

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H072

For first teaching in 2015

H072/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction3

Paper 1 series overview4

Section 1 overview6

 Question 1 (a)7

 Question 1 (b)7

 Question 2 (a)8

 Question 2 (b)8

 Question 3 (a)10

 Question 3 (b)10

 Question 4 (a)11

 Question 4 (b)11

 Question 5 (a)12

 Question 5 (b)14

 Question 6 (a)14

 Question 6 (b)14

Section 2 overview15


 Question 716

 Question 819

 Question 919

 Question 1020

 Question 1120




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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 1 series overview

H072/01 (Shakespeare and poetry pre-1900) is one of two exam components for the AS English Literature. The component comprises two sections.

Section 1 requires the candidates to answer one question from a choice of six Shakespeare plays. Each question has an either/or choice and requires the candidate to discuss a specific topic taking account of a prompt quotation.

Section 2 requires the candidates to answer one question from a choice of five pre-1900 poets. The question directs the candidate towards a specific poem or extract from a longer poem, which is the principal focus of the question. Each question comprises a single poem or extract with no choice offered. The candidates are required to analyse the poem/extract closely and make links between the set poem and other poems by the given poet or, if it is an extract, to the rest of the poem.

Section 1 assesses the four assessment objectives AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO5.

Section 2 assesses the four assessment objectives AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4.

The fundamental principle of the marking is holistic: each response is given one mark out of 30. This reflects how the response has met the level criteria as a whole, as set out in the mark scheme.

To do well on this paper candidates must have close familiarity with the texts. With respect to Section 1, this means knowing the written text of the Shakespeare play well. Knowledge of productions and references to them is invaluable, but these should complement, and not be a substitute for, close textual familiarity. With respect to Section 2, candidates must have studied all the set poems closely.

For successful responses, candidates should present structured arguments and spend a few minutes planning the response before answering the question. There are specific points to note in terms of the general approach to constructing a response in each section:

Section 1:

- Higher level responses ensured that they answered the question as set. This requires paying close attention to the key words of the question. Good responses invariably make frequent references to the key terms of the question in the body of the response and unpack their meaning. For example, in 2b, what is it in Hamlet's behaviour which is either 'cruel' or 'kind'? What does it mean to be 'cruel'?
- Higher level responses debated the propositions in the question and tried to see both sides of the argument, even if they then came down more on one side than the other. For example, a response to 5a might argue that 'The Tempest' is more about 'control and enslavement' than 'setting characters free', but should at least consider the arguments for both sides of the proposition.

Section 2:

- Candidates should analyse the set poem/extract closely. Candidates should be encouraged draw attention to and quote specific examples of language, imagery and verse form. They should analyse how the feature identified works and its effect on the reader.
- Higher level responses spent approximately two thirds to three quarters of the response on the extract and the rest to pertinent connections to other poems/the rest of the poem.

In terms of AO3 (context), candidates should remember that this is a 'light touch' requirement.

Two specific points arose with respect to this assessment objective and apply to both sections:

- Higher level responses tended to avoid reductive, sweeping generalisations about, for example, gender politics at a given time. Observations like 'at the time of Shakespeare, patriarchal views were dominant and there was an expectation that women should be silent, obedient and chaste' are more valuable than, 'at Shakespeare's time, women were completely submissive to men'. Higher level responses acknowledged that the literary texts set for study tend not simply to reproduce dominant values but also mediate emergent values and/or in some ways contest dominant ideology. See, for example, in 5b, Miranda's defiance of Prospero in the Courtship Scene, or the satire on anti-feminist ideology in 'The Merchant's Tale', Question 7.
- Specific contextual detail should be applied to the text directly. For example, in 2a and 2b, an argument that Hamlet is reflecting Early Modern misogyny is best discussed by considering the specific circumstances of Hamlet's behaviour towards Ophelia and/or Gertrude. Rossetti's charitable work with 'fallen women' is useful biographical context if related specifically to the presentation of Maude Clare as, say, defiant and proud.

