

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English Literature (9-1)

**Exemplar student answers
with examiner comments**

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About this booklet

This booklet has been produced to support mathematics teachers delivering the new International GCSE in English Literature.

The booklet looks at questions from the Sample Assessment Materials, and some relevant questions from past papers. It shows real student responses to these questions, and how the examining team follow the mark scheme to demonstrate how the students would be awarded marks on these questions.

How to use this booklet

Our examining team have selected student responses to 3 questions. Following each question you will find the mark scheme for that question and then a range of student responses with accompanying examiner comments on how the mark scheme has been applied and the marks awarded, and on common errors for this sort of question. The questions exemplified are:

- Paper 1 Section B Anthology Poetry Question 3
- Paper 1 Section C Modern Prose Question 6 and Question 7

Exemplar Question 1

woman is portrayed as if she is ~~extra~~ enchanting the knight with "wild" eyes and strange gifts such as "roots of velish sweet". This can also give an impression that romantic love is magical for the time that it lasts until the magic wears off and leaves the victim behind. "Poem at Thirty-Nine" is about a family relationship where Walker reflects on the death of her father. In contrast to "La Belle Dame", this ^{poem} love shows that even though there are struggles involved in love, in the end you come out as a stronger and better person rather than coming out worse than before. The time

Student response

Marks awarded for the question or question parts

22/30
Level 4

Examiner Comments
This response to the poems 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' satisfies clearly the criteria for Level 4: it is focused and detailed, with sustained analysis of language, form and structure. Examples are fully relevant, and there are effective comparisons, for example in the introduction and in considering the structure and subject-matter of each poem. To achieve the highest Level, slightly more telling development of some of the examples, and a more consistent use of the language of the poems to back up the points made, would have been required; a cohesive structure to the writing would have been more evident, particularly when writing about the second of the poems and in drawing the analysis together into a clear and compelling conclusion.

Examiner commentary on the student response

Paper 1

Exemplar Question 1

3. Re-read *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

Compare how the writers present relationships in *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and **one other** poem from the anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

Mark Scheme

Question number	Indicative content
3	<p>Examiners should be alert to a variety of responses and should reward points that are clearly based on comparison of the two poems. Indicative content is offered on <i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> but because candidates are asked to choose any other appropriate poem from the selection, it is not possible to indicate content for the second except in generic ways.</p> <p><i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i></p> <p>(AO2) Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the narrative poem, a ballad, written in 12 four-line stanzas each with regular rhythm and rhyming pattern, opens with the voice of an unknown narrator questioning the knight with concern at his state which is 'so haggard and so woe-begone' • the opening describes the poor state of the knight, which foreshadows the traumatic nature of the knight's relationship with the lady. His pale and feverish state contrasts with the magical beauty of the lady described in stanzas 4 and 5 which results in his seeing nothing else than her 'all day long' • the repeated question 'O what can ail thee', contrasts with the negative effects of the relationship that the knight goes on to describe with the lady/fairy in stanzas 4-9. So the poem presents two kinds of relationships: the casual kindness of a stranger and the misleading affection of the lady who declares 'I love thee true' but in fact has him 'in thrall' • colour imagery is used to describe the dramatic effect that his meeting with, and subsequent desertion by, the lady has had on the knight: his pale skin is described with the metaphor 'lily on thy brow' • the magical nature of the lady is developed by the use of a triplet: 'Her hair was long, her foot was light,/And her eyes were wild'. Archaic language 'fast withereth' provides a sense of time and place as the relationship is developed • this language suggests that love is like an illness: the knight is wasting away ('ail', 'fever-dew'). In stanza 10, 'pale' is repeated 3 times in the description of the 'kings', 'princes' and 'warriors' who have been tricked by the lady, suggesting that women are more generally dangerous to enter into relationships with • the bewitching nature of the relationship is emphasised when the lady/fairy feeds the knight with food from heaven 'manna'. This mitigates the impression that the knight was foolish to be taken in by the lady • the poem uses symbolism (seasons ['the harvest's done'], pale colours, dreams, sleep) to create the fairytale atmosphere for the doomed relationship and how it has affected the knight.

Question number	Indicative content
<p>3 (continued)</p>	<p><i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> and one other poem</p> <p>All poems have particular merits and features and therefore there are a number of points of comparison which students will make. Examiners might consider the following areas of comparison where applicable: treatment of subject matter and theme, tone, voice, attitude, character, diction, imagery including figurative language, poetic form/structure including rhythm, line length and enjambment.</p> <p>All points of comparison should be developed and supported by close reference and evaluation of specific examples.</p> <p>(A03) Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the poem chosen must be one in which relationships are a significant theme, such as: <i>Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night</i>, <i>Poem at ThirtyNine</i>, <i>Piano</i>, <i>Remember</i> or any other appropriate poem from the collection • the type of relationship may be central to the comparison: love; parent– child relationship; loss in a relationship; death in a relationship; suffering in a relationship • graphic images used to convey the relationship • comparative links between the writer’s attitudes to love in <i>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</i> and those of the writer towards the featured relationship in the second poem • comparisons in the way the thoughts and feelings of the writers about how relationships are portrayed in the two poems.

