

Anita and Me  
Higher Tier

The purpose of this pack is to provide centres with the question paper, mark scheme and a set of exemplar materials with commentaries.

The individual documents can be found on our website at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

Included in this pack:

- Question and extract from Summer 2012 Paper
- Marked scripts with the mark and band
- Examiner commentary and mark scheme

## Anita and Me – Higher Tier

\*8 What is the significance of racism in the novel?

You **must** consider the context of the novel.

Use **evidence** to support your answer.

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)

Script 1

33 marks

AO1 – Band 4 – 13 marks

AO4 – Band 4 – 20 marks

The significance of racism in the novel change Meena's view of the people around her, and affect who she grows closer with and who she turns away from. The significant racism events that involve Meena include the day at the fête. (pg 193)

The significance of this event is deeply wounding for Meena because "This is our fate, not some wog's handout" was said by Meena's friend Sam Lowbridge, and other villagers agreed "you tell him, son" which completely destroys Meena as she had always thought that the Torrington people accepted her, she had felt like one of them, and had considered Sam Lowbridge to be her friend. "my head was turning cartwheels" The comment was so deeply affecting that Meena is unable to think straight, she is completely overwhelmed, stunned and shocked about the

(Section B continued)

comment that she is unable to think straight.

The use of "I was his favourite" emphasises the importance of this line as Meena Syal has used this short, snappy sentence after a very long one, which emphasises Meena's honor as the comment was said by a friend, who she thought "I was his favorite" This affects Meena because she realizes that even her friends, will not always be there for her, and the only other people who will be feeling like this is other Indians, so she bows for her parents.

After the racist comment, and the action has deflated a little, when Anita said "Isn't he basting" portrays how Anita does not realize the effect the comment had on Meena, and Meena does something out of the ordinary. She insults Anita by saying "Anita Ruth, you are a bloody stupid cow sometimes". This is not only the first time Meena has insulted or deliberately upset Anita, but is also the first time that she publicly finds comfort with her family since meeting Anita. "until I had reached the haven of papa's arms" This portrays how Meena is being brought closer together, through the fact that they are different; Although we know that Meena will go back to Anita because she says "you are a bloody stupid cow sometimes" in a Tollington dialect, portraying how Meena is still happy to be a "Tollington Wench", and she will find her way back to Anita and the gang, because she still wants to fit in.

Another incident that did not affect Meena so much, but affected her mother, was when the rickshaw dog is called "nigger" (Pg 90) Meena describes her mother as "nearly choked choked" when she describes the name of the dog. Her mother says "just because we are not black it is still an insult", & this is the first time that Meena realizes the importance of this event, as she listens to her mother and father's discussion, and describes the actions of her mother "I knew <sup>what</sup> mama's polite smiles meant" however Meena does not treat Anita any differently. This is significant because it portrays how Meena does not consider herself Indian in the same way that her parents do, because Meena had no real

experience of India, and growing up in an English town means that Meena does not connect with India very much. "Information about the dog had now put my relationship, if that was what it was, with Anita into question, at least in mama's eyes" This shows the reader that Meena does not intend to let this affect her relationship with Anita, although she can see that her mother disapproves. This does not affect Meena's actions however, because she still goes to the fete with Anita,

and embarrasses herself in front of her family at Diwali with the "Shag the use of it" line.

Racism is an important theme in this novel because it brings Meena towards and away from her family. At the fete, she seeks comfort from her father, and rejects Anita's comment about Sam, it also helps Meena to realize her Indian heritage, as when Sam says "I didn't mean you, I meant the others," and Meena replies "I am the other" This portrays to the reader that racism is an important theme, because it brings the Indians closer together, which is important after the political events that happened in India, and the Indians all like to stay together and support each other, however Meena does not see the importance of this, and the racism helps her to connect with her Indian culture, and come together with her fellow Indians. Racism also helps Meena to see that she is better and bigger than Bollington because she is educated and has many plans for the future.

**Examiner summary:** For both AOs the candidate shows assured understanding of the theme of racism at the top of Band 4. The points are supported with relevant, detailed textual reference.

