



Examiners' Report

June 2023

International Advanced Level English Literature WET02 01

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Introduction

The summer 2023 series received roughly the same number of entries as the summer 2022 series and all texts were answered. The paper was very similar in performance to previous series. There were no errors in the paper, no erratum notices and there were no enquiries from centres following the examination.

As in previous series examiners saw a range of responses, with a significant number of candidates achieving Level 3. This was mainly because the majority of answers were clear and relevant to the question. The answers which achieved Level 4 and 5 tended to be planned and controlled, with candidates judiciously choosing different parts of the play to support their argument rather than tracking through the text and building their response in a linear fashion. As in previous years, a number of responses were restricted to Level 2 or below because of a narrative and/or descriptive approach where characters were often talked about as real people rather than constructs. As mentioned in the previous report, candidates would be best advised to take the time to plan their responses, developing lines of argument which directly answer the question and engage with the critical viewpoint. It was also noted by examiners that a significant number of responses seemed to omit paragraphing, with answers often 1 or 2 blocks of writing rather than a more considered, shaped response. More rigorous paragraphing may have helped some candidates structure their response more effectively and created a more cohesive and developed answer.

With reference to analysis, (AO2), there was some evidence of effective consideration of the characters as constructs rather than real people. However, this is still an area that could be developed by a number of centres. Candidates might also wish to consider focusing on the texts as examples of drama rather than relying on general analytical tools such as metaphor/simile. Whilst there was some interesting discussion of Plastic Theatre when analysing *Streetcar*, the analysis of dramatic techniques could have been much stronger when writing about the other texts on the specification.

On the whole, context (AO3) and criticism (AO5) was well embedded and was usually relevant to the question/the point being made. Candidates should be wary however of writing a heavily contextual opening paragraph. This can often steer them away from the specifics of the question and lead to a generic, historically focused essay. Essays which accessed Levels 4 and 5 for AO5 often did so by debating an idea rather than stating it as a hard, cold fact. It was particularly pleasing to see some candidates disagree with some of the critical statements they used and provide evidence from the text to support their alternative reading.

Overall, the candidates who took the time to develop a clear plan, one which engaged not only with the thematic slant in the question but also the critical statement, tended to achieve Level 3 or above.

Question 1

QUESTION 1: *The Rover*

Question 1, where candidates were asked to consider how far the women were in control of their own lives in the play proved to be more popular than question 2 which asked about acts of rebellion. A number of responses tracked through the different women in the play and gave a somewhat narrative account of their actions in the play. This was fairly limiting and affected the depth of analysis in the responses.

Question 2

QUESTION 2: *The Rover*

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 3

QUESTION 3: *She Stoops to Conquer*

In general, the knowledge of the play was thorough, but AO2 remains problematic for many candidates studying this text. A number of the responses here talked about Mrs Hardcastle as though she were a real person, and therefore their answer lacked an analytical element which would have helped them access the higher Levels. A more focused consideration on comedic strategies used by Goldsmith would have been useful here.

Question 4

QUESTION 4: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Here candidates were asked to consider 'the extent to which the women ... are in control of their own lives'. The most effective responses steered away from describing the actions of the different women and integrated a sense of debate when exploring the characters – arguing that a number of them did indeed have some control over their own lives, but only to a certain extent.

This is an introduction to an essay which went on to achieve a high Level 3 mark, 14.

On the surface women in *She Stoops to Conquer* seem to be in control of their own lives. However, looking under the surface it is evident the control they have of their own lives is limited. Oliver Goldsmith comments on gender roles in the 18th century in this comedy of manners by portraying women in a different light. Unlike the timid and docile women seen in most texts in this era Goldsmith presents women with opinions, as multi-faceted, and complex characters. Although, women are presented this way Goldsmith also highlights the underlying gender issues prevalent in society through his presentation of women in *She Stoops to Conquer*.



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Examiner Comments

This introduction is a useful illustration of one which includes a sense of debate into the response from the very beginning. The reference to 'on the surface' and the use of 'however' indicates that this is a candidate who intends to engage with the 'to what extent' element of the question, rather than just the idea of women having control.



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Examiner Tip

When planning, take into account the critical statement as well as the theme.

Question 5

QUESTION 5: *Twelfth Night*

Candidates explored a range of 'more serious ideas and issues' when approaching this question, with many considering ideas about gender, sex and class. Less secure was the discussion of 'silliness and frivolity', where candidates often missed opportunities to talk about the playwright's use of comic conventions.

