



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level In
English Literature (WET04)

Paper 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

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WET04 – Examiner’s Report 2506

Introduction

The paper is divided into two equally weighted sections.

Section A offers students a choice of a Shakespeare play (*Measure for Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*). Candidates are invited to explore a statement about the play and to consider contextual factors in their response.

In Section B students choose from one of three prescribed anthologies:

Metaphysical Poetry edited by Colin Burrow

English Romantic Verse edited by David Wright

The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse edited by Christopher Ricks.

For these poetry questions, candidates are presented with one poem from their chosen collection and asked to choose an additional poem with which to explore the question and consider relevant contextual factors.

The candidates who sat WET04 in this series were generally very capable of engaging with their chosen texts at least on some level and centres continue to prepare students for the exam in a way that enables many of them to access the middle and higher attainment strands. Relatively few candidates seemed to have significant difficulties with exam technique, although it does seem that there may still be a slight tendency to over-write in Section A, thereby squeezing the time available for Section B.

Summary

The Reports for 2306 and 2406 recommended that candidates ensure that their use of textual reference was at least sufficient and relevant and there seemed to have been some acknowledgement of this advice but, once again, the Assessment Objective grid states that a Band 3 answer (for example) will offer ‘a clear response using relevant textual examples’. As a rule, candidates continue to embed their references at least effectively, with fewer quoting very little or not at all. As this is an open book exam, there should be fewer problems in managing this important aspect of the assessment.

Similarly, as stated, critical interpretation has to figure in any response for it to be considered thorough because two of the bullet points in the Assessment Objective grid address it:

- Offers clear understanding of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts
- Explores different interpretations in support or contrast to own argument

(Band 3: 11-15 marks out of 25)

Especially in answers on the Poetry texts, this key element is sometimes overlooked, though in this series, there was a lot of successful coverage of different interpretations, including some strong focus on different presentations of the plays in performance, both on stage and in film or television.

Two bullet points in the Mark Scheme focus on context:

- Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors
- Develops relevant links between texts and contexts

(Band 3: 11-15 marks out of 25)

This was more consistently addressed across the exam, though still not always as strongly in Section B.

Future students are offered the following advice:

- Address all four assessment objectives, which are the same across both sections of the paper; AO3 (the significance and influence of context; links between text and context) and AO5 (different interpretations and alternative readings) need to be a focus
- Return frequently to the terms of the question throughout the answer to ensure that analysis is specific to the set task and relevant
- Context covers a whole series of factors – political, social, cultural, historical, intellectual, literary, biographical – that influence both the writer and the audience (context of production and context of reception)
- Varieties of possible critical reception are exemplified in the Mark Scheme for each iteration of WET04. These can range from specific comments by named critics to 'school-based' theories, e.g. relating to gender concept, eco-critical or Marxist analyses. Where possible, it is better to avoid constructs such as "a critic says" - an alternative might be "one interpretation suggests that", if the candidate has forgotten the name of the person being cited. It is imperative that whatever is being referenced is relevant to the question being answered. Although forms of critical idiom are somewhat a matter of preference, it would perhaps be better to avoid the formulation 'critic Leavis suggests' as if 'critic' was the given name of the person in question or an honorific title.
- In Section A questions, candidates should carefully consider the assertion (the comment in inverted commas) and the injunction which follows it (the actual task being set). More effective answers tend to use this as a guide for generating a thesis. Often, the prompt is intended to help with AO5 ("exploring literary texts informed by different interpretations")
- Candidates should remember that the play in Section A was written to be performed and consider how it may be interpreted and presented in different productions, as well as how audiences and critics respond. Increasingly answers make knowledgeable

reference to particular performances or film versions of the plays and this can be a significant strength, though such commentary needs to be relevant

- In Section B, candidates should make sure they extend the argument by choosing an appropriate additional poem, not just the one they happen to know best from the anthology
- Candidates should develop a flexible “toolkit” of technical knowledge that can be applied to drama and poetry, along with a range of literary terminology which they must attempt to use relevantly.

