



General Certificate of Education

English Literature 6746 *Specification B*

LTB6 Exploring Texts

Mark Scheme

2006 examination – January series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

LTB6: Exploring Texts

Skills Descriptors Question 1

BAND 1: MARK RANGE 0 – 5

AO2ii	simple account of content
AO2ii	little sense of comparison across texts
AO3	very little understanding of genre, language features and structural devices
AO3	very little discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 2: MARK RANGE 6 – 12

AO2ii	some focus on the task with basic textual understanding; a little illustrative support
AO2ii	some comparison across texts
AO3	some limited understanding of genres, language features and structural devices
AO3	some limited discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 3: MARK RANGE 13 – 19

AO2ii	focus on task with some understanding of text; some illustrative support
AO2ii	some consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
AO3	some understanding of genres, language features and structural devices
AO3	some discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 4: MARK RANGE 20 – 26

AO2ii	clear focus on task with informed understanding of text: apt supportive references
AO2ii	detailed consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
AO3	consideration of genres, language features and structural devices
AO3	consideration of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 5: MARK RANGE 27 – 33

AO2ii	detailed understanding of the text and task; good selection of supportive references
AO2ii	detailed exploration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
AO3	exploration of genres, language features and structural devices
AO3	some evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 6: MARK RANGE 34 – 40

AO2ii	secure, confident and well informed understanding of text and task; excellent selection of supportive reference
AO2ii	detailed and perceptive evaluations of issues raised through contrasts and comparisons across texts
AO3	detailed exploration and analysis of genres, key language features and structural devices
AO3	perceptive evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings

Possible Content

Question One: Compare and contrast the ways in which McGregor and Lawrence attempt, in the opening sections of their works, to secure the interest of their reader/audience.

(40 marks)

Assessment objectives tested: AO2, AO3

Possible content:

Key differences resulting from genre: expect students to be aware of differences in language use, register, tone, character revelation and representation, point of view, relationship between reader and subject matter, importance and development of story, setting, structure. Importance of remembering that neither text is complete and that the extract from the play is also intended to be staged rather than read.

Similarities and differences in content and point of view: McGregor writes about the city, Lawrence about a semi-rural environment in a time nearly a century earlier. McGregor writes as though both he and the reader are simultaneously experiencing impressions of the city. He uses second person, directly addressing the reader ‘If you listen...’ However, he describes mainly in the third person and, although the reader is clearly aware of being addressed by the narrator, does not explicitly use the first person. Lawrence, as a playwright, lets the characters’ words and actions reveal themselves and their story. McGregor’s text here consists primarily of sense impressions. Unlike the openings of most novels, there is very little focus on people in the opening and no clear introduction of characters who will play a significant role in the novel. McGregor concentrates on city life in general and introduces no names. Not surprisingly in view of the genre, Lawrence’s opening scene focuses directly on a small group of people with two apparently central, adult characters. Lawrence’s focus is on personal life therefore but in the context of the mining community. McGregor’s focus is broad, the city at night, Lawrence’s narrow, an individual home and family at night.

Language: McGregor: often informal English, with ellipses and a good deal that is colloquial. Sentences often lack finite verb. Effect of lexis depends a great deal on repetition, accumulation, especially of present participles. Sentences that begin with ‘And’ add to cumulative effect. Use of alliteration, assonance, metaphor, simile. Focus on the senses. Lawrence: lexis shows period, especially slang, e.g. ‘skedaddled’, ‘toffed himself up’. Dialogue seeks effect of naturalness, shown in capturing the more formal conversational idiom of Edwardian times, despite working class setting and non-standard grammar. Also, however, seeks rhetorical effects, as in repetition of ‘pride’. Effective use of children’s description of the antics in the pub, with present tense for immediacy, use of exclamation and question to give sense of their naïve excitement. Language combines with visual effect in play, e.g. Blackmore commenting on his dirty hands and clothes, which contrast with the clean laundry again perhaps used symbolically.

Structure: McGregor’s opening not traditional. Entirely devoted to sense impressions of the city. Suggests the goings-on of human beings through the description but doesn’t foreground any of them as characters in the story. By end of this section does move in to focus on a couple but still without naming them. No sense of the opening of a plot. Structures the passage on the idea of listening to a song and follows that through with constant evocation of sounds. Suggests that those who don’t listen sufficiently to take in each individual note will miss the essence of things (reflection on the title). McGregor also uses silence. It punctuates his passage to indicate a moment seemingly out of time, a pause in life’s activities. It seems partly to represent the moment when one day finishes and the next has not quite begun. Use of similes to emphasise this, ‘like a falter between heartbeats’. After the pause moves back to music and dance, perhaps in themselves metaphors for life. The great variation in paragraph and sentence lengths and the lack of main verbs contribute to the sense of variety, the layering of many different aspects of experience to create a sense of order in chaos. Structured through time. **Lawrence:** More traditional opening than the novels, which is part of exposition: introduces characters and establishes the basis for conflict in the presence of the domesticated and pleasant Blackmore implicitly contrasted with the absent

and unsatisfactory husband. The children are cleverly used to establish, in a completely innocent way, both the virtues of Blackmore and the vices of their father. Through them Lawrence is able to evoke with dramatic immediacy what is going on elsewhere, bringing a vivid evocation of the absent father into the scene. Domestic business of laundry provides a visual focus for the whole extract, with Mrs H's opening words a comment on the difficulty of drying sheets even in good weather and the conclusion of the extract a harmonious image of Mrs H and Blackmore sharing a domestic chore. The children's dialogue well structured both to show realistic sibling rivalry, 'Shut up, our Minnie!' and to give a sense of dramatic climax to the revelations re Holroyd.