Question 6

QUESTION 6: *Twelfth Night*

This proved to be the more popular of the two questions on Shakespeare's comedy. The majority of candidates were able to make relevant points about passion. More challenging seemed to be the engagement with the critical view, where they were asked to consider how the line between madness and passion was blurred in the play. To access the higher levels of the mark scheme candidates should be encouraged to engage with the critical statement in the question, rather than just the theme.

Question 7

QUESTION 7: *Doctor Faustus*

This question asked about 'greed and its consequences' and proved to be the more popular of the two. A particular strength of a number of responses to this question was the integration of context. Rather than let the complex contexts dominate the answer there were a number of examples where candidates used context to strengthen and develop their line of argument.

This essay achieved a top Level 4 mark, 19.

In Christopher Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus", greed is presented as a focal point of the play, the theme that single-handedly causes Faustus to "sell his soul to the devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleasure," as critic Francis Jeffrey claims. In the same critic's words, Faustus as a "vulgar sorcerer" becomes corrupted with greed for knowledge, power and wealth until this greed transforms into a hindrance rather than a benefit, leaving Faustus with the consequences of such greed - the loss of wealth, knowledge and societal power. The reason why Marlowe's play continues to hold such universal appeal is because the playwright manages to show how greed leads Faustus to lose everything he wanted as well as everything he already had, conforming to the framework of Christian morality within which the play was written by showing the soul-possessing influence of greed and its consequences.

Firstly, greed can be presented as a plot device motivating Faustus to expand his "settling thy studies" and expand his knowledge as he is also greedy for greater understanding. The play's opening scene features Faustus in his study, peering through a multitude of different forms of study as he mulls over which area of knowledge he should indulge in next: "Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold, and be eterned for some wondrous cure." From his opening soliloquy, audiences can already understand his greed - his most desire for materialistic wealth is exhibited through the visual image of heaping gold and his greed for worldly recognition by ~~forming~~ discovering a coveted

cure is also similarly displayed. His use of *illicum* - referring to oneself in the third person - also highlights how highly he thinks of himself. Faustus is already searching for ways to expand his already existing vast knowledge, exposing his greed for unattainable knowledge, such as the way to "make men live eternally / or being dead raise them to life again." His talk of immortality further exposes his greed as he now claims he wants divine powers, such as the ability to bestow life to corpses - "Dr. Faustus" was first performed in the 15th century, in early Elizabethan times so audiences would have been familiar with Marlowe's allusion to Jesus Christ's divine ability to raise the dead. Faustus is greedy for not just ordinary knowledge, but knowledge beyond the limits placed on human ability. The character of Faustus mirrors the Renaissance, a period of "rebirth" which followed the middle ages that boasted developments in science, astronomy and Greek / Latin antiquity. The Renaissance exceeded limits on human knowledge, just like Faustus aspires and as a result, Faustus has been labelled a Renaissance man, the embodiment of the exaltation of the human spirit. This ultimately leads to the consequence of Faustus' greed for knowledge, which is delving into necromancy: "Divinity, adieu! These metaphysics of magicians / and necromantic books are heavenly" His farewell to religion and the combination of both alliterative language and antithesis highlights the blasphemy of such greed - necromancy was a forbidden area of study considered heretical by the Church, Marlowe chooses to purposefully mock the catholic institution here by glorifying those who revolt against its values, conforming with the strongly anti-catholic views of the time and the Protestant reformation. Faustus' greed for knowledge ultimately leads to him being unsatisfied with the his

consequently
existing knowledge and turns to necromancy. A series of events breeze
Dante, a leading critic aptly described as "the controlled intellectual
going away to the indulgent sensual."

Moreover, greed is presented as a more powerful, ultimately leading to
the consequence of the loss of rationality. The power of greed allows
Faustus to misread the St. Jerome's Bible, the highest form of knowledge
as the Doctor claims: "If we say that we have no / sin, we deceive
ourselves, and there's no truth in us / why, then, belike we must sin,
and so consequently die." Faustus becomes blinded by greed, leading
him to misquote the Bible as he ignores the last lines line, which
speaks of redemption - this parallels his ignorance of the possibility
of redemption throughout the play, leading to the consequence of lost
rationality. As William Hazlett claimed, "the character of Faustus can
be considered a "personification of the pride of will and eagerness of
curiosity, sublimed beyond the reach of fear and remorse." Faustus'
greed directly propels him beyond any feelings of fear and regret, even
when he does summon Mephistopheles during "the gleaming shadow of
the night / longing to view / Orion's dazzling look." Marlowe uses pathetic
fallacy to ~~create~~ establish an ominous, eerie atmosphere and his allusion
to Orion shows the influence of the Renaissance and the revival of the study
of Greek and Latin classics. Orion was a hunter who was blinded by a long
due to his sexual greed for his daughter, a parallel to the same way Faustus
is metaphorically blinded by greed and his power. Such intense greed for power
ultimately leads Faustus to reveal to the audience his consequently depleting
intellectuality - when Mephistopheles does appear, he orders him to "go, and

