
AS
ENGLISH LITERATURE B
(7716/1B)

Paper 1B: Literary Genres: Aspects of Comedy

Mark scheme

Specimen Material

Version/Stage: Version 3.0

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

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' 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.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Information for examiners marking Aspects of Comedy: Closed Book

Welcome to this mark scheme which is designed to help you deliver fair and accurate assessment. Please read all sections carefully and ensure that you follow the requirements that they contain.

The significance of Closed Book: Section B

Examiners must understand that in marking a Closed Book exam there are examining implications. Candidates do not have their texts in front of them, so while it is expected that they will use quotations, it is also legitimate to use close textual references. They will have had to memorise quotations so there may be some errors which should not be over penalised. Detailed discussions of particular sections of texts are less likely here than in Open Book exams. Instead, candidates may range broadly across their texts as they construct their arguments.

There are specific issues for AO2 – how meanings are shaped in texts. There is, with Closed Book, the expectation that candidates will not have the texts in front of them, so although they will sometimes be able to make specific references to structural and organisational issues, at other times they will be more general.

Arriving at marks

1. All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Weightings are given above the generic mark scheme. Answers are marked holistically but, when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives (see page 5) and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. In all questions more weight should be given to AO1, AO2 and AO3 than to AO4 and AO5. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training and standardisation. Examiners need to read the whole answer taking into account its strengths and weaknesses and then place it in the appropriate band.
2. Examiners should avoid making early snap judgements before the whole answer has been read. Some candidates begin tentatively but go on to make relevant points.
3. Examiners should be prepared to use the full mark range and not ‘bunch’ scripts in the middle for safety. Top marks are attainable if candidates could not be expected to do more in the time and under the conditions in which they are working.
4. Examiners should mark positively. Although the mark scheme provides some indicators for what candidates are likely to write about, examiners should be willing to reward what is actually there – **provided of course, that it is relevant to the question being asked.**
5. Examiners should remember that there is no one right answer. Candidates’ views which are relevant, well-argued and supported by appropriate textual evidence must receive credit whether the examiner agrees with the views or not. It is important to try to remain flexible if a candidate introduces unusual or unorthodox ideas.
6. Examiners should remember that length and quality are not synonymous. Some brief answers may be relevant and concise. Equally, long answers may be diffuse and repetitive.
7. If answers are short or incomplete, examiners can only reward what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit may be given to answers finished in note form.

Using the mark bands

8. When placing answers in mark bands, examiners need to look closely at the descriptors and the detailed generic mark bands on page 7. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5 (21–25)	perceptive/assured
Band 4 (16–20)	coherent/thorough
Band 3 (11–15)	straightforward/relevant
Band 2 (6–10)	simple/generalised
Band 1 (1–5)	largely irrelevant, largely misunderstood, largely inaccurate

9. Answers placed at the top of the band will securely address the descriptors; answers at the lower end of the band will securely address the descriptors below and begin to show the qualities of the band into which you are placing them. Careful judgements need to be made about marks in the middle of the range; here it is likely that the key descriptors will be more intermittent but still clearly evident.
10. There will be occasions when an answer addresses descriptors in different bands; in such cases, the 'best-fit' model applies. Here examiners will need to exercise a different kind of judgement, looking to see where the answer can be most fairly and appropriately placed in terms of its quality against the descriptors.
11. Examiners must remember that the mark bands are not equivalent to grades: grades are decided by the awarding committee at the end of each session.

Advice about marking each section

Section A

12. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking extract based questions:
- does the candidate have an overview of the extract?
 - has the candidate written about dramatic method?
 - has the candidate quoted from the extract to support ideas?
 - the candidate's AO1 competence.

Section B

13. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions based on single texts:
- has the candidate engaged in a relevant debate or constructed a relevant argument?

- has the candidate referred to different parts of the text to support their views?
- has the candidate referred to Shakespeare's dramatic method?
- the candidate's AO1 competence.

Annotation

14. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.
15. In addition to giving a mark, examiners should write a brief summative comment indicating how the mark has been arrived at. These comments are likely to mirror the appropriate mark band descriptors but comments must not be mechanical. Examiners need to describe candidate performance.
16. Please remember that scripts can go back to candidates, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express your views temperately.
17. The following symbols can be used when marking scripts:
 - tick for a good point, idea, reference etc
 - tick in brackets for a potentially good point, not fully made
 - underlining for an error in fact or expression
 - D when a candidate is describing content
 - R for repetition
 - I for irrelevance
 - ? for when meaning is not clear.

Please do not use your own private systems, as these will mean nothing to senior examiners. If in doubt about what to use, simply write clear comments.