**Band this response achieves in the mark schemes:**

**A01**

4	11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pertinent responses to text supported by relevant textual reference.</li> <li>Selection and evaluation of textual detail show assured understanding of theme/ideas.</li> </ul>
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**A04**

4	16-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pertinent reference to context supported by relevant textual reference.</li> <li>Explanation of importance of theme/idea shows assured understanding.</li> </ul> <p>*Sentences are purposefully structured, with assured control of expression and meaning with assured control of the full range of punctuation devices. Spelling is almost always accurate, with minimal errors.</p>
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**To move up to the next bands:** This response needs to make more perceptive reference to the novel to support the points about the significance of racism in the novel.



## Script 2

40 marks

AO1 – Band 5 – 16 marks

AO4 – Band 5 – 24 marks

8) The theme of racism is extremely significant in Anita and me for various reasons. I believe one of the most important reasons being that it clashes directly with another major theme of the book: Friendship.

Throughout the novel there is a sense of dramatic irony building as we watch Meena become more involved with Anita because the reader can see that the friendship is much more sincere on Meena's part, yet Meena is unaware. Meena places Anita on a pedestal from the moment they meet. "The first time Anita had talked to me and I had wondered what I had done to deserve it." Meena speaks respectfully of her despite Anita's awful disposition, later on describing her as a "pissed off cherub." It's from this that the reader can infer that Meena's adoration of Anita is largely to do with how Anita looks, being

(Section B continued)

Meena's ideal. Meena desperately wants to fit in at Tollington and she feels being asian stops her from doing so, shown by her rendition of "We Wear Short Shorts" after struggling through a song in Punjabi. Therefore it is a pivotal moment in the novel when the racism at the fête happens and is supported by Anita. For Meena, it's a chance to see how the people of Tollington think of her race and it hurts her dreadfully that Sam Lowbridge, a supposed friend or more, publicly denounces her race. "You don't do nothing but talk, 'Uncle'. And give everything away to some darkies we've never met. We don't give a toss for anybody else. This

'is our patch. Not ~~some~~ 'wag's handout.' Sam's speech is laced with countless insults to Meena and her family, despite how Sam later refuted this. Many people in Tollington stereotype anyone who's not white under the name 'darkies' and even

~~call Meena's father naming~~ paint after a racial slur: "Nigger Brown." <sup>Shyam</sup> Dattit <sup>once</sup> explained that if you ask anyone in Tollington, they would be able to tell the difference between them and "a Jamaican fellow." Especially when the Rutter's name their dog "Nigger"; as if to make fun of it. This shows how casually racist most Tollington inhabitants are. This is only further supported by Sam referring to Golliwags in his speech to talk about those of a darker skintone. Golliwags are ~~extremely~~ <sup>extremely</sup> offensive as they portray black people as feral and wild. Yet Sam does so proudly. Meena feels bitterly betrayed: "I felt as if I had been punched in the stomach."

Furthermore, Anita worsens Meena's state of betrayal, calling Sam "dead bloody hard." This is a significant moment for Meena finally voices negative thoughts on Anita and stands up for herself and her race which she previously wasn't proud of. "Anita Rutter, you are a bloody con sometimes." This is the start of <sup>serious</sup> change for Meena and defending who she is. She gets the courage to voice her thoughts on the name "Nigger" for a dog. "I hate that stupid name!" and "It's very insulting!"

**Examiner summary:** This is a convincing response to the theme of racism in the novel; showing perceptive understanding. It supports the many points about racism in the novel with sustained relevant textual reference.

**Band this response achieves in the mark schemes:**

**AO1**

5	14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convincing responses to text supported by sustained relevant textual reference.</li><li>• Selection and evaluation of textual detail show perceptive understanding of theme/ideas.</li></ul>
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**AO4**

5	21-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convincing reference to context supported by sustained relevant textual reference.</li><li>• Explanation of importance of theme/idea shows perceptive understanding.</li></ul> <p>*Sentences are convincingly structured, with sophisticated control of expression and meaning with precise control of the full range of punctuation devices. Spelling is consistently accurate.</p>
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This response receives full marks