Section A - Shakespeare

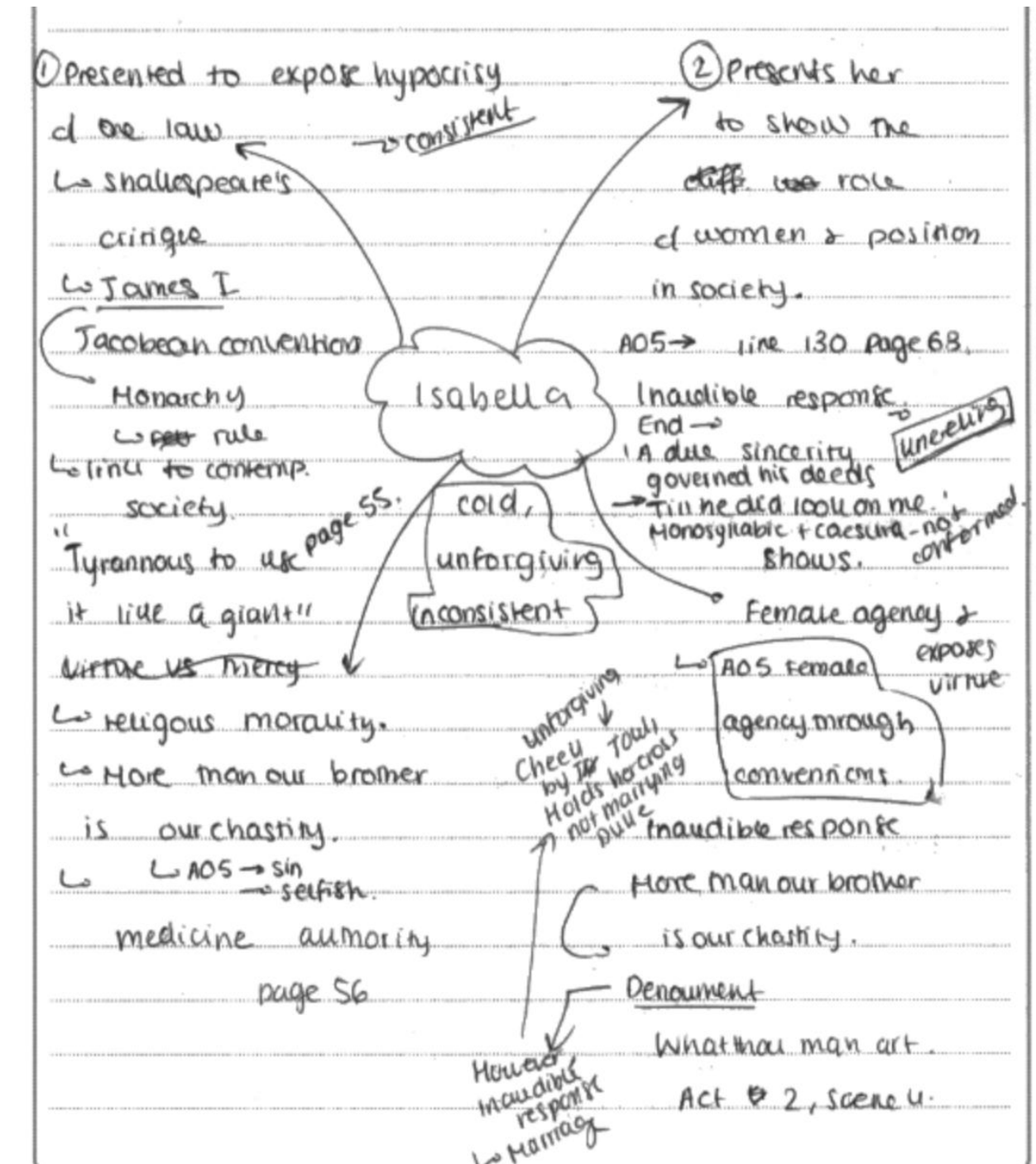
There remained some evidence of candidates perhaps pre-learning essays or sections of them and reproducing these with only mild adaptation to the terms of the question. They are, once again, reminded not to mis-spell Shakespeare, or critic (often ‘critique’ when used to mean a person).