Section 1 overview

'Hamlet' was by some way the most popular text. 'The Tempest' was also popular, with far fewer responses to 'Measure for Measure', 'Richard III' and 'Twelfth Night.' 'Coriolanus' was the least popular text. Candidates who performed well did the following:

- Used productions effectively. Typically, specific details were selected which enriched AO5 interpretation. For example, one candidate observed the effect on the audience's perception of the Duke (3b) when Mark Rylance emerged on stage from a basket of laundry covered in under garments. Many candidates made good use 'Hamlet' productions, comparing, for example, the way Hamlet treats Ophelia physically in the Branagh, Tennant and Papa Essideu productions. The RSC 2017 production of 'The Tempest' was used well to unpack Prospero's (Simon Russell Beale) farewell to Caliban and Ariel.
- Produced thoroughly planned and well-constructed arguments, taking a variety of approaches to the question. For example, although many responses to 5a concentrated on Prospero's control and 'setting free' of Ariel and Caliban, there were top Level 6 answers which barely touched on these two characters instead concentrating on Prospero's own enslavement to his magic and liberation, the Epilogue, the Court characters and Miranda. Excellent debates were to be found. For example, whether or not Miranda, in 5a and 5b, is set free or merely handed over to more patriarchal control.
- Quoted from critics appropriately: from Goethe, through Coleridge, Wilson Knight, Dollimore to Emma Smith. Good understanding was reflected in the way critics were used selectively and pertinently to enrich, not as a substitute for, AO1 argument and AO5 debate.
- Showed familiarity with texts by extensive and relevant quotations from the text which were then unpacked for their effect. The ambiguity of 'nunnery' in Hamlet's verbal assault on Ophelia was frequently unpacked to good effect.
-
- Used context selectively (see section above) and with qualification. For example, references to James 1 enriched discussion of 'Measure for Measure' and 'The Tempest': the political manoeuvrings of Vincentio and Prospero's role as a magician. Good use was made of the Tudor Myth with relation to Richard III's charismatic and Machiavellian relationship with the audience. The Corn Riots were alluded to in discussions of 'Coriolanus' and the Puritan context of the presentation of Malvolio enriched discussions of 'Twelfth Night'. Excellent use was made of Bacon's comment on revenge being a 'wild kind of justice' in responses to both 'Hamlet' and 'The Tempest.'

Lower level responses tended to include the following features:

- Deflection of the question away from the question set and /or reproducing a response to a question which had been set in previous sessions. For example, examiners saw several responses to both 'Hamlet' questions which addressed Hamlet's inability to act, rather than this year's question. One response ignored the requirement to discuss the Tribunes in 1b and focused on the Patricians 'protection' of the Plebeians. Candidates should be encouraged to debate the proposition in the question.
- Lack of quotation or detailed textual support.

- Ineffective use of productions (see above) and in some responses, production knowledge was substituted for textual knowledge. For example, the scene in Branagh where Hamlet is in bed with Ophelia, was cited as evidence of their sexual encounter before the action of the play.
- Contextual generalisations, unqualified and unaccompanied by close attention to the text. Some candidates are still identifying Shakespeare as a Victorian writer and Rossetti's poems as Jacobean.

Question 1 (a)

1 *Coriolanus*

Either

- (a) 'Plenty of hatred, not much love.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this comment on the play?

[30]

Although not a popular text, there were some excellent responses. Love and hate were discussed in relation to both political and personal relationships. Although most candidates identified 'hate' between states, classes and family, the highest-level responses addressed 'love' effectively as well. For example, the homoerotic nuances in the relationship between Coriolanus and Aufidius was discussed as was the relationship between Coriolanus and his family. On the one side, Volumnia's 'fetishising' of Coriolanus's wounds was noted but this was juxtaposed with the dramatic image of Coriolanus kneeling before his family when sparing Rome. Two candidates gave an interesting reading of what 'love' between mother and son might look like in terms of Early Modern and Contemporary perspectives. Candidates tended to perform less well when they did not at least consider the possibility that love might be presented in the play.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) 'Loyal protectors of the people.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of the Tribunes in the play?

[30]

The role of the Tribunes was generally well understood. One very good answer looked closely at the Tribunes' costumes in an RSC production, arguing that they had more in common with Patricians than Plebeians and that their leadership made them automatically at risk of corruption. Lower level responses did not write about the Tribunes at all, which underlines the importance of close attention to the precise terms of the question.

Question 2 (a)

2 *Hamlet*

Either

- (a) 'A play that suggests how difficult it is to be true to yourself.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play *Hamlet*?