Level	Mark	<p>AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects (15 marks)</p> <p>AO3 Explore links and connections between texts (15 marks)</p>
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is simple and the identification of language, form and structure used by the writer is minimal. • There is little or no comparison of the two poems. • Limited use of relevant examples to support the response.
Level 2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is largely descriptive, with some comment on the language, form and structure used by the writer. • There are some underdeveloped comparisons and contrasts presented, with obvious similarities and/or differences between the poems. • Some use of relevant examples to support the response. <p>NB: the mark awarded cannot progress beyond the top of Level 2 if only ONE poem has been considered.</p>
Level 3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response shows an understanding of the range of language, form and structure used by the writer and links these to their effect on the reader. • The response compares and contrasts a range of points and considers some similarities and/or differences between the poems. • Use of clearly relevant examples to support the response.
Level 4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is focused and detailed, and the analysis of the language, form and structure used by the writer and their effect on the reader is sustained. • The response compares and contrasts the poems effectively, considering a wide range of similarities and/or differences between the poems. • Use of fully relevant examples to support the response.
Level 5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is a cohesive evaluation of the interrelationship of the language, form and structure used by the writer and their effect on the reader. • The response compares and contrasts the poems perceptively with a varied and comprehensive range of similarities and/or differences between the poems. • Discriminating use of relevant examples to support the response.

Student Response A

The poems 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' both have ~~the idea~~ a theme that includes relationships, although both show their idea of the consequences and privileges of being in a relationship in a very different light.

'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' has a more negative attitude towards relationships. As a ballad, it is written in the form of a story. It is told as if it is a cautionary tale, warning against the 'perils' of love. This is shown for by how it is structured; the beginning is sad, creating tension throughout the poem as something terrible is expected to happen even when the middle of the poem seems brighter. It ends with even more grief for the knight which ~~ingives~~ gives the impression that even though love and a relationship may seem beautiful and joyful at first, it is not long lasting and ends in tragedy. 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' on the other hand, has a much more positive outlook. It may begin with a sense of sadness and grief with the first words of "How I miss my father" but the way in which it is structured shows how the poet's grief becomes more optimistic as she realises how the relationship helped her become a better person, therefore ending

The poem with a sense of contentment and satisfaction

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' ~~has a very formal~~ is much more formal than the other poem. In terms of form, its stanzas are set out in a very formal manner, each four lines long, with a shorter line at the end. This is due to the idea that a story is being told rather than being a conversation as it makes it more intense to show that a warning is trying to be put across to anyone reading. 'A poem at Thirty-Nine' has a form of free verse, where the stanzas vary in length. This gives the idea that Alice Walker is writing as her thoughts came, making the poem more conversational. This makes the poem more personal and therefore more relatable when one thinks of their own family members.

The poems also show relationships of a very different kind. 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' is about a more romantic relationship as he speaks of a woman he has fallen in love with, calling her "a faery's child" which illustrates an idea that she is something super-natural. This fact alone can give the idea that perhaps John Keats thinks love is fleeting or isn't even there as the poem reflects ^{rather} a fairytale. The romance could be interpreted more as lust than love as the

woman is portrayed as if she is ~~extra~~ enchanting the knight with "wild" eyes and strange gifts such as "roots of relish sweet". This can also give an impression that romantic love is magical for the time that it lasts until the magic wears off and leaves the victim behind. "Poem at Thirty-Nine" is about a family relationship where Walker reflects on the death of her father. In contrast to "La Belle Dame", this ^{poem} love shows that even though there are struggles involved in love, in the end you come out as a stronger and better person rather than coming out worse than before. The time

22/30
Level 4

Examiner Comments

This response to the poems 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' satisfies clearly the criteria for Level 4: it is focused and detailed, with sustained analysis of language, form and structure. Examples are fully relevant, and there are effective comparisons, for example in the introduction and in considering the structure and subject-matter of each poem. To achieve the highest Level, slightly more telling development of some of the examples, and a more consistent use of the language of the poems to back up the points made, would have been required; a cohesive structure to the writing would have been more evident, particularly when writing about the second of the poems and in drawing the analysis together into a clear and compelling conclusion.

Student Response B

PLAN

P1 - Introduction

P2 - Relationships shape you, relationships destroy

For fairy
as well,
her
relationship
with males.

P3 - Love in relationships - on the one hand familial love, on the other mad love → Women in relationships

P4 - Caution v. Comfort

P5 - Lasting v. Transient/ephemeral

P6 - Conc.

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' is a folk ballad that tells a tale of medieval romance and courtly love. It is a very ominous, dark poem that ^{portrays relationships in} ~~stands~~ a completely different light to 'Poem At Thirty Nine'. 'Poem At Thirty Nine' is a personal, ^{personal} confessional poem written in free verse that reflects Alice Walker's personal view on ^{her} relationship with her father. It contrasts greatly to 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' ~~each of these~~ one ('Poem At Thirty Nine') ^{has} a comforting outlook ^{genuine} ~~poems conveys relationships as extremely differ~~ on relationships. The other has a much more grim outlook on ~~the~~ transient and perhaps even deceptive relationships.

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' really seems to convey how relationships, especially those involving mad love, can be

destructive and quite perilous. Just from the title, ^{which} the reader ~~is~~ translates as 'The Beautiful Woman without mercy'. This suggests ^{ominously} ~~immediately~~ relationships involving men and women, women are temptresses who can lead to despair and betrayal. Immediately Keats sets up his poem as one where in the relationship, the man and woman have predefined roles. Throughout the poem Keats refers to the dangers of obsessive love in relationships. The £ "Knight-at-arms" was left "alone and palely loitering" with "a lily on" his "brow". His relationships destroyed him - leaving him companionless and quite purposeless (as suggested by the verb "loitering"). The "lily" - a flower of death - seems to foreshadow his impending death and reflects how this relationship almost drained the life out of him. Not only did the relationship described by Keats drain the life out of him, it also ~~drained~~ ^{drained} the life out of the "pale kings and princes too, pale warriors, and death-pale were they all" - the fact that one woman has managed to reduce all these ^{valiant} ~~stereotypical~~ men to shadows of their former selves reflects how Keats wants to portray relationships and love as things to be taken with caution. Perhaps this poem is a reflection on Keats's own experiences with love - his mad and unbounding love for Fanny Brawne would have left him hopeless if it was taken away. Keats shows the dangers of obsessive relationships well through his poem.