Question 1

This was the more popular of the *Measure for Measure* tasks. Here, a decent opening with a thesis of a sort is brought to bear on the question of whether the presentation of Isabella makes her seem ‘cold, unforgiving and inconsistent’.

The theme of virtue in 'Measure for Measure' by William Shakespeare runs deep within the lines of the play and is predominantly tackled through the playwright's presentation of Isabella. Being a nun ~~and~~ and therefore a religious figure in the piece, Isabella automatically is placed under the burden of utmost virtue and chastity by expectation, however we see that through the course of the play, in order to maintain this very conventional form of virtue, she begins to show signs of inconsistency with sincerity and proves that she may not really be ~~the~~ ^a beacon of purity she says she is.

Previous reports have commented on the value of planning. This candidate's thoughtful approach (with its clear AO5 signposting) seemed likely to lead to a well-constructed and sustained answer:



Question 2

The alternative *Measure for Measure* option was about the theme of choice. Here is a strong opening from an essay about that:

William Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" constructs a world in which agency and control are closely intertwined with the themes of choice and decision making. Set in Vienna, a city facing strict authority, yet confronted with hypocrisy, the playwright investigates how characters handle decisions and moral obstacles. Moreover, written in the early 1600s, during the beginning of King James reign, the play reflects the anxieties reflecting social status and governance, in a period marked with changing political power. Ultimately, through character construction, language, as well as dramatic devices, influenced with 17th century factors, Shakespeare explores a society where corrupt morality and longing for agency triggers the themes of choice and decision making.

Question 3

Is there 'plenty to like about Petruchio'? Is his conduct unsuited to the tastes of modern audiences? Plenty of candidates who had learnt about *The Taming of the Shrew* had a lot to say about the assertion in this question and there was much lively, engaged and engaging debate. This excerpt exemplifies that with its informed and perceptive use of contextual reference.

Moreover, the style of Petruchio's behaviour is also able to be presented differently through the use of dramatic methods. In subtle ways, Petruchio is able to be presented as loving and considerate in private, while being dominant in public. The ending of the play in some productions, like the 2012 Globe, has Petruchio quickly bend down and pick up Katherine's hand from under his foot. He raises her to his level to give her a kiss, subtly refusing her submission to him. Earlier in Act 5 Scene 2, Petruchio also tells Katherine to "throw that cap underfoot". Biblically, in Corinthians, the hat is a symbol of a woman's submission to her husband. The imperative is a subtle method of freeing Katherine from his power, telling her she may behave however she pleases. The lines give the actors for Petruchio and Petruchio's servants the ability to smile and subtly congratulate Katherine from her 'graduation' from taming school as she had proved herself by indulging Petruchio in Act 4 Scene 5 by admitting the sun and moon change "even as your mind". Petruchio is

Here, the candidate makes a strong start – they obviously have opinions, which they express well and this is always to be welcomed.

Though 'tastes' and moral values have shifted and evolved over time, Petruchio remains an almost entirely morally unjustifiable and thus unlikeable character. G. B. Shaw on the cusp of the 20C ~~sees~~ stated that Taming of the Shrew is a play that not merely challenges but defies 'modern sensibilities'. Certainly, if over a century ago, despite Shaw's progressiveness for his time, the play was contradicting 'modern tastes' this sentiment persists. Petruchio ~~can~~ is the embodiment of this challenge against our moral exigencies, both now, in Shaw's time and even, as according to Watts, even in ~~Shakespeare's~~ Shakespeare's own ~~then~~ epoch. Moreover, as this is an Elizabethan play, Petruchio's 'conduct' is the only source of defining his character, apart from the scarce soliloquy. Unlike ~~now~~ characters or narrators of later literary works there is little to no introspection into Petruchio's ~~in~~ character & through his own reflections. Ultimately, his conduct is downright abusive, his marital choice - financially motivated. While there is debate surrounding his interactions with Katherine, in any ~~reading~~ critical reading she is forced into either deception or complete submission through an entirely opposing temperamental shift.