[30]

This was a popular question on the most popular text. Many responses picked on Polonius's 'to your own self be true' as an ironic comment on the play. Excellent responses included an analysis of Hamlet in a variety of ways: the conflict between the task he must perform and his thoughtful, reflective, humanist nature and the difficulties of being true to oneself in a surveillance society, where spying seemed the norm. There were some excellent analyses of women within patriarchy: Ophelia's domination by her father and brother; good debates as to whether Gertrude was being loyal to the state and/or her own desires by marrying Claudius. Excellent points were made exploring Ophelia's self-expression through madness and suicide, and Gertrude's defiance of Claudius when taking the poison. Views of Ophelia's 'domination' were also more nuanced by acknowledging that in some productions her responses to Laertes are presented as feisty. Higher level responses considered characters who do seem to be true to themselves: Horatio, Fortinbras and Laertes. There were interesting debates about whether Claudius was true to himself or not. Productions were used well in some responses. For example, the way mirrors in the Branagh 'Hamlet' suggest facades, duplicity and surveillance.

Question 2 (b)

- (b) 'The Prince is rarely kind and often cruel.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the character of Hamlet?

[30]

This was the most popular question on the paper. It was very well answered. The highest-level responses exemplified Hamlet's cruelty towards Ophelia, Gertrude, Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern but also unpacked the cruel behaviour and considered possible explanations for it. Most responses went way beyond simple identification of cultural misogyny to consider, for example, Hamlet's grief, sense of betrayal, sexual disgust, sexual longing, 'madness' by unpacking specific encounters. The best responses did consider his kindness, usually towards Horatio. Some good responses argued that his 'cruelty' towards Ophelia in the Nunnery scene was motivated by a desire to protect her and observed the anaphoric references to his kindness to Ophelia in his letters. Some good responses took the Bradley view that in the Closet Scene Hamlet is being 'cruel to be kind' by trying to save his mother's soul. Good use was made of productions comparing whether or not Hamlet's verbal assault becomes a physical assault. Candidates who did less well simply gave examples of Hamlet's cruelty and did not move beyond 'misogyny' to unpack his behaviour in a more nuanced way.

Exemplar 1 below is an extract from a very secure Level 6 response.

Exemplar 1

Hamlet is also seen to be cruel for his attitude towards Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are characters stained in corruption, that "soaks up the king's countenances and his rewards". The use of the king's wealth generates a strong sense of irony, clearly representing the hypocritical state of the two officials, and thus Hamlet does not show any leniency towards them either. In Robert Icke's Almeida production, Hamlet can be seen to heavily question the officials' purpose, and there is an almost comedic effect generated by his relentlessness. He uses the metaphor of a pipe ~~see~~ telling them to "put ^{their} pipes in these stops, and give it breath and it will discourse our eloquent music". Of course, Hamlet knows that they are lying as he says "it is as easy as lying" and finishes off with the direct question, "do you think I am easier to be played upon than a pipe?". The demanding tone adopted by the prince is clearly very cruel, showing his lack of regard for ~~the~~ Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who according to Marilyn French, "sampl[e] the bond of human friendship to a cold propriety". At the time, spy networks were highly prevalent in Elizabethan England, with the Queen using Sir Francis Walsingham, just as Claudius uses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. However, Hamlet, being naturally clever, is able to see through the deceitful nature, and vents the two characters with unrelenting cruelty.

This response shows a tightly developed argument; excellent analysis of textual detail; succinct use of critical comment; apt and detailed use of production to enrich argument; precise and apt use of contextual knowledge.

Question 3 (a)

3 *Measure for Measure*

Either

- (a) 'The play *Measure for Measure* suggests that almost any human fault may be forgiven.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *Measure for Measure*? [30]

There were some excellent responses which made the distinction between earthly versus divine forgiveness. Others balanced Early Modern versus Modern perceptions of crime and punishment. One excellent response referenced Dollimore's notion of 'authoritarian repression' and debated the balance between mercy, forgiveness and justice. Another good response drew an interesting distinction between mercy and forgiveness, the former being an act of Christian value independent of what is socially just or capable of being forgiven. Some excellent responses debated specific examples of faults which were committed and whether or not they were actually forgiven in the play. One excellent response considered how different audiences over time might choose to forgive the characters, independently of what judgements are given on stage.