return an old Franciscan friar." This alludes to the Protestant Reformation sweeping through Europe at the time and its mockery of the Catholic Church but also highlights Faustus' diminishing intellectuality as a consequence of his greed as he appears ignores the devil's horrific appearance entirely, which would have been considered a warning of the horrors of Hell.

Furthermore, greed is presented to be connected with wealth. Faustus is a swayed by the temptations of materialism, "guzzled by the conceit of his!" The word "guzzled" alludes to the sin of gluttony and would have been recognized by Marlowe's audiences at the time as part of the Seven Deadly Sins due to Elizabethan values. Faustus appears overcome by his greed for wealth: "I'll have them ply to India for gold / Ransack the ocean for orient pearl / and search all corners of..." Faustus' words directly parallel the spirit of the Renaissance, namely its geographical discoveries: Columbus discovered America in 1492 and Leyon, Japan and the East Indies were discovered between 1501 and 1516. Words such as "gold" and "pearl" act as evidence of his materialistic greed whilst the positive imperative "ransack" conveys his overwhelming determination. However, despite his such greed for wealth, Faustus consequently ends up losing all his wealth, leaving it to wane at the end of the play: "He has made me his will and given me his wealth." Faustus' greed for wealth more and more wealth to please his materialistic soul ultimately leads to him not only gaining no wealth, but losing all he has too.

In addition, greed is also conveyed through Faustus' desire for worldly recognition. Despite challenging Aristotle's position by being born to "parents born of stock" Faustus has managed to ascend the ranks of

Society's ladder until he "profits in drabty" and is a well-respected scholar. However, he is greedy for more. He possesses unimaginable greed to reach the very top of society, to namely ascend through the Great Chain of Being (a damely hierarchical order that assumes a place for every thing in the universe). As Harold Bloom, renowned critic, acknowledges, "Faustus wants to reach a certain level of greatness and assume godhead." Therefore he makes this bargain with Lucifer where he sells his soul to receive unlimited knowledge - all with the intention of climbing the ladder Great Chain of Being. This is an example of the literary influence of imitation, the retelling of great works - in this case, it is the Faust legend from German folklore. Even though Faustus did manage to "mount him up to scale Olympus' top" his greed for worldly recognition consequently leads to him to ~~leave~~ travel the globe, playing tricks on the Pope in Rome and ~~seems~~ acting as a magician with tricks for the Emperor. However, despite his greed for worldly recognition, he achieves nothing of the sort in Rome or with the Emperor German Emperor. He is chased out by the Emperors due to their conviction of him as a dealer in disguise as Protestants do not believe in ghosts and the Emperor only entertains him as a "renowned magician" who summons spirits for the court's entertainment. Faustus has gained no worldly recognition despite his greed for it - he would ~~not~~ ^{not} be from aspiring to ascend to the pinnacle of the Great Chain of Being to merely acting as an obsequious entertainer for the Emperor, whose "gracious words, most royal Caesars / shall make poor Faustus to his utmost power / Both love and serve the German Emperor."¹

Critic ~~Walter~~ Wilhelm Wagner claims that "Machow's Faustus is anything but a hero. He ^{gives up heaven and} sells his soul to the Devil yet he derives no benefit from this agreement."²

Faustus' greed even consequently creates greed within others - well-meaning Benolito, whose name literally means good will, is infected with greed for

revenge as a consequence of his Faustus' greed. In the end, Fear after he is dragged to Hell at the play's climax, Faustus the scholars find Faustus' "limbs / all torn assunder by the hand of death" and give him an ordinary funeral so even in the end, all he does will be remembered as well be an ordinary scholar, despite all the sacrifices he made and his greed for worldly recognition.