Question 4

The Taming of the Shrew task on the use of setting in the play was comparatively very unpopular. That said, there were some answers and in this case, the candidate makes a commendable use of textual reference, demonstrating fine skills of embedding and creating a coherent, well-evidenced argument:

The main setting in the play is Baptista's house, which creates a sense of familiarity for readers and a sense of safety for the characters. The fact that women have some power in this setting suggests the power of Baptista, who, in the societal structure of the play, is the main Patriarch. Bianca's ability to assert her power in Baptista's house through her pleasant temperament can be interpreted as manipulation that she learned through watching her sister's interactions with people. Her manipulation of language when she states "Sister, content you in my discontent. Sir, I submit myself humbly" highlights her ability to mock the societal expectation of a perfectly mannered woman, and uses this supposed submission to subtly exert power over the men in her life. Her assertion to the tutors that she is "no breeching scholar" and "will not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times'" reiterates her ability to regain control over her life while still maintaining the portrayal of innocence and obedience. The dominant assertion in her stating "will not" suggests a power that she previously had not displayed, but the fact that this assertion goes unnoticed by the tutors highlights the fact that a lot is overlooked due to people's expectations. Since Baptista's house is presented as the foundations of the play itself, the fact that ambiguous intentions or double meaning to people's conversations are unexpected, but due to the framing narrative of the induction, the theme of ambiguity is an underlying theme throughout.

Question 5

By far the most popular question on this part of the paper, quite a lot of candidates saw a task which invited them to 'explore the ways in which Shakespeare presents Hamlet's mental state' as a chance to answer the question 'Are you able to describe Hamlet's mental decline?' or 'Is Hamlet really mad?' without perhaps considering whether or not 'The disintegration of Hamlet's mental wellbeing resonates fully with modern audiences'. This wasn't disastrous, but the answers which tended to be more successful were those which actually engaged with the initial proposition by considering the critical position stated in it and choosing their weapons carefully. Therefore, those who recounted Hamlet's treatment of Gertrude and Ophelia in a linear and narrative fashion, considering it as evidence of either his insanity or his playing a part did reasonably well. Others who looked at the same material through the lens of how current readers and viewers might see his cruelty to Ophelia in particular, tended to fare better because they tended to construct more interesting interpretations of their own and drew more

convincing conclusions. Many of these responses had, additionally, relevant perspectives on the well-being agenda.

Here, a candidate indicates from the outset that they are unlikely just to be re-telling the story:

Hamlet's Mental Wellbeing + Modern Audiences	
Yes	No / Somewhat
• The situation he's been put in is quite traumatic ↳ Resonates with modern audiences as the recognition of trauma is becoming a more common practice ↳ Doesn't quite resonate with a Victorian Victorian audience ↳ Next to no focus on mental health	• The reaction Hamlet has ↳ Killing polonius w/ no remorse is quite unusual and shows quite poor mental wellbeing → Next to no resonance with modern audiences ↳ Contrast as in this case it would resonate with a Victorian audience as revenge for family as well as killing a monarch was common

This answer threatens to become a history essay initially, but the candidate has a thesis and turns towards the question soon enough, making the contextual commentary relevant and producing a nicely task-focused essay, with a strong element of critical reference. It went on to use the idea of a 'fractured mind' as a cohesive strand through the remainder of the response, all the way to the conclusion. It's a neat, concise and appealing approach.

Essay:

The 17th century in England began with a time of ^{political} uncertainty, as Queen Elizabeth, also known as The Virgin Queen, had no heirs to succeed her throne, ~~and which~~ a circumstance which made the public uneasy and questioning whether ~~any~~ England was at risk of invasion from James I. 'Hamlet' is a play in which the concerns of the people are thoroughly explored, represented by the titular character. The disintegration of Hamlet's mental state is shown by sudden changes in behaviour and mood, reminiscent of the symptoms of bi-polar disorder, which resonates with audiences to this day. A.C

Bradley has attempted to ~~con-~~ deconstruct Hamlet as a traditional tragic hero such as his predecessor Aeneas, however Bradley was criticised for his approach, due to Hamlet's mental deterioration not being a simple crescendo, but rather presented as a fractured mind.

