

General Certificate of Education  
January 2004  
Advanced Level Examination



**ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION B)**  
**Unit 6 Exploring Texts**

**LTB6/PM**

To be issued to candidates on Friday 23 January 2004 for examination  
on Thursday 29 January 2004 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

**Pre-Release Material**

- To be given out on or after Friday 23 January 2004.
- On receipt of this material, you are advised to check carefully that the booklet is complete and that no pages are missing or illegible. There should be 12 pages. If you experience problems you should consult your teacher.
- You should use the time between receiving this material and the examination to familiarise yourself with its contents.
- You are permitted to make **brief** annotations on the pre-release material. Such annotation should amount to no more than cross-references and/or the glossing of individual words or phrases. Highlighting and underlining are permitted.
- You are **not** permitted to bring any additional written material with you into the examination.
- Your teacher is **not** permitted to discuss the pre-release material with you before the examination.
- **You must bring this material with you to the examination.**

**Pre-Release Material****The Gothic in Literature****Contents**

- Item One**      *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Allan Poe.
- Item Two**      Extract A: from *Gothic* by Fred Botting.  
Extract B: from *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1, The Gothic Tradition* by David Punter.  
Extract C: from the introduction to *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe* by David Galloway.
- Item Three**    Extract A: from the entry on the Gothic Novel in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams.  
Extract B: from the introduction to *Gothic* by Fred Botting.  
Extract C: from *The Gothic Tradition* by David Stevens.
- Item Four**     Extract from an article in *The Guardian*, 21 September 2002.

## Item One

The following short story is by Edgar Allan Poe, an American writer (1809–1849). It was first published in *Graham's Magazine* in 1842 and appeared in its final form in the *Broadway Journal* (19 July 1845).

### *The Masque of the Red Death*

THE 'Red Death' had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal – the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim, were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the 'Red Death'.

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven – an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different; as might have been expected from the duke's love of the *bizarre*. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue – and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange – the fifth with white – the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet – a deep blood color. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite, there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the fire-light that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes, was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of

**Turn over ►**

the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes, (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies,) there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the duke were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the moveable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*; and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm – much of what has been since seen in ‘Hernani’. There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the *bizarre*, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these – the dreams – writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away – they have endured but an instant – and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many-tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away; and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appals; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gaieties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise – then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted it, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the prince’s indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood* – and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

‘Who dares?’ he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him – ‘who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him – that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise, from the battlements!’

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly – for the prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the prince’s person; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple – through the purple to the green – through the green to the orange – through this again to the white – and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry – and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave-cerements and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

**TURN OVER FOR ITEM TWO**

**Turn over ►**

---

**Item Two Some critical views on Edgar Allan Poe**

**Extract A:** from *Gothic* by Fred Botting in the New Critical Idiom series

Extract A from *Gothic* by Fred Botting, Routledge 1996 – not reproduced here, due to third-party copyright constraints.

**Extract B:** from *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1, The Gothic Tradition* by David Punter

Extract B from *The Literature of Terror: Volume 1, The Gothic Tradition*, by David Punter, Longman 1996 – not reproduced here, due to third-party copyright constraints.

**Extract C:** from the introduction to *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe* by David Galloway

The best of Poe's creative work deserves to be taken symbolically: its roots are in his desire to avoid the mundane, to break through the conventional frontiers of consciousness into 'the elevating excitement of the Soul'. The real clue to Poe's writing is thus to be found in his own criticism – in the aesthetic ideals put forward in his essay on 'The Poetic Principle' and the preface to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Here we find the two most persistent determinants of Poe's art, the imaginative quest for Beauty and what he termed 'the terror of the soul'; together they form the writer's *Weltanschauung*. The poetry and prose are thus linked not only by recurrent images and themes, but as studies of what Edward Davidson has called the 'stages of consciousness when the real world slipped away or disintegrated and the mind found itself fronting the "horror" of its own loneliness and loss'. . . . The voyage of the mind out of the real world ends in a blinding vision that is at once revelation and destruction.

All of Poe's most memorable characters withdraw from life in its conventional aspects, into heavily draped rooms with artificial lighting, and there they cultivate a life of their own, so distinct and cut apart from the world that they lose all touch with reality. In this condition, they can develop an acuteness of sense (even at times, synaesthesia) and an almost mystical perception in keeping with Poe's own aesthetic principles. . . . Poe's outsiders lose their sanity and often their lives as a result of expanded consciousness. In 'The Masque of the Red Death' Poe makes the lesson unmistakably clear: under Prince Prospero (a figure totally lacking the redemptive magic of Shakespeare's Prospero), a thousand knights and ladies take refuge in a castellated abbey, sealing themselves away from the plague which stalks the land, and there they cultivate Beauty in its most elaborately artificial forms. But they cannot elude death, and it finally stalks through the exotic chambers of the abbey, infecting all the revellers: the ebony clock stops, the torches expire, and 'Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all'.