18. Use the model marked script for guidance.

The Assessment Objectives and their significance

19. All questions are framed to test assessment objectives AOs 2, 3, 4 and 5, so if candidates answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO1, which tests more than technical accuracy.

The AOs are as follows:

- AO1** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. (28%)
- AO2** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. (24%)
- AO3** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received. (24%)
- AO4** Explore connections across literary texts. (12%)
- AO5** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations. (12%)

Mark scheme

It is important to remember that these students are 16 to 17 years old, so we are judging their skills at a midway point in Key Stage 5.

Weightings for each question are as follows:

AO1: 7 marks AO2: 6 marks AO3: 6 marks AO4: 3 marks AO5: 3 marks

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
<p>Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21-25 marks</p> <p>'Perception' is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task.</p> <p>'Assuredness' is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression 	<p>This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task 	
<p>Band 4 Coherent/ Thorough 16-20 marks</p> <p>'Coherence' is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way.</p> <p>'Thoroughness' is shown when students write carefully,</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression 	<p>This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task coherence in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	

precisely and accurately.	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task 	two lapses in coherence and accuracy.
<p>Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11-15 marks</p> <p>'Straightforward' work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>'Relevant' work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student's response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task relevant connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explores connections across literary texts arising out of generic study in a straightforward way 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task 	
<p>Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6-10 marks</p> <p>'Simple' work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>'Generalised' work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task generalised connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	

	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task 	
<p>Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1-5 marks</p> <p>‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question.</p> <p>‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s) • the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant • little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts; little sense of any connection arising out of generic study; little sense of an argument in relation to the task 	<p>This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate, and so unlikely to be addressing the AOs in a relevant way.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p>
<p>0 marks</p>		<p>No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.</p>	

Section A

Question 01

***The Taming of the Shrew* – William Shakespeare**

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic comedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the contrast between Katherina and Bianca
- stage action
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as ‘significance’ relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues, some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Taming of the Shrew* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic method:

Focus might be on:

- the contrast of Kate’s (Katherina’s) petulance towards Baptista with Bianca’s seeming respect here and elsewhere in the play
- the aggression of Kate compared to the passivity of Bianca shown through the visual display of Bianca tied by her hands, possibly the striking of Bianca by Kate – and other actions elsewhere
- the quiet confidence of Bianca and the comic jealousy of Kate shown through their stage actions
- Kate’s melodramatic chasing of Bianca
- the use of language throughout the play associated with power: ‘bondman’, ‘unbind’, ‘command’, etc

Given that this is a **Closed Book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of context:

Focus might be on:

- female representations – Kate as the shrew using insults and imperatives to show her power over Bianca but also attitudes of others towards her, here and elsewhere in the play
- the farcical nature of the scene which could be seen in terms of slapstick comedy; or perhaps students might focus more on what it reveals of social attitudes of the Elizabethan era as represented in the play; or looked at from a more modern perspective in terms of pity for Kate – that she should feel so humiliated because of her gender and the expectations regarding the marriage market – this scene could be related to other parts of the play
- male representation, particularly Petruchio and the potential meanings behind his question, etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre:

Focus might be on:

- sibling rivalry as a comedic concept
- comic jealousy
- suitors (likely and unlikely) in love stories links with love story element of dramatic comedy
- use of the comic love story – suggestions that marriages will inevitably follow, etc

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found:

Students might develop any of the points mentioned above and suggest what meanings arise from those ideas and how audiences might react, for example:

- comment might focus on Bianca's dissembling, particularly in the light of her behaviour at the end of the play – she might be admired or condemned
- there might be comment on male representation, particularly Petruchio - different views might be posited about his behaviour and language, etc

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic methods, interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

Question 02***Twelfth Night* – William Shakespeare**

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic comedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Duke Orsino
- the use of disguise
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as ‘significance’ relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues, some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Twelfth Night* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic method:

Focus might be on:

- the regal entrance of the Duke and his first words
- the use of irony when Orsino describes Cesario’s beauty (his lips and voice) as a woman with classical and romantic imagery
- Orsino’s use of language of love - ‘passion of my love’ ‘discourse of my dear faith’, affectionate use of ‘thee’, ‘good youth’, ‘it shall become thee well’, ‘dear lad’, ‘I know thy constellation is right apt’ - here and elsewhere in the play
- the specific terms of endearment from Orsino to Cesario (affectionate use of ‘thee’, ‘good youth’, ‘it shall become thee well, dear lad, I know thy constellation is right apt’)
- the use of foreshadowing – ‘Prosper well in this/And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,/To call his fortunes thine’
- Viola’s final aside to end the scene where she steps out of her disguise
- the dramatic surprise in soliloquy of Viola’s confession of love at the end of the scene, etc

Given that this is a **Closed Book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of context:

Focus might be on:

- the setting of Orsino's court in Illyria
- the social context - the master/servant relationship, attitudes towards power and servitude
- the irony of Viola (being played by a man in Elizabethan theatre) in disguise as a boy, etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre:

Focus might be on:

- the use of disguise as a generic feature of dramatic comedy
- (wise) master/servant relationships
- excessiveness in comedy – as here in Orsino's love for Olivia, use of excessive language – 'clamorous', 'leap all civil bounds', 'unfold the passion of my love', excessive behaviour
- the suggestion of the final happy resolution (and marriages), etc

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found:

Students might develop any of the points mentioned above and suggest what meanings arise from those ideas and how audiences might react, for example:

- the ridiculousness of Orsino as a character, his excessiveness and self-indulgence, his lack of depth, his behaviour, his sentimentality, his luxuriating in his own excesses, the stupidity of his focusing on an object of love (Olivia) that is apparently unmoveable
- comment might be made on the nature of dramatic comedy itself where audiences need to suspend disbelief and enter into the spirit of comic absurdity that pervades the genre, etc

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

Section B

Question 03***She Stoops to Conquer* – Oliver Goldsmith**

Explore the view that, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, barmaids are not simply figures of fun, they are positively celebrated.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Goldsmith's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *She Stoops to Conquer* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1 **Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.**

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument as students address and explore the given view.
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

AO2 **Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.**

With respect to significance of dramatic method:

Focus might be on:

- structural issues relating to the scenes in which barmaids are mentioned or when Kate disguises herself as one to further her plot
- the importance of the The Three Jolly Pigeons inn as setting for Kate's disguise, the setting also of The Three Pigeons
- the use of entrances and exits and dramatic action
- the use of asides, simple language, sexual innuendo, imagery, linguistic devices, patterning, etc

Given that this is a **Closed Book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

AO3 **Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.**

With respect to significance of context:

In exploring the view that far from simply 'being figures of fun' in *She Stoops to Conquer*, 'barmaids are celebrated', students will specifically be engaging with dramatic, social, and gender and comedic contexts. In exploring whether barmaids are 'celebrated' or 'simply' figures of fun,

students will be engaging with and demonstrating understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts of when the play was written and how it has been received.

Focus might be on:

- the way that barmaids are seen as the playthings of gentlemen, reflecting 18th-century attitudes as represented in the play
- the way that barmaids have power in an alternative world (The Three Jolly Pigeons) to the 'real' world, dispensing ale, behaving naturally, speaking honestly
- Bet Bouncer (if she is a barmaid) and how she conquers the heart of Tony, and how he prefers her to the wealthy, sophisticated Miss Neville
- the way that barmaids (who perhaps seem more natural and honest) do not fill Marlow with terror in the way that sophisticated women do, etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre:

In exploring whether barmaids in *She Stoops to Conquer*, are 'figures of fun' or 'celebrated', students will be connecting with:

- the comedic concept of humour, the upbeat resolutions and representations of gender which are common to the genre
- the significance of the barmaid in relation to the title of the play and the concept of humour and social class
- the use of disguise in dramatic comedy as a means to finding 'truth'

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found:

Some will disagree and focus on:

- Kate's role as a barmaid being nothing more than that, a role
- the fact that the barmaids who Marlow talks about are in his past and not part of the dramatic present
- Bet Bouncer (if she is a barmaid), who is not given a speaking role in the play
- the barmaid as belonging to the lower social classes and having no status in the 'real' world
- the way that there is much fun to be had at the expense of the barmaid, whether part of the dramatic action (as in Kate's disguise) or in the reports of the barmaids of Marlow's back story or in Tony's comments about Bet Bouncer
- how the whole play is about figures of fun and the barmaid is ridiculed in the same way as the townsfolk and the country folk; that no-one is taken seriously in this play, etc.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 04***The Importance of Being Earnest* – Oscar Wilde**

Explore the significance of the title *The Importance of Being Earnest* to the comedy of the play.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as ‘significance’ relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues many strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Importance of Being Earnest* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1 **Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.**

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

AO2 **Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.**

With respect to significance of dramatic method:

Focus might be on:

- the way the play is structured around the build-up to what the title eventually means in relation to Jack Worthing
- contrast of settings (the morning room in Algernon’s flat, the garden at the Manor House) for the playing out of the significance of the title
- the punning of Earnest/ Ernest
- Jack’s final words in the play
- the irony of Jack’s real name being Ernest
- the use of parallels
- the use of language, witty exchanges, self-conscious humour which draws attention to itself, etc

Given that this is a **Closed Book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3 **Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.**

With respect to significance of context:

Focus might be on:

- the way the title mocks Victorian society as presented in the play, with its emphasis on gravity, correctness and politeness
- the way that Victorians might have laughed at the representation of their own society
- Jack’s and Algernon’s creation of alter egos to escape earnestness/solemnity,

- the 19th century interest in split personalities (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* etc) though here for comedic purposes
- the moral context suggested by earnestness
- the representation of idle middle class men in terms of their trivial interest in names, etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre:

Focus might be on:

- the irony of the seriousness implied by the word ‘earnest’ and the comedy of the play’s action and language. Comedy as both serious and non-serious
- the creation of ‘doubles’ in comedy – as here Wilde in the construction of the play with pairs of lovers (Jack and Algernon and Gwendolen and Cecily) but the two male characters create their own doubles Jack and Ernest, Algernon and Bunbury, while Algernon also pretends to be Ernest
- use of disguise as a generic feature of dramatic comedy, showing the ‘importance’ of being Ernest
- the generic significance of titles to romantic comedy – comment might also be made on Wilde’s subtitle *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found:

Students might develop any of the points mentioned above and suggest what meanings arise from those ideas and how audiences might react, for example:

- the way in which Wilde ridicules all names in the play
- the moral paradox of the man who both is and is not Earnest
- the hypocrisy of those who put a premium on sobriety and honesty
- the implications of ‘not’ being earnest
- the way that the play ridicules the very concept of earnestness, etc

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic method, any valid interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are connected to the title of the play.

Question 05***Educating Rita* – Willy Russell**

Explore the view that the play is more about educating Frank than educating Rita.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Russell's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Educating Rita* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1 **Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.**

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument as students address and explore the given view.
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

AO2 **Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.**

With respect to significance of dramatic method:

Focus might be on:

- structural issues relating to the scenes in which Frank's learning takes place and where Rita's learning takes place, significance of the beginning and ending
- the contrast of academic language and Rita's Liverpool working-class dialect
- use of dialogue, wit and repartee, mockery, patterning, use of literary allusions, use of Frank's drunken speech, use of vulgarisms, etc

Given that this is a **Closed Book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

AO3 **Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.**

With respect to contextual issues arising from the question and the play:

In exploring the view that the play is more about 'educating' Frank than 'educating' Rita, students will specifically be engaging with dramatic, social, gender and comedic contexts. In exploring whether the play is 'more' about educating Frank than educating Rita, students will be engaging with and demonstrating understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts of when the play was written and how it has been received. Focus might be on:

- the academic setting of the university – Frank’s tutorial room, the place for the battle between the classes and sexes as Rita begs Frank to educate her and in the process educates him
- the play which reflects the social divides and attitudes to education in the 1970s and 80s when a university education was still the privilege of the middle-classes – Rita feels she is intruding into an academic world in which she does not really belong
- the differences in social class which inform Frank and Rita’s attitudes and the play’s comedy – he speaks Standard English with Received Pronunciation, she uses a northern dialect and speaks with a Liverpool accent
- the differences in their genders which set up the possibility of a romantic conclusion, which Russell does not satisfy, etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre:

In exploring whether the play is more about ‘educating’ Frank than ‘educating’ Rita, students will be connecting with the comedic concept of learning and gaining self-knowledge.

- Focus might be on:
 - the importance of learning as an aspect of the comic genre, especially in the sense of self-discovery
 - the joy of acquiring knowledge
 - the representatives of a middle class academic life style and the raw urban working class are at the centre of the comic world and echo Higgins and Eliza in *Pygmalion* in their attitudes to learning and in the ways they learn
 - the way that the play connects to the comedy genre through drawing attention to its own artifice in terms of education – (Rita wants to know why Chekov’s plays are called comedies when events in *The Seagull* are so tragic)

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found:

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on:

- Frank’s understanding that Rita’s desire for learning is ‘like a breath of fresh air’
- his facing up to the fact that although he has learning it has no meaning
- his learning that one’s ability to learn is limitless
- his learning to respect his students
- his regaining of his self-esteem
- his learning that life has meaning
- his learning the importance of spontaneity
- his personal growth
- his learning that he needs to undo the rules of academic essay writing
- his learning of love perhaps
- Rita’s education only making her a snob, so in fact limiting
- her knowing instinctively from the start what it is that is important
- her knowing from the start that life must have meaning, etc.

Some will disagree and focus on:

- the idea that Frank's learning takes him nowhere whereas Rita learns that she has the power to make choices
- Rita's academic achievements
- Rita's love of learning, her wanting to learn everything ('I wanna know')
- Rita's learning how to be resilient
- the idea that Frank's education has made him into an alcoholic
- the idea that Frank's education is always second-hand
- the idea that Frank does not really understand Rita, etc

Some students will explore the view that both are educated and that, though different, their learning is equal.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.