Question 6

The use of contrasts in *Hamlet* was also relatively fully answered. Here a candidate offers a neatly worked discussion of contrasts relating to Ophelia, tying together technical focus and critical interpretation very effectively.

ner to hallucination. This association with flowers is continued ~~then~~ during the queen's dialogue later on, where Shakespeare uses natural imagery of "daisies, and long purples." The noun "daisies" is traditionally symbolic of purity and is associated with the Norse Goddess of fertility, thus simultaneously contrasting and coinciding with the sexual symbolism of "long purples." Shakespeare uses ~~contradicting~~ ^{contrasting} imagery to emphasize Ophelia's split mind and Dr. Ross Wilson ~~in~~ interprets ~~th~~ this portrayal of Ophelia as a "mirror of a madness-inducing world." The idea of a mirror is developed by the verb "drown'd", which is repeated by several characters. Shakespeare contrasts the life of ~~flowers~~ "fantastic gardens" with the dark verb "drown'd," suggesting that by dying in a ^{a reflective surface,} brook she is turning the mirror back on society to expose the madness within. Society destroyed Ophelia, a symbol of "sweetness and innocence, highlighted by death and emphasized by Shakespeare's use of ~~syms~~ the "willow", which dually symbolizes rebirth

and mourning, two conflicting ideas that almost confront ~~the~~ society with how perfectly they reflect its role in her demise.

Question 7

The presentation of Goneril and Regan in *King Lear* attracted plenty of attention. This response is typical. Though it is not without fault, it certainly engages with the question.

Firstly, it can be argued that both Goneril and Regan possess an interesting quality in their manipulative natures, a trait not characteristic of women at the time due to social constraints such as the chain of being which deemed them to be meek and demure. This is apparent when Cordelia posits that "Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides, who covers faults at last with shame derides. well you may prosper." wherein rhyme is utilized to juxtapose the sense of disorder and chaos Goneril and Regan have synthesised as a means to manipulate their father. Cordelia's acknowledgement of the sisters Machiavallian natures elucidates the calculating, scheming machinations they participate in to an audience, this culminating in a sense of distrust and unease towards the two sisters. Indeed, this is supported by Winterson, who argued that "Goneril and Regan are like hyenas in lipstick." this serving to expose their verbal distortions of reality when they praise and pander to their fathers ego. Their weaponisation of their false filial loyalty would be especially disconcerting to a contemporary audience in the Jacobean era wherein hierarchal notions pertaining to the divine right of kings followed that Lear, as a corporeal representative of Gods will on earth, should be adulated and revered. This is an ideology openly mocked by Goneril when she posits "Idle old man that still would manage his authorities that he hath given away!" wherein the exclamative invokes a sense of disparagement towards her father, this directly defying the Chain of Being, a perception which stated those of high social status to be closer to God, as she actively insults him, even though he is perceived to be superior to her as a man and as a King. Here, it can be said Shakespeare sought to criticise Jacobean ideas of hierarchy as the sisters rebellion is a result of their disempowerment as they are considered to be inferior to the men around them, this resulting in their attempts to assuage their lack of autonomy by exerting thier skills of manipulation which leads to tragic consequences. This is pertinent if one also considers King James' rise to prominence on the throne and how his ideas of unity between Scotland and England led to massive political turmoil amongst the Gunpowder plot and the Protestant church which led to conflict.

