



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
June 2009

## English Literature (Specification A)

## LTA1C

Unit 1 Texts in Context

Option C: The Struggle for Identity in Modern Literature

Wednesday 20 May 2009 9.00 am to 11.00 am

For this paper you must have:

- a 12-page answer book.

### Time allowed

- 2 hours

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black 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 LTA1C.
- Answer **two** questions.
- You must answer:
  - the **compulsory** question in **Section A**: Contextual Linking
  - **one** question from **Section B**: Poetry.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.
- The poetry texts prescribed for this paper **may** be taken into the examination room. Texts taken into the examination must be clean: that is, free from annotation.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

### Advice

- You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each question.

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**SECTION A: CONTEXTUAL LINKING****Answer Question 1.**

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In your response to this section of the paper you must refer to your wider reading across all three genres (prose, poetry and drama). You may also refer to your AS coursework texts.

- 1 Read the following extract carefully. It is taken from *Jarhead* (2003), an autobiography by Anthony Swofford, an American soldier. In this extract Swofford recalls his father, an airman in the Vietnam War which ended in 1975. Swofford was conceived whilst his father was on leave in Honolulu, Hawaii.

How does the writer present his thoughts and feelings about the struggle for identity?

How far is the extract similar to and different from your wider reading about the struggle for identity in modern literature? You should consider the writers' choices of form, structure and language. (45 marks)

In the bed, in Hawaii, my parents are fornicating. I cannot watch, and neither can you.

My father could've flown to Vietnam the next day and been shot dead, on the street or in the jungle. But he wasn't shot: the bullets and shrapnel missed him, and he arrived home three months later, a few more ribbons and medals on his chest, a pregnant wife sitting on the porch, nervously smoking.

My father returned from Vietnam only partially disturbed. For many years he suffered migraines, and at social events he wandered away from the crowds to pace. In Japan, in 1975, I played Pee-Wee football on base. My father filmed our games with Super 8. But at some point in the action he'd stop the camera, break down his tripod, pack his gear, and pace behind the bleachers during the remaining quarters, smoking, my handsome father. Years later my mother insisted that the possibility of me breaking a bone was too much for him, weak-stomached man, afraid of his own blood, vomiting over nosebleeds. I'm sure my mother was wrong, that her hypothesis was a product of the divorcée's caustic revisionist history. I think my father couldn't stand still in one place for too long because if you do, a bomb lands there. And then you are dead.

In 1981, when his migraines tapered off, his hands locked in fists. At this time, I delivered a paper route. I'd wake at five-thirty, before anyone else in the house. I'd have about half of my papers folded, and my father would emerge from my parents' bedroom. He'd find me in the garage and sit next to me on the cold concrete floor, fisted hands on his knees.

He'd say, "Sorry, Tone, wish I could help."

Some mornings he'd be fine, and he'd help me fold and load my papers onto my bike, and I'd return from delivering my ninety papers and he'd be dressed in uniform, but usually when I returned, he was still sitting on the floor of the garage, reading, turning the pages of the paper with his fists. I suppose my mother helped him dress on these mornings.

After breakfast, I'd walk with him to his Jaguar and jump in the passenger seat, and I'd work his right fist over the clutch ball and his left fist over the steering wheel, and I'd start the car and in winter turn the headlights on.

His doctors weren't able to explain these ailments, or at least that's the story I received. Agent Orange, maybe? Plain and simple madness? My father once told me that after Vietnam he'd been ordered numerous times to visit the base psychiatrist, something he never did. I suppose he had enough rank to cover his insubordination. Of course he needed help. Not only because of Vietnam, but because his mother had died when he was three months old and his closest half-brother died while a marine on embassy duty in 1967. My father was thirty-nine years old and the world seemed a dead, cold place, void of promise. The problems of his psyche had become manifest in his hands. With his fists he beat at the thick chest of the world, but the world ignored him. Of course the world ignored him.

**Turn over for Section B**

**Turn over ►**

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**SECTION B: POETRY**

Answer **one** question from this section.

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**EITHER***And Still I Rise – Maya Angelou*

- 2 Maya Angelou has said, “I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself.”

How important is the idea of ‘home’ in the collection *And Still I Rise*?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely across the collection as a whole. (45 marks)

**OR**

- 3 “Angelou’s appetite for life is evident in all her poems but never more so than in ‘Life Doesn’t Frighten Me’.”

How far do you agree that ‘Life Doesn’t Frighten Me’ provides an insight into important ideas expressed in the collection as a whole?

In your answer you should consider form, structure and language, as well as subject matter. (45 marks)

**OR***The World’s Wife – Carol Ann Duffy*

- 4 “Duffy is entirely hostile towards men in *The World’s Wife*.”

How far do you agree with this view of the ways Duffy presents men in this collection?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely across the collection as a whole. (45 marks)

**OR**

- 5 How far do you agree that ‘Mrs Faust’ is the key to the collection as a whole?

In your answer you should consider form, structure and language, as well as subject matter. (45 marks)

**OR**

*Skirrid Hill* – Owen Sheers

- 6 Sheers' poetry is said to show "an awareness of moments of separation between men and women, childhood and adulthood".

How far do you think the poems in *Skirrid Hill* show this separation?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely across the collection as a whole. (45 marks)

**OR**

- 7 "'Y Gaer' and 'The Hill Fort' are essential to *Skirrid Hill*: this pair of poems is the heart of the collection."

How far do you agree with this view of the collection as a whole?

In your answer you should consider form, structure and language, as well as subject matter. (45 marks)

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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