



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2023**

**International Advanced Level English Literature WET03 01**

## Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk).

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).



### Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit [www.edexcel.com/resultsplus](http://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus). Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

### Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk).

June 2023

Publications Code WET03\_01\_2306\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2023

## Introduction

Centres are thanked for choosing Pearson Edexcel for their International A Level provider. This has been a successful paper. There were no errors, no erratum notices and no changes made to the mark scheme.

For this unit, WET03, the open book examination is 2 hours long and comprises two sections. All candidates must answer Section A, Question 1, Post-1900 Unseen Poetry. Candidates then respond to a question from Section B, Prose. For this series, a full range of marks was awarded with many candidates placed in Levels 2-5.

### Section A: Post-1900 Unseen Poetry

This question is presented to the whole cohort. Candidates will use the reading and critical skills that they have learnt throughout the course in order to answer one essay question on a post-1900 unseen poem. It assesses AO1 and AO2. Context is not assessed in this section of the paper. There are 20 marks available for Section A.

The unseen poem for Question 1 was **The Journey** by Mary Oliver. It was an absolute pleasure to read the interpretations of the poem offered and candidates were able to range across the poem for the most part with ease and confidence.

As in previous series, candidates are drawing upon an impressive array of poetic and literary terminology and responses are increasingly more able to link form to function. Responses that are able to do this invariably access the higher levels of the mark scheme more successfully. Some responses were relatively short or did not show evidence of planning. It is strongly recommended that candidates spend some time planning before writing their responses in order to produce cohesive, well-structured arguments.

### Section B: Prose

In this section, candidates answer one comparative essay from a choice of two, on the two studied prose texts that they have studied. It assesses AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4. Candidates can select from the themes: *Growing Up*, *Colonisation and After*, *Science and Society* or *Women and Society*. Candidate responses should be informed by an appreciation and understanding of the contexts in which their chosen texts are both written and read. In Section B, candidates will study two out of a choice of three thematically linked texts. They will learn about:

- the importance of the relationship between texts, making connections and comparison between texts
- the significance of the cultural and contextual influences under which literary texts are written and received
- how to respond creatively, relevantly and in an informed way to texts using appropriate terminology and concepts as well as coherent and accurate written expression.
- how to analyse texts from a critical perspective.

There are 30 marks available for Section B.

In the Prose section, the most popular theme was *Science and Society* (Questions 6 and 7) with the second most popular theme *Women and Society* (Questions 8 and 9). There were fewer responses to *Growing Up* (Questions 2 and 3) and *Colonisation and After* (Questions 4 and 5). All texts had responses written on them in this exam series and many candidates were placed in Levels 3-5.

As with previous exam series, written expression is mostly clear and many candidates are meeting the requirements of writing fluently and accurately, conveying their knowledge and understanding of their studied texts effectively. On the whole, contextual comment has been used more effectively than in previous series. Similarly, many candidates are effectively meeting the demands of Assessment Objective 4 (AO4) and its requirement to make links between the two studied texts. However, Assessment Objective 1(AO1) was not always evenly covered and some candidates did not consider the techniques employed by the writers of their studied texts.

**The paper assesses performance across the following Assessment Objectives (AOs):**

AO1: Articulately informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.

AO5 is not assessed in this paper.

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

## Question 1

The unseen poem for Question 1 was *The Journey* by Mary Oliver. This was a discriminating poem that allowed students to approach analysis of it in varied and interesting ways and, therefore, to access the full range of the mark scheme.

Candidates generally responded well to Question 1 with examiners noting that a variety of themes (ranging from maturation, liberation and independence to mental health and abusive relationships) were identified and explored. The poem is an address to an unseen recipient ('you') – potentially the reader, but not necessarily so – and contains advice about how to proceed throughout the difficulties of life. Some candidates were able to identify and explore the way the poem contains an element of 'in media res' and to discuss the impact that this conversational device has on the reader. Other candidates examined the way in which the poem is rich in contrast and juxtaposition with one particularly successful response exploring the theme of self-affirmation in the poem and how the tone is both 'heroic and tired'. Again, examiners noted that the conflict in feeling was an aspect of the poem highlighted with sensitivity by candidates.

Surprisingly, few responses explored the imagery of the title itself. Another successful response noted that the title has connotations of adventure and discovery and that this leads into the richness of the imagery in the poem.

It should be noted that responses are most successful where time is obviously spent on planning. There is a lot to do in the allotted time: candidates must read, absorb and analyse an unseen poem and a clear plan would help in marshalling together an argument that would help to give responses shape and clarity. Planning is time well-spent in the examination.

All candidates seem to be aware of Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 (AO1 and AO2) and of the importance of exploring how meaning is created within a poem and of how literary and linguistic terminology as well as structure are used to do this. Successful responses use a range of appropriate terminology to underpin their analysis, fully exemplifying the evidence they select with precise reference to technique. Again, one examiner noted that there were 'pertinent comments on imagery, sound effects, syntax and personification'. Interesting responses identified the shift in tone in the poem and used it as a starting point for discussion of theme and idea.

At Assessment Objective 1 (AO1), candidates are most successful where terminology is correctly identified and precisely supports the point being made. The question set is an unseen one and candidates do need knowledge of a range of poetic terminology. However, responses where techniques are 'listed' or seem to be working through a pre-prepared checklist are rarely as successful as those where the candidate has responded to the poem on its own terms and can confidently integrate aspects of literary device and language into their comments. Many Level 2 and bottom to mid Level 3 responses are able to comment on the literary and linguistic devices used but can't always confidently discuss the effect that they have.

Candidates are, on the whole, able to identify and discuss word class and imagery but are still approaching form and structure with varying degrees of success. Some responses were clear on aspects of form and structure that the poem didn't contain (ie 'doesn't use a rhyme scheme'), but unless this approach was tied to discussion of the themes and ideas in the poem it was rarely a successful argument to make. As has been stressed in previous Examiner's Reports, responses that make superficial comment on aspects of form are often placed in Level 2 or the bottom of Level 3 as they do not consistently demonstrate an awareness of the writer's craft in order to meet the demands of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2). Some responses incorrectly identified the form of the poem (commenting on iambic pentameter or blank verse) or concentrated their analysis on the length of lines or number of sentences. Again, this was rarely a successful approach to take. In contrast, one pleasing response spent time discussing what it considered to be the 'dramatic monologue' form of the poem, linking structure to language choice and use of direct address as a way of discussing the sense of action and forward motion created in the poem.

It is recommended that centres continue to make use of the *Sample Assessment Materials* and past papers in order to become even more familiar with the assessment requirements. The mark grids demonstrate how candidates can progress from one level to the next. In order to achieve Level 4 or above, responses need to be discriminating, critical and evaluative. Analysis of the poem should be controlled and well supported with evidence and close reference to the techniques used and should provide examples of the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft.

The following script was awarded 17 marks for Question 1 and placed into the lower end of Level 5.

It meets all of the descriptors across Assessment Objectives 1 (AO1) and 2 (AO2) and offers a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft.

There is a careful selection of evidence and terminology and a clear attempt to evaluate the ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

1 Write a commentary on the poem *The Journey* by Mary Oliver.

In your answer, you should consider:

- the poet's development of themes
- the poet's use of language and imagery
- the use of other poetic techniques.

(20)

The poem 'The Journey' by Mary Oliver depicts the themes of the breathless passageway of life and death, through metaphors of natural imagery. This poem is written in the second person as if the poetic speaker is directly addressing us, the readers. This puts us in the shoes of the speaker, almost as if we are living, breathing & experiencing the same journey of life they are.

The theme of nature is poignantly seen throughout the poem, specifically dark nature being a destructive force to be reckoned with. In the exposition of the poem, "the whole house began to tremble". The metaphorical clause alludes to the idea of an earthquake which brings nothing but destruction, death and despair into the lives of all. The quantifier 'whole' connotes the

enormity of mass destruction, further emphasized by the enjambed line, creating a sense of abundance, and shock. The notion of nature being destructive is further seen towards the end of the poem when looking up into the sky, "the stars began to burn". This metaphor alludes to biblical imagery, linking to the woe a being in a state of purgatory - the end is near. The verb 'burn' links to fire, and with that, complete and utter destruction. This may be Oliver's way of critiquing society, as the stars may symbolise the people of power - celebrities, government, even our own idols, and how they are tainted and destroyed by society. Overall, through the nature imagery, the readers get a sense of social upheaval, and destruction, as nature is usually associated with life and new birth, here - it represents death.