This is an extract from a similarly effective essay:

anagnorsis comes late for Lear, he finally realises the consequences of his failed parenting when he declares "thou art my flesh, my blood my daughters....boil...disease...In my corrupted blood". The lexical field of grotesque imagery here creates this idea that Lear has corrupted his daughters through his parenting or perhaps lack thereof. But there is an interpretation to say that this isn't completely Lear's fault, Hudson in fact describes Goneril and Regan as "personifications of ingratitude", seemingly implying that Lear has done all a Jacobean parent needs to do - provided a home, resources and fulfilled his fatherly duties by setting them up with powerful husbands - Dukes. Perhaps then the fault doesn't lie in a foolish king but rather a world where chaos was inevitable, the seeds of discord were planted from start, even if the kingdom was divided equally it seems that Goneril and Regan would've eventually encroached on Cordelia's, their father's "best object" territory. Therefore Shakespeare creates further interest in the evil sisters, not just by their grey area of gender but also through the question of their upbringing, he posits an interesting question to his audience - nature vs nurture? Are the sisters inherently evil, or has a lack of female or rather parental presence made them that way?

Question 8

The option on the presentation of power in *King Lear* drew a range of responses. As with other similarly worded questions, defining the key terms, or setting a clear pattern is always a sensible approach, especially when it is tied clearly to the terms of the task:

Power in "King Lear" is a central theme which is both the cause and result of chaos and discord. The misuse and manipulation of authority, leadership and power bring about devastating circumstances, culminating in the death of the virtuous as well as the total inversion of power towards ~~the~~ ^{the} end of the play. Lear's struggle to retain power as it is mercilessly stripped away from him through his own fault and ~~and~~ naivety, Edmund's Machiavellian pursuit of ~~the~~ wreaking havoc to achieve ~~the~~ ultimate self-gain, and the Fool's carefully embedded satirical ~~statements~~ jokes and criticisms ~~on~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ on Lear's abuse of his power are all "brilliant examinations" of the actual "nature of power."

Section B - Poetry

Besides ensuring that they are accurate in how they render the names of the poets and their works, it would be generally sensible for candidates not to misspell simile, amongst other things.

It remains advisable for candidates to state which other poem they have chosen early in their response, clearly and with some kind of brief rationale.

It is probably still not wise to comment at great length on punctuation (or rhyme scheme perhaps).

There were fewer unfiltered comments on rhetorical technique, it seemed. This may or may not have been in response to comments in the 2306 Report (slightly revisited in 2406) for WET04. It remains a welcome development in any case.

Question 9

This question on the Metaphysical poets, covering relationships, was popular enough. Here a candidate make sustained use of their second poem and offers interesting references to other anthologized texts, which is entirely permissible, if made relevant.

While Donne conveys relationships through the criticisms he provides his lover, Vaughan takes an interesting approach when viewing relationships and explores them through his unprofitable relationship with God. This is exhibited in the way the speaker refers to their leaves as "bleak" and hopelessly hung". The connotations of the leaves being hopeless reveal that the speaker reduces himself as he find no value for his fruitfulness. This goes against the way in which God speaks to man in the bible and claims that they are "beautifully and wonderfully made in his eyes". Therefore, with this self-deprecation, it could perhaps be seen as Vaughan going against the will of his God in the poem. Furthermore, the speaker goes on to reveal how, he himself in this garden is "a thankless weed dost dress". This reference to the speaker as a weed, with its negative connotations, of being unwanted further reveals the unworthiness the speaker feels in comparison to his God's view of him. Vaughan's use of hermeticism in his poetry is rather longing than fulfilling [Garner] which reflects Vaughan's belief in the Christian Doctrine by Martin Luther, Lutheranism, that reveals a personal relationship for God is the right approach to go about life. The title itself reveals that Vaughan does not feel worthless because of his sin but rather worthless because he utilises the conceit of being a tree in the garden that bears no fruit. This idea of not being worth God, is reflected in George Herbert's Redemption and Love III, (a poet Vaughan took inspiration from). In some ways, unprofitableness could be a direct intertextual allusion to the bible, the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector in the bible, as he does not feel worthy to dine with Jesus, which is the same idea conveyed in Vaughan's illustration of his unprofitableness. This therefore, puts into question the relationship Christians have with their God as their constant feeling of worthlessness as presented in Vaughan's poetry reflects an imbalanced relationship where humanity is coerced into always feeling as though they could never amount to their "God's" power.

