for control, she finds comfort in an innocent being, showing ~~that~~ & she has good within her and the potential to become a better person. However, at the end of the novel the

(Section B continued) predictions that the fortune teller made at the fair begin to come true as Anita is left on her own. ~~Anita moves~~ Meena and her family move away to a more diverse area, and ~~she~~ Sherrie also leaves Tollington. This conveys how many people were 'trapped' in 'forgotten' villages because they were too poor to move out. Although Anita once believed she could run her own horse and live in London, we as readers are shown at the end of the novel that Anita ends up stuck in Tollington without her mother, who left, and without friends. This shows ~~the~~ how children growing up in the 1960s were negatively ~~eff~~ affected by their changing environment and lack of opportunities.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 – 30 marks

AO4 Level 3 – 8 marks

- The response offers a sustained and convincing personal response to the question, with clear focus throughout on how Syal presents Anita's relationships with her friends.
- Interpretation is assured and rooted in detailed textual evidence. There is a strong awareness of character motivation, such as Anita's controlling behaviour being a response to abuse and neglect in her home life.
- The essay uses a conceptualised argument: that Anita's cruelty is a defence mechanism, and that Syal uses this relationship to reflect the impact of 1960s social and economic pressures. This is explored convincingly across the novel.
- Context (AO3) is integrated fluently and with insight. This illuminates the text rather than feeling bolted on.

There is some particularly strong evaluative comment, e.g. the horse scene revealing Anita's emotional depth, or the social commentary behind her failure to leave Tollington.



Where possible, candidates should link relevant events to the question and to the writer's message and intention.

Question 24

Anita and Me

The question asked candidates to explore the significance of rebelling in the novel.

This was an accessible question that generated a wide range of responses across all levels. Most candidates were able to engage with the theme of rebellion and used Meena's development to explore how rebellion can be both personal and cultural. The question allowed for exploration of character, theme, and context, and encouraged candidates to reflect on Meena's growing self-awareness and resistance to the expectations placed upon her.

Many responses focused on Meena's early rebellion as an attempt to fit in with Anita and the wider Tollington community. Candidates frequently discussed how Meena defies her parents, embraces English culture, and distances herself from her Punjabi heritage in her quest for belonging. This was often contrasted with her later rejection of Anita's influence and her return to a more confident and self-defined identity.

Stronger responses explored rebellion as a vehicle for growth and self-definition. These candidates examined how Meena's challenges to authority, culture, and peer pressure help her forge her own path. There was also some thoughtful discussion about how rebellion functions differently for different characters, such as Anita, who rebels through aggression and rule-breaking.

Many candidates linked rebellion to the theme of casual racism, with effective commentary on how Meena comes to recognise the harm in Anita's actions and the wider prejudices in her community. Some responses also connected this to the historical context of the novel, referencing 1970s Britain, racial tensions, and the rise of political hostility towards immigrants. However, in weaker responses, context was either missing or loosely attached, lacking development or relevance to the points being made.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 4 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ✕

Question 8 ✕

Question 9 ✕

Question 10 ✕

Question 11 ✕

Question 12 ✕

Question 13 ✕

Question 14 ✕

Question 15 ✕

Question 16 ✕

Question 17 ✕

Question 18 ✕

Question 19 ✕

Question 20 ✕

Question 21 ✕

Question 22 ✕

Question 23 ✕

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Question 29 ✕

Question 30 ✕

In the bildungsroman, rebelling is significant as ~~young~~ the young character of Meena rebels against the disciplined culture of her Indian parents. This in turn ~~causes~~ attracts her to ~~A~~ the boisterous character of Anita, ~~and her~~ and away from her family. ~~§~~ Syal is then able to highlight the contrast ~~is~~ ^{released} between the ~~the~~ working-class White culture and the strict Indian upbringing as Meena begins to understand that ~~her~~ ~~to~~ ~~family~~ Anita is only going to end up with a fruitless ~~to~~ and unsuccessful

(Section B continued) life, and she should have not rebelled and instead stayed close with her ~~par~~ ~~par~~ family, so she can prosper in life.

Meena, at the beginning of the book, rebels against the ^{old} "gracious" model of a lady, which her mother, Daljit, embodies. She rolls ~~around~~ around in the "pigsty", comes back home with "tears" in her clothes and describes herself as "mouthy" and "clumsy".

Meena's ^{Indian} Indian parents, as well as their "Aunties and Uncles" around her, tell her off for this behaviour - "Do you want to ~~be~~ be a boy, Meena?"

Meena rebels against this, and ^{even} looks ~~down~~ with envy towards ~~the~~ ~~chore~~

the "mad ~~dog~~ dog" of the yard that runs "a reign of terror", wishing she was as "free" as it. This

~~rebelliousness~~ rebelling is significant as it attracts her towards ~~the~~ Anita,

the "testosterone" filled "rock of the yard" - exactly the person ~~to~~ Meena aspires to be. Meena thus "aches" to be with

(Section B continued) Her, ~~or~~ ~~and ends up~~ despite her being the opposite of kind of person — rude, noisy, violent — that Meena's ~~her~~ parents want her to be. *

As a result of this rebelling causing her to "follow" Anita, Meena gradually becomes further and further from her parents, which causes a her to distance herself ~~from her Indian~~ ^{from} and become frustrated at her Indian identity, while she seeks to become a "Tollington weech" and follow in Anita's footsteps. Meena's telling off ~~by~~ ^{at the} by a Tollington elderly person, for bellowing down the alley with Anita — which she describes as "letting out all the screams" she had been saving — is described as "letting down the whole Indian nation" showing how she does not pay regard to ~~how~~ ^{societal} the views about Indians and ~~seems~~ doesn't care about ~~worsening~~ ^{worsening} them, rebelling against expectations. ~~from~~ ^{almost} Further on in the novel, Meena ^{almost} assimilates into the lifestyle of a "weech" and becomes Anita's best friend. ~~Meena~~ During the conversation

(Section B continued) with her "Papa", Shyam, Meena uses "slang deliberately" which makes Shyam "wince". Meena's distance from her parents can be seen when she says that "talking" as she did with Papa, ~~is~~ had now become "Anita's job". ~~Furthermore,~~

Towards the latter half of the ~~novel~~, Bildungsroman, Meena's rebelling against ~~racism~~ racist attitudes plays a part in bringing her back to her family, and gives her pride in her Indian identity, rather than hating it.

This comes to light when at the Cafe, Sam Leachbridge makes the comment about Tellington being "our patch, ~~but~~ not some wage's handout". Meena takes offense, and ~~wishes~~ ^{hates} her "Papa" was by her side in that moment rather than Anita, ~~showing how she stands up and rebels against racist attitudes~~ ~~instead~~ who finds it "boasting". This shows ~~how~~ ~~Anita's company~~ a ~~rebellious~~ rebellion.

