



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In English Literature (WET01)

Unit 1: Post 2000 Poetry and Prose

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Introduction

Centres are thanked for choosing Pearson Edexcel as their International A level English Literature provider.

WET01 is an open book examination lasting two hours. The examination is in two sections.

Section A: Post-2000 Poetry

Candidates answer one essay question from a choice of two comparing a named poem from the prescribed list of poems from *Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002-11* with one other poem of their own choice from the prescribed list. Section A assesses Assessment Objectives AO1, AO2 and AO4.

Section B: Post-2000 Prose

Candidates answer one essay question from a choice of two on their selected text from the following options: *The Kite Runner*, *Life of Pi*, *The White Tiger*, *Brooklyn* and *Purple Hibiscus*. Students are required to demonstrate an appreciation of the contexts in which texts are written and read. Section B assesses Assessment Objectives AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Note that AO5 is *not* assessed in this paper.

There are 25 marks available for Section A and 25 for Section B. The total mark of 50 represents 50% of the total IAS and 25% of the total IA2.

Please refer to the full specification for details of the Assessment Objectives and their weightings.

General Overview of the WET01 June 2025 (2506) paper and performance

- This has been a successful paper.
- Most candidates demonstrated familiarity with the contents of the specification.
- Responses in relation to the set texts and to the range of Assessment Objectives covered the full range of marks and levels.
- Responses were received addressing all the texts available for study.

Section A: Post-2000 Poetry

It was pleasing to see many candidates responding effectively to the tasks set on the selection of poems covered in this section of the paper. However, there were some candidates who did not approach the tasks that were set in relevant and detailed ways. Thinking carefully and planning is essential if candidates are to ensure that they offer developed and relevant responses that directly address the questions set. Where responses do not connect in explicit ways to the task, this inevitably has an impact on the marks that can be awarded. It is important to note that AO4 is assessed in this section of the paper. In addressing this objective, candidates need to explore connections between the poems. The selection of a relevant and helpful second poem is therefore very important. Not all candidates made judicious choices, and this meant that connections between the named and chosen poems were not always effectively drawn. There was a tendency amongst some candidates to discuss the chosen poem in greater depth than the set poem and to allow it to dominate. This is not advisable.

AO2 focuses on the ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. Writers' choices of language are, of course, very important. Analysis at word level is, however, not sufficient on its own. There are often interesting observations to be made related to poets' use of poetic form, the structures of poems, and their deployment of a range of poetic devices. These, of course, need to be carefully connected to potential meanings and to particular effects. The simple identification of poetic techniques is not sufficient on its own;

candidates need to offer analysis of how these methods contribute to the potential meanings of the poems.

Many candidates organised their writing effectively, establishing clear and relevant arguments, illustrating these with appropriate selections from the poems. There are, however, some general observations it is worth making:

- Planning of arguments and the sequence in which they occur was not always effective, making it difficult to follow the development of some candidates' responses.
- It is helpful if texts and names of authors are included in the opening paragraph to assist with clarity.
- A reminder again about AO4 and the need to connect the poems rather than dealing with them separately.
- Candidates should be reminded that they need to consider how poets use methods to shape potential meanings.
- **There continue to be candidates writing about poems that are not on the prescribed lists. Centres need to ensure that candidates only make use of poems on the list provided in the Source Booklet for the paper.**

Section B

As in previous series, the most popular prose text was *The Kite Runner* (Questions 3 and 4) and the second most popular *Purple Hibiscus* (Questions 11 and 12). It was good to see, however, that candidates provided responses on all the set prose texts.

Previous reports have discussed centres' coverage of AO2. This requires candidates to write about the ways in which meanings are shaped in texts. It continues to be a weaker component of candidates' work and as such warrants further consideration during teaching. The texts in this section of the paper are all lengthy works of prose. The discussion of writers' use of language at word and sentence level is therefore not sufficient. As observed in the last report, candidates need to be prepared to discuss the writers' use of patterns of language and imagery across the text as well as their use of a range of the methods writers of prose fiction employ and the effects they achieve, including but not limited to use of structure, genre, settings, characterisation, narrative

voice and tone. These methods need in their turn to be illustrated by the effective selection of textual examples.

