

General Certificate of Education  
June 2006  
Advanced Level Examination



**ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION A)**  
**Unit 6 Reading for Meaning**

**LTA6**

Monday 12 June 2006 9.00 am to 12.00 noon

**For this paper you must have:**

- a 16-page answer book

Time allowed: 3 hours

**Instructions**

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is LTA6.
- Answer **both** parts of the question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

**Information**

- Materials from your wider reading **may not** be taken into the examination room.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 40.

**Advice**

- This unit assesses your understanding of the relationships between the different aspects of English Literature.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Please read this advice carefully before you turn to the material.

### 1 Reading

- Here are the materials taken from the prescribed area for study. You will be using this material to answer the questions in the examination which appear on the facing page.
- Alongside the four pieces (**B, C, D, E**) about The First World War (the prescribed area for study) you will find **Extract A**, a pre-twentieth century poem, *A Wife in London*, by Thomas Hardy. This also has **war** as its theme.
- Read all five pieces and their introductions carefully and closely several times in the light of the specific questions set.

### 2 Timing

- You should plan to spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes on Question 1(a); this will include reading and planning time.
- You should plan to spend about 1 hour and 45 minutes on Question 1(b); this will include reading and planning time.

### 3 Wider Reading

- Question 1(b) tests your wider reading on the subject of **War in Literature** with specific reference to literature of and about The First World War.
- In your answers, you should take every opportunity to refer to this wider reading and to your knowledge of this specific area of study.

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Answer **both** parts of Question 1.

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1 (a) You should spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes on this question.

Basing your answer on **Extract A and Extract B**, you should:

- write a comparison of the ways the poets present the loss of a loved one
- say how far you agree with the view that Hardy's poem about a soldier's death is more moving and effective than Brittain's poem about her grief.

*(20 marks)*

(b) You should spend about 1 hour and 45 minutes on this question.

By comparing **Extracts C, D and E**, and by referring to your **wider reading**, examine how typical in both style and treatment of subject matter these writings are of literature from and about The First World War.

You should consider:

- language, form and structure
- the writers' thoughts and feelings about war and contemporary society
- the influence of the time of composition
- the gender of the writers.

*(20 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**Turn over ►**

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**THE READING****Extract A**

This poem was written by Thomas Hardy in 1899.

*A Wife in London*

(December 1899)

## I

She sits in the tawny vapour  
That the Thames-side lanes have uprolled,  
Behind whose webby fold on fold  
Like a waning taper  
The street-lamp glimmers cold.

A messenger's knock cracks smartly,  
Flashed news is in her hand  
Of meaning it dazes to understand  
Though shaped so shortly:  
*He—has fallen—in the far South Land. . . .*

## II

'Tis the morrow; the fog hangs thicker,  
The postman nears and goes:  
A letter is brought whose lines disclose  
By the firelight flicker  
His hand, whom the worm now knows:  
  
Fresh—firm—penned in highest feather—  
Page-full of his hoped return,  
And of home-planned jaunts by brake and burn  
In the summer weather,  
And of new love that they would learn.

THOMAS HARDY

**Extract B**

Vera Brittain's fiancé, Roland Leighton, was killed in December 1915. She left her studies at Oxford to take up voluntary nursing. She wrote this poem in memory of Roland in 1916.

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**Turn over for Extract C**

**Turn over ►**

**Extract C**

This extract is taken from *The Accrington Pals* by Peter Whelan, first performed in 1981. The “pals” are the men from the local volunteer battalion, and in this extract we hear of how one man has volunteered. Here, May is trying to protect Tom Hackford, the recruit, because she cares about him.

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**Turn over ►**

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**Extract D**

Helen Thomas was married to the soldier and poet Edward Thomas who died in the battle of Arras in 1917. Her memoir, *World Without End*, tells the story of their family life and his death. In her memoir, Helen Thomas refers to her husband Edward as David and to herself as Jenny. The following extract describes the last family Christmas before Edward Thomas' death.

And I knew David's agony and he knew mine, and all we could do was to speak sharply to each other. 'Now do, for goodness' sake, remember, Jenny, that these are the important manuscripts, and that I'm putting them here, and this key is for the box that holds all important papers like our marriage certificate and the children's birth certificates, and my life insurance policy. You may want them at some time; so don't go leaving the key about.' And I, after a while, 'Can't you leave all this unnecessary tidying business, and put up that shelf you promised me? I hate this room, but a few books on a shelf might make it look a bit more human.' 'Nothing will improve this room; so you had better resign yourself to it. Besides, the wall is too rotten for a shelf.' 'Oh, but you promised.' 'Well, it won't be the first time I've broken a promise to you, will it? Nor the last, perhaps.'