* This reflects the cultures of the white working-class in 1960s Britain. During this time, ~~women~~ attitudes towards women were changing and they now could be more ~~defiant~~ ^{seen as} independent while prior, they were quiet and submissive.

(Section B continued) against the general attitudes in Tellington as ~~it~~ its ^{made} clear she does not support the racism, and this rebelling takes her away from Anita - her idol - ~~to~~ her father. ^{X2} Meena even calls Anita "a lost cow" which ends up breaking their friendship temporarily, however Meena isn't distraught since this rebelling has taught ~~her~~ that her ~~when~~ ~~her~~ ~~poor~~ shifted the balance slightly and now she values her parents, and their Indian culture, more. This manifests completely after ~~she~~ she hears that Anita went "P*ki-bashing" with Sam Howbridge, to which she throws up in disgust and gully disconnects from Anita, becoming the "good Indian girl" her parents wanted her to be: growing her "hair long", ~~new~~ ~~an~~ revising for the "eleven plus" exam and telling the truth at about Sam, Anita and Tracey to the police at the end of the novel.

^{X2} Racist attitudes like Sam Howbridge's were prevalent during the 1960s Britain with many anti-immigration protests and MP

(Section B continued) Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood"
have speech fuelling further discontent.



AO1/AO3 Level 4 - 25 marks

AO4 Level 4 - 8 marks

- The response offers a thoughtful and developed personal response to the question, focusing on the significance of rebelling throughout *Anita and Me*. There is a clear line of argument about how rebellion leads Meena away from her family and identity, but ultimately becomes the catalyst for her return.
- There is a secure knowledge and understanding of the text, including key moments such as the pigsty scene, the shift in Meena's speech patterns, the scene with Sam Lowbridge, and the eventual disillusionment with Anita. These points are clearly linked to the idea of rebellion and help build a consistent argument.
- Contextual references (AO3) are relevant and show understanding of 1960s Britain.
- While not fully integrated throughout, these references support the response meaningfully and often illuminate character motivations or reader response.
- AO4 - there is a high level of accuracy throughout.



If methodically tracking through the text, the best way for candidates to develop their answer is by highlighting the most relevant and useful elements of text in relation to the question.

Question 25

The Woman in Black

The question asked candidates to explore the significance of horror in the novel.

This was a popular and accessible question that produced a broad range of responses. Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the genre conventions of horror and were able to identify key moments of fear, suspense, and supernatural activity within the novel. The strongest answers considered how Susan Hill constructs horror to explore deeper ideas about grief, trauma, and repression.

Candidates often structured their responses around the most memorable moments of fear: the first appearance of the Woman in Black at the funeral, the events at Eel Marsh House, and the climactic pony and trap scene. These moments were generally well analysed, with candidates commenting on setting, character response, and sensory language to explain how horror is evoked.

More able candidates moved beyond simple recounting of scary events to explore the purpose of horror within the text. They linked the Gothic atmosphere to Arthur Kipps' emotional journey and discussed how horror reflects his inability to escape the past. These responses often considered how Hill uses narrative structure, particularly the framing device, to build suspense and distance the reader from the action in a way that heightens fear.

Context was often referenced, though not always securely integrated. Some candidates referred to the Victorian fascination with the supernatural and the Gothic revival, while others touched on changing attitudes to death, mourning, and child loss in 19th-century society. The best answers connected these ideas to Hill's authorial intention and modern perspective, recognising her use of horror as a lens through which to examine psychological and emotional trauma.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

In the 'The woman in Black', horror is heavily contrasted with the idea of psychological terror. Both have profound impacts on Arthur, but the woman and setting create a mixture of the physical horror and ^{psychological} terror, whereas the conspiracy of silence mainly creates terror and a fear of the unknown. This contrast is a very common theme of Gothic literature that Hill is trying to imitate.

In the novel, horror is created by The woman in Black, ~~and it is contrasted by terror created by the setting.~~ The woman is described as being 'pale and gaunt with disease', having 'a ghostly pallor and a dreadful expression',

(Section B continued) with 'her eyes... sunken back into her head' and 'skin tautly stretched and strained across her bones'. This description of her appearance is grotesque and unsettles Arthur¹ ^{with the gothic uncanny.} The act of her ~~being~~ 'wickedness' that led her to take away other women's children because she had lost her own' is also a form of horror which creates fear looming over the residents of Crythin Gifford. She is the ~~man~~ gothic trope of the ~~this physical horror~~ 'monstrous feminine' and 'the revenant', and due to this characterisation, she has been portrayed as horrifying to unsettle both the reader and Arthur.

This physical horror is contrasted by psychological terror created by setting and the conspiracy of silence - The marshes are described as 'wide' and 'wild' and Arthur would have 'travelled a thousand miles to see it'. The marshes could represent a liminal space between the rational (Crythin Gifford) and irrationality (Eel marsh house) and the sublime feeling Arthur gets ~~is~~ heightens the ^{intensity} ~~quality~~ of

(Section B continued) the terror he feels as he descends into insanity and ^{loses} ~~loses~~ his reason he had with his 'Londoner' sense of superiority'. At the house, when he is with Spider, the terror is much more prevalent than ~~the~~ horror as he is afraid ~~paranoid~~ about being alone whilst also being paranoid that he is not, simultaneously. He clings to Spider feeling 'her warmth, grateful for her', and 'the first thing [he] must have was a light'. The ^{isolation} ~~isolation~~ of Eel marsh house, ~~trapped~~ surrounded by the liminal zone which traps the dead ^{and} ~~and~~ torments the living, allows a place for the Supernatural to emerge and for terror to overtake Arthur, even if nothing horrifying is happening to him.

★
(added on)

In spite of this contrast, ~~and~~ it is ultimately the horrifying accident, ~~and the terror~~ that causes the terror to ^{return} ~~return~~, creating trauma for ~~Arthur~~ the rest of Arthur's life. ~~His~~ In the final chapter, he is with Stella, watching Joseph take unlikely steps, 'as proud as any parents

(Section B continued) could be'. This description is emphatically placed in the final chapter so the reader can build a connection with Arthur's new, happy life, thus making ~~the~~ ~~most~~ the ultimate death hit harder so the reader feels it ~~to~~ stronger. The following graphic description of their 'baby son ... thrown clear, clear against another tree,' and Stella's broken neck ~~have~~ ~~a~~ ~~to~~ fuel the horror and explain why Arthur in his later years ^{unable to pick up his pen!} has been so traumatised. This links to the Gothic idea of the ingénue figure, a rational character ^{corrupted} ~~corrupted~~ by the irrational. As an unconventionally male ingénue, the fact that Arthur feels such heightened emotions as a result of the horror and terror he's experienced, and expresses them, really highlights the impact of them on ^{he is living} ~~his~~ ~~life~~ in a ~~time~~ ^{time period} ~~period~~ where men ~~was~~ did not often show such emotion.