In addition, the theme of discovery is seen throughout this poem, as one big breacher's and dangerous, when the speaker describes leaving the safety of their home and venturing into the world, it was "a wild night, // and the road full of fallen // branches and stones". The adjective 'wild' has connotations of danger and precarious, and linking to how the speaker, nor anyone,

can see/predict what may occur in the upcoming future. The clause "road full of fallen branches and stones" has connotations of liminality, the barriers between entrapment and freedom. This alludes to the idea of there being difficulties and milestones in the road to the future, as much like life, we have to get past the fallen trees and rocks, and overcome said setbacks. Furthermore, the journey is seen as one of mystery & danger, as "you strode deeper and deeper into the world". The simile alludes to the pathway of adulthood, as we must leave our childhood behind, and explore the new, unknown territory that is the world and society. The adverb 'deeper' has connotations of darkness and the unknown, this further reinforces how the journey to self discovery is treacherous, which is further emphasised by the repetition. In addition, the poem's title 'The Journey' emphasises the importance of the passage of life, through the definite article. It has an ambiguous tone, yet the reader gets a sense that Oliver is guiding us through said journey, as we all travel together in the poem.

Finally, the theme of life and death is

prevalent throughout this poem, as the intertextual reference, " 'Mend my life!' " alludes to desperation and precarity. The short declarative, emphasised by the exclamation brings a sense of urgency, almost as if the poetic speaker is shouting into the void that is society for help, but there is nothing, and no one there. This may allude to the millions of people in society who are suffering, begging for mercy to no avail, as much like the speaker "you can't stop", society does not stop either. In addition, the theme of life and death is seen at the end of the poem, as you are "determined to save // the only life you could save.". The repeated verb 'save' further reinforces the danger of life, and the possibility of death & misery. The quantifier 'only' has connotations of despair and hopelessness, almost as if society & the world is so full of death, that to live, one must only focus on themselves, and not others. The theme of death is also seen through the structure of the poem, being in blank verse, no rhyme scheme nor strict stanza/line form - it is almost a stream of consciousness; one with no stability, always leaving the reader searching for more.\* However the end stopped line at the end of the poem alludes to finality, such as death.

\* such as the quest for life.

In essence, the poem 'The Journey' by May Oliver brings about the powerful notions of leaving childhood, and entering the world of society, even if said journey is dangerous, and full of grief & misery. The most powerful theme is how precarious the discovery of the world's, as everyone in society can venture to the ups, and downs of life - nothing in this world, much like society, is risk free.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The opening paragraphs are confident and firmly link form and function to theme, thus meeting the requirements of both AO1 and AO2.

Note the precise linking of structural technique (in this case, enjambment) to theme. This is a good example of how Level 5 responses integrate comment on poetic form to what they consider the writer's intentions to be.

Appropriate and sophisticated use of concepts and terminology continues, developing the points made on the contrasts in theme that the candidate has identified.

Evidence is carefully selected and is mostly nicely embedded within the points being made. This indicates that the candidate is moving past Level 4, and a demonstration is made of 'discriminating' and 'controlled' application of terminology and examples into Level 5 with 'sustained textual examples'.

The concluding comment nicely surmises the themes and ideas identified in the response.



Try to ensure that your response begins with a sense of what your argument will be and that you've identified what you consider the most important aspects of the poem to be.

Ensure that comment on poetic form is appropriate and links directly to the point you're making about the poem.

This response was awarded a mark of 14 which places it towards mid-level 4.

This Level 4 placement confirms that the response is discriminating and controlled but that some descriptors are met more securely than others.

The overall analysis offered by the candidate is sound, with examples embedded into the discussion of the poem's themes and ideas, thus the response's placement in Level 4 for Assessment Objective 1 (AO1). However, the range of terminology used is mainly concentrated on imagery and verb class. A broader range would have further supported the analysis offered by the candidate.

1 Write a commentary on the poem *The Journey* by Mary Oliver.

In your answer, you should consider:

- the poet's development of themes
- the poet's use of language and imagery
- the use of other poetic techniques.

(20)

"The Journey" by Mary Oliver presents a metaphoric journey of self-discovery, about ~~the~~ being able to overcome ~~or distract~~ the need to help others before helping yourself. The poet uses natural imagery and a series of metaphors to portray the challenges of this journey, and creates an ~~dark~~ atmosphere of ~~darkness~~ darkness and mystery to express the difficulty of not being swayed by the demands of others, ultimately ~~de~~

The poet's central message, of prioritising your own worth, is metaphorically portrayed as a journey, which is clearly signalled through the title of the poem, but also its structure. The one ~~into~~ long stanza of the poem with short verses gives the appearance of a path, ~~perhaps~~ the path that the person on the journey must take. The enjambement ~~used~~ constantly used in the poem ~~g~~ pushes the reader to move to the next verse in anticipation, as much as it metaphorically pushes you to continue walking ~~on the~~ to continue the journey.

Although the journey ~~is~~ actually represents only an internal resolve, the poem uses literary techniques to give the impression that the journey is dynamic, that you're walking and encountering obstacles. The intrusive demands of other people, although just "voices", are given the power to "tug at your ankles". This sensory imagery ~~represents the voices~~ gives the sense of the voices trying to trip you as you walk, a physical obstacle in your way. The caesura at the end of "cried" gives the impression that the voices were able to stop you through their tugging, but the poet uses a one line sentence to ~~even~~ restore the dynamic image of the journey, of you not stopping but keeping on walking: "But you didn't stop.". This dynamism is sustained through the poet's use of verbs, starting with "began", which creates a linear perception of the journey, and continuing with "strode". The poem addresses the reader directly with "you", making them feel like they are the ones taking the journey and creating a personal link between the readers and the poem, as well as a feeling of pride in the readers because of the faith the poet has in their determination, emphasised by the anaphora of "determined".

The poem uses the natural world to visually portray their message and the difficulty of the journey. They present the conditions of the journey as rough, with strong wind and darkness ~~that~~ imp and thick clouds that impaired vision.

The wind is personified with the metaphor of its "stiff fingers"

causing a feeling of discomfort at the perceived touch of these vines, pulling you back from continuing the journey. The night is also personified as "wild", which creates a spooky atmosphere of mystery and danger. The imagery of the "road full of fallen branches and stones" represents the obstacles in this journey, showing its difficulty. The metaphor of "sheets of clouds" is used to portray the sky as fully covered by clouds, with no peeking light from the stars. However, the thinness of sheets allows the light to finally shine through the moment that the stars begin to shine brighter, which is emphasized by the word "burning". The burning light could represent the determination of the person taking the journey finally coming through in its power to guide them through the obstacles of this journey. It's because of this light that they're able to recognize their own voices, which was perhaps hidden in the darkness before. Although this voice is not as charged as the other voices, which give imperative commands: "Mend my life!", or as emotionally scarring as the voices with their terrible "melancholy". However, it is portrayed as consistent, being there with you to guide you through your journey, and bringing about the final epiphany portrayed as the message at the end of the poem that every person needs to save ~~and~~ their own life before saving others.





It is better to use short pieces of evidence and to embed them within points in order to meet the demands of the descriptors within Levels 4 and 5 at AO1.

This script was awarded a mark of 11 placing it in the upper half of Level 3.

The response does not deviate from its central discussion of the poem – the theme of maturation – but is mostly straightforward in this and thus meets the descriptors of 'clear' and 'relevant' for this level.

There is a range of poetic terminology and textual evidence used, although the quotations selected are sometimes too long and not as well integrated into the response as they might be. There is enough understanding of the writer's craft here to meet the demands of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) and the expression is mostly logical and clear although there is a 'broadness' to this response which denotes Level 3 rather than Level 4.

'The Journey' by Mary Oliver is a single stanza poem with no rhyme scheme, making it a free verse poem, representing the flow of life. The poem depicts the idea of a 'journey' immediately through its title. Analysing it more deeply, the poem discusses the idea of a ~~journey~~ metaphoric journey of maturity, the physical development of time through a journey all whilst alluding to ideas of human mortality.

Initially, the idea of a physical journey is represented through ~~descriptive~~ language, "but you didn't stop," the idea of <sup>constant</sup> movement throughout the poem symbolises the physical journey the single speaker is going on, relating closely to the surface of the title, 'the Journey.' Additionally, this idea of a physical journey is portrayed

through the utilisation of the development into nighttime, "it was already late enough and a wild night." The imagery created through 'late' and 'w' the simple language, 'late enough' and 'wild night,' allows the reader to clearly understand the idea of passing time in relation to the journey. Furthermore, the idea of physical movement is depicted utilising surrounding people, "as you left their voices behind," the language used heightens the idea of physical movement along a journey through representing distance, 'left (v.) voices behind,' emphasises this distance physical distance, further implying this idea of a physical journey. Additionally the continued enjambment throughout the poem, "it was already late / enough," enough being on a separate line portrays the idea of enjambment, which furtherly depicts the idea of movement, as it provides the poem with a flow representing constant movement.