Stronger responses were well planned and explicitly addressed the demands of the questions set, ensuring careful address of all relevant Assessment Objectives. Candidates are advised to plan carefully to ensure that their answers explicitly respond to the terms of the questions set.

Detailed Commentary

Section A: Post-2000 Poetry

Question 1

This was the more popular question in Section A. Many candidates responded effectively to the presentation of parents and parenting in the named and chosen poems. They were confident about the meaning of 'Material' and evidently felt comfortable writing about the poem. Candidates were sensitive to the tone of the poem, noticing the regrets and wistfulness of the persona. Candidates were aware of the relationships both between mother and daughter, and the daughter and her own children, exploring the contrasts that emerge from these. Some candidates also wrote well on the poem's structure, e.g. the repetitive nature of parenting and how that is reflected in the regular stanza form of 'Material'. Most were able to pick up on the extended metaphor of the handkerchief. *Effects* was a very popular choice of second poem, and this worked well, candidates developing some very apt connections between the significance of the objects presented in the two poems and the contrasting emotions of past and present. Where less effective choices of second poem were made, candidates often failed to develop clear lines of argument beyond an initial link explaining how the poem could reflect parenting. Less successful responses also tended to focus primarily on the poems as narrative, offering more surface-level commentary and limited exploration of language and structure.

The most popular choices of second poem were 'Effects', 'On Her Blindness' and 'The Deliverer'. Other choices included 'Genetics', 'History', 'To My Nine-Year-Old Self', 'An Easy Passage', and 'Ode on a Grayson Perry Urn'. Some of these were not the best choices and candidates should try to focus on the task set rather than opting to write about poems that they feel comfortable with or like the most. Regretfully, we continue to see candidates choosing poems that are not available for study. Centres are referred to the Specification and to the Source Booklet, in both of which is a list of the poems from which candidates MUST select their second poems.

Here we see an extract from a response to Question 1:

The way each poem is written helps us understand the emotions behind the words. Material has regular stanzas with eight lines each which are known as octets, but the rhythm changes, making it feel like someone talking and remembering. The structure shows Barber's calm reflection and how she is trying to make sense of her emotions. In the finale stanza, the lines get longer showing how her thoughts are overflowing as she realises how much she's changing from her mum. On the other hand, Effects is written in one long block of text with no stanzas. This makes it feel heavy and full of emotion, like the speaker has kept everything bottled up and now he is letting it out all at once. There's barely any punctuation, so it sounds breathless and tense, showing how hard it is for him to talk about his mother. The long, unbroken form makes the poem feel overwhelming just like grief. Jenkins's messy structure shows emotional distance, while Barber's tidy stanzas reflect her effort to process things. Both poets use form in clever ways to reflect how they feel about their parents.

Comment: Notice the way the candidate offers ideas in relation to the poets' use of structure and form, but that these ideas are generally observed without being clearly developed in relation to explicit examples from the texts.

In this extract, by contrast, we have a more engaged and discriminatingly developed approach:

The use of flashbacks and memories is also ~~also~~ ^{palpable} and important within both poems, expressed in the form of different emotions in each. In "Material", Barber represents memories in a nostalgic, sad and regretful tones particularly through personal perceptions of the past. The narrator remembers that hankies were "presents from distant aunts", which shows that ~~hankies were considered to be easy, quick gifts for~~ ^{hankies were considered to be easy, quick gifts for} people who you do not know, which has a sad tone as it seems that they had never made an effort to get to know each other. "The naughtiest Christmas gift you'd get" is ironic, and the later saying of "nostalgia makes me old" expresses how the narrator looks back on these times with a brooding feeling, portraying care and a sense of sadness. In "Effects", memories are shown in an ominous, contempt filled light, with more emotional disconnection. Jenkins shows this through the quote "from the time we took a holiday 'abroad'", which illustrates that his mother ~~did not really~~ ^{made} it seem further than it truly was, perhaps fulfilling her role as a mother.

Comment: See how here the discussion of the methods the poets have employed is much more closely connected to textual examples and how this provides a much more effective focus on the effects of the methods considered.