* ~~Arthur~~ The conspiracy of silence also creates terror rather than horror, just like

(Section B continued) setting, as Mr Jerome told Arthur 'nothing at all, nothing personal, nothing revelatory, nothing very interesting.' Arthur 'grows' impatient of half-hints and dark mutterings¹, ~~and~~ and this creates a psychological terror as Arthur is paranoid and unaware of what is truly happening - whirling in the dark's ~~even so~~ - even though nothing majorly horrific ~~has~~ has happened to him yet. Naturally though, the conspiracy of silence, a Gothic trope, is built ~~upon~~ upon ~~the horror~~ the horrors experienced, like Keckwick and Mr. Jerome who have lost relatives and know what the woman is capable of.

Overall, ~~horror is in the~~ in 'The woman in Black', horror is used as a contrast to terror², showing the Gothic trope of physical fear ~~versus~~ versus psychological fear. This is created by setting, The woman, and the conspiracy of silence, and ultimately, the effect it has on Arthur is devastating and traumatising. This follows the Gothic trope of the ingénue being corrupted by

(Section B continued) the supernatural and irrational, and, in this case, by horror as well as terror.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 28 marks

AO4 Level 4 - 8 marks

- The response offers a perceptive and convincing interpretation of the contrast between horror and terror in *The Woman in Black*, supported by consistently thoughtful references to the text.
- There is an assured understanding of the Gothic genre, with embedded contextual awareness. For example, Gothic tropes such as the revenant, monstrous feminine, and the ingénue are explored in relation to both character and theme.
- The candidate establishes a clear, coherent line of argument that is maintained throughout, and develops nuanced points about Hill's purpose and authorial intention.
- Context is convincingly integrated and enhances the discussion, particularly in the analysis of gender roles, the supernatural, and the psychological impact on Arthur.
- The AO4 mark reflects a high level of technical accuracy and control. The writing is confident, with well-sequenced ideas and assured use of terminology.



An effective introduction can act as a plan for what the essay will cover.

Question 26

The Woman in Black

The question asked candidates to explore the ways love is important in the novel.

This question was chosen less frequently than Q25, but those who attempted it often approached it with sensitivity and a sound understanding of character motivations. While some struggled to identify more than one or two relevant examples, the best responses recognised that love, particularly parental love and its loss, lies at the heart of the novel's emotional and supernatural elements.

Most candidates focused on Jennet Humfrye's love for her son, presenting it as a driving force behind her transformation into the vengeful Woman in Black. Candidates frequently discussed how Jennet's deep maternal attachment, and the trauma of being separated from her child, creates the central horror of the novel. The strongest responses explored the emotional complexity of Jennet's actions, considering how her grief distorts love into something destructive.

Arthur Kipps' love for Stella and their child was also explored in more developed responses. These candidates often considered the impact of grief and how Arthur's traumatic experiences are shaped by love lost, not just fear. Some perceptive answers drew parallels between Arthur and Jennet as parents, highlighting how the pain of bereavement links their otherwise opposing experiences.

Contextual knowledge was variable. Some candidates made relevant points about Victorian attitudes to motherhood, social shame, and class-based restrictions on women like Jennet, which enhanced their analysis of how love is constrained by social convention. However, others struggled to integrate context meaningfully or referred only briefly to Gothic tropes or generic references to the period.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

~~① descent into supernatural~~

~~② motivates desire for revenge~~

~~③ revenge~~

ROUGH

26) Love is a very significant theme in Susan Hill's novel: The Woman in Black. Perhaps most significantly, love catalyses Jennet Humfrye's descent into the supernatural and motivates her desire for revenge.

Firstly, Jennet Humfrye's love for her son Nathaniel catalyses her descent into the supernatural. Following the birth of her son outside of wedlock, Jennet Humfrye was ostracised from society and became very emotionally unstable. This emotional conflict can first be observed in Jennet's letters to ~~her~~ Alice

(Section B continued) Drablow, 'I shall kill us both before I let him go' yet conversely, 'take care of him'. This dramatic contrast clearly suggests her psychological conflict and distress at the idea of losing her son. The erratic nature of these letters demonstrates the extent of her love for her son whilst pointing toward the anger and distress that begins to warp her sanity. Hill may explore this growing insanity to demonstrate the anger and power that can be fuelled as a result of brutal treatment of loving mothers and women. During the Victorian era, there were unjust expectations placed on women, for example ^{the} 'Angel of the House', and if these were not met it resulted in drastic isolation. Following ~~the~~ Nathaniel's death, Jennet Humfrye appears to experience physical torment as a result of ~~her suffering~~ the grief and darkness consuming her. She's described as 'a vision of decay' as she becomes this enigmatic, spectral figure that can only ever be viewed from a distance. There is a dichotomy to this description as she appears 'decayed' which suggests she is physically impacted by time passing and the process of ageing. However the preceding noun 'vision' ~~suggests~~ alludes to her descent into the supernatural and how her paranormal presence cannot be understood. ~~That~~ Hill may point to the propelling force of Jennet Humfrye's rage and desire for revenge; she is visibly experiencing the process of ageing which her son who she loved very much will not be able to do. Humfrye's love and grief catalyses her descent into madness and The Woman in Black acts as a cautionary figure for the

(Section B continued) detrimental effects of unresolved trauma.

Moreover, Fennet Humfrye's love and loss motivates her acute torment of Arthur Kipps as the novel progresses. In the beginning, Kipps is presented as ~~a~~ ^{the} classic Victorian gentleman; he was 'a commonsensical young fellow' with 'a schoolboy's passion for everything'. The likeness to a 'schoolboy' suggests his naivety and ~~young~~ youthful curiosity before his experiences in Crythin Gifford. He is described as possessing 'a Londoner's sense of superiority' ahead of his trip to Eel Marsh House. ~~He~~ He uses a patronising tone to describe Crythin Gifford, 'just the sort of place where little-tattle and superstition are rife', alluding to the prominent north-south divide present in the Victorian era. This was the belief that southerners were inherently more intelligent and sophisticated than people living in north. Hill may reference this belief to make Kipps' transition into a byronic hero more shocking and to hint at the opening for The Woman in Black's torment. Arguably Kipps' ignorance and disbelief in the supernatural's powers allowed the largest opening for The Woman in Black's horrifying influence. Upon arriving at Eel Marsh House, The Woman in Black begins to inflict irrevocable torment onto Kipps. ~~Firstly~~ Firstly, she triggers somatic reactions in Kipps, he explains that 'he had never known [his] knees to tremble and [his] flesh to creep'; however despite the evident fear he experiences he maintains his grasp on rationality. His interest and curiosity to 'find out exactly who she was' kept him within her paranormal presence.