In addition, 'the journey' can also be deemed as metaphorical, symbolising

a journey of maturity away from society, 'one day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice,' Mary Oliver criticises the power of society through and its influence on people's actions through, "voices around you kept shouting their bad advice." The language used showcases the constant opinions from members of society; the flow of the ennoblement represents the constant provision of opinions flowing in and out. This criticism of society is utilised to depict a journey of maturity and overcoming societal pressures, "you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices . . ." the immediate ambiguous tone used creates a powerful mood, through language such as 'you', simply showing the speaker embarking on a positively selfish journey, which is further emphasised through 'though the voices,' creating an image of dismissing any pressures on this maturity journey. Moreover, this metaphoric journey is symbolised through the language which

per trays the change in voices being heard by the reader, "There was a new voice which you slowly recognised as your own that kept you company," the change in language from 'the voices around you,' to 'new voice (..) your own (..) which kept you company,' act as a symbol to maturity journey and the relief of societal pressures.

Moreover, it can be argued that Mary Oliver depicts a 'journey' as a symbol of mortality, through the idea of a journey through life. "As you left their voices behind, the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds," the concept of the stars 'burning' implies closeness through a sign of heat, providing heavenly connotation through the description of nature. The idea of nature being heavenly implies the immortality of nature as it is present along all parts of life's journey. "The road full of fallen branches and stones," the idea of 'fallen branches' creates the idea of protection against anything on the other side, as the guard the road

implying the safety of ~~the~~ reaching the 'heavenly' part of life's journey. Furthermore, the idea of the speaker being alone, 'your own that kept you company,' heightens the idea of reaching the end of life's journey as you are left alone. This idea of mortality is further depicted through the end of the poem "the only thing you could do ~~to~~ - determine to save the only life you could save," the repetition of 'you' further personalises the poem, ~~through~~ portraying the intimacy of ~~of~~ reaching the end of life's journey and the fearful concept of mortality through the desperate desire to 'save the only life you can save,' ultimately being yours.

In conclusion, 'The Journey' by Mary Oliver portrays the physical movement of time, as well as arguably discussing the metaphorical ideas of ~~so~~ journey through society and life, through language and imagery.



Although this response begins with a discussion of what the poem 'lacks', it picks up the pace from the second paragraph onwards with the comment on 'metaphoric journey of maturity'. This shows the beginnings of a clear understanding of the writer's craft at AO2 and moves it away from Level 2. There is a slight lapse in expression but this does not detract from the demonstration of how meanings are created in texts (AO2) in the comment on the sense of constant movement created throughout the poem.

The continual focus on enjambment as a structural method in creating movement throughout the poem is apt and displays evidence of the relevant use of concepts and terminology at AO1 that should be apparent in a Level 3 response.

Comment on language here becomes more vague and less precise, thus indicating that the response is more characteristic of Level 3 than the discrimination and control needed for Level 4.

Although evidence is not fluently embedded here, this does not detract from the clearness of the understanding of the writer's craft at AO2.

There is some repetition of points, but the discussion is still relevant and apt.



Ensure that form is linked to function.

Be precise with comments on language and poetic devices.

## Question 2

### Overview of Section B

Centres should be congratulated on having thoroughly prepared their candidates for the examination. It was clear that candidates knew their texts well and could make many perceptive and insightful comparisons between them. A full range of marks across the levels was awarded on this section of the paper. Candidates select one from a choice of two questions on their studied texts.

The questions in Section B assess Assessment Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

**Successful responses** marshalled a clear argument, made discerning comparisons between the two texts, selected contextual information judiciously to support points and explored linguistic and literary techniques. These responses never lost sight of the question and selected moments from their texts with consideration.

**Less successful responses** often veered away from the question set or made slim comparisons between their chosen texts. Mid to low level achievement was also marked by a lack of focus on the writer's technique and by less judicious selection of supporting evidence.

Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) invites candidates to write *informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concept and terminology, and coherent accurate written expression*. The vast majority of candidates are writing responses with good expression but are lacking the articulation of the writer's methods and techniques that demonstrate a full understanding of Assessment Objective 1 and of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) with its focus on the craft of the writer. Candidates are encouraged to explore the narrative perspectives, forms, structural techniques and voice as well as literary and linguistic devices in order to write rich and fully realised responses that explore the various ways in which novels are crafted and constructed. Candidates who can do this are invariably more highly rewarded as a result.

Examiners have noted that Assessment Objective 3 (AO3) was particularly strong. It was pleasing to see the trend on this paper to continue to include a rich wealth of contextual comment. One examiner noted that candidates 'applied considerable contextual knowledge, more often than not in a focused and illuminating way'. Candidates clearly have a wealth of social and historical information to apply to their texts as well as an understanding of literary context and genre. However, candidates should apply their contextual knowledge carefully – it must be in service to the question and point being made, otherwise it can overwhelm the treatment of the other Assessment Objectives.

As with previous series, there are few responses that are dealing with the texts as separate entities. Candidates, however, did not always explore points of comparison in detail or considering which aspects of their texts might be ripe for investigation. As noted during the last series, there are many forms of comparison that candidates can make. Stylistic comparisons are just as valid (and, in fact, demonstrate the candidate's ability to multiple Assessment Objectives at once) and are often found in the highest scoring responses.

Overviews are provided for each question with extended examples given for the most popular questions.

## **Question 2**

### ***Growing Up***

The set texts for the Growing Up option are: *What Maisie Knew*, *Great Expectations* and *The Color Purple*.

**Question 2:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present jealousy.

There were few responses to this question. Candidates could have taken a range of approaches to this question including how all three writers present jealousy as a device that reveals the maturation and processes of transformation that the protagonists go through; theme of jealousy as linked to the genre of the bildungsroman; symbolism and linguistic devices used to present jealousy. One particularly interesting response noted that both Dickens and Walker explore jealousy as a way of creating pathos for their characters.

As was common with other texts and themes in this section of the paper, on the whole candidates were able to incorporate contextual comment into their responses well.

## Question 3

### *Growing Up*

**Question 3:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts explore how characters influence one another.

This question had the bulk of responses for the *Growing Up* theme.

Candidates explored the various ways in which characters can negatively or positively influence each other. *Great Expectations* and *The Color Purple* are the most popular texts for this theme although *What Maisie Knew* did have some responses. Responses mostly concentrated on how characters negatively influence each other – particularly through relationships that are abusive – and were able to link this to the genre of the bildungsroman. One particularly pleasing response commented on how Compeyson (and his relationship with Arthur Havisham) as an antagonist is used as a device by Dickens to comment on abuse and the destructive influence individuals can have on one another.

As with Question 2, contextual comment in Assessment Objective 3 was integrated well.

The following script was awarded a mark of 9, placing it in the middle of Level 2.

This response exemplifies the descriptor heading of 'general understanding'. The candidate clearly understands the novels (in this case, *Great Expectations* and *The Color Purple*) but has provided a surface reading of the texts that best fits the descriptors for Level 2 than 3.

The placement of the script within the middle of the level indicates uneven achievement across the Assessment Objectives.

There is an awareness of context at AO3 and the response has clear expression at AO1. However, this response very much demonstrates the generality and surface reading associated with Level 2 achievement. With further analysis of some of the points made and some more pertinent links and comparisons made between the texts, the response would have headed towards the descriptors in Level 3.

'Great Expectations' by Charles Dickens and 'The Colour Purple' by Alice Walker are both Bildungsroman novels depicting the lives of the protagonists Pip and Celie and how they grow up from childhood <sup>to</sup> and adulthood with the influence of other characters in their lives.

Firstly, in 'Great Expectations', Pip is influenced by the absence of his parents and siblings, as he has a lonely childhood without them:

"my first fancies . . . from their tombstones." Consequently, he grows up under the cruel Mrs Joe's command, who constantly emotionally blackmailed him as "she had . . . "by hand". " Thus, Pip is gravely influenced by his sister's method of

upbringing as it has a deep psychological effect on Pip which is unfolded to the readers later on in the novel.

For instance, though Estella is incredibly rude and insulting to him; "And what thick boots!" Pip finds himself entranced by her beauty. A psychoanalytical reading of this novel will show that Pip tolerates such cruelty from Estella and falls in love with her because of Mrs Joe's treatment of him as a mother-figure. Thus, Pip accepts such mistreatment and is <sup>subconsciously</sup> influenced by it - as Estella's rejection of him is what makes Pip want to become a "gentleman".

It is important to note the context of this text, as Dickens himself had an unhappy childhood. His mother was quite cruel to him, which is reflected in Mrs Joe's behaviour towards Pip.

On the other hand, in 'The Colour Purple', Celie is deeply traumatised by Alphonso's physical, emotional and sexual abuse: "But I don't never git used to it." Additionally, she lost her mother at a young age - "My mama dead," - and had to protect her sister, Nettie: "All I thought about was Nettie."

~~All of these events and Celie's~~ stepfather's abuse and her mother's death has a significant influence on her as it teaches her to be obedient and tolerate the abuse of men, like Alphonso and Mr - : "I lay... she safe."

Moreover, Celie is influenced by the women in her life as well, such as Shug Avery, Nettie and Sofia.