Alice Walker, on the other hand, in "Poem At Thirty Nine"

conveys how ~~love~~ ^{relationships} ~~do~~ ^{shape} you rather than destroying. Her poem's tone towards the end has a ~~reflected~~ ^{yo-yo tone} and ~~almost~~ ^{do it as she has this moment} ~~de~~ ^{of} ~~metaphorically~~ ^{epiphany} ~~tone~~ where she realises that her relationship with her father was not destructive, as conveyed in Keats's poem, but constructive. Walker writes "Now I look and look just like him: my brain light" - this realisation ^{that this amazing} ~~that she is an~~ person Walker has grown into has been shaped by her relationship with her father is quite poignant. Whilst in 'La Belle Dame', the knight was left as a shadow of his former self due to his relationship, Walker was left wholesome and fulfilled from her relationship with her father: 'tossing this and that into the pot; seasoning none of my life the same way twice; happy to feed whoever strays my way'. This metaphor ^{relating to cooking} ~~also~~ ^{reflects} Alvie's generous, carefree spirit ^(especially conveyed with dynamic, poignant verbs like 'tossing') - which was shaped by her relationship with her father. Alvie's kindness and ^{'seasoning'} was moulded by her relationship with her father - presenting relationships as something fundamental to us as humans. On the other hand, in 'La Belle Dame' relationships are presented as soul destroying and grim, which completely contrasts to Walker's optimistic outlook.

'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' ~~and~~ whilst it does refer to love ^{like 'Poem at Thirty Nine'} ~~relationships~~, portrays relationships as transient. 'Poem At Thirty Nine' portrays relationships as lasting, ^{which} ~~which~~ is quite a different stance. The middle

quatrains of 'la Belle Dame' are written with a euphonic tone to convey the knight's feelings during his relationship. The woman in this relationship is described as a 'faery's child' - making this relationship seem enchanting and magical. The ~~knight~~ ^{poem refers} ~~to how~~ Keats writes "And nothing else saw all day long" - ~~showing how~~ ^{referring to} how the knight ~~to~~, during his relationship, was "blinded" by his sensual and overwhelming love that he couldn't seem to escape it. The faery gave the knight 'honey mild and nanna dew' - the fact that he was fed food from heaven portrays how this relationship was divine and spellbinding. However, stanzas V, VI and VII are the only ones based with this true euphonic tone. In terms of structure, they are surrounded by grim, dark and ominous stanzas. This conveys how in Keats's mind ~~to be~~ ^{relationships} are often ephemeral ~~to be~~ ^{forged from} in the moment, rather than being permanent.

On the other hand, 'Poem at 39' conveys how relationships are things that ~~to be~~ ^{outlive} even death. Alice Walker's repeat of the refrain 'How I miss my father' (with an exclamation in each the second time) shows how she ~~felt~~ ^{even at long} after his death she felt ~~to be~~ the pain of his loss. The modal verb "He would have grown to admire the woman I've become" shows that she still values her father's opinion long after his passing. He still ~~to~~ ^{shapes} her, perhaps this is

similar to 'La Belle Dame' (not in the sense that the relationship is long lasting) ~~but~~ because ~~both~~ both poems show how relationships affect people for a long time. Both poems convey the effects of relationships, however the effects are starkly different in each poem.

30/30**Level 5****Examiner Comments**

This is an impressive response to the poems 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' – fully deserving a mark at the top of the highest Level, as it satisfies the criteria for this level extremely well in all cases. The clear planning which is apparent at the outset helps to ensure that the approach to language, structure and form is highly methodical and that there is comprehensive coverage of the ideas in the two poems, which are evaluated in a personal and insightful way. Impressive points are made throughout, with an excellent command of vocabulary that enables the candidate to contrast the mood and tone of the relationships in the two poems very effectively. The handling of each of the poems is confident and well-observed, which provides a secure basis for the skilful and poised comparisons between them. A strong feature is the close language analysis at word level. Overall, a very mature approach is demonstrated with ample evidence of a perceptive and discriminating ability to offer a strong and well-argued personal viewpoint that carries conviction.

Student Response C

Relationships, love, they fall under a category which Romantic poets, such as Keats, write about expressing the danger, the power, and the lust. Contrasted with Dylan Thomas' hopeful, pleading out look onto love and his relationship.

'La Belle Dame' looks at the power of love in a way that can eat you up, kill you, and ultimately leave you as less than what you were before. Love in the poem ^{has} ^{once} leaves a 'knight-at-arms' left looking 'haggard' and 'wise-begon'. This used to show how a relationship with a woman and the love - or lust - he felt for her was powerful enough to ruin him; even over a short period of time the ballad works as a story warning away others from the power.

However, 'Do not go gentle' also speaks of love's power within a relationship but not as a reason to be warned like Keats who uses the archaic language to make the poem seem more ^{like a warning} ~~warning~~ and works to make the perception of the danger seem ^{like an} old and ancient power. Thomas uses the power of the relationship as a plea between son to father to stay alive. Love in ~~the~~ Thomas' eyes 'should burn' and 'rage' the fiery imagery repeated ~~there~~ at the end of each stanza ~~in~~ portraying the love as undying and describing that love can prevent his father from leaving him, completely contrasting Keats' ideas that love ends in a ~~heartbroken~~ choice to be left. ~~Thomas~~ Although, both poets discuss in detail that 'dark is right', they both know love and relationships

must come to an end.