Question 3 (b)

- (b) 'The Duke seems to make things up as he goes along. He is never far from disaster.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*? [30]

This was the less popular of the questions on 'Measure for Measure.' Some good responses did take the Leavisite view of the Duke as a Christ-like figure but most agreed with the proposition. Specific examples of the Duke's improvisation were discussed: the initial decision to delegate his power, his adoption of the friar's disguise, the bed trick and the substitution of Barnadine's head. One good response debated the extent to which the Duke was improvising in his judgements in Act 5. There was evidence of good contextual awareness, observing that the comic trope of the bed trick might not be seen in quite the same way in the current cultural climate. Good use was made of productions, including the recent Donmar Warehouse production; the ambiguities of Isabella's silence and how an audience might respond to this particular outcome was discussed.

Question 4 (a)

4 *Richard III*

Either

- (a) 'Richard's most interesting relationship is not with the other characters, but with the audience.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play?

[30]

Not a popular text overall but this was the most popular choice of the two questions. There was evidence of the text having been much enjoyed and there were some excellent responses. A range of points were made to explore why Richard's relationship with the audience is interesting: the use of metadrama, breaking the fourth wall, the creation of dramatic irony, the conscription of the audience as co-conspirators were all well-made arguments. Many good responses seemed to be drawn to the mixture of comedy, charisma and Machiavellian evil in the presentation of Richard, with one candidate noting Richard's 'perpetual vitality'. The comment of one critic was quoted to particularly good effect: Richard 'selects himself to be the role of the dramatic villain.' Good alternative arguments were presented particularly when considering Richard's relationship with the female characters, most notably Anne. Much was made of Richard's opening soliloquy but candidates who did less well, did not move far beyond that to consider the rest of the play.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) 'Richard's followers are merely brutal and selfish.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the roles of Richard's supporters in *Richard III*?

[30]

There were very few responses to this question and they mostly achieved Level 4 and below. Buckingham and Hastings were analysed competently by one candidate but Catesby, Ratcliffe et al were not considered, although the openness of the question invited this. It is necessary to have secure knowledge of the full range of characters in the play.

Question 5 (a)

5 *The Tempest*

Either

(a) 'A play not about control and enslavement, but setting characters free.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Tempest*?

[30]

This was a very popular question and there were many excellent responses. The situations of Ariel and Caliban were debated often in terms of Jacobean versus postcolonial perceptions. Many good responses referenced specific productions to comment on the relationship between Prospero and his servants at the end of the play. Most impressive was the range of ideas. There were some excellent analyses of Prospero's own enslavement to magic and the concept of revenge and his liberation from them. The power relations in the opening scene and the treatment of the Court were also analysed well. Good, relevant points were made about the overarching structure of the comedy as it moves from disorder to order with the setting free of characters. Many good responses discussed the situation of Miranda, as in the exemplar below. Good responses debated whether Miranda is being set free from patriarchy or merely being handed over from one man to another.

Exemplar 2 represents good Level 5 qualities.

Exemplar 2

This is also reinforced ~~later~~ earlier as many critics suggest that in many ways Prospero has set his daughter free from father-patriarchal beliefs. Through the courtship of Miranda and Ferdinand Prospero has given Ferdinand "a third of his life" this could suggest his daughter is now no longer under his control. During the Jacobean era marriage was seen as a contract or exchange between families and thus women were objectified. Undoubtedly, feminist critics would view this as unfair and unjust because women ~~are~~ should be equal with men. However, during the Jacobean era, the ~~etern~~ hierarchy of order placed men above women. Therefore, through the courtship of Miranda she is set free from her father's rule.

The question is clearly addressed; the argument is structured and debated; the text is quoted and commented on; context is referenced with a specific reference to attitudes towards marriage and a comparison is made between Jacobean and Modern perceptions; an appropriate register is used with acknowledgement of 'patriarchal beliefs' and how women were 'objectified' in Jacobean marriage.

The response would have been improved by:

- being more specific about which critics were being cited;
- more textual detail and reference to, for example, the courtship scene, the masque or the chess game.