For example, Nettie always encouraged Celie to get an education and establish herself as Nettie believed in Celie's potential: "but she say I ain't dumb." Additionally, Sofia's show of strength and self-defense has an impact on Celie as Celie is

amazed by Sofia's bravery. Sofia communicates this with Celie honestly, "you remind me of my mama," which helps Celie realize that she should stand up for herself: "You ought . . . heaven later". Likewise, Shug Avery has the most significant influence on Celie's personality, as she portrays to Celie the importance of women empowerment through her actions and words: "I brought you . . . get on your feet."

As a result, Celie gets the courage to finally stand up to Mr — "It's time to leave you," and break free from his abusive control. <sup>"cause she my wife."</sup> Furthermore, Celie goes to "Memphis" with Shug and starts a pant-making business, which further facilitates her journey to growth and independence: "I got work . . . money."

Going back Therefore, the readers recognize the elements of feminist theory being incorporated in the novel.

as Walker portrays the hardships faced by ~~two~~ black women in Georgia during the Early 20th Century. Additionally, the New Historicism Theory comes into play here as many of the events portrayed in this novel reflect the influences Walker had from the powerful women in her life.

Going back to 'Great Expectations', Pip is also influenced by those in the upper class of society, such as Miss Havisham. Her attitude towards Pip and Estella: "I want diversion," is what makes him think that Miss Havisham was his ~~pe~~ secret benefactor: "Miss Havisham . . . on a grand scale." This is further reflected in his elitist attitude towards Magwitch when Magwitch arrives at Pip's door, "stay . . . keep off!" as Pip was influenced by the rich to think he should be rude to those ~~in~~ belonging to lower classes. This belief is then broken by Magwitch

burning the money Pip gave him – “still watching . . . ashes into the tray.” – which has a greater influence on Pip as it is the first time Pip encountered someone who did not value material wealth. Thus, Dickens uses symbolism to criticise elements of the marxist theory that were prominent in the Victorian Era.

Interesting to note, Pip is also positively influenced by the characters Joe and Magwitch, who are responsible for Pip's change of heart. Joe's unwavering kindness from Pip's childhood to Pip becoming a gentleman: “that my only wish were to be useful to you” is what reminded Pip of what is truly important in life: connection.

Similarly, Magwitch's kind deeds: “Yes, Pip . . . gentleman on you!” moves Pip so significantly that Pip eventually accepts him as a father “He smiled, and I understood his touch.” Thus, Dickens presents the

positive ~~imp~~ influence. Pip's father figures had on him.

Lastly, it is interesting to note the influence of side characters on others: like Miss Havisham raising Estella to be a cold-hearted woman. "I stole her . . . ice in its place". The impact of this influence is seen in Estella's abusive marriage to Drummle "I had heard . . . with great cruelty," which influences Estella to be soft to others. Similarly, Squeak is influenced by Shug, as he begins to sing "Squeak sing." Also, Adam is influenced by Tashi, as he permanently scars himself to convince her to marry him "People look . . . they business."

In conclusion, Dickens and Walker portrays to the Victorian and Early 20th century readers how characters influence one another through their depiction of Pip and Celie. Dickens uses the first person

retrospective narrative to portray a wiser, older Pip reflecting on his childhood and how he was influenced by those around him. Similarly, Walker uses an epistolary narrative and the process of elision to present Celie's growth through external influence: "Dear God", "Dear Nettie".

As a modern reader myself, I feel that the presentation of people's influence on others in these two novels is done realistically and accurately through the characters with the writers' choice of narrative method, use of symbolism and the inclusion of contextual factors that adhere to the themes of 'The Colour Purple' and 'Great Expectations'.



There is an awareness of the genre of the novels and an eye on the question.

AO3 is referred to here in the mention of a psychoanalytical reading, but this contextual comment is not developed and, therefore, does not demonstrate the clear understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts associated with Level 3 achievement.

This candidate uses a lot of evidence but it takes a 'listing' approach and is not developed or tied to ideas about the texts.

The comment here on female empowerment lifts this into the middle of Level 2 and away from the upper reaches of Level 1.

Again, mid-level achievement in Level 2 is demonstrated through the contextual link to Walker's own life, but this comment is not developed.

There is an awareness of the crafting of the novel by Dickens in the brief discussion of symbolism, but this comment demonstrates 'general' rather than 'clear' understanding.

Again, note the listing of evidence that is typical of achievement at Level 2.

The contextual comment on reception is worthy but not developed.



Ensure that all comments are developed.

Evidence should be short and embedded within points in order to ensure that it is as thoroughly exemplified as possible.

## Question 4

### ***Colonisation and After***

The set texts for the *Colonisation and After* option are: *Heart of Darkness*, *The Lonely Londoners* and *A Passage to India*.

Question 4: Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts make use of the titles of their novels.

This section was the least popular of the four options but still provided many thought-provoking and interesting responses.

Candidates used the titles of the novels (often exploring the imagery and devices inherent within each one) as a starting point before exploring the themes of the novels in depth. Examiners noted that the 'question was thoughtfully and critically handled. Many pointed out there are, in fact, a number of hearts of darkness in Conrad's novel; some candidates focused on the ambivalence of the term 'Londoners' and some candidates explored the connotations of indulgent leisure in the word 'passage'. All responses to this question considered context well – often selecting discerning contextual evidence to support points well.

This script was awarded a mark of 22, placing it in the middle of Level 4.

Placement in the middle of the level denotes an uneven coverage across the Assessment Objectives, although this response provides a controlled argument with a discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. There is a focus on the question throughout the response and the candidates rarely strays away from the task.

Examples are fluently embedded throughout although this response does not analyse as broad a range of linguistic and literary devices as it might and, therefore, coverage of Assessment 1 (AO1) is uneven across the script.

The novels explore the essence of man's search for meaning as characters grapple with ~~the~~ personal and physical journeys; ~~The Heart of Darkness~~ in both novels investigate if true unity or enlightenment can ever be achieved, especially when backlit by the iron fist of colonialism.

Essentially, the two novels discuss the theme of journey as a means to uncover truth; 'A Passage to India' employs the title as an umbrella for mystical or muddling happening whilst 'Heart of Darkness' questions the nature of ~~human~~ <sup>darkness</sup> and whether it can be resisted. In 'Heart of Darkness', Marlow - when in contact - with the wilderness - remarks on it being 'Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough' and the ~~repetition~~ <sup>repetition</sup> of 'ugly' conveys the unappealing nature of the wilderness yet the 'dim suspicion of there being <sup>a</sup> meaning in it' suggests that ~~this~~ this brutish ugliness cannot be dismissed as just that; in fact, 'its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life' presents the illustrious yet dangerous forces of the Congo as enchanting. This besets the question of whether darkness can be rejected when - as the title suggest - it remains so invasive to one's heart. For Marlowe,

Maslow himself is said to have 'peered over the edge' of this supposed darkness and the metaphorical ~~admonition~~ admonition suggests that darkness' intangible nature ~~perhaps makes it more dangerous~~ than physical appeals to the human heart in a bid to 'be captured by the incredible'. Maslow continuously ~~describes~~ the wilderness to a 'dream' which evokes enchantment, mysticism yet also helplessness, as one cannot ~~escape~~ ~~from~~ control nor evade ~~the~~ their dreams. Conrad himself struggled with such darkness as he tried to attempt suicide, as well as ~~the~~ embarking on a journey to the Congo; by using Maslow as a vessel for his own thoughts, he attempts convey the seductiveness of darkness by emphasising how desiring it is 'a vain attempt'. On the other hand, in 'A Passage To India', the title utilises the word 'passage' to encompass a spiritual journey. Adela Quested often remarks on her desire to see 'the real India' ~~and~~ and this desire relates to the notion of <sup>'orientalism'</sup> ~~colonialism~~ in which the English enquire India in hopes that it will reveal to them something that can progress personal enlightenment. Additionally, Adela says 'I don't believe

in India. 'I believe in her destiny' and the anaphoric repetition as well as personification suggests an intimate connection with the country. So, similarly to how the British Empire wished to exploit India for resources, the ~~wishes~~ ~~Englishman's~~ Englishman's 'passage' can be interpreted as a desire to exploit India for personal enlightenment. Moreover, after her incident in the caves, Adela remarks that 'There is something ridiculous about Indians, and [she] wishes to be rid of them soon'; the verb 'rid' connotes the Indians of dispensable which mirrors colonial attitudes such as how Britain used thousands of Indian soldiers to fight WWI. Foster suggests that colonial attitudes are so pervasive that, even when open-minded about India, the English will turn on it when the country cannot offer them the great satisfaction ~~of~~ or truth that they seek. Therefore, both novels discuss a spiritual journey yet Foster's conveys the fragility of such a journey whereas Conrad's novel portrays the journey as highly illustrious and intoxicating.