(Section B continued) resulting in her further trauma. The Woman in Black begins to play on his senses; he hears 'the sound of a pony and trap' and a 'child's cry' at night. This forces Kipps to question his present understanding and solidifies this irrevocable terror within him. The Woman in Black's love for her son drives her to isolation and causes her to torment others. Her torment of Kipps inextricably links them through their haunting past; perhaps, Humphrey does this to reduce her isolation and suffering alone. Hill may effectively portray the effects of Ingenn's grief and the extent of a mother's love as she has personally experienced grief. ~~But~~ Her middle daughter and fiancé died; this novel may be an effort to purge her life of this consuming grief. Hill allows the reader to vicariously experience Humphrey's grief to ~~help~~ ^{people} sympathise with other's grief. This effort can be seen in the final holophrastic end stopped line 'Enough'. Both her and Kipps² intend to resolve their trauma to stop this cycle of misery insured by The Woman in Black.

Finally, The woman in Black inflicts further trauma on the residents of Crythin Gifford due to her unwavering love for Nathaniel. The Woman in Black inflicts this powerful matriarchal force over Crythin Gifford in order to take back the power in death that she was denied in life. ~~But this effort is as Kipps describes~~ ^{that} ~~the~~ 'her grief and despair permeated the air all around' suggesting the extent of her presence within Crythin Gifford. The Woman in Black traps the town in this liminal space between life

(Section B continued) and death alongside her grief. This power appears to warp and effect the impact of time, perhaps ~~thus~~ the most striking example of this is in the nursery inside Felmarsh House. Kippes describes the chair rocking gently (as if) someone just got out of it' and the candle 'half burnt away'. This state of abandonment may mirror Humfrye's sudden alienation from society as a result of her 'ungodly' behaviour. Hill may have chosen the setting of a nursery to allude to the propelling force of her extreme desire for revenge. The nursery demonstrates all the loving, maternal experiences Humfrye is unable to have with Nathaniel. Moreover, the nursery highlights Hill's didacticism; she wrote this novel as a pastiche of the classic Victorian ghost story. The nursery setting for such horrifying things to take place is uncanny and creates a chilling atmosphere. This can also be seen at Alice Drablow's funeral; Kippes notices the children's 'solemn faces'. This suggests the extent of *The Woman in Black's* influence over Crythin Gifford as it is capable of stripping away even the most dramatic levels of happiness and innocence. Finally, her power and extreme love can be seen in the archaic depiction of Crythin Gifford. Mr Jerome rides 'a pony and trap'; Humfrye's grief and trauma traps Crythin Gifford in this warped time in which no one can progress. Interestingly, in this novel Hill subverts traditional Victorian gender conventions, alluding to her modern take on the gothic genre. The powerful tormentor is a woman with men and children at her mercy.* Hill may do this to demonstrate the power that can be fuelled by a mother's love and grief following the brutal

(Section B continued) treatment from society.

In conclusion, love is a theme that permeates this novel as it motivates all of The Woman in Black's behaviour and desire for revenge. Hill explores, in particular, a mother's love and how different that is and the torment that can stem from such intense emotion.



AO1/AO3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The response offers an insightful and assured personal interpretation of the significance of love, particularly through the character of Jennet Humfrye.
- A perceptive line of argument is sustained throughout, with precise textual references used to support evaluative comments. Ideas are explored in depth, for example, the duality of Jennet's "vision of decay" and the Gothic imagery in the nursery.
- Contextual ideas are integrated in a sophisticated and purposeful manner. The Victorian treatment of women, Hill's own experiences of grief, and the use of Gothic conventions are all linked convincingly to meaning.
- The assured fluency, conceptual engagement, and consistently focused analysis are hallmarks of a top-level response.
- The AO4 mark reflects a consistently accurate and clearly communicated piece. While there are minor slips, sentence structure and vocabulary are mature and controlled, making the meaning consistently clear throughout.



Context can take many forms and candidates should consider a range of these in line with the question they are answering. Examiners are always looking to reward positively.

Question 27

Coram Boy

The question asked candidates to explore the importance of Toby in *Coram Boy*.

This was a well-received question that allowed candidates to explore both character and theme in a meaningful way. Most responses demonstrated a clear understanding of Toby's narrative role, with many focusing on his bravery, compassion, and significance in the lives of other key characters. The question's focus on importance encouraged candidates to move beyond plot and consider Toby's symbolic function within the novel.

A large number of candidates discussed Toby's role in saving Aaron and Mish, presenting him as a figure of moral strength and loyalty. Many essays focused on his friendship with Aaron, recognising this as a source of emotional connection and one of the novel's few consistent examples of trust and equality. Stronger responses linked this relationship to the wider theme of prejudice, commenting on how the boys' bond challenges the racism and classism of the 18th-century setting.

Toby's race was explored in most responses, with candidates commenting on the way he is viewed and treated by other characters. Some candidates discussed the significance of his identity as the son of a slave, while others examined the cruelty and abuse he suffers at the hands of Otis / Mr Gaddarn. These points were often connected to wider issues of dehumanisation, power, and exploitation.

Contextual understanding was variable. Many candidates were able to make relevant links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the racism of 18th-century British society. However, fewer were able to consider how Jamila Gavin's portrayal of Toby reflects a modern perspective on historical injustice. The strongest responses acknowledged that the novel, published in 2000, reflects contemporary concerns with inclusion, historical reckoning, and social justice, while still being rooted in the events of the 1700s.

Weaker responses tended to describe Toby's actions without fully explaining their importance, or made generalised comments about racism without linking them to specific events or characters. Some responses included valid points but lacked structure or failed to maintain a clear focus on the question.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 5 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ✕

Question 8 ✕

Question 9 ✕

Question 10 ✕

Question 11 ✕

Question 12 ✕

Question 13 ✕

Question 14 ✕

Question 15 ✕

Question 16 ✕

Question 17 ✕

Question 18 ✕

Question 19 ✕

Question 20 ✕

Question 21 ✕

Question 22 ✕

Question 23 ✕

Question 24 ✕

Question 25 ✕

Question 26 ✕

Question 27 ✕

Question 28 ✕

Question 29 ✕

Question 30 ✕

PLAN When considering note → Mt. Calbarin.