Setting: Both aim at realism, with the novel detailing the minutiae of city life and the play's stage directions giving a sense of reproducing a 'real' miner's cottage interior. Both focus on the importance of the environment we live in but use very contrasting environments. McGregor concentrates exclusively on creating the setting with all its appropriate sense impressions. Lawrence uses the setting to explore family relationships in the mining community. The reader has too little of the novel to be sure what McGregor is aiming at. Night time an important feature of both settings. In the novel this gives the feel of life's ceaseless continuity and restless energy but as the opening shows, it's intended to make the reader focus on the 'song' of the city. Enigmatic statement, 'nobody hearing it could doubt what it sings'. Could be argued that the city is introduced as a 'character' in the opening chapter. Lawrence uses night in a different way; at one level it points up the difficulties of domestic life in an earlier age. Sheets are set to dry round the fire; there is only lamplight and the incident of the smashed glass shows the difficulties of simple survival. At another level, light and darkness here may be symbolic. Blackmore brings light to the house. Holroyd is enjoying himself elsewhere and is on show at the pub, which has no curtains at the windows.

Skills Descriptors
Question 2

BAND 1: MARK RANGE 0 – 5

AO1	technical weaknesses which impede the communication of meaning / unclear line of argument
AO4	little understanding of different interpretative approaches
AO4	little personal response based on slender evidence or misreading
AO5ii	very little relevance to texts / contexts / task

BAND 2: MARK RANGE 6 – 12

AO1	simple attempt at structuring argument / some use of critical vocabulary but some technical weakness
AO4	reference to different interpretations of text
AO4	some evidence of personal response
AO5ii	some limited awareness of links across texts / contexts / task

BAND 3: MARK RANGE 13 – 19

AO1	use of critical vocabulary and generally clear expression / some structured argument
AO4	some consideration of different interpretations of text
AO4	evidence of personal response with some illustrative support
AO5ii	awareness of links across texts / contexts / task

BAND 4: MARK RANGE 20 – 26

AO1	clear expression and use of accurate critical vocabulary / clear line of argument
AO4	clear consideration of different interpretations of text
AO4	clear evidence of personal response with illustrative support
AO5ii	clear consideration of links across texts / contexts / task

BAND 5: MARK RANGE 27 – 33

AO1	accurate expression and effective use of appropriate critical vocabulary / well structured argument
AO4	clear consideration of different interpretations of text and some evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses
AO4	clear and detailed evidence of personal response with good selection of supportive references
AO5ii	detailed exploration of links across texts / contexts / task

BAND 6: MARK RANGE 34 – 40

AO1	technically fluent style and use of appropriate critical vocabulary / well structured and coherent argument
AO4	perceptive consideration of different interpretations of text with evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses
AO4	clear and detailed evidence of confident personal response with excellent selection of supportive reference
AO5ii	perceptive evaluation of links across texts / contexts / task

Possible Content

Question Two: Items Two, Three and Four are all concerned with Literary Beginnings and the interpretations of texts. In the light of your reading of this material, write about:

- how far the commentaries (Items Two and Three) on reading the openings of novels have helped to inform your response to the opening of Jon McGregor’s *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*;
- the relationship between the reader and the text, showing how far you agree with the authors of Item Four that your response to texts arises out of your own contexts. Illustrate your answer by reference to the literary extracts from this paper and, if you wish, to other literary texts you have read.

(40 marks)

Objectives tested: AO1, AO4, AO5

Bullet one:

Possible content:

David Lodge: Possible aspects for students to focus on:

- may have made them think about the way a novelist prepares in advance; students often write as though the author has written without any forethought or preparation;
- the idea of a threshold over which we step as the novelist ‘draws us in’;
- difficulties to be encountered, such as familiarising ourselves with a variety of details;
- comment on whether or not the reader has decided to go on with this story after reading the opening section;
- likelihood that candidates will try to fit this opening into a category as Lodge has done for a number of other novels in the second extract from *The Art of Fiction*.

Frank Kermode:

- ‘kinds of intellectual operation entailed’;
- whether McGregor’s novel fits into category of those that make ‘special demands’ or are ‘too simple or diagrammatic’;
- reference to ‘reader’s compliance’; how the novelist creates relationship between reader/narrator and how this applies to McGregor;
- playing a game according to the rules; ‘magical means of making present what is absent’;
- noting whether the scene described is similar to or different from reader’s present;
- reader as invention of the author; need to sift detail and work out which bits need to be remembered; reader may not be sure which category some details belong to at first

Bullet two:

Possible content: Candidate likely to highlight some of the following:

- some of the questions in paragraph 1 of Item Four, e.g. ‘Is it really possible to generalise about ‘the role of the reader’ and the experience of reading?’ and ‘How far does meaning depend on the reader, and how far on the text of the novel itself?’
- sophisticated candidates likely to pick up on the passage’s suggestion that we have, as readers and critics, to weigh up the importance of ‘contexts’, including critical contexts and personal contexts;
- relationship between the personal context of the individual reader and the ‘wider, shared historical context’;
- individual reader reads with ‘purpose’; we each have ‘different personal motives’;
- candidates should show awareness of the aspects of their context that influence them, (eg geographical situation, culture, age, gender, race, religion, knowledge and experience) and apply some of these personal contexts to an analysis of their own responses to the given literary texts. Candidates should give some precise reference to the literary texts to illustrate their responses,

relating them to their own personal contexts. Two or three precise, detailed comments are sufficient. They can, if they wish, refer to texts they have read or studied in the sixth form. This may give rise to some interesting discussion about the effect on them being students of English Literature at Advanced Level. Some may find that this enhances their reading; others may feel that their pleasure in reading has been undermined by constant dissection of texts.