Lastly, greed is also presented as a warning, upholding the morality play tradition as the Chorus points to the consequences of Faustus' greed and warns Elizabethan audiences to "regard his hellish fall" and never Faustus is metaphorically presented as a "branch that might have grown full straight / and burned to Apollo's laurel bough" - "burned" alludes to the fires of Hell but whilst in Greek mythology, a laurel branch signifies worldly achievement. As a consequence of Faustus' greed, all his worldly achievements have been lost to Hell's fires and the audience is warned to not follow in his path.

In conclusion, greed is an overarching theme in Marlowe's "Dr Faustus", presenting itself as an integral tool to carve and create the play's plot of fear, pity and fear. Faustus, a character so enamored by his greed, was described by Robert Ornstein as "unlike God who became man, Faustus is man who would be God" and for such greed, he was consequently punished.



This essay has a number of strengths. The introduction is an effective example as to how to embed criticism into the opening of an essay (although remember, if you use a critical viewpoint in the body of your answer you would need to engage with it more directly than this).

This essay moves away from stating the different examples of greed in *Doctor Faustus* and thinks more about how greed is used by the playwright to explore wider ideas. If we consider the opening to the second paragraph, 'Firstly, greed can be presented as a plot device', we can see that the candidate has thought about the function of the theme in the text rather than just where it occurs. This continues throughout the essay; each paragraph starts with an idea which 'lifts' the theme from the text and links it to a more conceptual point, for example on page 3 where the candidate writes 'Moreover, greed is presented as powerful, ultimately leading to the consequence of the loss of rationality.'

Also useful to note is the way ideas about the Renaissance are integrated and tied directly to the question, as can be seen on page 2 of the answer.



When integrating context, always pull it back to the idea being explored.

Question 8

QUESTION 8: *Doctor Faustus*

This proved to be less popular than Question 7, however the focus on an argument (that the view of human nature which emerges at the end of the play leaves an audience feeling pessimistic) rather than a single word theme seemed to encourage more considered and planned responses.

Question 9

QUESTION 9: *Othello*

Candidates explored a number of different examples of betrayal, with the best responses exploring the view in the question ('even the play's most innocent characters are, to some extent, guilty of betrayal') rather than listing examples of different kinds of betrayal in the play.

The following answer went on to achieve a low Level 4 score of 16.

In the play 'Othello' by William Shakespeare, one of the core themes of the play lies in the idea of betrayal. All characters in the play undergo or bestow upon another at least one form of betrayal as the plot progresses. Yet, the most heart-wrenching betrayals are presented often through the characters that otherwise are pure and have no ill-intent, unlike the play's main antagonist Iago, whose betrayal knows no bounds. Hence, the most significant and symbolic shows of betrayal take form through some of the play's best natured characters.

The most, perhaps, overt sense of betrayal in the story occurs over Emilia stealing Desdemona's handkerchief to bestow upon her husband in what she considers an act of devotion to him. This simple action, however, is the dark catalyst that Othello uses to confirm his aroused suspicions.

of Desdemona's infidelity. The Emilia's betrayal of Desdemona is presented on multiple levels through the handkerchief, particularly the social and sexual way. The handkerchief itself is a representation of both infidelity and jealousy, transforming from a positive symbol of Othello's love to a symbol of Desdemona's infidelity. Yet, perhaps, Emilia's biggest betrayal by her mistress is the way she handles the situation. In Act 4, scene 2, Emilia broadcasts her discontent at Desdemona's situation

~~"the Moor's abused by some most villainous"~~
"Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her company?" to which Iago replies

"Speak within door." This ~~is~~ imperative speech categorizes Emilia's more dominant nature than Desdemona's, yet it plays towards Desdemona's detriment. In the Elizabethan and ~~more~~ middle ages, ~~ecclesia~~ Ecclesiastical courts were imperative to the legal system. These courts focused on defamation, of which particularly women were subjected to on a sexual basis. A closer inspection of this by critic and feminist Lisa Jardine has revealed that women were often the ones spreading such rumors about each other,

and where the line crossed to defamations regarding these cases lay in the 'public spreading' of them. Through this, it can be expected that the contemporary audience of Shakespeare's time was aware of this status quo, and cloaked into the fact that this was the worst way a woman could betray another. Hence, it may be inferred that Emilia's worst betrayal was not the physical one, but the social betrayal she subjected Desdemona to, while simply trying to stand up for her.