- ① Angry: Come on Aaron! Before the time write more and act us.
 - ② Tolerant: He liked Toby, his little black boy Coram.
 - ③ Careful: See 'im Sir! See Aaron and Miah!
 - ④ Identity: Toby sat rigid feeling the whole of Africa cry out
 - ⑤ Infortilised: Collapsed at his feet - weeping
- P
E
A
C

23

- When considering how ~~the character of~~ Toby is significant in Emily Gann's 'Coram Boy', it is important to mention how the character of Toby is both vital to the progression of the ^{novel} plot, serving as a vehicle for the events of the ^{Coram} boy. Furthermore, Toby is symbolic of how people of colour were treated in the 18th century, showing how ~~the~~ ^{Emily} Gann emulates the ~~idea~~ ^{idea} of slavery and race, crafting the character of Toby in such a way that he portrays these ideas to the reader.

(Section B continued)

When Toby is first introduced in Coram Boy, ^{in Part 2} he is immediately portrayed as cowardly and weak by Jamilla ^{Gavin}, which is representative of the wider idea of the effects of both Coram children and people of colour. In the Coram Hospital, Aaron and Toby are watching Motor Catbrain, who is "a jerk on the leg" by the riverbank, whilst dropping a bucket into the water. Here, unlike Aaron who goes in and picks her up, Toby warns Aaron to "Come On!" and leaves her "before she turns us into mice and eats us!" Firstly, this again strikes the reader as being a man of cowardice opposed to Gavin, despite the boys' close relationship & this ~~emphasises~~ ^{reinforces} the idea that Toby is significant to serve as a foil to Aaron. Despite them being "night and day", the two of them don't share the same ideas. This evokes a sense of ~~an~~ conflict. In the reader, as Toby is initially portrayed as a weak character. This important further point as Toby is representative of the slaves back in the 18th Century ^{Gavin}, and the ~~author~~ ^{Gavin} shows this through Toby's character, ~~trying~~ ^{perhaps} trying to show how the life of slaves were in 18th century England, and shows how they ~~trouble~~ ^{struggle} with the wider world. On the other hand, Gavin could maybe be also showing the theme of the Coram Hospital, and how, despite their upbringing, no seemingly benevolent institution, made for the purpose of aiding those with no parents, this is underlying corruption in his charity, which can be later enforced with the exploration of other aspects of Toby's character. After this, Toby's personality is...

(Section B continued) Contrasted completely, and is not known as tolerant, and willing to endure the things in which other people like him may not be so able to do. After 'Apprenticed out', Toby becomes the 'property' of Mr Gaddens, otherwise known as Old Gaddens, a corrupt benefactor to, otherwise known as charitable, Old Gaddens to "keep Toby, his little black boy" and "be deck him in his full princely regalia". This is incredibly striking, and he is felt for the readers as Toby is portrayed as being abused and used for his race. Not only is Toby described as 'property to Olds', he is degraded by his words, supposedly nothing but his skin colour, it is he must for any other means. Moreover, though Olds' was it dressing him up in rich clothes, he is further exploiting Toby for his race, once again enforcing the idea that Toby is at the hands of utter corruption. Therefore, to however, despite the constant abuse towards him, Toby doesn't fight back. One reason, ^{Garr} ~~that~~ can be perceived him as able to withstand impact, and strong as a character, however, it is also possible that perhaps Garr is reinforcing the idea of Toby's weakness and cowardice, by making him unable to fight back, appeared to unwilling. This is important, not only for the readers to be impacted, but also due to the fact that it is more ~~representative~~ representative of a 18th century slave, as how they were treated. For a reader of this century, it is likely that they would not fully understand or be able to comprehend how horrific the treatment of slaves in the 18th century was, therefore, Garr uses Toby to symbolize

(Section B continued) and emulate ideas of the fraternalism of people of colour in the reader's mind. This is vital to Coram boy. Later in the novel, the idea of loyalty is highlighted in Toby's character, in stark contrast to the previous ideas surrounding Toby earlier on in the novel. Toby and Aaron grow close through the progression of the novel, and their friendship is both vital to the novel's progression and essential to the understanding of the Coram Hospital. At whilst Toby is still in the hands of Oke, he sees Meekah and, knowing as much as in this part, and Aaron being taken into Mr Gaddern's basement in order to be shipped off to America, powered by his friendship and loyalty, Toby escapes Mr Gaddern's and Fred Thomas's ledgers, he begs him to "Save 'im Sir!" and "Save Aaron as Miah". This is vital to Toby's character, as it shows a clear development from when he is first introduced: from cowardly to saving his friends. Not only is this important to emphasize the importance of friendship, it is also symbolic of the slave trade. Firstly, the Coram is putatively how the friendship made of the Coram Hospital (known being an anti-slavery hospital, built by Thomas Coram for children with no parents) (erik, and as both important and strong. However, Sam could also be shown symbolizing Toby's break free from the slave trade, their freed from the cuffs of those who 'own' him, and run away, which slaves in the slave trade were unable to do. This shows Toby as important and significant as Coram.

(Section B continued) "cry out". Here, the boy's identity as a race and heritage is directly referred to. Currier, a deaf and Tobey's significance as a device to portray wider themes is increasingly evident. The use of Tobey being described as "ridiculous" highlights how he is completely skill and unwavering, emulating how horror stories are of success only to the field of those before him. He can feel his bridge within him almost screaming begging at him to not come to the same fate as all those slaves, before him is a 18th century slave trader. Given as the Tobey is clearly representative of the slave trader, and as Currier uses him to show the importance of friendship as, by the end of the novel, despite all his hardships, Tobey escapes. Therefore, Tobey's identity is significantly important, representative and symbolic. In conclusion.

~~Therefore, Tobey is a~~



AO1/3 Level 5 - 32 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This response shows an assured and perceptive personal engagement with the text. The candidate demonstrates a mature critical style, with an argument that is ambitious in scope exploring Toby as a plot device, symbolic figure, and vehicle for broader social and historical commentary.
- There is a strong conceptual focus throughout, particularly in linking Toby to ideas of slavery, race, and systemic exploitation in 18th-century England. The response aims to interrogate Gavin's authorial intention, presenting nuanced interpretations of how Toby reflects themes of powerlessness, marginalisation, and loyalty. These insights are indicative of perceptive understanding, fulfilling the AO1 criteria at a high level.
- In terms of AO3, the candidate engages convincingly with context, demonstrating a sound understanding of the historical significance of race, slavery, and child exploitation. References to 18th-century England, the symbolism of the Coram Hospital, and the critique of seemingly benevolent institutions are particularly strong. The idea that Toby is both a representative and a subversion of 18th-century expectations around race is a thoughtful and sophisticated assertion.
- Textual references are frequent and purposeful, even if expression is sometimes unpolished. The essay draws on a range of examples, including Toby's initial cowardice, his subjection to Gaddarn's abuse, and his growth through friendship with Aaron.