Both texts use the title as a means to

convey the effects of colonialism on individuals. In Heart of Darkness, the character of Kurtz serves to portray the catastrophic nature of colonialism. He is noted to be 'a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear yet ~~struggled~~ struggling ~~blindly~~ blindly with itself'; the description of Kurtz as this primitive, uninhibited creature is emphasised by the object pronoun 'it'. ~~Marlow~~ <sup>Conrad</sup> conveys the insanity of Kurtz - 'his soul was mad' - as a way to epitomise the brutality of colonialism. Kurtz - meaning 'short' - ~~is~~ is a stand-in for Belgian trader 'Klein' (meaning 'small') as well as Leon Rahn who was a notorious sadist. The absence of Kurtz's morality reflects the title as it suggests that darkness truly can eclipse the heart, consuming it wholly. Comparingly, in 'A Passage to India', the Indian natives remark that they 'give any Englishwoman six months' before she becomes used; this reflects the divisiveness of an unjust colonial system where kindness and peace cannot triumph. Similar to how a 'passage' can refer to a <sup>certain</sup> part of a novel, the English people's kindness wastes itself and finishes itself just as

quickly. Furthermore, the chauvinistic attitudes of the English are conveyed when Mrs Foster tells ~~Adela~~ Adela "you are superior to every one of them" which ties into how the British viewed Indians as culturally, intellectually and physically inferior which is why it ~~was~~ is the 'white man's burden' to civilise them. Both novels present colonialism as unjust and destructive on human empathy.

In 'A Passage to India' the title can be seen as ~~very~~ representative of how India cannot be uncovered in a single 'passage' ~~as~~ as the native communities themselves do not live in the same India. Aziz remarks that 'Hindus are Hindus; Muslims are Muslims. Our soul cannot be one'; Foster touches upon the cultural barriers that prevail in India that perhaps the English will never comprehend as they fuel them. For example, the Malabar rebellion of 1921 saw the persecution of many Hindus by Muslims and this incident was spurred on by the British appointing high caste Hindus as

positions of power. Moreover, Aziz himself states that 'I am a stranger in my country' which conveys the unfamiliarity of the land even to its natives. Also, Fielding says that 'Nothing ever happens in India. Everything goes on'; this reflects the rich and complex history of the nation that renders the title ironic as India itself is a continuous journey and the British, coming here to seek change or true assimilation, cannot comprehend the essence of India in a single journey.

Also in 'Heart of Darkness', however, the title is used ~~to~~ in reference to the last few pages as a means to reject nihilism. Marlow, upon meeting Kurtz's intended, lies to her about Kurtz's reality ~~which is a~~ ~~fact~~ and this is done so due to 'the unextinguishable light of belief ~~at~~ and love'; the metaphor conveys the intended's hope and blind belief in some semblance of morality ~~that~~ that forces Marlow to 'bow [his] head before the faith that was in her'. He discourses the 'savage illusion' amidst the 'triumphant darkness' and the personification presents the

ongoing battle between two great, opposing forces: faith and darkness. By lying to her, Marlow preserves her hope, her beliefs and her love for Kurtz. This essentially portrays the triumph of the heart over the 'imperceptible darkness' and by ~~staying~~ <sup>refusing to admit to it</sup>, Marlow ~~resists~~ <sup>resists</sup> the nihilistic clutch of darkness. However, a post-~~modern~~ <sup>modern</sup> lens might perceive Marlow's actions as a reflection of patriarchal structures where women of a colonial Britain were ~~not~~ not aware of the true egregious acts of colonialism for fear they would not be able to handle it. So, both texts portray an opposition to their title as *Heart of Darkness* conveys how darkness can be concealed whilst *APTI* suggests that *shadows* can never truly be uncovered.



The opening is very promising and hints at the focus on the question that is characteristic of this response throughout. AO3 and AO4 are met well here in the focus on the thematic link between the two texts.

There is a definite sense that the candidate has understood the subtleties and nuances of the writer's craft at AO2. Evidence is well chosen to support points. The link between the two texts could be made stronger and is signalled through the discourse marker 'on the other hand' which is not as clear as it might be.

AO2 and AO3 are well linked here.

As characteristic of this response, evidence is well chosen and fluently embedded within points. There could be more analysis of concepts and terminology here.

Apt to context at AO3.

Again, well chosen contextual evidence for AO3 supports the comment made at AO2.

The conclusion is rather brief, but does not need to be as long as the comparative and contextual work is completed.



Ensure that links and comparisons are specific.

Try to include a broad range of literary and linguistic terminology to fully support and exemplify points.

## Question 5

### *Colonisation and After*

**Question 5:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present characters who struggle to fit in.

As with Question 4, AO3 was an Assessment Objective covered strongly by many of the candidates who responded to this question. The lives of the authors are relevant sources to draw upon for contextual comment, and many candidates explored the ways in which Conrad, Forster and Selvon were outsiders in their own lifetimes. Successful responses often went on to make links to the broader theme of colonialism and to the setting and locations of the texts. It should also be noted that comment on literary context was also strong on this question and was well integrated into responses.

Responses explored a range of interpretations of the question set ranging from characters who do not desire to fit into society to the way that Conrad uses the setting of the Congo to comment on the impossible demands of European society and brutality of colonialism.

Candidates were able, for the most part, to connect their understanding of AO3 to a broader understanding of technique and the writer's craft at AO1 and AO2. One particularly interesting response used literary criticism of Forster to effectively present the argument that the writer could not have accurately understood Indian society.

## Question 6

### ***Science and Society***

The set texts for the *Science and Society* option are: *Never Let Me Go*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Frankenstein*.

Question 6: Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts make use of narrators who may or may not be reliable.

The vast majority of responses on this paper (over two thirds of candidates) opted for this theme with a more or less even distribution between Question 6 and Question 7. All three texts were covered evenly.

Candidate's work on this question was particularly pleasing – especially on Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) and Assessment Objective 4 (AO4). Candidates had many varied and interesting comparisons to make about the narrative voices used in each novel including the ways in which Offred paraphrases other characters within *The Handmaid's Tale*. One examiner noted that many candidates saw how 'Atwood and Ishiguro force their narrators to admit their own unreliability' and that there were 'detailed discussions of the cross-currents and tensions between Shelley's narrators'. The same examiner went on to comment that one perceptive candidate noted that the 'tale is the property of the teller', drawing links between the reader's own perception of *The Handmaid's Tale* and Atwood's framing device of Piexoto.

This script was awarded a mark of 26 and was placed at the lower end of Level 5.

The response is critical and evaluative, using sustained textual examples, although not consistently all the way throughout and thus is placed at the lower end of the level rather than in the upper.

AO3 and AO4 are particularly strong in this response and contextual comment, in particular, is integrated well throughout the response.

A wider range of terminology and concepts could have been demonstrated at AO1. Although this does not detract from the quality of the argument made it does hinder a full meeting of the demands of this Assessment Objective.

In both Frankenstein and The Handmaid's Tale, ~~the narrators are unreliable and their~~ <sup>unreliability of the narrators</sup> is central to the plot and message of each book. Frankenstein is a multi-strand narrative, with multiple characters telling each other's stories, ~~unlike~~ unlike The Handmaid's Tale where the main narrator is Offred and the only other perspective we are presented with is <sup>that</sup> of Professor Pieixoto in the Historical Notes. Despite these differences, both Margaret Atwood and Mary Shelley utilise the unreliability of their narrators to explore power dynamics in ~~the~~ society and show the complexity of the issues addressed in their novels, to force the reader to reflect on their message of each novel. Both authors do this as a result of their circumstances: Shelley was living during the Enlightenment Era, when rapid scientific advancements were taking place, ~~and~~ and thus Frankenstein serves as a warning ~~of~~ to not undermine God by attempting to become more powerful through science. Atwood on the other hand, ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> living a time of great political division, the Cold War, as well as the rise of the Christian right wing of America as a response to the societal change taking place in terms of civil rights, women's rights and gay rights. Both authors, despite their different circumstances, ~~warn~~ <sup>warn</sup> of the events that could result due to the ~~changes~~ changes taking place, and employ unreliable narrators to do so.