Candidates who did less well tended not to debate the proposition and presented the colonial enslavement of Caliban and Ariel as incontestable and could not see beyond the 'tyranny' of Prospero. One or two responses cited a 'Marxist' approach which saw Prospero enslaving the proletariat, not recognising that the Court characters and Ariel (a spirit) do not fit easily into such an analysis.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) 'Miranda's eagerness to grow and change is of great dramatic value to the play.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Miranda in *The Tempest*?
[30]

This was by some way the less popular of the choices on this play. There were some very good responses discussing the relationship between Miranda and Prospero and its development through the play. Miranda's assertiveness with Ferdinand and the 'brave new world' reaction were both discussed effectively. Miranda's responses throughout the play were discussed well in relation to staged productions. Examiners felt that candidates might have engaged more with the 'dramatic value' dimension to the question. Studying the plays as drama, viewing productions and reflecting on their effect, is central to this specification. Teachers might wish to give more explicit attention as to what constitutes dramatic value/impact/effectiveness. Discussions of how texts are enacted and staged, audience responses, the presentation of conflict and shifts of mood, the importance of spectacle (especially in 'The Tempest') would all be profitable points of discussion.

Question 6 (a)

6 *Twelfth Night*

Either

- (a) 'For a comedy, *Twelfth Night* possesses a strong undertone of sadness.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play? [30]

This was much the more popular question. Candidates engaged well with Orsino, Viola and Malvolio. The context of *Twelfth Night* as a festival and the Puritanism of Malvolio was well understood. Some very good responses took a more conceptual approach to the question. Notwithstanding that is a comedy, the play's concerns with death and bereavement, madness and unrequited love were all discussed to good effect. Examiners felt that Feste's songs were often neglected and would have enriched discussion.

Question 6 (b)

- (b) 'Olivia and Orsino get what they need, not what they want.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of their roles in *Twelfth Night*? [30]

Several candidates engaged in a profitable debate about 'want' and 'need'. Orsino's marriage to Viola was treated with even greater scepticism than Olivia's to Sebastian. Candidates were alert to the gender and sexual politics of the play and the idea that Orsino wanted Cesario and not Viola was popular. One sophisticated response cited the recent RSC production in which the identities of Viola and Sebastian were dramatised with such subtlety in the denouement of the play, that they appeared not as two but as one, making choices between them immaterial.

Section 2 overview

Rossetti was overwhelmingly the most popular text. This was followed by Chaucer and Milton, with very few responses to Coleridge and Tennyson.

- There is an expectation in this section that AO2 analysis will be sharper and more detailed as the set poem/extract is reproduced on the examination paper. Examiners reported some excellent close analysis. Features were unpacked for their effect and there were some good analyses of form: the rhyming couplets in Chaucer and the unsettling use of rhyme in 'Maude Clare'.
- Higher level responses used literary terminology to good effect, including quite sophisticated rhetorical terms: the use of 'effectio' in Chaucer and Milton's use of 'epanilepsis'.
- Higher level responses showed evidence of planning and paid attention to the steer of the question. For example, in question 11, love and marriage are not synonymous and good answers tended to discriminate between how Rossetti presents love and how she presents marriage. Arguments paid most attention (two thirds to three quarters of the response) to the set poem/extract and, in the best responses, links to other poems or the rest of the poem were integrated by way of comparison.
- Detailed analysis was sustained in the best responses, including analysis of quotations from the linked texts.
- Higher ability candidates used contextual material selectively and precisely to enrich their comments on the poem: good use was made of Watts' painting of the 'fallen woman' and of Coventry Patmore's 'Angel in the House' when discussing Rossetti, alongside the more readily accessible biographical information concerning her charity work and her marriage proposals. The courtly love traditions were well used in discussions of both Chaucer and Milton.

Lower level responses tended to include the following features:

- Lack of familiarity with the poem or extract set.

Lack of focus on the set poem or extract and too much emphasis on links rather than showing a detailed understanding of the task set. Some candidates tried to name check a host of poems or wrote at length about the whole poem from which the extract is taken rather than making apt links.

- Making broad generalisations about context, rather than selecting specific contextual details to enrich the understanding of the text in hand. This was particularly noticeable in broad generalisations about Milton's 'misogyny' or the oppressed position of women in Victorian society.