Question 10

The Metaphysical Poets task on longing saw very few answers. Here, however, a candidate makes a good use of contextual and critical reference points to explore longing as it is presented by both Phillips and Bradstreet (whose anthologized poem was a popular choice of comparator):

immense physical longing for her, now under the added premise of time being limited. This idea of limited time intensifying longing is also mirrored in "Orinda to Lucasta", through the lines "too long I wait"... "thou mayst come too late" and "not restore my life, but close my eyes." This correlates to Katherine Philips's beliefs, ~~was not letting in~~ as she was often repressed by society, she believed largely in not letting opportunities go to waste, and the presentation of her impending death appears to enhance her deep want for Lucasta, which is evident in the ~~ad~~ vivid adjective adverb "mournfully" and the hopeful verb "seeks", which both connote immense longing. Therefore, it is evident that both poems present speakers who have deep rooted desires for another person, however the reasonings behind such longing varies.

This response also handles a comparative approach nicely:

Both poets indulge in the idea of the are influenced by the Renaissance as they skillfully incorporate new findings and geographical terminology through the cosmic imagery. Through the ~~idea of~~ metaphor of the "Sun," Philips suggests her knowledge of the cosmos and space. Being a female writer, she deviates from the patriarchal norms and indulges in new learnings and finding. ~~Phil~~ Sarah Ross criticizes that Philips reworks metaphysical Humes from a distinctly female perspective, "suggesting that her work, although ^{with} incorporating feminine authenticity, incorporates wise and intellectual learning, showcasing that females can have equal or greater emotional awareness than men. Donne too incorporates ~~cosmic~~ geographical imagery through references to the "moon", "sphere" and "world." He emphasises his clever wit, making him one of the writers who broke free from Tudor conventions to engrave poetry anew. They both incorporate these Renaissance references to portray longing through a different lens.

Question 11

A question on the presentation of social concerns by English Romantic poet William Blake (and another text of the candidate's choice) seemed likely to be attractive when it was set and this proved to be the case. There were, perhaps, some slightly unhelpful choices of second poem – maybe candidates were shoehorning in a favourite or practised text, rather than really thinking about the question. In the event, Byron was not necessarily the greatest option for considering social concerns. Though it was possible to use *Lines Inscribed on a Cup...* or *So We'll Go no more A Roving*, neither of these worked especially well. More sensibly, some candidates dealt with both versions of *Holy Thursday*.

In this extract, there is quite a nice, even dramatic, section on context.

in the late 18th century is understandable. The conditions in London had become dangerous, with class inequalities growing ~~at~~ only more prevalent as thousands of workers lived in slums and shantytowns in the city, while even more people crowded into the over-populated capital in search of work in the factories. ^{Toxic smog} filled the air, leading to rampant disease, and the Thames, which ^{Blake} ~~often~~ commonly cites in his works, became filthy with human and industrial waste. Blake, like many romantic poets, was ~~a~~ passionate about nature, so no doubt seeing the natural rivers and skies be disturbed would also have disturbed him. With all this in mind, it is no wonder ^{that in the poem} Blake criticises those in power for the state to which London has been reduced. ~~is the~~

Here, there is a good interweaving of text, context and critical interpretation.

Blake uses a multitude of devices in this powerfully political poem to colour the Church of England as hypocritical. He uses reversed colour symbolism to mark the children as innocent - they're in "red and blue and green", the primary colours, referencing their childhood vivacity in direct comparison to the "grey....beadles" with "wand as white as snow". There's a chilling subversion of ordinary colour symbolism here, usually white connotes purity but the use of grey - perhaps alluding to their age or grey moral nature implies that these beadles are anything but pious - with their weapons of wands. The entire poem is a political tirade against what Blake sees as an unrelentingly uncaring hypocritical society - one so corrupt it has produced these "multitude" of poor orphan children. But the speaker himself doesn't seem to realise this - he's distracted by their performative innocence the childness, Noah-Ark aspect of them "walking two & two". But Blake to us, under the guise of an ignorant observer, relays a sense of concern and fear - it isn't a good thing that there are multitudes of these children, this is emphasised by the chilling metaphor of "these flowers of London town", it seems that poverty and despair are so rife that orphans are growing like flowers. Blake was well aware of the misery of London, he was born in Soho and stayed in London most of his life, working as an engraver then a poet. He was even raised as a Dissenter a religious sect which broke away from the Church of England. This