Question 2

This was the less popular Section A question. Some candidates had obviously studied Turnbull's poem in depth and noted the links to Greek mythology and to Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'. They were aware of the references to Keats' in the last few lines of Turnbull's poem and were also able to comment on a range of other cultural references in the poem: 'Shirley Temple', 'Calvins', 'Burberry' and 'The Daily Express'. Stronger responses used these very effectively as a means of considering the tone and bathos of the poem. Other candidates were much more general in their writing, seeing the poem as a critique of youth. The most common choice of second poem was 'An Easy

Passage', to which successful connections were made. 'To My Nine-Year-Old Self' was another popular and effective choice.

A range of comparison poems was seen: 'An Easy Passage' and 'To My Nine-Year-Old Self'. Other varyingly effective choices included 'Out of the Bag', 'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled', 'From the Journal of a Disappointed Man', 'The Deliverer', 'Look We Have Coming to Dover' and 'Please Hold'.

The following extract shows a candidate writing in response to Question 2:

However both poems have a different structure to each other yet they both show attitudes towards youth in various ways. For example "An Easy Passage" by Julia Copus ~~her~~ is written in free verse, she has also developed a persona/speaker. Her poem is almost like a stream of consciousness. This ~~shows to~~ symbolises how the youth enjoy to speak their mind without worries. Whereas "Ode on a Grayson Perry urn" by Tim Turnbull has similar length stanzas with varying line lengths. Tim Turnbull has included many enjambements to ~~thereas~~ create a feeling of suspense. The youth tend to be dramatic and enjoy creating a sense of suspense. Both ~~po~~ poems also have a

Comment: The writing makes reference to techniques such as the poets' use of stanzas and to enjambement. The comments, however, are very general in tone and there is no clear exploration of specific examples and their effects.

In a final example, we see a candidate producing work typical of Level 5:

Just like in this poem, "Ode" portrays the youth being "too young to appreciate the peril they are in", "too young" suggesting a more mature observer, and "peril" revealing that this observer feels concern for the young people due to their irresponsibility. However, unlike "...Self", the youth's dangerous actions never elicits any consequences- they are simply paintings on an urn, "no harm will befall these children"; the persona's concern does not linger. On the other hand, the child's actions in "...Self" do impact the narrative voice's life later, leaving behind "scars", physical representations of her reckless decisions in the past. While both personas display concern for the youth, in "Ode", some of that worry is alleviated due to them only being a work of art, while in "...Self", this sentiment remains.

Comment: Notice here the assured development of connections between the poems, the controlled tone and analysis developed by the candidate, and the fluent embedding of quotations to ensure that the analysis remains rooted in the texts.

General Observations on Section A

1. Responses in this series suggest that students have been well prepared in relation to the list of prescribed poems.
2. It was good to see many candidates making sound choices of second poem, allowing for useful connections to be developed. However, some candidates opted for poems that were much less successful in helping them to develop effective responses.
3. In spite of repeated highlighting of this issue in previous reports, a small number of candidates continue to select poems not on the list of prescribed poems.
4. Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of poetic methods as well as of poets' use language, form and structure. Very importantly, they need to develop their analysis to demonstrate how these poetic methods shape meanings.

Section B: Post-2000 Prose

Questions 3 & 4: *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini)

Question 3 considered the presentation of fear in the novel. Candidates responded well to the task and discussed a variety of kinds of fear: personal fears, the fears of ethnic groups such as the Hazaras, the description of Kabul as a city dominated by fear on Amir's return. At the upper end of the performance range there was thoughtful discussion of Hosseini's intentions. Across the range candidates seemed more secure in discussing how examples of Amir overcoming personal fears could be seen as representative of Afghanistan as a country rising to face the Taliban threat – with a few sensitive responses noting how the novel seems sadly optimistic given the contemporary situation in Afghanistan. Candidates often discussed Baba's intimidating strength and how this in turn fuels Amir's fears and mistreatment of Hassan. A number of responses included the cruel treatment of women, with many making effective links to the presentation of the stoning in the stadium. Less successful responses tended to provide a narrative summary of moments where Amir, Hassan and others experienced fear. Some tended not to move much beyond the infamous rape scene. Most candidates were able to include context effectively within this question.