---

**Item Three**

**Extract A:** from the entry on the ‘Gothic Novel’ in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams

Gothic Novel. The word ‘Gothic’ originally referred to the Goths, an early Germanic tribe, then came to signify ‘germanic’, then ‘medieval’.

The Gothic novel, or in an alternative term, Gothic romance, is a type of prose fiction which was inaugurated by Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764) – the subtitle refers to its setting in the middle ages – and flourished through the early nineteenth century. Some writers followed Walpole’s example by setting their stories in the medieval period; others set them in a Catholic country, especially Italy or Spain. The locale was often a gloomy castle furnished with dungeons, subterranean passages, and sliding panels; the typical story focused on the sufferings imposed on an innocent heroine by a cruel and lustful villain, and made bountiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances, and other sensational and supernatural occurrences (which in a number of novels turned out to have natural explanations). The principal aim of such novels was to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and a variety of horrors. Many of them are now read mainly as period pieces, but the best opened up to fiction the realm of the irrational and of the perverse impulses and nightmarish terrors that lie beneath the orderly surface of the civilized mind.

Examples of Gothic novels are William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786) – the setting of which is both medieval and Oriental and the subject both erotic and sadistic – Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and other highly successful Gothic romances, and Matthew Gregory Lewis’ *The Monk* (1796), which exploited, with considerable literary skill, the shock-effects of a narrative involving rape, incest, murder, and diabolism. Jane Austen made good-humored fun of the more decorous instances of the Gothic vogue in *Northanger Abbey* (written 1798, published 1818).

The term ‘Gothic’ has also been extended to a type of fiction which lacks the exotic setting of the earlier romances, but develops a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror, represents events that are uncanny or macabre or melodramatically violent, and often deals with aberrant psychological states. In this extended sense the term ‘Gothic’ has been applied to William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794), Mary Shelley’s remarkable and influential *Frankenstein* (1817), and the novels and tales of terror by the German E.T.A. Hoffmann. Still more loosely, ‘Gothic’ has been used to describe elements of the macabre and terrifying in such later works as Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Charles Dickens’ *Bleak House* (for example, chapters 11, 16, and 47) and *Great Expectations* (the Miss Havisham episodes).

**Extract B:** from the introduction to *Gothic* by Fred Botting

Extract B from *Gothic* by Fred Botting, Routledge 1996 – not reproduced here, due to third-party copyright constraints.

Turn over ►

**Extract C:** from *The Gothic Tradition* by David Stevens

The 18th century gothic was essentially a self-conscious revival of something older – or at least a contemporary perception of what was older, for historical accuracy was not of paramount importance. The fascination for ruins and relics permeated all the gothic arts, from architecture to literature, and frequently verged on the nostalgic in its idealisation of the past as opposed to a complicated and unacceptable present. Detailed re-creation of a past era was rather less significant in the gothic world-view than mood and atmosphere, presented through the narrative content of texts, and through the form that these texts embodied. In the range of forms available to gothic writers, the ballad, dating back to an oral tradition, and the medieval romance were significant artefacts. Even more important to the gothic revival was Shakespeare. Indeed it was gothic and subsequently Romantic figures who virtually re-invented and re-presented Shakespeare in ways which are familiar to modern audiences.



**Item Four**

An extract from a review of a television programme called *Goths*, *The Guardian*, 21 September 2002

Extract from *Look Black in Anger* by Ben Marshall, *The Guardian* 2002 –  
not reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

**END OF PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL**

---

THERE IS NO MATERIAL PRINTED ON THIS PAGE

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF COPYRIGHT-HOLDERS AND PUBLISHERS

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases efforts to contact copyright-holders have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements in future papers if notified.

**Item One** EDGAR ALLAN POE, *The Masque of the Red Death*, Broadway Journal, 19 July 1845.

**Item Two** Extract A: FRED BOTTING, *Gothic* (Routledge) 1996.  
Extract B: DAVID PUNTER, *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1, The Gothic Tradition* (Longman) 1996.  
Extract C: DAVID GALLOWAY *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe* (Penguin) 1967.

**Item Three** Extract A: From *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 7th Edition by M.H. ABRAMS, © 1999. Reprinted with permission of Heinle, a division of Thomson Learning: [www.thomsonrights.com](http://www.thomsonrights.com). Fax: 800 730-2215.  
Extract B: FRED BOTTING, *Gothic* (Routledge) 1996.  
Extract C: DAVID STEVENS, *The Gothic Tradition* (Cambridge University Press) 2000.

**Item Four** Goths by Ben Marshall in *The Guardian*, 21 September 2002. © Ben Marshall.

Copyright © 2004 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.