Both poems are about different relationships and therefore their purposes are different. 'La Belle Dame' is a Ballad, written for the purposes of telling a story with a moral warning against relationships like that of the ~~pen~~ knight. It's ~~written~~ got an unknown narrator making it less personal, colder, making relationships seem ~~icy~~ icy and ~~sore~~ ^{do he's left on a 'cold hills side'} sore. As I previously mention Thomas repeatedly uses fire imagery, both fire and ice are painful and dangerous but the ^{ideas of} fire heat and ~~representing~~ 'blaze like meteors' is beautiful and heart warming. Thus ~~showing~~ 'Do not go gentle' is also more of a thought process of short three lined stanzas trying to quickly describe desperation and admiration making it personal with the beliefs of 'I pray'. This ~~shows~~ emphasises the meaning behind their relationship of parent and child as important, almost on going even though the father is dying. Thus showing both poems use structure and imagery to emphasise their contrasting beliefs of the purposes and meanings of a relationship.

The two poems both look at relationships of different types; 'do not go gentle' is about love, about how it ~~can have~~ is rough and strong it states repeatedly 'do not go gentle into that good night', even starting with that line. Keats has a similar idea that the relationship is about more lust than love but ~~in the idea of~~ 'wild' repeatedly used in 4 stanzas IV and VIII. Both poems ~~have~~ ^{portray} relationships as overpowering, emotional and turbulent things. They always end but the journey to the conclusion whether it be being left behind or death is 'fast' and 'fierce' always changing.

Keats poem adventures through the interesting topic of lust or love in a relationship. The knight seems lustful after his 'fairy's child' but

it's stated she had told him she 'loved thee true.' yet the lustful and nature leading up to stanza VII and the sad ending seem to not portray relationships to containing feelings that are confusing and sometimes inseparable. Unlike Thomas's poem which only speaks of good will and love making you upset and desperate not lose a someone you care and love have love for.

Therefore, both poems though about relationships are about different kinds romantic and familiar family love. Both poems agree on the power and inevitability of the end of a relationship but disagree on the terms that ending has to happen. Language and structure both were as important parts of the poems.

24/30
Level 4

Examiner Comments

The candidate's response fully meets, at a very secure standard, the criteria for Level 4, being both focused and detailed. In this answer, relatively unusually, but highly appropriately, the poem chosen to set alongside 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' is 'Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.' This enables the candidate to pick out many clear differences, not least with regards to the kinds of love portrayed in the two poems. Appropriate comparisons are made in relation to the form and structure as well as the language – with reference to the archaisms of Keats, seen as fitting for a poem in medieval ballad form. Good points are made, for example, in the introduction, in which the candidate notes the emphasis on relationships necessarily coming to an end. There is a focus on the fact that Keats's narrator is anonymised and hence distanced, whereas Dylan Thomas, as the son of the dying man, is writing from a far more personal standpoint. The structure and imagery of both poems are analysed clearly, with the observation that both show relationships as 'overpowering, emotional and turbulent'. The response has demonstrated some of the qualities to be expected at Level 5, but not quite consistently so, and more development in the range of examples, together with closer analysis of language would have tilted the answer into the next Level. A strong, confident start to the answer would have helped, too.

Student Response D

'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' by John Keats is a ballad about a Medieval Myth. ~~How~~ in comparison, 'Poem at Thirty - Nine' is a reflective, personal poem on the life of Alina Walker. In Keats' poem he focuses on the perils of obsessive love and the damage and destruction it could cause on one's life. However, Walker focuses on how a father's influence can shape the life of his daughter.

Both poems ~~to~~ focus on the loss of a loved one and how that impacts lives ~~after~~ after they are gone. 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' has a very cyclical structure with the poem beginning and ending in the same way - the knight ^{being} left without a purpose. However, in Walker's poem, the tone changes from remorse to her being grateful and appreciative for all that her father has done for her. ~~to~~ 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' has two voices which shows the poem as ~~if~~ ^{if it} were a conversation between the knight and an unknown person. We see ~~the~~ a similarity in "39" as the poem ~~is~~ is structured ~~as if~~ to make it seem as if this was a conversation Walker would have wanted to have with her father.

The attitudes of both poems are ~~very~~ ~~different~~ ~~as well~~ also contrast each other. In 'La Belle', with the attitude and ambience Keats creates is very ~~more~~ mellow and depressing to reflect his views on relationships between a man and a woman in love. He is trying to portray how a love ~~is~~ this consuming and obsessive

has the potential to destroy ~~the~~ the soul of a person. However, Walker creates a more feel-good and comfortable atmosphere whilst trying to portray how some types of love such as that between a father and daughter is everlasting and still very much exists even after their passing. The opinions contrasting opinions of both poets may be stemmed from personal experiences. Keats wrote "La Belle Dame" whilst madly in love with Fanny Brawne and therefore may have been concerned about what may happen to him if he were to find out it was all a hoax. Walker composed "39" after receiving the Politz Prize and therefore was written after a very symbolic occasion in her life which would have caused her to ~~to~~ reflect on her life and the main influences behind shaping her into the woman she is.