When writing about the text's big ideas, candidates should always tie them to particular lines, scenes, or events from the text. They should avoid just saying what the character represents and should show how the writer constructs this using the text.

Question 28

Coram Boy

The question asked candidates to explore the importance of music in *Coram Boy*.

This question was well received by candidates across the ability range, providing a clear route into both character and theme. Most candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of how music functions as a central motif in the novel, recognising its role in shaping identities, driving the plot, and bridging divisions across class and time. The thematic nature of the question led to more candidates choosing it over Q27 as it seemed candidates had more to say, though occasionally, this led to less focused answers than were seen on Q27.

Many candidates began by discussing Alexander's decision to leave his privileged life in pursuit of music. These responses often explored the personal significance of this sacrifice and what it reveals about his character and values. Stronger answers linked this choice to broader social expectations, particularly the rigid class system of 18th-century Britain and explored the consequences of deviating from aristocratic norms.

The friendship between Alexander and Thomas was another common focus. Many candidates highlighted how music acts as a unifying force between them, transcending their class differences and forging a deep emotional connection. Some of the more thoughtful responses extended this discussion to comment on Gavin's wider message about music's capacity to dissolve societal boundaries and foster empathy.

Chronological approaches were also common, with candidates tracking how music evolves across the novel's structure. This often included discussion of Aaron's inherited talent and the way his musical identity connects him to Alexander. While not all candidates explored this in depth, the idea of music functioning as a generational link was touched on by many.

Contextual references were often sound. Candidates made apt points about the societal expectations of the time, particularly the pressures placed on young men like Alexander to follow in their fathers' footsteps. Some candidates also identified music as a symbol of personal freedom or rebellion against the constraints of class. The best answers integrated this context fluently and connected it to Gavin's modern perspective as a writer reflecting on historical inequality through a contemporary lens.

Weaker responses tended to rely on narrative summary or generalised assertions about music being "important" without providing specific examples or analysis.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 4 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

~~Jamitta~~ → Jamila

~~Gavin~~ Gavin presents the importance of music in multiple areas of the ~~the~~ book. One of the most major ways this is shown is through the ~~the~~ Cathedral School Of Performing ^{Arts} ~~Arts~~, where the reader is introduced to two key characters, ~~Alexander~~ ~~is~~ Alexander Ashbrook, and Thomas Ledbury, who later in the novel become best friends, 'Thomas is my best friend' and share a passion of music together. ^{Jamila} ~~Jamitta~~ Gavin using an entire school dedicated to music emphasises it's importance to the novel and allows characters, such as Alexander and Thomas to express themselves through it.

Moreover, Gavin ~~it~~ illustrates the importance of music as a theme through key characters, such as Alexander, who

(Section B continued) Abandons his inherited household duties to pursue a life of music; in his departing letter, he ~~states~~ begins his letter with: 'music is my life', 'I cannot live without music', which to the reader can seem shocking, as in the 18th century, wealthy son's were supposed to inherit and continue their enterprises, yet ~~after~~ Alexander abandons his without a second thought, and can emphasise how ~~much~~ Alexander is completely infatuated and dedicated towards the arts. In addition to this, * the phrase ~~the~~ 'music is my life', uses hyperbolic language and exaggeration, yet it turns out to become true in the end, when Alexander ~~gets a~~ becomes a successful composer in part 2 of the novel, 8 years after abandoning Ashbrook Estate.

~~Furthermore~~ Furthermore, the theme of music and its importance, is highlighted through Alexander leaving and choosing ~~the~~ music over a potential relationship with Melissa; 'my dearest, sweetest, most distressed melissa', this quote can help the reader understand ~~just how~~ the extent Alexander loves Melissa, but clearly, it wasn't more than his passion and love for music and therefore departs and leaves her. ~~the~~ ~~Gravin's~~ Gavin's use of superlatives to describe Alexander's love for Melissa, may be interpreted as confusing, as he extends ~~the~~ extensively describes the love he has for her, yet leaves her for a life of music, and although Melissa and Alexander's relationship would've been ~~stunned~~ stunned and

(Section B continued) rejected, since wealthy ~~some~~ families like the Ashbrooks would've ~~not~~ decided ~~not~~ ~~for~~ ~~fulfilling~~ an appropriate wife for Alexander themselves, especially since Melissa and Alexander belong to different social classes, yet is still shocking that Alexander chose a treacherous journey through ^{life} ~~the~~ to ~~be~~ pursue music ~~instead~~ and highlights and signifies the ~~is~~ importance of music in the book.

Furthermore, Gavin highlights the importance of music through ~~the~~ Aaron's 'angelic voice', which was so angelic, landed him a scholarship to work alongside his father - unknowingly, and signifies how the theme of music can bring people together. Additionally, Aaron earning a scholarship for his ~~beautiful~~ beautiful voice, and ~~he~~ then studying music to ~~then~~ pursue it as a career for when he grows up, can highlight and reflect how music has allowed ~~the~~ Aaron to follow in his father's footsteps, all through dramatic irony, as Alexander and Aaron work alongside each other yet do not know they are related; and shows how music intertwines people together, signifying its importance.

The importance of music is further ~~emphasised~~ emphasised through Melissa playing the virginals in the Waterside cottage; her beautiful skills ~~was~~ was constantly ~~emphasised~~ highlighted through all the little

(Section B continued)

Ashbrook siblings, continuously begging Melissa to play, showing how music is an entertainment source for ~~the~~ individuals. Additionally, Melissa and Alexander played the virginals together on Alexander's last night and highlights it's importance to the novel.



AO1/AO3 Level 4 - 24 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- This response shows sustained focus on the theme of music across a range of characters and plot points.
- There are well-chosen textual references, such as “music is my life” and “angelic voice”, used to support analysis.
- There is confident contextual understanding of 18th-century expectations (e.g. inheritance, class, social mobility).
- There is also effective exploration of music as both personal expression and plot device (e.g. linking Alexander and Aaron).
- The response also shows structured progression of ideas, showing how music influences multiple relationships and decisions.
- There is also thoughtful discussion of symbolism and irony, e.g. Aaron and Alexander working together unknowingly.
- There is accurate expression throughout with effective vocabulary.