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The introduction to this answer is a useful example of one which engages not only with the theme highlighted in the question but also the critical viewpoint. This sets up a controlled answer rather than one which may only be clear. The end sentence is particularly effective in illustrating this, 'Hence, the most significant and symbolic shows of betrayal take form through some of the play's best natured characters'.

Rather than starting with a more obvious idea, ie Iago, this candidate chooses to consider the idea of innocent characters and starts their answer with Emilia.



Make sure you spend time planning so that you move away from listing different parts of the text and on to exploring different ideas related to the given focus of the question.

Question 10

QUESTION 10: *Othello*

Question 10 saw some useful integration of context, especially centred around Othello's identity as a Moor in contemporary Jacobean society. Some of the Level 2 responses remained quite general, relying on describing the characters' identities rather than exploring the impact of those identities.

This section is part of an answer which achieved a high Level 4 mark, 19.

Firstly, Shakespeare presents the shift in ^{Othello's} attitude from a confident, voluble Moor to an insecure Moor who realises that he is half Venetian ~~to~~ half 'others' (Loomba) like the symbol of Cyprus ~~and~~ — which represents an

* far more fair

isolated 'warlike isle' that is part of Venice, implying how Othello is accepted as a general in the ^{area of} military ~~beat~~, however is still discriminated as an outsider — a 'Moor'. ~~that is 'far more~~ The term 'Moor' is an elastic term which ~~links~~ reflects how, in the Jacobean era during the time of writing, a Moor consists of black people, Barbarian ~~as w~~, North African and so on. The most that Othello can be is ^{"a valiant"} a Moor that is 'far more fair than black'. The ~~fric~~ ^{contrast} ~~comparison~~ ^{The fricative highlights the contrast} between fair, which has a connotation of white and beauty and black which, during the time, has a connotation of evilness ^{insecure identity} highlights underlines the undercurrent of insecurity that Othello might have as a character of contrasting background ~~and~~, complexion as well as religion — as 'Moor' are also associated with Muslims as Honigmann notes. ~~The fricative gives a sense of~~ The title of him and reputation of him as 'the Moor' ^{seems to} replace his actual name since not many characters call him 'Othello' — Iago initially informs the audience in ^{his first} ~~the~~ soliloquy "I hate the Moor" which only allows the audience to interpret it themselves through the title of the play that he is talking about "Othello".



This extract is an effective example of how to integrate the text and context in an economic but still effective way. The point about Othello being like Cyprus in the way that they are both isolated is neatly embedded as part of a wider point about Othello's racial identity.

Also effective is the consistent and sustained reference to the text, with the candidate embedding examples and then sometimes going back to analyse them in more detail – as can be seen in the section on black and white.



Try and embed the text all the time, even if you don't always closely analyse it.

This answer achieved a low Level 5 mark of 21

P1 - Othello - valiant man or murderer ~~husband~~ ^{husband}

"Valiant man"

"my perfect soul"

pestilence "Iago's suggestion... are new" Coleridge

P2 - Desdemona - subversive or passive

"divine"

"savageness out of a bear" "Soft simplicity," Johnson

P3 - Iago - evil or human. nonrelature

"motiveless malignity"

In Shakespeare's Aristotelian tragedy 'Othello' he constructs an inner contention within the characters who struggle to determine their true identity from the ~~contrast~~ contrasting views of themselves, wider society and their actions. Othello is stuck between the acclaimed military man and the unsophisticated "lascivious" (Iago) man; Desdemona seems to prefer passivity over her apparent power and Iago, whose

actions demonstrate evil to the audience, shows flashes of human empathy.

In Jacobean and Elizabethan England, 'moors' of people of colour were looked down upon and were at the bottom of the 'great chain of being' a widely accepted hierarchy of people. Therefore, Shakespeare's choice to craft Othello's persona as ^{being} at the top of Venetian high society was subversive at the time, so much so that early critics such as Rymer were aggressive in their disapproval with Rymer deeming it "the most lamentable play ever" due to its lack of realism in regards to race and status. This subversion is seemingly not lost on Othello and some other characters, Othello is aware of his position and its delicacy and this manifests in him ~~having~~ demonstrating a incessant insecurity once Iago's "pestilence" begins to work. In Act 1 Othello is established as well regarded, in the face of a threat of court he asserts that ~~"this"~~
"My parts, my title and my perfect soul shall manifest me rightly." Shakespeare here uses three reasons to ~~establish~~ embellish Othello's reputation creating an assuredness in his position. However his reputation is not the result of hubris alone as the other characters praise him as well, most prominent of the praise coming from the Duke who ~~clearly~~ exalts Othello as a "valiant man." The Duke's own high standing add further weight to the praise. Although his seemingly secure place of respect