Here is an extract from a Question 3 response:

This echoes redemptive arcs in pastoral and religious literature, where sin or wrongdoing is not final but must be reckoned with through courageous acts. The deliberate simplicity of this line contrasts with the emotional and ethical complexity of Amir's situation, intensified by his fear and guilt of confrontation, making it all the more haunting. This line also echoes ~~can~~ contains ~~reli~~ theological undertones, echoing the Islamic principle of Tawba — repentance followed by moral change.

Comment: The candidate offers a clear analysis, with some elements of discrimination, of Rahim Khan's observation to Amir that 'There is a way to be good again'. Contextual ideas are effectively woven into the argument:

Question 4 was focused on the representation of the character of Baba. Most candidates wrote with a good understanding of the ways in which Baba was presented and how zoomorphism and aligning Baba with natural forces provided insight into Amir's perspective of his father. A few candidates provided a critical analysis of the ways in which Baba was reduced in stature by his experience of migration, and how this in turn may have given him true 'nang and namoos'. Some candidates showed good awareness of the duality of Baba in his presentation and his strengths and weaknesses, as well as considering the novel's significant structural divide between the USA and Afghanistan. Many considered Baba's treatment of Amir and its effects on his character and development in the novel. Some also related Baba to traditional Afghan presentations of masculinity, going on to highlight the irony of this due his own personal failings. In a few lower end responses, there was extended explanation and occasionally inaccurate description of Baba's appearance in the early part of the novel. Candidates in the mid and lower range did tend towards character-driven responses lacking sharp focus on methods of presentation. Some found it more difficult to integrate wider contexts in a relevant way. Weaker responses were also often overly reliant on a narrow set of quotations and concluded with narrative retelling rather than sustained analysis.

Here we see an extract from a response to Question 4:

However, Baba's strong adherence to his values was always revered by Amir, and became the blueprint for who Amir became in the future, towards the end of the novel. As the archetypal Afghan man, Baba was loyal to his "naang and namoos", which led to him being capable of standing up for himself and others, in stark contrast to Amir. For example, when father and son were fleeing Afghanistan after the soviet invasion and a Russian soldier demanded to sexually assault a woman on the truck, Baba immediately stands up, preferring to take "a thousand bullets before [letting] this indecency take place". The hyperbole in "a thousand bullets" reflects Baba's immovable willingness to sacrifice himself in order to prevent injustice, reflecting his rigid moral code. This contrasts directly with Amir, who had witnessed the rape of Hassan, his closest friend, but who never attempted to stand up for him, and even caused Hassan to leave by pretending he had stolen money, compounding his pain, causing Amir to feel tremendous guilt due to being aware that he betrayed his own moral code due to selfishness. Later in the novel, Amir begins to embody his father's moral code as he starts the journey of redemption and begins to acknowledge his past mistakes. Mirroring his father's generosity to the people in Kabul, Amir "planted a fistful of crumpled money under a mattress", alluding to earlier in the novel where Amir did the same thing, but with different intentions. "Fistful" implies his determined nature, as he shoves the money in the mattress willingly and emphatically, repeating this action years later out of a change in morals- in order to help others rather than tear them down.

Comment: Notice the fluent tone of the writing and its interleaving of material covering all three Assessment Objectives. The candidate's ability to combine close textual reference with broader references to the text is very effective. This is a good illustration of work in the Level 5 range.

Questions 5 & 6: *Life of Pi* (Yann Martel)

Question 5 focused on the way Martel presents journeys in the novel. Some students wrote well on this question with a range of journeys considered: literal geographical, spiritual, literary and narrative, metaphorical and personal

growth. There were some interesting arguments relating to conflicting journeys and reader response, and some responses addressed the frame narrative and the inclusion of Pi's adult perspective as illustrative of the 'journeys' he has undergone. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the idea of 'religious' journeys alone or simply to provide a recount of aspects of Pi's journey on the boat. There was often a lack of relevant context.

Here is an example from a Question 5 response:

Pi's search for spirituality is a prominent journey, which is aided by India's multicultural, secular nature. This diversity and freedom to follow any religion ~~he wants~~ of his choice meant Pi could explore God and the interfaith dialogue in peace (for the majority). The reader thus gets the idea of religion being not a ritualistic path but rather a way to 'love God'.

