

## A-level ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 2B Texts and genres: Elements of political and social protest writing

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Tuesday 12 June 2018

Afternoon

Time allowed: 3 hours

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a copy of the set text(s) you have studied for Section B and Section C. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/2B.
- You must answer the question in Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C. Over Section B and Section C you must write about **three** texts: **one** poetry text, **one** post-2000 prose text and **one** further text. At least **one** of your texts must be written pre-1900.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 75.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- In your response you need to:
  - analyse carefully the writers' methods
  - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
  - explore connections across the texts you have studied
  - explore different interpretations of your texts.

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**Section A**

Answer the question in this section.

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Explore the significance of elements of political and social protest writing in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways the author has shaped meanings. **[25 marks]**

The extract is taken from *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* written by Elizabeth Gaskell and published in 1848. The novel portrays the lives and experiences of Manchester factory workers and the suffering they endured during severe economic depression in the 1830s and 1840s. In the extract, the factory owners (the ‘masters’) and a group of striking workers meet to discuss wage rates in an unsuccessful attempt to resolve the dispute. Later that day John Barton discusses the outcome of the meeting with other workers.

The day arrived on which the masters were to have an interview with a deputation of the work-people. The meeting was to take place in a public room, at an hotel; and there, about eleven o’clock, the mill-owners began to collect. There might be about twenty gentlemen in the room, divided into little groups, who did not seem unanimous by any means. Some were for a slight concession, just a sugar-plum to quieten the naughty child, a sacrifice to peace and quietness. Some were steadily and vehemently opposed to the dangerous precedent of yielding one jot or one tittle to the outward force of a strike. It was teaching the work-people how to become masters, said they. They forgot that the strike was in this instance the consequence of want and need, suffered unjustly, as the endurers believed; for, however insane, and without ground of reason, such was their belief, and such was the cause of their violence. It is a great truth, that you cannot extinguish violence by violence. You may put it down for a time; but while you are crowing over your imaginary success, see if it does not return with seven devils worse than its former self!

No one thought of treating the workmen as brethren and friends, and openly, clearly, as appealing to reasonable men, stating the exact and full circumstances which led the masters to think it was a wise policy to make sacrifices themselves, and to hope for them from the operatives.

In going from group to group in the room, you caught such a medley of sentences as the following, “Poor devils! they’re near enough to starving, I’m afraid. Mrs. Aldred makes two cows’ heads into soup every week, and people come several miles to fetch it; and if these times last we must try and do more. But we must not be bullied into anything!”

“A rise of a shilling or so won’t make much difference, and they will go away thinking they’ve gained their point.”

“That’s the very thing I object to. They’ll think so, and whenever they’ve a point to gain, no matter how unreasonable, they’ll strike work.”

“It really injures them more than us.”

“I don’t see how our interests can be separated.”

“Ay, I for one won’t yield one farthing to the cruel brutes; they’re more like wild beasts than human beings.”

(Well, who might have made them different?)

The door was now opened, and a waiter announced that the men were below, and asked if it were the pleasure of the gentlemen that they should be shown up.

Tramp, tramp, came the heavy clogged feet up the stairs; and in a minute five wild, earnest-looking men stood in the room. Had they been larger boned men, you would have called them gaunt; and their clothes hung loosely upon their shrunk limbs. In choosing their delegates, too, the operatives had had more regard to their brains, and power of speech, than to their wardrobes. It was long since many of them had known the luxury of a new article of dress; and air-gaps were to be seen in their garments. Some of the masters were rather affronted at such a ragged detachment coming between the wind and their nobility; but what cared they?

At the request of a gentleman hastily chosen to officiate as chairman, the leader of the delegates read, in a high-pitched, psalm-singing voice, a paper, containing the operatives' statement of the case, their complaints, and their demands.

He was then desired to withdraw for a few minutes, with his fellow delegates, to another room, while the masters considered what should be their definitive answer.