The language used by Walker is very colloquial and therefore makes it accessible to everyone. It echoes an every day, casual conversation a daughter is likely to have with her father, whereas, in "La Belle Dame", Keats uses ~~formal~~ a formal approach to talk about country love that went wrong. The views of men and women in both poems are ^{also} extremely different. In Keats's poem, he presents women as being the cause of destruction to a man's soul, the cause of reducing the knight to simply a shade by sucking out all the life he had. This ~~shows~~ ^{directs} the reader to also feel this way about women. However, in "39" ~~reflects~~ ^{reflects} ~~on~~ ^{on} the possible reason for us see Walker, an accomplished woman praising the most important man in her life for one of the main reasons she was able to win the Politz.

The structure of "La Belle Dame" is a regular four line stanza poem with regular rhyme and rhythm whereas in "39" the structure is slightly more

relaxed ~~with~~ which reflects the thinking of Walker as she writes the poem. It is a more personal account as it is subjective to her feelings and opinions.^{T₁} However, the topic she chose to write about is one that relates to most people. In "La Belle Dame", ^{Keats'} ~~his words~~ strict structure suits the atmosphere and purposelessness he was trying to achieve to reflect how monotonous ~~and~~ the knight's life has reduced to after falling out of an obsessive love.

^{T₁} The reader sees this with her excessive use of the pronoun "I".

The tone of both poems vary to ~~of~~ reflect the emotions that are being written about. ^{*₂} ~~for ex.~~ In "39", the poem starts off with Walker feeling ~~of~~ regretful on the passing of her father. We see this from the repetition of the phrase "How I miss my father". However, towards the end of the poem it moves onto Walker filled with pride as she remembers and celebrates his life and all the good teachings and memories he gave her.

*₂. "La Belle Dame" ~~was~~ has a very melancholic tone throughout the poem. However, in certain areas, a sense of euphoria is felt as we see the knight is overjoyed ~~at~~ as he is with the woman of his dreams. However, the euphoric tone quickly comes to a close as the cyclical structure of the poem results in the knight being left unhappy and destroyed.

28/30
Level 5

Examiner Comments

The candidate has produced an extremely good response to the poems 'La belle Dame sans Merci' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine', with many excellent points throughout. The introduction to the answer provides a thoughtful overview and establishes the basis for making worthwhile comparative points. It is noted that the poem's structure is cyclical and that the knight is left with no purpose. The tone and mood are seen as weaker and depressing in comparison with Walker's comforting poem. Walker's use of colloquial and accessible language is compared with the formality of Keats's diction. To have reached the very top of the highest Level, the candidate would have expanded some of the perceptive points made with a slightly fuller development of the analysis of language and a fully comprehensive range of examples from both poems.

Exemplar Questions 2 and 3

***Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck**

EITHER

6. 'Candy is central to our understanding of life on the ranch.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 = 40 marks)

OR

7. Explore the theme of power in the novel.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

Mark Scheme

Question number	Indicative content
<p>6 <i>Of Mice and Men</i></p>	<p>Examiners should be alert to a variety of responses and should reward points which are clearly based on evidence from the text. This is not an exhaustive list but the following points may be made.</p> <p>(AO1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy is unusual in that he is one of the few workers on the ranch who is not itinerant. Nevertheless, he is one of the more lonely, not being able to go into town with the other men: 'I ain't got the poop no more.' • He provides information for George and Lennie, and the reader, about people and previous events on the ranch: the boss, Whitey, Slim, Crooks and his fight with Smitty, Curley and Curley's wife. • He is an observer and a listener, to the extent that George accuses him of eavesdropping, but he is reluctant to give his opinions at first. He says the boss is 'nice' and only gradually does he offer any criticism: Curley's bullying 'never did seem right' to him and Curley's wife is 'a tart'. • After losing his dog, he is keen to contribute to George and Lennie's dream and he gains strength when in a group, joining in the 'attack' on Curley and defending Crooks against Curley's wife. Even so, he subsides when challenged by those who are more powerful: 'Nobody'd listen to us.' • The episodes involving his dog are important in a number of ways, not only illustrating the need for companionship. The dog's fate suggests what might happen to Candy when he becomes useless in old age: 'When they can me here I wisht somebody'd shoot me.' He admits that he should have shot the dog himself. • Candy's changing temperament shows how life on the ranch can be tough. Although usually mild, Candy can become excited and angry, particularly when he launches a verbal assault over the body of Curley's wife, calling her a 'God damn tramp'. <p>(AO4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy is one of the more vulnerable people on the ranch, being old and disabled. His situation highlights the insecurity of many workers in 1930s' America. He is constantly afraid of those who might 'can' him. He knows that he would not find employment elsewhere due to his arm. He demonstrates the caution needed to survive as a man low in the pecking order. • In giving information to George and Lennie when they first arrive, he paints a picture of relationships and the power/social structure on the ranch. • Candy's admission that he should have shot his dog himself resonates when George shoots Lennie. There is no safety net for those unable to work, nor for those who fall victim to rough justice. • He may show anger towards the body of Curley's wife but his last comment is one of sympathy and plaintive longing: "'Poor bastard,'" he said softly', stressing an essential humanity in the face of a frequently brutal way of life.

Level	Mark	<p>AO1 Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement (20 marks)</p> <p>AO4 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written (20 marks)</p>
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of the text. • The response is simple with little evidence of personal engagement or critical style. • There is little comment on the relationship between text and context. • Limited use of relevant examples in support.
Level 2	9–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some knowledge and understanding of the text. • The response may be largely narrative with some evidence of personal engagement or critical style. • There is some comment on the relationship between text and context. • Some use of relevant examples in support.
Level 3	17–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of the text. • The response shows relevant personal engagement and an appropriate critical style. • There is relevant comment on the relationship between text and context. • Use of clearly relevant examples in support.
Level 4	25–32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge and understanding of the text. • The response shows thorough personal engagement and a sustained critical style. • There is a detailed awareness of the relationship between text and contexts. • Use of fully relevant examples in support.
Level 5	33–40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assured knowledge and understanding of the text. • The response shows assured personal engagement and a perceptive critical style. • Understanding of the relationship between text and context is integrated convincingly into the response. • Discriminating use of relevant examples in support.