Oh, God! melt the snow and let the sky be blue.

The last evening comes. The children have taken down the holly and mistletoe and ivy, and chopped up the little Christmas-tree to burn. And for a treat Elizabeth and Polly are to have their bath in front of the blazing fire. The big zinc bath is dragged in, and the children undress in high glee, and skip about naked in the warm room, which is soon filled with the sweet smell of the burning greenery. The berries pop, and the fir-tree makes fairy lace, and the holly crackles and roars. The two children get into the bath together, and David scrubs them in turn—they laughing, making the fire hiss with their splashing. The drawn curtains shut out the snow and the starless sky, and the deathly silence out there in the biting cold is forgotten in the noise and warmth of our little room. After the bath David reads to them. First of all he reads Shelley's *The Question* and *Chevy Chase*, and then for Polly a favourite Norse tale. They sit in their nightgowns listening gravely, and then, just before they kiss him good-night, while I stand by with the candle in my hand, he says: 'Remember while I am away to be kind. Be kind, first of all, to Mummy, and after that be kind to everyone and everything.' And they all assent together, and joyfully hug and kiss him, and he carries the two girls up, and drops each into her bed.

And we are left alone, unable to hide our agony, afraid to show it. Over supper we talk of the probable front he'll arrive at, of his fellow-officers, and of the unfinished portrait-etching that one of them has done of him and given to me. And we speak of the garden, and where this year he wants the potatoes to be, and he reminds me to put in the beans directly the snow disappears. 'If I'm not back in time you'd better get someone to help you with the digging,' he says. He reads me some of the poems he has written that I have not heard—the last one of all called *Out in the Dark*. And I venture to question one line, and he says, 'Oh no, it's right, Jenny, I'm sure it's right.' And I nod because I can't speak, and I try to smile at his assurance.

I sit and stare stupidly at his luggage by the wall, and his roll of bedding, kit-bag, and suit-case. He takes out his prismatic compass and explains it to me, but I cannot see, and when a tear drops on to it he just shuts it up and puts it away. Then he says, as he takes a book out of his pocket, 'You see, your Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is already where it will always be. Shall I read you some?' He reads one or two to me. His face is grey and his mouth trembles, but his voice is quiet and steady. And soon I slip to the floor and sit between his knees, and while he reads his hand falls over my shoulder and I hold it with mine.

'Shall I undress you by this lovely fire and carry you upstairs in my khaki overcoat?' So he undoes my things, and I slip out of them; then he takes the pins out of my hair, and we laugh at ourselves for behaving as we so often do, like young lovers. 'We have never become a proper Darby and Joan, have we?'

**Extract E**

Clifford Dymont's poem, *The Son*, was published in his *Poems 1935–48*.

*The Son*

I found the letter in a cardboard box.  
Unfamous history. I read the words.  
The ink was frail and brown, the paper dry  
After so many years of being kept.  
The letter was a soldier's, from the front –  
Conveyed his love and disappointed hope  
Of getting leave. *It's cancelled now*, he wrote.  
*My luck is at the bottom of the sea.*

Outside the sun was hot; the world looked bright;  
I heard a radio, and someone laughed.  
I did not sing, or laugh, or love the sun,  
Within the quiet room I thought of him.  
My father killed, and all the other men.  
Whose luck was at the bottom of the sea.

CLIFFORD DYMENT

**END OF EXTRACTS**

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Extract A Source: 'A Wife in London' by Thomas Hardy, from *War Poetry*, JON STALLWORTHY (ed.) (Oxford University Press) 1984

Extract B Source: 'Perhaps' by Vera Brittain, from *Scars upon my heart*, CATHERINE REILLY (ed.) (Virago) 1981. By permission of Mark Bostridge and Rebecca Williams, literary executors for Vera Brittain.

Extract C Source: PETER WHELAN, *The Accrington Pals* (Methuen) 1982

Extract D Source: 'World Without End' by Helen Thomas, from *Women's Writing of the First World War*, CARDINAL, GOLDMAN AND HATTAWAY (ed.) (Oxford University Press) 1996. We are grateful to Myfanwy Thomas for permission to print this extract.

Extract E Source: 'The Son' by Clifford Dymont, from *Collected Poems 1935–48*, CLIFFORD DYMENT (Dent) 1970. By permission of Martin Starkie for (on behalf of) Irene Dymont.

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