When the men had left the room, a whispered earnest consultation took place. The conceders carried the day, but only by a majority of one. The masters could not consent to the advance demanded by the workmen. They would agree to give one shilling per week more than they had previously offered. Were the delegates empowered to accept such offer?

They were empowered to accept or decline any offer made that day by the masters. Then it might be as well for them to consult among themselves as to what should be their decision. They again withdrew.

It was not for long. They came back, and positively declined any compromise of their demands.

Then up sprang Mr Henry Carson, the head of the most extreme party among the masters and proposed the withdrawing of the proposal just made. He declared that all communication between masters and that particular Trades' Union end; and that no master would employ a workman in future unless he signed a declaration that he did not belong to any Trades' Union. The men who stood listening with lowering brows of defiance were all leading members of the Union. Mr Carson's motion was carried. The workmen received it with deep brooding silence, but spake never a word and left the room without even a bow.

Towards seven o'clock that evening many operatives began to assemble in a room in the Weavers' Arms public-house. Starved, irritated, despairing men, they were assembling to hear the answer that morning given by the masters to their delegates.

John Barton began to speak; they turned to him with great attention. "It makes me more than sad, it makes my heart burn within me, to see that folk can make a jest of earnest men; of chaps who comed to ask for a bit o' fire for th' old granny, as shivers in th' cold; for a bit o' bedding, and some warm clothing to the poor wife; and for food for the children who are too weak to cry aloud wi' hunger. For, brothers, is not them the things we ask for when we ask for more wage? We do not want dainties, we want bellyfuls; we do not want fancy coats and waistcoats, we want warm clothes. We do not want their grand houses, we want a roof to cover us from the rain, and the snow, and the storm. *We* want it for daily bread, for life itself. Well, we come before th' masters to state what we want, and what we must have, afore we'll set shoulder to their work; and they say, 'No.'"

A low angry murmur was heard among the men, but it did not yet take form or words.

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Over **Section B** and **Section C**, you must write about **three** texts from the following list:

*Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (pre-1900)

Tony Harrison: *Selected Poems*

*The Kite Runner* (post-2000 prose)

*Harvest* (post-2000 prose)

*Hard Times* (pre-1900)

*Henry IV Part I* (pre-1900)

*A Doll's House* (pre-1900)

*The Handmaid's Tale*.

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### Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

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**Either**

**0 2**

***Songs of Innocence and of Experience* – William Blake**

‘In his poetry, Blake presents parents as oppressive and controlling of their children.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Blake’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

**0 3**

***Selected Poems* – Tony Harrison**

‘In Harrison’s poetry, education is the main cause of social division and disunity.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Harrison’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

**0 4**

***The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini**

‘In *The Kite Runner*, resistance against those who have power and influence never succeeds.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Hosseini’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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**Harvest – Jim Crace**

‘In the world of *Harvest*, violence is the only effective way to resist those with power.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Crace’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

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**Hard Times – Charles Dickens**

‘In *Hard Times*, Dickens presents Coketown as a place of unrelenting oppression and misery.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Dickens’ authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

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| 0 | 7 |
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**Henry IV Part I – William Shakespeare**

‘Ultimately, Shakespeare suggests we must condemn Falstaff for his rejection of authority.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

or

|   |   |
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| 0 | 8 |
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**A Doll’s House – Henrik Ibsen (translated by Michael Meyer)**

‘Ibsen presents Nora Helmer and Christine Linde as admirable in the ways they defy masculine power.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Ibsen’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

**Section B continues on the next page**

**Turn over ►**

or

|   |   |
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| 0 | 9 |
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***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

'The principal focus of the novel is on the personal suffering of the female characters, rather than the repressive power of Gilead.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atwood's authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

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**Section C**

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your answer you must write about **two** texts that you have **not** used in **Section B**.

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**Either**

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‘The endings of works of political and social protest are always ambiguous.’

Explore the significance of endings as presented in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
|---|---|

‘Political and social protest writing uses contrasting worlds to present its ideas.’

Explore the significance of contrasting worlds as they are presented in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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**There are no questions printed on this page**

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