Comment: The candidate's establishment of argument and the application of contexts are clear and relevant, but they are not developed in a more discriminating fashion.

Question 6 asked candidates to consider Martel's use of narrative point of view. Again, some candidates tended to focus on the religious elements of the text or responses were narrative driven. Others, however, developed some really interesting ideas about different elements of storytelling related to magic realism, postmodernism and philosophy. There was a tendency for some of these responses, however, to drift away from detailed connection with examples from the novel. This led in some cases to a tendency to recount elements of Pi's story rather than evaluating the effects of narrative point of view.

Questions 7 & 8: *The White Tiger* (Aravind Adiga)

Both Question 7, on the presentation of relationships between men and women in the novel, and Question 8, on the presentation of characters unable to escape from their positions in society, led to some interesting responses. Candidates drew on a range of appropriate contextual ideas related to social norms in modern day India and how these are experienced and represented in characters and situations in the novel. Some also considered a variety of factors significant in shaping characters' behaviour and motivations. Many candidates focused on Balram, but it was also good to see candidates widening their frame of reference to consider in more depth the roles and functions of the other characters, ideas and situations Adiga presents.

Questions 9 & 10: *Brooklyn* (Colm Tòibín)

Question 9, on the effects of experience, and Question 10, on characters who survive under difficult circumstances, attracted similar numbers of responses. Question 9 yielded some thoughtful and well-developed answers in relation to the experiences of a range of characters in the novel, considering a number of relevant factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity and their different effects on experience. Several candidates showed a clear and sensitive understanding of the cultural and historical context of the novel, particularly in relation to Irish and American identity. Many focused on Eilis, while others explored how Tony faced his own parallel hardships growing up with financial constraints in Brooklyn. A number also considered Rose and her sacrifices for Eilis. For Question 10, some showed good understanding of the factors leading to personal and social difficulties in the novel. There was some consideration of the relevance of setting and examination of how key events are significant in generating learning, development and change. Other, less effective, responses tended to take refuge in recounting difficult experiences the characters encounter in the course of the novel. There was a tendency in weaker responses to miss the requirement to deal with AO2 – the writer's methods.

Questions 11 & 12: *Purple Hibiscus* (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)

In responding to Question 11, on the presentation of secrecy in the novel, some candidates explored how characters' choice to remain silent might represent secrecy. Other responses looking at secrecy in relation to the Nigerian political regime and other social structures such as the family. They also looked at the Achike family's 'silence' about the mismatch between Papa's public image and the figure he cuts at home. Most were able to discuss the idea of family secrecy with Papa as the oppressor and quite a few discussed Adichie's use of central images and symbolism like the missal, the figurines and the purple hibiscus. Examiners commented that contextual awareness was a real strength, with many students referencing the historical context of Nigeria and the role of specific figures, such as Adewale Giwa (Dele Giwa), with confidence and relevance. Question 12 addressed the novel's presentation of change. Candidates considered the idea of change on a personal level for Kambili, the changes for the wider family after Nsukka and her father's death, the use of Papa and Ade Coker to present social political change, and the various actions for change across the text. Some stronger candidates evaluated the irony of Papa's social activism juxtaposed with domestic tyranny. Some candidates were also able to reference the ending of the text with confidence, including addressing the potential ambiguity of achieving change through violent means.

General Observations on Section B

1. It has been pleasing to note that many candidates are now more confidently applying contexts of varying kinds to their discussion of the prose texts on this paper. Texts for which this still tends to be less effective are *Life of Pi* and *Brooklyn* – but practice is clearly improving. Centres are reminded that contexts, whether of production or of reception should be used consistently and formatively in answers and should not appear simply as adjunct information.
2. The issue of AO2 – the ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts – has been raised in previous reports. This continues to be an area for development in this section of the paper. Centres should prepare their students to discuss a variety of the methods the writers employ,

recognising that word level analysis and sentence level analysis are insufficient when considering what writers do in lengthy works of prose fiction. Candidates need to be prepared to discuss a variety of the methods their selected writers are employing, including but not limited to use of structure, genre, settings, characterisation, narrative voice and tone.

Grade Boundaries

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

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