Question number	Indicative content
<p>7 <i>Of Mice and Men</i></p>	<p>Examiners should be alert to a variety of responses and should reward points which are clearly based on evidence from the text. This is not an exhaustive list but the following points may be made.</p> <p>(AO1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ranch is presented as having a clear power structure. At the top are the boss and his son Curley. At the bottom are Curley's wife and those below her: Crooks, Lennie and Candy. • The boss has economic power, being able to hire and fire. He is, reports Candy, 'sore as hell' when Lennie and George are late. However, we are told that he is generous with whisky at Christmas and Candy tells us he is a 'pretty nice fella'. He only appears to abuse his power with Crooks, giving him 'hell when he's mad', but his absolute power stresses the vulnerability of itinerant workers. • His son Curley is a more direct threat to the men, always being ready to demonstrate his boxing skills against those bigger than him and showing jealousy and aggression where his wife is concerned. Carlson and Slim stand up to him, despite the threat of being 'canned', and he is humiliated by Lennie's physical power. When his wife is killed, however, the ranch hands support him. • George has intellectual power over Lennie and tells Slim that he has abused this power in the past. Now, though, he attempts to protect Lennie. On the other hand, Lennie is cunning enough to exercise the power of emotional blackmail over George. • The least powerful are Candy, old and disabled and on the edge of his useful life, and Crooks, a black man in a society riven by racial inequality. Crooks' attempt to assert himself is easily countered by the threats of Curley's wife who, as a woman, is also severely disadvantaged. • Slim, 'the prince of the ranch', has an almost metaphysical power and 'calm, Godlike eyes'. <p>(AO4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinbeck's choice of title, and its source in the Burns poem, hint at the ultimate power of fate in controlling human affairs. • The boss's ability to sack workers shows his absolute power on the ranch and the itinerant workers seem to have little protection against this. The issue of worker rights is raised when the workers act in unison. After Lennie's fight with Curley, Curley's power is temporarily neutralised. However, Candy's attempt to support Crooks against Curley's wife comes to nothing. • The 1930s' views on race are reflected as black people are seen as being at the bottom of the chain of power, as we see from Crooks' monologue and the treatment of him throughout. • Society of the time offers little to help the old and infirm (Candy says 'they'll put me on the county'). Curley's wife represents the women in society who are defined by their husbands and have little hope of independence. The women who work at the cat house are able to make money only by selling themselves.

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Student Response A

Question 7

⑦ Steinbeck presents the theme of power in *Of Mice and Men* using several characters, such as Curley, Crooks and Curley's wife, all of whom which show us the desire for power and the extent in which we go to ^{we have} obtain it.

Curley's wife ~~is shown~~ helps us understand the predatory nature of the ranch in which not only the ~~strong~~ strong attacks ~~he~~ weat, but the weak attack the weaker. This can be seen when Curley's wife says to Crooks "I could have you strung up on a tree", ~~in~~ in which she is threatening him with her status/power, whereas in reality she is a direct parallel of Crooks, as they both suffer from ^{is} loneliness and discrimination on the ranch - ~~the~~ Crooks being the only ranchworker of color results in his isolation while Curley's wife being a female concludes to her inferiority and ~~there~~ hence lack of power. Curley's wife going against Crooks who is of similar status ~~to her~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ showcases that ~~she~~ although the lack of power one may have, they will go to any ~~an~~ extent to feel the slightest amount of superiority.

Steinbeck uses the character of Curley to add emphasis to the fact that an abundance of power can result in the corruption of one's humanity and ~~the~~ lack of sympathy for others. This can be seen in the novel when Curley asks ~~for~~ ~~Candy's~~ ~~dog~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~shot~~, Carlson

to shoot Candy's dog, who is his only companion. This thoughtless act portrays the inhumanity that comes along with obtaining power, and hence the consequence it acquires. ~~Curley's saying "I ought to have shot that dog myself" after his dog is killed,~~ ~~also~~ ~~portrays~~ ~~the~~ ~~lack~~ ~~of~~ ~~power~~ ~~Candy~~ ~~had~~ ~~in~~ ~~terms~~ ~~of~~

Candy stating "I ought to have shot that dog myself" after his dog is killed helps showcase the fact that power is not just something you have over others, but is also something within yourself that you use to make decisions in life. Candy did not have the power to be courageous and ~~to~~ shoot his dog himself thus showing us that the death of his dog is a ^{reflection} symbol of his own life - he can't ~~even~~ stand up for his ~~dog~~ dog and nor can ~~he~~ he stand up for ~~himself~~ ^{the} ~~rest of his life~~ ^{the} life of himself, which sees him being left all alone at the end of the novel, the only person ~~at~~ left to ~~aspire~~ ~~and~~ try and achieve the American Dream, yet not being able to do anything about it ~~and~~ progress with his life.

In conclusion, Steinbeck uses characters to present the theme of power in such a way that the reader is able to see the contrast between the positive and negative impacts it can have on oneself and others around you, and ultimately the way in which you use it to progress through life.