Both Frankenstein and the Handmaid's Tale (THT) <sup>reflect ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> society is built</sup> ~~reflect the~~ <sup>depicting</sup> the patriarchy and its effects throughout the whole novels. The unreliability of their <sup>eg. of</sup> ~~main~~ <sup>main</sup> narrators, Victor Frankenstein and Offred, serve to emphasise the ~~gender power men have over women~~ <sup>gender</sup> differences in ~~the~~ <sup>receive</sup> treatment ~~amongst~~ <sup>different</sup> people ~~have~~ in society. In the THT, this is done in a much more obvious way in the Historical Notes where Professor Pieixoto admits to have had "to arrange the blocks of speech" of the tapes found containing Offred's story "[...] based on some guesswork". These revelations threaten

the possibility that THT is not told the way it should be, and thus isn't ~~an~~ accurate. Pieixoto's ~~some~~ misogynistic comments present this as a ~~possible~~ possibility, since even the choice to name the discov~~ery~~ 'The Handmaid's tale' appears to be a pun "with the 'archaic vulgar'" signification of the word 'tail'." ~~Prox~~ The professor's acknowledgement of the "vulgar" aspect of this pun demonstrates no concern for the mocking of the female body, despite ~~him being~~ having to have studied the oppression women faced, especially in terms of their body being ~~not~~ controlled and dehumanised, in Gilead. Atwood's choice to ~~not~~ reveal yet another layer of unreliability in THT through the historical notes ~~for the reader to reflect on the~~ <sup>invites</sup> the reader to reflect on the ~~foundational~~ <sup>profound</sup> patriarchal foundations of society ~~and~~, thus demonstrating that the foundations by which a society, like Gilead to emerge are already established, emphasising action must be taken to ~~prevent~~ educate people as the possibility of Gilead occurring is not as distant as people might believe. This ~~is a message~~ <sup>crisis message</sup> ~~that was~~ was extremely relevant during the 80s, when THT was written as the Christian Right wing of the US gained power and influence, and the ~~1980s~~ AIDS crisis began, provoking a homophobic moral panic that ~~not~~ provided the perfect circumstances ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> right wing Puritan propaganda. On the other hand, Frankenstein takes a more nuanced approach as despite there only being male narrators, it is the male monster that suffers the most obvious and explored discrimination. Mary Shelley strove to analyse the fear of 'The Other' in society and use it to transmit her message discouraging scientific transgressions that threaten <sup>to undermine</sup> the power of God, as Victor does. The monster ~~is described as~~ <sup>nevertheless</sup> ~~hideous, even by himself~~ emphasises the power of men in ~~the~~ our society as despite being male, he experiences many obstacles women did too. The monster is uneducated and has to rely upon himself to learn, much like the handmaids in THT, that are forbidden from reading and ~~or~~ having any access to any form of news or information. The monster is also alienated because of his body, while the handmaid's body are exploited and dehumanised for reproductive purposes, the monster ~~is still~~ <sup>is still</sup> faces violence due to his "hideous" form and big stature, he is frequently described as a "wretch". ~~The monster~~ In addition, his narration of his story is much more emotional, focusing on how he responded to situations and his inner thoughts, much like Offred's story where she often offers a

"reconstruction" of events as it pains her to admit the truth. Victor is <sup>supposedly repeating</sup> ~~telling~~ the monster's words, but due to his immense hatred, it is unlikely it is free from bias. <sup>Also</sup> ~~and~~ ~~some~~ ~~reasons~~ his hatred of all things feminine is visible throughout the novel, ~~adding~~ <sup>one of</sup> reasons he wanted to create a ~~non~~ living being was to undermine women, and so despite the monster being male, his "feminine" attributes, which involve him showing profound empathy and sensitivity, ~~is~~ highlighted during his confessions of ~~how~~ ~~moved~~ he was with the "trait[s] of kindness" the young cottagers he was observing shared to their father, ~~and~~ and his body not looking like a conventional human man result in discrimination against him by society, but especially Victor, who resents him greatly. ~~Also~~ as Victor doesn't count femininity as a success in his experiment. ~~Then~~ Mary Shelley uses the unreliability of Victor's narration to force the reader to consider the origin of Victor's bias and hatred, ~~and~~ as she writes to communicate <sup>the demonisation</sup> ~~the~~ ~~importance~~ of attributes and behaviours ~~of~~ that are not associated with men, ~~at~~ which Atwood also does. Both authors use unreliability to demonstrate that the patriarchy doesn't hate women, but anything that ~~isn't~~ ~~a~~ man.

~~Power is also a central theme in both The Handmaid's Tale and Frankenstein, and power dynamics are explored in both novels through unreliable narrators. Bias in the novel is used to show~~

The unreliability adds dimension to the plot and its characters in both novels, as they are used to reveal the desires and ~~inner~~ <sup>There revelations are</sup> weaknesses of each character. ~~This is employed by both Atwood and Shelley to then show that anyone can suffer~~ ~~the end of~~ ~~how easily~~ the events of the novel occur. Walton, in Frankenstein's tells the story in letters to his ~~100~~ sister so both the monster's story and Victor's are filtered through ~~himself~~ him. He confesses to his sister in the beginning of the novel that he ~~is~~ feels "the want of a friend", this leads him to idealise Victor, an intellectual adventurer like himself and thus potentially shows him in a better light than he should. Mary Shelley adds layers to the complexity of the ~~situation~~ <sup>situations with</sup> ~~circumstances~~ of the creation of the monster and the events that came after as she emphasises that who ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> telling the story matters, ~~which~~ ~~can~~ ~~be~~ ~~further~~ ~~investigated~~ as readers consider ~~the~~ ~~monster~~ ~~was~~ ~~never~~ <sup>the monster</sup>

listened to by anyone, except Victor and only once, while Victor had many people he could go to, and eventually tells his story to Walton. With this Shelley highlights the complexities of individuals and uses unreliability to ~~invite~~ invite the reader to reflect and discuss the events of the novel, ~~effectively~~ effectively portraying the idea that morality isn't as ~~not~~ simple as people pretend it is through prejudices and extreme ideas to avoid those uncomfortable discussions, ~~the~~ which might be an allusion to the power of the Church, that often ~~it~~ prevented conversations on taboo subjects ~~and~~, especially as Shelley lived during a politically turbulent time, where ~~and~~ many began criticising the ~~on~~ power and influence of institutions like the Church. Atwood, on the other hand, instead reveals the complexities of the characters to emphasise the ~~the~~ different people ~~in~~ in a regime and avoiding the simple attribution of "good" and "bad" to characters. The Commander and ~~the~~ Serena Joy are two examples as they are both characters with power but still suffer under the regime. The Commander longs for ~~more~~ <sup>love</sup> ~~and~~, requesting Offred kisses him "like [she] meant it", ~~at that time it was~~ and through Offred's confessions of "reconstruction" ~~the~~ Atwood ~~rather~~ implies there is more depth to the Commander than we'd expect. Serena Joy's character undergoes similar treatment, and it's Offred's bias and unreliable narration that raises questions of the morality of Serena Joy's and the Commander's actions. Atwood, who lived all of the Cold War, was familiar with the propaganda on both sides, the US and the USSR, that created the perception of a bipolar world, and she uses the ~~the~~ unreliability of Offred to highlight the complexity of situations and people, and emphasise the difficult position all the characters are in as a result of the regime - Offred merely acknowledges Serena Joy is suffering, "in pain but holding on" which ~~it~~ represents what most people are doing in the regime and so with the hints in Offred's narration, Atwood, like Shelley in Frankenstein, ~~adds~~ <sup>adds</sup> ~~more~~ the dimension to her story and character to represent how complex life is.

~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~power~~ ~~is~~ ~~shown~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~

In conclusion, both Atwood and Shelley employ ~~the~~ unreliable characters to ~~to~~ underline how

bias affects ~~the~~ our perception of the world and ~~the~~ any issues that arise, as well as the bias that exists in our society as a whole due to its patriarchal foundations that, despite the years between Frankenstein and THT, ~~are~~ <sup>remain</sup> visible and causing problems. The message of both novels, ~~role of the~~ ~~transgression~~ how ~~at~~ ~~transgressive~~ ~~transgressive~~ advances in technology affect people and exacerbate prejudices relies on the use of unreliable narrators who provide the basis for further analysis. Both authors influenced by the turbulent ~~political~~ times of change they respectively lived through, focus their novels on ~~the~~ the potential ~~interpretations~~ ~~and~~ influences ~~upon~~ their characters to ~~highlight~~ ~~the~~ force the reader to realize how external factors affect our <sup>perception</sup> of ~~the~~ events and how we must be aware to avoid bad decisions that lead to the suffering of ~~many~~ others and ourselves.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The response begins promisingly with a firm linking of AO1, AO2 and AO3.

AO3 continues to be a strong element of this response and is firmly anchored to discussion of writer's intent and craft at AO2.

Comparisons between the two texts are apt and are beginning to be evaluative.

The commentary on Atwood and Shelley's intentions is particularly effective and meets the demands of Level 5 for AO2 and 3, albeit not as developed or as evaluative as might be and thus justifying this response's placement towards the lower end of Level 5.

This response continues its sharp focus on the question set.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Ensure that comparisons between the two texts are detailed.

Return to the wording of the question in order to convey that you have kept on task.

## Question 7

### *Science and Society*

**Question 7:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present the role of the natural world.

Candidates interpreted the role of the natural world in an interesting variety of ways. This obviously at times focused on setting and location – the Sublimity of the Alps, the Arctic and the Gothic menace of the woods surrounding Hailsham – but also the dichotomy between the natural world and society, the disruption of nature by humans and also, in some of the most interesting answers, the 'nature' of things.

Responses focused on *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go*. Candidates explored the role of reproduction in dystopian societies, but candidates who had studied *Frankenstein* also explored the role of the natural world in creation.

AO2, AO3 and AO4 were covered well in general on this question although as with other responses to Section B, coverage of AO1 and the writer's techniques was uneven.

This script was awarded a mark of 17 and is placed at the top end of Level 3, best exemplifying the characteristics of achievement in this level.

The response is clear and uses relevant textual examples throughout with a logical structure. It is well written throughout and incorporates contextual comment.