Othello seems to struggle with who he truly is as the praise contradicts the racism rampant in ~~the~~ Elizabethan England, a society where the Queen passed ~~the~~ edicts banning 'news' from London. He clearly internalises the racism as he views himself as simple and unsophisticated when his near poetic speech ~~and~~ and use of verse suggests otherwise. He states ~~the~~ "Rude am I in my speech" directly contradicting the well spoken nature of his dialogue, showing he is indeed insecure and unable to come to terms with his identity. Many critics attribute this to his downfall as his insecurity allows Iago's machinations to fester even deeper and debase him, ~~but~~ ironically leading to him becoming the unsophisticated person he thinks he is as shown by his ~~quite~~ switch from verse to prose as the tragedy is realised and he kills his wife.

In another instance of Shakespeare's brave subversion of his society's norms, he presents Desdemona as ~~at~~ beyond reproach and having power over her society in contrast to the near powerless role of women in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, however she does not retain this position and as cultural materialists would point out, conforms to the passive ~~role of~~ archetype of ~~the housewife but Cassio~~ ~~describes~~ Shakespeare's contemporary housewife. Cassio mltz heralds Desdemona as "divine" and furthermore goes on to

deem her the "captains captain." By way of the word "Divine" Desdemona is likened to the biblical figure of Mary, who in the bible is touted as the highest standard of femininity. This would have cemented her power to a very religious early audience. The metaphor "captain captain" then gives her massive power on earth as by Cassio suggesting her to ~~bring in~~ control of military captain Othello. Shakespeare directly flips the marriage power dynamic on its head. This praise for Desdemona's goes as far as critics with Johnson admiring her "soft simplicity," however Desdemona herself does not retain this position. In the play's climax as Othello is unjustly murdering and defaming her, her protest are surprisingly passive. She begs to ~~be~~ "kill" "kill me tomorrow let me live to-night" accepting fate for ~~as~~ ^{an act} she did not commit. Her position in secrecy suggest that she would have power to stop this, especially with ~~her~~ her aforementioned status as the "captains captain", however her injustice and death without honour underline her struggle with her true identity.

The "Machiavellian" antagonist Iago's evil ~~and~~ is well known and has been ~~reconstructed~~ by critics for centuries, however in his deceit some seem to doubt whether he truly wants to claim the role of villain. Iago infamously declares "I am not what I am" to

the audience in the beginning of the play. The direct contrast between his statement and the Christian God's statement in Exodus of the bible, "I am what I am" suggest that Iago is the devil by way of his ~~own~~ speech. ~~Iago's villainy goes as~~ ~~Ostensibly~~, Iago's villainy goes as far as his nomenclature and heritage with his name ~~being~~ ^{being of} Spanish descent, a nation that was enemies to Shakespeare's resident England. He plots on "the net that shall encompass them all" with the ~~cinema~~ metaphor here going to show his plans to deceive and trap his victims. However when his plans come to fruition he is caught, showing that he was not the all powerful character he presented himself as and was actually "supremely human." He is unable to even defend himself ~~and~~ cowardly declaring "What you know, you know:" Furthermore his lack of concrete motivation, what Coleridge ~~on~~ articulates as " motiveless malignity", leaves some audiences questioning why he chooses to deceive and ~~what~~ and lead to some concluding he struggles to understand his true identity.

All in all, ~~to~~ Shakespeare through ~~the~~ ~~play~~ his critically acclaimed drama explores the way identity can have damning effects when distorted as victims such as Othello, Desdemona and perhaps Iago, act irrationally on the basis of a lack of understanding of themselves and what they are worth.



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The introduction to this answer gives a brief overview of the different ideas the candidate intends to explore and directly references and interprets the question in an individual way. Key phrases such as 'Shakespeare's choice to craft Othello's persona as being at the top of ...' draws the examiner's attention to the fact that this candidate clearly understands that these characters are not real people and that they have been constructed by the playwright in order to explore ideas. The idea about internalised racism is a perceptive one and is supported by an analysis of Othello's verse and use of language.



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Examiner Tip

Consider the characters as constructs rather than real people.