Question 12

Ode on Melancholy contains plenty of imagery and symbolism and a lot of candidates wanted to write about it. *The Sick Rose* was a popular second choice as were the other Keats poems and Wordsworth. There was plenty of controlled and erudite discussion of specific examples and the purposes of the poets using them as well as some strong comment on context and critical interpretation. Not many candidates simply went for a linear recount of some specific similes, metaphors and symbols, but where it did appear, this approach tended not to prosper.

Question 13

Mood and tone in *Let the world's sharpness, like a closing knife* saw comparisons with, e.g. *Grief, Remember* and *Meeting at Night*, as well as a liberal dose of Tennyson. This answer connects technique, evaluation (relating to the tone of the fear of judgement) and context effectively enough:

the opposite to its readers. Through Robert's use of imagery it communicates the tone of fear of judgement. The fact that the meeting is happening at night suggests that they have something to hide and the narrator is scared that it will be seen. This is highlighted by the title, ~~as well as the repetition~~. The "half yellow moon large and low" also fortifies this. However, this could also be seen as a symbol of hope as the liquid L as well as the use of fricatives can create a mood of calmness and lack of fear. However, the repeated use of dark imagery to describe the sea and the land suggest an ultimate level of overwhelming fear. This idea of judgement can come from the authors themselves as in order to get married, the two poets had to face judgement. Elizabeth was 6 years older and wealthier ^{and famous} than Robert, making their marriage completely unconventional for social standards at the time, explaining why Robert could be scared, while Elizabeth, who had the support of her brother and her wealth, had no reason to fear judgement. So, the two poems use specific language as well as imagery. However they use these literary techniques to each present different tone and mood.

Question 14

The presentation of nature in *The Darkling Thrush* saw other poem choices including Tennyson's *May* and *Home-thoughts from Abroad*. This is an interesting passage from one response, though perhaps bending pre-learned material to the purpose of the question a little too much.

Hope, whereof he knew / and i was unaware.". From this, one can infer Hardy sought to reflect ideals of romantic poetry through his fervent adulation of the thrush, this being a tenant of romanticism which rose to prominence within the Victorian era and saw massive popularity. Here, one may also consider the publication of the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, a book which contradicted many Christian ideals and saw massive pushback from the Victorian public, and how Hardy, as an Atheist, may have appreciated nature through a refreshed lens because of it. However, this hopefulness is not found within May as Rossetti remarks "Like all sweet things it passed away" wherein the nebulous pronoun 'it' casts doubt on what has effectively died, calling into question the state of the speakers sanity. This lack of definition allows one to infer a sense of grief that there is difficulty overcoming, this culminating in a lack of hope as the speaker cannot even bear to define what she has lost. From a feminist lens, one could argue it is a sense of agency or autonomy that has passed due to the transition into adulthood, reflecting contemporary womens struggles within the Victorian era as they faced oppression and abuse. The theory of the second sex which states that women are treated as an 'other' proposed by Simone De Beauvoir could also lend insight into the speakers loss, this potentially pertaining to an identity which has been stripped. This is inferred by the once passionate adulation of nature as this could represent the speakers previous perceived freedoms as a child who was blissfully unaware to the realities of being an adult in a patriarchal society transitioning into a dour, sorrowful volta towards the end of the poem as no hope is to be found in such an environment due to her disillusionment. Alternatively, one could argue what has been lost is instead a child as the nature within the first stanza could be said to represent new life which has been denied to the speaker due to a miscarriage, this instead supplementing the loss of hope she now feels.