When writing about a theme, candidates can follow it through multiple characters and key moments.

Question 29

Boys Don't Cry

The question asked candidates to explain how women are important in the novel.

This question was chosen approximately 50% of the time and generally well handled by those who chose it. Most responses were structured around the key female characters, particularly Aunt Jackie and Melanie with more developed answers also including Colette, Veronica, and occasionally Emma. While some candidates broadened the question to discuss females more generally, this occasionally led them away from the specific focus on women and weakened the relevance of their arguments.

Stronger responses explored how women are portrayed as resilient, supportive, and central to family structures, and made thoughtful comments about how these portrayals challenge or reinforce societal stereotypes. Aunt Jackie was frequently discussed as a practical and stabilising presence, while Melanie was seen as a figure of emotional intelligence and maturity. Some candidates explored the contrast between these characters and how each influences Dante's journey, occasionally linking their roles to wider themes of gender roles and responsibility.

Contextual references were often underdeveloped. While there were some mentions of single parenthood and the expectations placed on women in modern society, few responses embedded this meaningfully into their analysis. Most responses did not refer to the novel as a *Bildungsroman*, and few considered the broader cultural or societal shifts surrounding the role of women in contemporary Britain. Context was more often bolted on as an afterthought or missing entirely.

Weaker responses tended to become narrative or generalised, offering superficial comments about the female characters without engaging closely with the text. These responses lacked specific textual reference or detailed language analysis, and some answers struggled to go beyond basic personal opinion.

The best answers showed a clear understanding of the characters' significance and occasionally offered perceptive interpretations supported by well-chosen quotations. There were some sensitive analyses of language, particularly when discussing the emotional and maternal roles played by characters like Melanie and Aunt Jackie. Some perceptive comments were made on Dante / Adam's mother's death and how this lack of a woman in their lives had impacted them.

Overall, while most candidates were able to engage with the topic on some level, few responses demonstrated a fully developed conceptual understanding of how women are represented in the novel. AO4 was generally secure in terms of written expression. Overall, more consistent integration of context and more nuanced exploration of the author's purpose would have elevated many answers.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 4 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Question 9 ☒

Question 10 ☒

Question 11 ☒

Question 12 ☒

Question 13 ☒

Question 14 ☒

Question 15 ☒

Question 16 ☒

Question 17 ☒

Question 18 ☒

Question 19 ☒

Question 20 ☒

Question 21 ☒

Question 22 ☒

Question 23 ☒

Question 24 ☒

Question 25 ☒

Question 26 ☒

Question 27 ☒

Question 28 ☒

Question 29 ☒

Question 30 ☒

~~The response~~ In this coming of age novel, women are the catalyst that triggers maturity, growth and demonstrative changes in to the lives of Adam, Dante and Tyler. This allows for ~~more~~ acceptance of what ~~he~~ has changed in the Bridgeman family.

Undoubtedly, Aunt Jackie is one of the most significant female characters in the novel, as she ~~make~~ is a source of emotional stability and reassurance to Dante and Adam. This is evident through the quote "Crying isn't a bad thing. It just makes you human." This form of reassurance is what helps Dante realise that bottling up ~~from~~ your feelings only makes situations worse, leading to a decline in mental health, which is what is seen in modern society, as toxic masculinity encourages undemonstrative attitudes.

(Section B continued) ~~Furthermore, her~~ Aunt Jackie's ~~character~~

importance of emotional reassurance is further expressed through the quote "You're doing your best Dante. That's more than enough."

She ~~acts as~~ fills the gap that Dante and Adam's mother, Jenny, left, and knowing that Aunt Jackie wasn't able to have her own children due to not being able to have a successful pregnancy, leading to her divorce, she finds it a great pleasure in being the mother figure that the boys so badly needed in their lives. She is important in allowing the boys to express their feelings, and she makes them feel heard.

Aunt Jackie is further proved to be important in helping Dante accept his new role of being a father, due to her optimism, it ~~also~~ helps Dante change the way he sees fatherhood. This is shown through the quote "Being a father doesn't end anything. This is just the beginning." The effect of Aunt Jackie's optimism helps Dante to accept his new role, and to embrace it, as it is an exciting experience ~~which~~ which society thinks different about, as they see teenage parenthood as a negative element, as it shows immaturity and irresponsibility, and being "too keen and eager". Aunt Jackie proves to Dante that having a child is a blessing, ~~and that~~ ~~linking~~ linking to her inability to have children.

~~Emma is an important character in the~~ Emma is arguably the most important female in the novel, as she is the catalyst of what made the Bridgeman family

(Section B continued) reconnect and work together, which indirectly rebuilt their relationships, making their home ~~an~~ a happier place.

Emma helps with Dante's maturity, as the moment Dante saw Emma for the first time he referred to her as "it" and asked Melante "are you sure it's mine?" This is a sign of great immaturity and lack of respect for others. ~~However,~~ ~~as the novel progresses, Dante's came for~~ However, not soon after, when he had Tyler build the cot for Emma in Dante's room. ~~Now~~ Dante asked Tyler to "take my Beyonce poster down please" as he knows it wasn't appropriate for the situation he was now in. This is a ~~sign~~ symbol of growth in maturity. ~~Now~~

Furthermore, the importance of Emma is shown when her first birthday came around, and Tyler brought out his camera which "he hadn't picked up since Jenny died". This small act of using the camera again shows that Tyler is healing from Jenny's ~~dear~~ passing, moving on from mourning over his wife, to the loving of his ~~granddaughter~~ ~~granddaughter~~ granddaughter.

~~Emma helps Adam~~ After the attack on Adam from Josh, he got severely depressed, and despised the way he now looked, however when Emma saw Adam, she "stroked ~~he~~ his face

(Section B continued) so gently" and whispered "hurt ugly", in which she then hugged him. This helped Adam get over himself and accepted his situation, which is a symbol for growth, in which Emma was the catalyst of it.?

~~Emma plays a major~~ Veronica plays a major role in the novel, as her name means "she who brings victory". She is ~~the~~ a social worker who represents the welfare state, although they face very negative stereotypes where they want to split families apart, their actual goal ~~was~~ the complete opposite, to help build family relationships, making them stronger. She helps Dante greatly by advising him to sign Emma up for the doctor, using the red book which was given to him by Melanie, and once he put his name as the father, he could claim benefits, which would help Dante greatly, however the social stigma of claiming benefits ~~shows~~ ~~the~~ indicates to other people that you are "stealing their tax money" which is what the lady in the shop said to Dante, which is very discriminating, ~~as~~ as she assumed it due to Dante being so young being a parent. The negative view society has on teenage parenting is shown through the incident with the ~~lady~~ lady in the shop.