25/40

Level 4

Examiner Comments

There is a clear and focused introduction, giving the reader a firm indication of the main intended coverage. The comments on Curley's wife and the 'weak attacking the weaker', in her treatment of Crooks, are thoughtful and very well made, with a recognition that both are subject to discrimination (on grounds of race or sex). The observations on Curley and how power corrupts are helpful. The occasional inaccuracy prevents a mark higher in Level 4, and the coverage could be somewhat fuller. There are strong points about the context, with interesting observations on the predatory nature of the ranch, on status and on the American Dream. Although in some respects the response is not fully sustained, the quality of the writing is enough to place it just into Level 4 on the 'best fit' principle.

Student Response B

Question 6

In the novel, *Mice and Men*, Steinbeck introduces the audience to Candy. ~~He~~ Steinbeck describes Candy as an old migrant worker who lives on a ranch in the 1900s. Candy helps the audience understand more about living on a ranch as he has a lot of experience from it.

Steinbeck uses Candy's dog to metaphorically represent how life really is on the farm. Candy's dog was once a great sheepherder with a lot of skills. The dog, however, ~~grew~~ ^{grew} old and ~~is~~ ^{was} put out of work and is later killed. ~~This~~ Steinbeck does this to ~~display~~ emphasize that without your physical capability and power you ~~can~~ have no purpose on the farm. Candy later ~~realizes~~ realizes that he is following in his dog's footsteps and can be sacked any day due to his age and physical state. Steinbeck does this to help our understanding of living on a farm. ^{is not easy} as Candy says, "I would be shot" just like his dog rather than ~~be~~ ^{this is further explained} ~~sacked~~ grow old on the ranch.

Steinbeck later goes on to talk about how lonely migrant workers were at the time. Candy explains that ~~he doesn't~~ he, "ain't got no relatives nor nothing" that can help him or take care of him. ~~Steinbeck displays Candy as a very lonely person to convey that they.~~ ~~This~~ Steinbeck writes this to convey that life on the ranch was extremely tough as ~~if~~ you stand on your own and no one will help you if you cannot do something yourself.

Steinbeck describes the ~~life on a ranch~~ as a place you do not want to be in. He uses Candy while doing ~~this~~ ^{this}. Candy's dream is to be independent and not be under the boss's control. Steinbeck demonstrates this when Candy is willing to give up his life savings

in order to buy a farm with George and Lennie. Candy knows that if he gets sacked that he "can't get no other work" so by having a farm of his own ~~he~~ Candy would not have to worry about that. Steinbeck uses Candy to represent this as every migrant worker will be faced with the same fear one day.

Steinbeck uses Candy to ~~de~~ display that you grow mentally weak by living on the farm. ~~to~~ Steinbeck uses Candy to do this by ^{not} being able to shoot his dog himself or even talk about his dead dog without having a hard time. Candy does however realize his mistake as he says, "I ought to of shot that dog myself."

In conclusion, ~~is~~ Candy is a good character to represent what life on the ranch is really like. Steinbeck uses him in many clever ways to emphasize how the problems a migrant worker faces when living on ~~the~~^a ranch.

22/40
Level 3

Examiner Comments

The response demonstrates sound (Level 3), but not detailed enough to be considered 'thorough' (Level 4) understanding of the significance in the novel of the character Candy. There is worthwhile comment on how Candy's dog is, like his master, without physical capability and having no power. The answer also focuses on loneliness – with a recognition that life is tough on the ranch. There is also reference to his willingness to give his savings to pursue the dream. More could have been done to show the thematic link between the shooting of his dog and the way in which this foreshadows later events with Lennie.

Student Response C

Question 6

6. 'Candy is central to our understanding of life on the ranch'

I agree, because Steinbeck has presented Candy as an old and incompetent migrant worker who works on the ranch. He is incompetent and has no power because of his old age and the loss of his hands. However, he is kind and friendly which suggests that even during the times of the Great Depression, even the migrant workers have humanity in them to be friendly in times the hard times when almost everyone think about only themselves.

In 'Of Mice and Men', Steinbeck explores different themes of loneliness, power, friendship and the ^{history of the} American dream through Candy's character which shows the life on the ranch. Candy is lonely because he doesn't have other workers as his friend, however, he does have his dog. He is strongly attached to his dog whom he has had for a long time. This could be proven when he says, "I've had him since he was a pup". This shows that Candy was lonely even when he was younger and that he didn't have any friends on the ranch. Now, this can be compared to the life of any other migrant worker in America in that time. After the great depression and the crash of the Wall Street, the country was economically damaged and this had a strong impact on the citizens. For migrant workers in those times, they had to work on ranches alone, they had no one to trust and hence they had no friends, just like Candy in the novel. Candy's dog is used as a symbol/representation of Candy to show the readers ~~Candy~~ how the old and physically incompetent workers were treated at that time in America. Even though Candy is the oldest worker on the ranch and is friendly, no one respects him, i.e., he has no power. Which proves that on the ranch, if you are old, you are useless and they throw you

out of the ranch, as Candy fears, "kick me out" because of my hand'. This shows that the workers and the employer of the ranch ~~didn't~~ couldn't afford to be understanding. If Candy gets kicked out, another worker - younger than him would take his place and no one would care about him. This also shows how unreliable the employer of a ranch could have been during those times.

Another factor which makes Candy central to our understanding of life on the ranch is his friendship with his dog. It shows how a migrant worker on the ranch could trust no other worker and even though all of them were lonely in a way or another.