Question 11

QUESTION 11: *Top Girls*

There was some effective integration of context here, supporting ideas about the pitfalls of too much ambition. Although most answers tended to focus on Marlene there was also some useful analysis of the consequences of a lack of ambition in some of the characters.

Question 12

QUESTION 12: *Top Girls*

This was a question where the focus was more directly centred on AO2, with the reference to 'Churchill's use of an all female cast'. This led to some effective analysis of the play, especially the opening scene, and some useful discussion of the men who are mentioned by other characters even though they do not appear in the play itself. There was noted a tendency to 'shoe horn' context about Thatcher into some of the answers, despite this not being particularly relevant to the point being made.

Question 13

QUESTION 13: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Candidates interpreted 'the past' in different ways here, with a number exploring the characters' cultural heritage as well as their personal lives. There was some useful analysis of dialogue, although more could have been made of Hansberry's extensive use of mimesis, including props and staging.

Question 14

QUESTION 14: *A Raisin in the Sun*

A number of answers focused on Walter here and accessed Level 3 with clear and relevant points. More considered responses touched on Mama as the matriarch who was most committed to change despite her age and position in society.

Question 15

QUESTION 15: *Death of a Salesman*

This was a question which encouraged a number of thoughtful responses, with a number of candidates debating what 'courage' actually meant within the context of Miller's play. More controlled and discriminating essays explored the juxtaposition of Biff and Happy's responses to their father's death and debated which character could be argued to be more courageous. Other fruitful areas for discussion considered Willy's suicide and whether or not this could have been considered to be a final demonstration of courage.

Question 16

QUESTION 16: *Death of a Salesman*

With its focus on illusion this question proved to be popular with candidates. There was some effective analysis of Miller's stagecraft, especially relating to Expressionism and staging.

This question achieved a mid Level 3 score of 13.

'Death of A Salesman' by Arthur Miller is a tragic story set right after the end of the second world war. During this time America was trying to rebuild their country, this period of time was when the idea of the American dream was brought in, giving hopes to people that they could be successful with any means possible in America. These subjects are explored in Arthur Millers play and he shows the bad side of such illusions / false hopes which can lead to a dangerous reality.

Willy Loman is a believer of the concept of the 'American Dream'. He believes that anyone who works hard enough could achieve success, this is evident when he speaks about Biff, "~~In the great~~ Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world?". Willy Loman who has worked ^{for} so long, still believes he is still the young salesman he used to be. He still believes that he can achieve the amount of success he wishes, even though its apparent that he isn't. A critic by the name of Emily Clarke explained that, "Willy fell

from an imagined height", this in it self sums up the illusion of life Willy think he's having compared to his reality.

An illusion Willy creates for himself is his loyalty towards Linda. "You're the best there is, Linda, you're a pal, you know that? On the road I want to grab you sometimes and just kiss the life outa you". Willy never throughout his life admitted to cheating, it was kept as a secret between him and Biff. Eventhough Willy doesn't think much about that incident, it was what created the conflict between him and Biff and why they don't get along. This in return brings reason as to why the whole trajectory of Biff's life changed.

Another illusion that Willy believes is that of Bens success. Ben, Willy's brother, is told that he achieved success by going to Africa and discovered diamond mines which resulted in his success. This story can be found as very absurd but this is what Willy believes in. As a person who was left alone by both his father and brother when they were young, made him look up to them more and follow their footsteps. He believes that Ben achieved success through hard-work but its extremely obvious that he got very lucky. Him looking upto his family was what resulted him in

always chasing wealth and success. It's mentioned that his father made, "more in a week than a man like you in a lifetime". This success story is what drives him and is what he teaches his sons as well.

A reason as to why Biff and Willy argue is that because Willy believes that, "how can he find himself on a farm." This illusion of believing that success happens through working in "real jobs" is something Willy is wrong about. Biff is happy working in a farm, even though it's not the most wealthiest of jobs. Biff clearly wants to live happily rather than working hard to find money, which is completely acceptable. Although this isn't what Willy taught them as children and his false hopes of Biff being a wealthy man is broken through his decisions. Willy "The brutal capitalist system is what broke Willy down", this quote according to the critics helps understand Willy's mindset towards life compared to that of Biff's.

The false pride Willy has about his sons is another illusion he believes in. When Willy meets Bernard he asks him about Biff. He explains, "Well, he's been doing very big things in the West but he decided to

establish himself here", which is very obvious & it's a lie. Willy wants to make himself shown to the world as a very successful person through work and as well as a father. Due to this he creates this false version of his lifestyle where he is very proud of, where in that Biff has become the successful person that Willy dreamt he would be. This may seem a bit sad compared to the actual reality where none of this is true.