Question 7

7 Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*

Discuss Chaucer's portrayal of the way Januarie goes about choosing a wife in the following extract from *The Merchant's Tale*.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find this extract characteristic of *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*. **[30]**

This was a popular text and the question was typically answered well. Good responses clearly identified Januarie's preoccupation with youth and appearance, his objectification of May and the foregrounding of lust. Foreshadowing, proleptic irony and the identification of patterns of language and imagery all featured prominently. There were some excellent analyses of the 'mirour' unpacking the way it connoted inversion, voyeurism, illusion and objectification. Excellent responses were comfortable with analysing Chaucer's use of rhythm and phonology. It was impressive that several responses drew interesting distinctions between Januarie, the Merchant and the overarching control of Chaucer. Excellent links were made to the rest of the Tale and to context with concepts of the *senex amans*, *fabliau*, courtly love and mercantile culture all being cited to good effect. Some responses still confused 'wise' with the modern 'wise' rather than 'way', which lead to some misreading of the presentation of Januarie. A few candidates suggested that the irony and parodic qualities of the Tale were only seen by modern audiences and that a medieval audience would think that Januarie's focus on May's youth and appearance was normal. Perhaps the notion that pre-modern audiences and readers were quite smart needs emphasising.

Exemplar 3 shows good Level 5 qualities.

Exemplar 3

Firstly, Chaucer portrays the way Januarie goes about choosing a wife in a way that he seems materialistic and superficial (as seen through the use of the setting in a market place). This is demonstrated when Chaucer explains "whoso take a mirror polished bright, // And sette it in a comune market-place". The use of the image of a "mirror polished bright" suggests a materialistic and superficial nature to the way Januarie goes about choosing a wife. The "mirror" will never show a true representation of a person as the image is always inverted suggesting Januarie's decision to choose a wife in this way is somewhat flawed. The fact that it is in a "comune market-place" gives his choice an air of

-his nature as he hopes it will be a busy place with many potential wives to choose from. The avarice and materialistic flaws in the way Janurio goes about choosing a wife links to the tale as a fable with Janurio as a senex among the elderly man to be ~~marked~~ marked as the audience knows he will be cuckolded regardless of his choice in wife. The materialism in Janurio's choosing of a wife links to the rest of the poem in with particular with the character of the merchant with his vast materialism. This can be seen at the start of the poem in which the merchant is described as having a "flaundersh beaver hat", being dressed "in mottlee". These materialistic features of the merchant carry significance in the way he tells the tale and the materialism he and Chaucer has present and satirise within other characters such as Janurio. His "flaundersh beaver hat" proves his materialism and wealth and proves he is well travelled as his hat is "flaundersh" (from Flanders) and is made of "beaver" (beaver) an expensive material at this time. Therefore, Janurio's the way Janurio goes about choosing a wife may be viewed as materialistic.

	and awarfeers as seen through the market setting, this materialism presented here is characteristic of the poem and can be seen throughout particularly through the character of the merchant.
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Secure knowledge of the extract and the whole text; good close detail, quoted and commented on; pertinent links made to the rest of the Tale; relevant links made to social context; clearly developed argument.

Question 8

8 John Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Books 9 & 10

Discuss ways in which Milton portrays Satan's flattery of Eve in this extract from *Paradise Lost*, Book 9.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find this extract characteristic of *Paradise Lost*, Books 9 and 10. [30]

This was a popular text and responses were typically very good. There were excellent analyses of the way Satan addresses Eve. Literary and rhetorical terminology were well used as tools of analysis: comments on syntax, hyperbole, lexical patterns, as well as more specialist terms such as anadiplosis. Responses identified well Satan's lines of attack on Eve: her vanity, her vulnerability, her desire for independence, her free will. One excellent response wrote convincingly about Satan as a performer and actor and that the whole seduction was a 'theatrical event'. Students who did well gave due attention to Eve's responses to Satan which are the subject of the second half of the extract. Excellent links were made to the rest of poem, Books 9 and 10 and even beyond, with much being made of the Fall and Eve's interactions with Adam. There were some excellent references to context both biographical and socio-political. However, some candidates who did less well found it challenging to get beyond Milton's putative misogyny.