The quote, "I ought to of shot that dog myself", shows that he would rather have shot his dog himself rather than a stranger because he had ~~was~~ emotionally attached to his dog. The use of "ought" in the sentence emphasizes more on how much he regrets his choice. This also shows how the disabled ~~were~~ had no power and were controlled by the stronger workers on the ranch because Slim ~~tells him~~ to make him agree to Carlson's suggestion ~~and~~. Further, the quote, "I'll give you one of my pups", suggests that there was no pity or understanding between the workers, the survival of the fittest was the ideology that they followed which resulted in Candy's dog's death. The notion ~~is~~ also proved when Slim tells them, "damned son of a ~~ten~~".

Candy's tale of being powerless also ~~proves~~ shows how the migrant workers always had a leader ^{like Slim} among themselves on a ranch. You had power if you are strong physically and young. While the old, weak and the blacks always add to agree and follow them. This can be proved by the quote, "Candy, the dog is ~~do~~", by Slim which shows that no one could argue with him and his "words were commands". Another incident is when Candy enters Crooks' bedroom for the first time a bit hesitantly. It shows that ~~he~~ he so didn't hate Crooks or disrespect against him because of his race, but it was just what other ~~migrant~~ workers on the ranch did - avoid the "miggs".

Here, Candy is central to our understanding of life on

The ranch as the Steinbeck book explores different themes of friendship, loss, power and loneliness through him. It enlightens the readers on the life of migrant workers working on a ranch in America during the Great Depression.

32/40
Level 4

Examiner Comments

This candidate's response is a very good one overall, and a mark at the top of Level 4 reflects that in some ways the perceptive nature of some comments on how Candy helps us to explore a number of the themes (including loneliness, power, loss and friendship) nudges towards Level 5. However, the use of relevant evidence, though effective, could show slightly greater development and discrimination. The reference to Candy as 'incompetent' is not fully explained, but thereafter the comments gain in assurance, and there is a strong account of how his physical characteristics affect his life and treatment, as well as on his kind and friendly nature. There are also signs of a good awareness of the relationship between the text and its context in the era of the Depression and the American Dream, the Wall Street Crash and the existence of migrant workers. Overall, this is thoughtful writing showing thorough personal engagement, but to reach Level 5 slightly more aspects of the text could be analysed in depth.

Student Response D

Question 7

Explore the theme of power in the novel

Steinbeck explores the theme of power in many different ways. ~~One of the ways~~ of *Mice and Men* can be considered to portray weakness for most characters, ~~however~~ because they are all the main characters are mostly migrant workers during the period of the Great Depression in America.

At the beginning of the novel Steinbeck already presents us with the idea of power. He explores it through his use of physical strength. Lennie is presented one of the first impressions we are given from Lennie is that he is constantly described ~~to~~ like an animal. He is mentioned to chug water like a horse when drinking out of a lake and is also described to have "paws" like a bear. Both of these animals can be seen as very strong and fearful, ~~however~~ which is exactly what ~~everybody in the book~~ Lennie's first impression can be described to be by any other character in the book. However ~~he has so much~~ Lennie cannot take control over his own strength, ~~but~~ which is exactly the first exploration Steinbeck shows in the book of powerlessness. Lennie constantly tends his rat whenever Lennie pets his mice he always ends ~~up~~^{with} a dead mouse being hidden from George.

Steinbeck also explores the theme of power through Lennie and George's relationship. Since the start of the novel Lennie's and George's relationship can be compared to a father, son relationship. George is always seen to take care for Lennie such as the time when they were arriving to the ranch and Lennie realises he doesn't have his worker's card with him. George replies to him saying how stupid he is to think ~~he~~ George would let him ^{to} carry his own card. George is always seen to control Lennie. Steinbeck ~~shows~~ also plays with the theme of power when both Lennie and George arrive to the ranch. At this point George is seen to be the one with control over the situation as he ~~talks to~~ forces Alan not to speak when they talk to the boss. However as soon as they enter the boss's room, ~~the~~ change in the atmosphere and mood in George shows how ~~weak~~ ^{powerless} he is towards his boss. The Boss ~~can~~ is presented Steinbeck presents the boss to be very empowering as he speaks in a very ~~unemotional~~ harsh way. For example when ~~he~~ he thinks George is using Alan's money ~~what~~ and says "what's your stake in this guy" as he doesn't believe ~~he~~ ~~is~~ George is caring for Alan, he thinks he is taking over Alan and gaining from him.

Steinbeck presents the boss to remind us how powerless George actually is as he is just a migrant worker in a ranch.

Steinbeck also explores power ~~via~~ through the use of disability. Candy is presented to have a missing hand that was due to his work in the ranch.

~~The importance of~~ Most things humans do is with their hands, and by taking one off of Candy, he is shown to not ~~control~~ being able to control everything in his life, showing powerlessness. An example of Candy actually being powerless is when his dog is shot to death. Candy's later response is "I ought to have shot that dog myself".

~~the use of~~

16/40
Level 2

Examiner Comments

The candidate's response fully meets the criteria for a Level 2 award, with some elements of Level 3, but insufficiently consistently so. There is reasonable understanding, but the interpretation is not always fully secure and coverage of the relationship between text and context is undeveloped, although there is some brief reference to the Depression. The examples are relevant, but could be more fully elaborated, and the writing sometimes tends towards narrative. Much of the content sees power as conveyed through physical strength: Lennie is described as an animal (horse/bear) and it is noted that he cannot control his strength. More focus on characters other than George and Lennie would have enabled a more rounded exploration of the theme. Unfortunately, part-way through the text Lennie becomes 'Alan', and this error is repeated and not picked up – an example of where careful proofreading would have been helpful.