In conclusion, the illusions created by Willy may help him feel happy for a temporary duration but he also needs to know how to adjust according to his reality. His imagined success wouldn't always be achievable and he needs to understand that. Through these character flaws Miller has successfully created a very interesting character where the audience gets to know him through his flashbacks, mistakes and illusions.



Whilst the introduction does make a valid and clear point, about 'the bad side of such illusions', the opening contextual section could have been more tightly tied to the question/ideas about to be explored.

Whilst there is some clear discussion of dialogue here, in order to achieve Level 4 and higher there needs to be reference to a wider range of techniques, especially dramatic techniques such as props/costumes. There is also an implication that these characters are being dealt with as real people, for example in phrases such as 'Willy never throughout his life admitted to cheating . . .' A more analytical approach might be to use phrases such as 'Miller uses' or 'Miller crafts' in order to foreground the idea that characters are constructs, used by the playwright to explore ideas.



Make sure when using context and/or a critical viewpoint, that you link it to a specific idea/part of the play.

Question 17

QUESTION 17: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

This question elicited numerous considered, well thought out and well planned answers – many of which concentrated on Blanche's confused identity in terms of her class and her position as a woman in post-war America. Many candidates made the relevant point that Stanley is a character who is most assured of his identity, and that Stella can be seen as a liminal figure trapped in between the ideas of the Old and New South. Whilst there was some effective discussion of Williams' use of Plastic Theatre, especially his use of costume, there could have been more effective discussion of his use of music to explore ideas related to identity.

This introduction is the beginning of an essay which went on to score 19, a high Level 4 mark.

Insecurity of personal identity is a most innate and intrinsic theme within Tennessee Williams' beautiful crowning piece of written glory "A Streetcar Named Desire", a tale of how the vain pursuit of desire can lead to the the death of ~~one's~~ ~~own~~ one's most treasured possession: a personal identity.



This is an effective example of an introduction which integrates the key words and ideas of the question, but one where the candidate has not given a full overview of all the ideas they wish to explore. It is quite possible to achieve Level 4 and higher with this approach, as long as the essay goes on to detail the ideas and integrate context and AO5.

Question 18

QUESTION 18: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Candidates found much to write about on the subject of loyalty, with a number of answers focusing on Stella's divided loyalty. More successful answers moved away from describing different examples of loyalty in the text and engaged with the debate around 'the price some characters pay for being loyal'. There was much analysis of characters' loyalty towards a cultural ideal, with a number of characters exploring how Blanche's loyalty towards her Southern Belle roots ultimately contributes to her downfall. Candidates should be careful of adding irrelevant biographical detail to their answers as this tends to weaken the cohesion of their argument.

Question 19

QUESTION 19: *Waiting for Godot*

Candidates engaged with the idea of suffering, offering a number of different ideas about Beckett's use of the theme. More successful answers linked this idea to wider, contemporary concerns and brought in relevant and illuminative references to different productions of the play.

Question 20

QUESTION 20: *Waiting for Godot*

Only one candidate answered this question.

Paper Summary

Paper Summary

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

- Use the first 10 minutes (minimum) of the exam primarily to plan your response. You should take into consideration the theme in the question but also the critical statement. By considering and responding to the critical statement you are less likely to write a general essay
- During planning time, it can be helpful to write out what we might call 'Nutshells' or 'Lines of Argument'. These are short statements which briefly detail the idea you plan to develop/argue. You should think about planning at least 2 ideas which are relevant to the question and are ideas which you can strengthen and develop using context (AO3) and/or viewpoints/criticism (AO5)
- Write a clear introduction which gives an overview of your main ideas and indicates to the examiner how you plan to approach the question.
- For AO1/AO2, make sure you consider the texts as plays. You should also be thinking about the characters as constructs; what ideas is the playwright trying to explore through their use of character?
- If you are going to use criticism make sure you do something with it. Engage with it. Pull a key word out of the critical quote and highlight where that idea can be seen (or can be argued against) in the text. The closer the connection between the viewpoint and the text, the more likely you are to access the higher bands.
- Finally, give yourself time to think. English Literature is not a science – there isn't one right answer. The examiner wants to see that you have carefully considered the question, carefully planned out your response and then argued and developed your ideas clearly and in a controlled way.

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>