Whilst nicely written, the response can sometimes feel 'list-like' in its approach and best demonstrates the Level 3 descriptors rather than the description of a 'discriminating' or 'controlled' response at Level 4. With some development of points and a wider range of appropriate, well analysed terminology at AO1 this response would have been placed higher up in Level 4.

In Margaret Atwood's dystopian 'The Handmaid's Tale' and Mary Shelley's gothic 'Frankenstein', the natural world plays an important role. Both authors present the destructive effects of science on nature, with Shelley using this to criticise scientific overreachers and scientific advancements of her time, while Atwood focuses on the damage science causes to the environment. They both also present the respite that can be found in nature.

In 'Frankenstein', Shelley presents how science can destroy the environment. She presents science as male and nature as innately female as seen through Victor and his ~~desire to~~ 'fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature'. Shelley uses a rape metaphor here to convey the violence of Victor's desire. The reference to 'her hiding places' conveys nature's femininity and how Victor's actions would

violate her. Victor comes to represent the Age of Enlightenment with his scientific pursuits, something Shelley wishes to warn against. In the Preface of her novel, she states 'frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the creator of the world'. Having attended Monsieur Garnerin's lectures in London on Galvanism, the reanimation of dead matter through the use of electricity, Shelley fears the advancement of science as it tries to usurp God and nature. By making Victor unsuccessful in his pursuits, as the Creature turns out 'more hideous than belongs to humanity', Shelley implies how his acts were unnatural and how ~~the~~<sup>he</sup> could not succeed against the power of nature, which the Romantics viewed as synonymous of God. The Creature, being created unnaturally, does not belong to 'humanity' and Shelley uses gothic elements to incite fear against the corruption of nature, such as 'lightning illuminated the object', using a natural element which could portray nature's anger at the creation of the monster through unnatural means. In this way, Shelley writes 'Frankenstein' as a cautionary tale,

warning against the misuse of science and ambition to usurp nature, as Victor tells Walton 'seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition' after recounting his tale of creating the monster.

Similarly, Atwood also portrays how science damages nature, but rather than warning against one individual's ambitions, she warns about how society as a whole destroys the environment. The extent of environmental destruction is seen through the Colonies, where Uloira explains that 'you've got three years maximum, at those, before your nose falls off and your skin pulls away like rubber gloves'. The graphic simile visually disgusts the reader and conveys the dangers of a nuclear explosion, which Atwood warns against.

Atwood describes her novel as speculative fiction, where every detail has been inspired by historical events and is bound to be repeated, as history repeats itself. The nuclear catastrophe present in 'The Handmaid's Tale' is inspired by the Three Mile Island incident which took place a few years earlier, and it precedes and almost predicts the Chernobyl Disaster,

emphasizing the power of Atwood's writing and the importance of her work in warning against the destruction of the natural world. The extent of this disaster is evident through the 'Unbabies' who are born deformed and described as 'shredders', which <sup>violently</sup> depicts ~~the extent~~ the unnaturalness of these babies, as babies are a symbol of new life and nature. This reflects the rise in deformities in babies born in Belarus after the Chernobyl disaster.

Thus, Atwood presents the importance of caring for the environment, as she herself is a climate activist, and the natural world.

In 'Frankenstein', Shelley presents the role of nature in providing respite. In his rage and hatred for the Creature, and in his paranoia as 'men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood', Victor finds comfort in nature. The natural world fills him 'with sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul, and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy'. This reflects the ideals of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Romantics, and the healing power of nature. The hyperbolic language and semantic field of elevation 'soar' and 'wings', emphasize an admiration of

nature and reflect, however, a feeling of superiority. Here, Victor, who fears men and finds comfort in nature, represents the Romantic ideal of the male solitary genius, which was present in Percy Shelley and Lord Byron, two men Mary spent a lot of time with. She disapproves of this feeling of individuality as it leads Victor to neglect responsibility for his actions. The Monster, abandoned and alone, also finds comfort in nature, and in his first waking, 'the only object that [he] could distinguish was the bright moon', which evoked feelings of 'pleasure'. The Creature which was abandoned by the selfish, individualistic Victor, finds respite in the natural world and in the 'moon', a symbol of motherhood which he was deprived of. In this way, the Creature manages to find the parental support he lacked in nature.

Similarly, Atwood also presents finding comfort in nature. However, rather than looking for consolation against their ~~own~~ self-inflicted feelings of guilt and fear, as Victor, Serena and Offred turn to nature as an escape from the totalitarian state that controls their lives. Serena Joy, who has been silenced and rendered 'speechless' by

the Republic of Crilead, tends to her garden as a way to maintain a sense of control over her life. She 'orders and maintains' her garden, as a way to give herself a sense of purpose, and Offred sees her 'snipping off the seed pods with a pair of shears'. This is symbolic as the 'seed pods' represents fertility, and Serena, being infertile, in a society that measures a woman's worth based on her reproductive abilities, feels may feel disregarded and lacking purpose and value. Her 'snipping', which suggests a violent action, is a way for her to feel in control, and in this way her garden and nature provide respite. Offred, too, turns towards nature. She apologizes for the sadness in her story: 'I'm sorry this story is so full of pain', and finds comfort in the idea that she has included 'flowers' in her recount. In this dystopian novel, Atwood shows that while humans may create a society where they are distant from each other and oppressed, the natural world cannot be controlled by humans and will always exist as a symbol of life and comfort, further emphasizing her message about the importance of protecting the environment and the natural world.

To conclude, the natural world plays a significant role in both 'Frankenstein' and 'The Handmaid's Tale', as it provides respite to the characters and both Shelley and Atwood warn about the dangerous consequences of using science to meddle with, and destroy nature.



This response begins well, focusing on the question and linking it to the writers' intentions and genre of the novels.

AO3 – literary as well as historical context – is well integrated. Evidence is appropriate, but perhaps the quotations selected are too long to thoroughly explore.

Connections and comparisons between the texts are relevant rather than controlled or discriminating.

AO3 becomes a little less secure in its application here – the comments on Chernobyl would be appropriate but are not developed or firmly anchored to the point being made.

The response picks back up here at AO2 and AO3.

Analysis of terminology is relevant and there is a clear understanding of the writer's craft.



Try to ensure that all supporting evidence is fully exemplified and explored.

All contextual points should have a relevant link to the question.

## Question 8

### *Women and Society*

The set texts for the *Women and Society* option are: *Wuthering Heights*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *Beloved*.

**Question 8:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present characters who are affected by their past.

*Women and Society* is the second most popular theme on this paper, with responses equally distributed between Question 8 and Question 9. All texts had responses written on them.

In the most successful responses to this question, structure and form at Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) were integrated well into an exploration of the theme of the past and its effects on characters. Examiners noted that there was sensitive discussion of the cycles of abuse presented in *Wuthering Heights* and analysis of how characters attempt to break this pattern. The least successful responses did not consider fully the demands of Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) and its requirement to explore the way in which writers use literary and linguistic techniques in the construction of their novels.

Again, as with other questions in Section B, Assessment Objective 3 (AO3) was handled with confidence and many candidates were able to make pertinent and relevant comments on the literary context of the studied novels as well as the social and historical context.

This script was awarded a mark of 20 and therefore was placed towards the bottom of Level 4.

There are discriminating elements to this response and a control over the written expression and argument which meets the requirements of Level 4.

The identification of linguistic and literary terminology is not broad but it supports the analysis of the points made in a controlled and discriminating way.

'Wuthering Heights' and 'Beloved' are both historical novels that blend realism with gothic symbolism to convey a gripping tale. ~~Wuthering Height~~ Emily Brontë wrote 'Wuthering Heights' in the Victorian Era but set her novel in the Georgian Era, whereas Toni Morrison wrote her novel in the Reconstruction Era of post-Civil-War America, but the story goes back twenty-five to thirty years when slavery still existed. Thus, both the stories revolve around the past and the ~~rather~~ multiple rather unreliable but omniscient narrators shine to present characters <sup>the way in which the</sup> who were affected by it.

The plot of 'Beloved' is mainly inspired by the true real life encounter of Margaret Garner, who with the help of her mother-in-law killed her baby for protection from slavery, is a direct result of the trauma she endured as a slave. Slavery is one of the most predominant themes in the novel and Morrison uses antithetical tactile imagery in the quote line "from the pure clear stream of spit that the little girl dribbled into her face, to her oily blood" to evoke sympathy in the reader and the quote acts as a stark reminder of the long-lasting effect the past has on a slave. The <sup>word</sup> "blood" in the quote represents

is a form of colour imagery to present the colour red, which is a repeated symbol image throughout the novel. It ~~is also a~~ created a link between Sethe's act of infanticide and the fatal whipping she undergoes from her Schoolteacher <sup>during her</sup> ~~on the~~ <sub>escape from Sweet Home</sub> way home, who left her back "red and split open".