Question 9

9 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Selected Poems*

Discuss how Coleridge's portrayal suggests that Geraldine might be a threat to Christabel in this extract from *Christabel*.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find the extract characteristic of Coleridge's work in your selection. [30]

There were very few responses to this text. There were a handful of good responses which analysed the Gothic features in the poem: the atmosphere, the innocence of Christabel, the chilling presence of Geraldine, especially the dismissal of the 'wandering mother'. Links were made to 'Fears in Solitude' but the much richer territory of 'The Ancient Mariner' with its Gothic themes of guilt, isolation, transgression and loss of innocence were not, overall, exploited. The sexual threat to Christabel, foreshadowed here and clearly presented later in the poem, was rarely mentioned. There was a strong sense that several candidates were not very familiar with the poem and did not engage with the extract closely.

Question 10

10 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *Maud*

Discuss how the speaker in this extract from *Maud* reveals his changing experience of love.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find the extract characteristic of *Maud*. [30]

There were very few responses to this text, but there were several good ones. One particularly strong response showed an excellent grasp of scansion and imagery, and nearly all candidates identified the shifts of rhythm between the different sections. There were some excellent links made to the rest of the poem, for example, in the patterns of imagery, such as the rose. Biographical and social-historical context were also referenced relevantly.

Question 11

11 Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems*

Discuss how Rossetti suggests in this poem *Maude Clare*, that love and marriage are far from simple experiences.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find this poem characteristic of Rossetti's work in your selection. [30]

This was an extremely popular text with more responses than all the other poetry texts combined. There were many very good responses and the best were rooted in a close reading of the set poem and distinguished between love and marriage; candidates commented on the range of Rossetti's presentation of love in the poem embracing sexual desire, moments of fulfilment, transience, bitterness, memory, loyalty and stoicism. Candidates noted that whereas love was quite simple for Nell, that wasn't the case for the rejected lover, Maude, especially given the social consequences of being seen as a 'fallen woman'. On the other hand, marriage was seen as an institution, which could be enduring but also loveless, contractual and oppressive for women in Victorian times. There were some excellent analyses of language, imagery (especially the natural imagery) and form. One response noted how the rhyme scheme complicated the simplicity of love. The candidate observed the effect of the trochaic rhythm of 'Out of the church' and the anapaestic rhythm of 'for better or worse'. Excellent comparative and contrastive links were made to other poems. 'No, thank you, John', 'Soeur Louise' and 'In the Round Tower' were popular and used well, with supporting quotations. Excellent distinctions were drawn between Rossetti's presentation of earthly and divine/religious love. Some contextual links were precise and pertinent: acknowledgement of Victorian patriarchy, Rossetti's charity work and her marriage proposals.

Candidates who did less well did not focus on the set poem but either spent too much attention on other poems (with which they seemed more familiar) or slipped into general accounts of Rossetti's disaffection with Victorian patriarchy. In these latter examples, sweeping contextual generalisation about the subjection of women replaced more qualified contextual references or close attention to what is actually written in the poem. Centres must continue to emphasise the central importance in this section of close analysis of the set poem/extract. Exemplar 4 shows secure Level 6 qualities.

Exemplar 4

Additionally, love is seen to be deceptive, Maude Clare expected a great deal from her relationship with Thomas but is instead simply court-aside. She returns to him her "half of a golden chain" which was presumably a lover's promise between them. This image suggests expense and value, reflecting how much Maude valued her relationship. Furthermore, the "chain" is a strong, long-lasting image suggesting that she expected their love to endure. The depth of her commitment to him is seen in "waded ankle-deep"; as in the Victorian era an unmarried woman was not supposed to expose her ankles. Her willingness to risk public censure for him conveys the strength of her love, however she was wary to trust him. His unworthiness suggests the complexity and incomprehensible nature of love, where you cannot choose who you fall for, love is similarly seen to be tragic ~~but not~~ when 'Soeur Louise' recalls her past desire. She speaks of the "here for which my life was hired", implying a lack of autonomy, and that her life was spent in the service of the patriarchy. Furthermore, the contrast between love and death in "my heart to love's death bed" suggests that desire is a mechanism for self-destruction. Similarly, the "rose" of her life became "prickles", suggesting the transient nature of love, and the shift from beauty and pleasure to pain. Therefore, love can be deceptive and painful.

Fluent argument; Precise attention to the question; Sharp, detailed analysis; Apt links to other poems;
Precise contextual references.

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