In conclusion, women are ~~definitely~~ ~~definitely~~ incredibly important in the novel "Boys Don't Cry", as Blackman proves it helps build relationships.



AO1/AO3 Level 4 – 24 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 8 marks

- The response covers a range of characters from across the novel to discuss the importance of women with evidence of well-developed interpretation.
- The response initially explores the character of Aunt Jackie and how she is a 'source of stability' and 'reassurance' for Dante and Adam following the death of their mother.
- Her significance is developed further when the candidate shows a sustained understanding of the way Aunt Jackie helps Dante accept 'his new role of being a father'.
- A third female character explored is that of Emma and how she is a 'catalyst' in the family, enabling them to 'reconnect' and helping Dante to mature and take responsibility.
- Finally, the candidate considers the role Veronica plays in the novel and how she 'represents the welfare state', confidently linking the point to the context of the novel.
- All points are clearly supported with well-chosen examples from across the novel and in the majority of examples, the candidate shows a well-developed interpretation. The points on Emma could be expanded further to move the mark up to the top of a Level 4.
- Context is neatly embedded and supports the central theme and idea within the novel. It also clearly enhances the candidate's points.
- AO4 – the quality of writing taking into account the level of demand, meets all the requirements for a top Level 3 mark of 8.



The best answers are supported with well-chosen examples from across the novel.

Question 30

Boys Don't Cry

The question asked candidates to explore how growing up is significant in the novel.

This was a popular question that enabled candidates of all abilities to engage with the text. Most responses centred on Dante's character arc, with candidates exploring how he matures in response to the unexpected challenges of fatherhood. However, while most candidates were able to recount the plot in detail, many responses lacked analytical depth and drifted into narrative retelling.

There was a broad interpretation of the theme, with stronger answers recognising that 'growing up' applied to more than just Dante. These responses considered the emotional growth of supporting characters such as Adam, Aunt Jackie, and even Melanie, and some interpreted baby Emma's role in more literal answers. A number of candidates offered thoughtful reflections on responsibility, decision-making, and personal change, occasionally linking this to contemporary social pressures.

However, contextual understanding was inconsistent. While there were some general references to modern fatherhood and masculinity, these were often bolted on and not fully explored. Few candidates discussed the text as a *Bildungsroman* or examined the author's intentions in portraying male emotional vulnerability and growth. Where theoretical or societal ideas were introduced, they were often undeveloped or only loosely connected to the analysis.

Many responses demonstrated familiarity with the characters and events but lacked clear structure or critical engagement. Some essays demonstrated strong knowledge of the text but struggled to maintain focus on the theme of growing up, while others relied heavily on generalised observations without sufficient reference to the task or the writer's intention.

The best responses were reflective, with clear textual references and some perceptive discussion of how Blackman presents growth as a complex and sometimes reluctant process. A small number of candidates explored the tension between independence and responsibility, or the societal expectations placed on young men, but such conceptual understanding was rare.

AO4 was generally secure, with most candidates able to express themselves clearly. However, more critical analysis and confident integration of context would have elevated many answers. Overall, this question provided a useful platform for personal engagement, but too often responses remained descriptive rather than analytical.

The following response was awarded marks in Level 2 for AO1/3 and Level 3 for AO4.

Chosen question number:	Question 7 ☒	Question 8 ☒	Question 9 ☒
	Question 10 ☒	Question 11 ☒	Question 12 ☒
	Question 13 ☒	Question 14 ☒	Question 15 ☒
	Question 16 ☒	Question 17 ☒	Question 18 ☒
	Question 19 ☒	Question 20 ☒	Question 21 ☒
	Question 22 ☒	Question 23 ☒	Question 24 ☒
	Question 25 ☒	Question 26 ☒	Question 27 ☒
	Question 28 ☒	Question 29 ☒	Question 30 ☒

P: In Boys Don't Cry, growing up is very significant because that's the person ~~to~~ they will turn into.

E: If you are brought up in a certain way it will a ~~big~~ mark there that you have learnt from parents. ~~Melanie's parents~~

T: "What do I know about bringing up a kid? It's not like my dad cared enough about me or my sister to stick around" How you were brought up is therefore who become in most cases. Melanie's father abandoned her and her sister so it seems as if she is still heartbroken about it she ends up doing it herself.

(Section B continued)

E: This shows that Melanie is not ready for motherhood just yet, she may believe she is too young to be dealing with a kid or she may have gotten too overwhelmed with school and a baby at the same time.

L: This links back to growing up is significant because Melanie's father who left may have had feelings like this which just shows you are your parents.



AO1/AO3 Level 2 - 9 marks

AO4 Level 3 - 6 marks

- There is evidence of some personal response and there are relevant supporting references.
- The answer is more focused on the text than the analysis.
- There is limited comment on the writer's intention and references to context are not completely relevant.
- Spelling is mostly accurate and sentences are correctly formed.



Candidates should always try to make their answers relevant to the question that they are answering.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, centres are offered the following advice:

- Please remind candidates to write their responses in the correct area of the answer booklet. Space is provided for each part. It does not matter which order questions are attempted, but the responses should be in the correct answer space.
- Candidates should avoid using extra paper. Ample space is provided in the answer booklet to cater for those with larger handwriting.

Section A – Shakespeare:

- For **Part (a)** of the question, candidates must explore the language, form and structure of the extract. Candidates should only refer to the extract in this part of the question.
- Context is not assessed in **Part (a)**
- For **Part (b)**, candidates should draw on their knowledge of the text that they have studied and give examples from elsewhere in the play. The extract should not be used in this part of the question.
- When responding to **Part (b)**, candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the play. They should explore specific areas in detail or cover a range of examples. **Remember, context is assessed in this part of the paper.**
- For **Part (b)**, examples can be particular references to other parts of the play such as events, actions, character and so on, that are relevant to the question.
- Candidates can paraphrase quotations from memory. Exact quotations are not mandatory, particularly as this is a closed book examination.
- For **Part (b)**, candidates are assessed on the context and need to show their understanding of the relationship between the text and context.

Section B – Play and Novel:

- Candidates should draw on their knowledge of the theme or characters from across the play or novel.
- Areas explored can be particular events, actions, characters and so on, that are relevant to the question.
- For **Section B** of the paper, candidates are assessed on the context and are required to show their understanding of the relationship between the text and context, including a consideration of the writer's intention.
- Candidates can paraphrase quotations from memory, but exact quotations are not mandatory, particularly as this is a closed book examination.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