Another example of colour imagery is ~~also~~ used to describe the memories of the ex-slave Paul D in the line "Stores them in a tobacco tin box where a red heart used to be. D's lid rusted shut." The tobacco tin box symbolizes the suppression of the past to avoid psychological damage in the present, and highlighting another significant theme in the novel - memories. Regardless of the absolute brutality of the suffering that slaves endured such as being raped, whipped and having to wear bits and contraptions, Morrison romanticized <sup>the past</sup> her language. Examples of this are when ~~Amey~~ describes Sethe's back is described using the image of a "chokeberry tree" and the bit and contraptions Paul D wore are described as "neck jewellery". This adds a magical and fairytale effect to the novel which is a result of Morrison basing it on African-American folklore. She combines the African-American <sup>and literary</sup> oral tradition and the Euro-American novel tradition to create an intensely personal story on the significance of the past to African Americans, having been racially discriminated as a child herself.

Similarly, the <sup>byronic hero</sup> protagonist of 'Wuthering Heights', Heathcliff, was faced with racial and social discrimination through most

of his life. He was found in the streets of Liverpool, <sup>when</sup> where the Industrial Revolution created various social issues such as prostitution and child beggars. Contextually, Brontë's great grandfather faced similar circumstances as a baby. Brontë also stated that <sup>the character of</sup> Heathcliff was inspired by her troubled brother who was a victim of substance abuse and depression. One of the narrators <sup>s</sup> Nelly Dean, refers to Heathcliff using the personal pronoun 'it' as well as animal imagery in phrases such as "mad dog" and "savage beast", which completely dehumanized him. <sup>Additionally,</sup> The ~~significance~~ symbolism of blood is also very significant in 'Wuthering Heights'. It represents sexual frustration, which adds a gothic element to it, as Heathcliff almost kills Hareton and makes Joseph kneel in a pool of blood after Catherine Earnshaw's funeral.

Moreover, blood represented the two bloodlines and three generations that the story follows. The mingling of Earnshaw and Linton blood was extremely important in Heathcliff's revenge plan to acquire Thrushcross Grange. The social issue that caused this was the property laws and inability of women to own properties, because if that was possible Heathcliff's revenge plan would be of no use. However, the ~~more~~ main reason was his past - the child labour and abuse he faced from Hindley after Mr. Earnshaw's death, caused a catalytic chain reaction for the plot. Heathcliff's past affected

him to the extent that he revolved his life around his revenge plan. This is foreshadowed by the pathetic fallacy when Heathcliff ~~storms~~ <sup>leaves</sup> Wuthering Heights, as there is a storm, representing his anger. Another use of pathetic fallacy is when Catherine Linton is born in spring, which represents hope. The season of spring is ~~quite~~ liminal as it's the season between where Catherine E dies and Catherine L is born. The novel is filled with liminalities and this is evident when Lockwood says "I should hardly know whose dead and whose alive" which shows the liminality between life and death. As this is a characteristic of gothic literature, it is also seen in the titular character of 'Beloved' who is half-alive and half-dead.

Another characteristic of gothic literature is generational repetition. As Heathcliff endured trauma from Hindley, he made <sup>his son,</sup> sure to inflict the same, one even worse trauma on <sup>his</sup> Hareton. Another example is ~~where~~ ~~Heathcliff~~ ~~locks~~ ~~Catherine L~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~room~~ ~~until~~ ~~she~~ ~~married~~ ~~the~~ name symbolism <sup>through the same</sup> ~~and repeated~~ names given to the younger generation, <sup>creating a cyclical structure in the novel.</sup> However, Catherine L breaks this cycle by acknowledging the past and telling Heathcliff "that no matter how miserable he makes her, she has the "revenge of thinking [his] cruelty arises from a greater misery." She also marries Hareton, whom she loves although her mother didn't get to marry the man she loved - Heathcliff. <sup>This is evident through the carved names Lockwood sees on her window sill</sup> This gives the end of the novel a sense of closure as

the damage done by the past generation is fixed by the new generation.

The ending of 'Beloved' has a similar satisfactory ending, as after <sup>generations</sup> years of African-American slaves, Denver finally gains independence and goes to college. Even Catherine L and Hareton's relationship is built on the foundation of knowledge as Catherine <sup>teaches</sup> ~~teaches~~ him how to read. The reason ~~this~~ <sup>the common theme of literacy</sup> is so significant is because African Americans as well as communities belonging to lower social classes such as Yeoman's, ~~which is what Hareton was brought up as~~ <sup>he</sup> were deprived of literacy and education for years in the past.

Just like 'Wuthering Heights', 'Beloved' also has a cyclical structure. The repetition of the <sup>sentence</sup> ~~too line~~ "I am Beloved. She is mine" ~~shows the~~, but constructed differently each time using the same words, shows how unchanged the reality of African-Americans was. For them, the past, present, and future was one continuum, showing how every single action of theirs was defined by the past, ~~and by which~~ was controlled by the ~~staved~~ white slave owners. The line "Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined." is extremely powerful in conveying this point to the readers.

It can be interpreted that Sethe's healing process was in parallel with the nation of the United

States. Morrison was a ~~neo~~ womanist one of the first womanist authors to speak up on the history of Black Women. The nation never addressed the how White men raped, abused, and burnt slaves alive, and suppressed the past completely, <sup>like before.</sup> By speaking up on it, the readers are forced to deal with, and think about the past, as the culture novel was a form of remembrance for the readers which helped them get closer to healing. Thereby the past affected present readers as well.

~~The~~ In conclusion, the most significant characteristic of gothic literature is ghosts. Ghosts normally come back because of their unsatisfied past. Thus, 'Beloved' is ~~a~~ represents every Black child that ~~was~~ was brutally killed in their past life. In 'Wuthering Heights', Brontë presents the ghost of Catherine E in a very ambiguous manner, making it difficult to identify whether the ghost was real or a manifestation. It may have been a result of the isolated Yorkshire landscape, or simply a manifestation of the past within the present.



The opening of the response begins in a controlled manner with an appropriate comparison of the two texts that uses relevant contextual comment on the social and historical as well as literary context of the novels.

The structure is controlled and there is a discriminating, if not broad, application of terminology.

Context at AO3 is appropriate.

The comment on liminalities here is particularly pertinent and covers the requirements for both AO2 and AO3.

Comment on the linguistic and structural techniques could be developed, and therefore does not securely meet AO1 at Level 4, but there is a clear attempt here to offer comparisons between the two texts.

There is a clear return to, and focus on, the set question.



Try not to re-tell aspects of the plot – carefully select moments from across your texts to support your points.

## Question 9

### *Women and Society*

**Question 9:** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts portray love.

As one examiner noted, 'interestingly, most candidates saw love as a destructive force' with comments including the obsessive love between Heathcliff and Cathy that leads to cruelty and death, the way in which Clarissa's feelings for Peter and Sally have affected her relationship with Richard and how Sethe's love for her children leads to infanticide.

Most candidates wrote responses that were clear and well structured for this question and incorporated a range of linguistic and literary terminology in their analysis and thus demonstrated the demands of Assessment Objective 1 (AO1). At Assessment Objective 3 (AO3), most candidates were able to make a variety of comments that explored the lives of the writers and the importance of love in their own relationships.

Successful responses made pertinent and insightful comparisons and links between the texts and thus met the demands of Assessment Objective 4(AO4), whereas less confident responses made generalised rather specific connections.

## Paper Summary

Performance of this paper has been very pleasing and there have been many marks awarded in the top two levels. Centres should be congratulated on having prepared their candidates so thoroughly.

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

- address the assessment objectives and use mark schemes and past papers to guide teaching
- in Section A, candidates should spend some time carefully reading, annotating and planning before they start to write their response. Invariably, candidates who plan their argument write better constructed and cohesive answers than candidates who don't
- incorporation of linguistic and literary technique into an exploration of texts is important. Candidates should be encouraged to use a range of terminology to support their points on how writers create meaning and the effect that this has on the reader. In Section A, this means fully linking form to function in using a range of apt poetic terminology to explore the set poem. In Section B, candidates must consider the range of ways in which writers construct and craft their novels. Narrative voice, structure, form and linguistic and literary devices are all important parts of a writer's toolkit and are ripe for exploration in service to the set questions. Incorporating an analysis of technique ensures that candidates meet the demands of Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) fully and can access the full range of levels on the mark scheme
- for Section B, narrative or 'listing' approaches are rarely successful in meeting the demands of the assessment objectives and will rarely be placed outside of Level 2 ('General understanding/exploration'). It is better for candidates to select several moments of comparison across their chosen texts and to explore these in detail than to attempt to cover the plot of both novels in full
- in order to meet the demands of Assessment Objective 4 (AO4), candidates must consider links between their two studied texts. Comparison can be found in a variety of ways – contextual, thematic, stylistic and so on – but 'bolted on' connections do not fully demonstrate comparison between the two texts and are rarely successful. Candidates should ensure that equal coverage is given to both studied texts
- enjoy sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm for the novels studied with the examiner.

## **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>

