

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress  
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

## Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress – Higher Tier

\*10 Explore the significance of love in the novel.

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

Use **evidence** to support your answer.

(Total for Question 10 = 40 marks)

### Script 1

27 marks

AO1 – Band 4 – 11 marks

AO4 – Band 4 – 16 marks

Luo and Ma show that they love each other because they stick together through whatever happens. Luo helps Ma when Mai's violin nearly gets put in the fire by taking a risk and telling the Village Headman that he is wrong. ~~Ma~~ Ma shows his love for Luo when he whips him when he has malaria because even though it is hurting Luo he knows it is for the best.

The Village Headman shows his love for stories because he allows the boys to take days off work to watch

(Section B continued)

a film so they can recite it to the village. ~~At~~ This shows how much he loves stories because he goes against the re-education as really Luo and Ma are educating him and the villagers with their stories when the villagers are meant to be re-educating them.

The Village Headman shows how much he supports Chairman Mao and the love for his regime because when Ma tells him that the song he is playing is called "Mozart is thinking of Chairman Mao" ~~Chairman~~ his "menacing look

Ma shows his love for the forbidden Western literature that Four-Eyes have because although he is shy and cautious about everything he was willing to take risks to get them. For example, when he went to visit the Old Nicker he dressed as a revolutionary cadre; and if he got caught he could have got in serious trouble. He also took a risk when breaking into Four-Eyes' house and stealing the suitcase because Four-Eyes would know it was them that had taken it and could have reported them.

Ma loves the little Seamstress a lot because when Luo goes to look after her Mother, he visits her everyday which shows he is besotted by her. He acts like a husband to her because he paints her nails and ~~tells~~ her reads to her. Also he says that he "had never carried out his

mission with more dedication" which shows he has strong feelings for her.

Ma also shows his love for her when he takes a big risk to help her get an abortion by offering the ~~great~~ doctor a forbidden book.

This shows ~~again~~ that he will do anything for her because the doctor could have reported him for having such things.

This scene also shows how everyone, not just the boys, had a love for the literature that was banned because the Doctor happily takes the book and agrees to do the abortion.

Luo shows his love for the little Seamstress by visiting her

everyday when the Village Headman is away to read to her and help educate her. It shows that his love for her is much greater than getting off the mountain because he ~~stops~~ stops working to visit her everyday and make her happy.

This also shows the little Seamstress' love for education because she never tells him to go back as he may get in trouble. She listens to him everyday and when him takes that jacket she can even copy the extract that was written on the ~~bag~~ inside. This tells us how desperate she is to become educated because when at the beginning of the novel they ask her if she can read and write she says "not much."

**Examiner summary:** The candidate shows a mainly assured understanding of both the context of the novel and the theme of love; the points made are supported with relevant textual relevance. Several instances of the significance of love in the novel are correctly identify, but some are not always fully developed.

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

**AO1**

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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**AO4**

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 is just into Band 4; to be more secure in Band 4 or move into Band 5 it needs to refer more closely to the text and develop the points made about the significance of love in the novel.

## Script 2

\*9 Explore the significance of the Little Chinese Seamstress in the novel.

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

Use **evidence** to support your answer.

(Total for Question 9 = 40 marks)

40 marks

AO1 – Band 5 – 16 marks

AO4 – Band 5 – 24 marks

The Little Seamstress is highly significant within the novel. She embodies represents the rural culture of the peasants who live on the mountain of "Phoenix in the Sky", the rural culture idealised by Mao in 1970s China. Furthermore, she emphasises the importance placed by Mao upon manual labour; she is referred to, only by the title, "the little seamstress", reflecting her role at the time. She is described as "the princess of phoenix mountain", showing this royal metaphor shows <sup>how</sup> highly valued she is within her culture; ~~and the importance~~ her father <sup>the tailor</sup> described with the simile "like a king", who might even have a pig "slaughtered" on his arrival, <sup>to village</sup> stressing his high status, as the villagers are very poor, and cannot ~~afford~~ afford such luxuries for themselves. The Little Seamstress also represents the difficulties faced by women at the time; in 1970s China women were subjugated, and expected to stay within their given domestic roles. The little Seamstress' horror at this idea is shown in the line after her abortion, where the narrator says her relief "could not have been greater had she been facing life imprisonment"; having the baby would have angered her father, and she would have been forced to stay on the mountain. She also shows the importance of rural culture; when Luo has malaria, she cures him using a local herb remedy "broken-bowl-shards"; however Luo and the narrator undervalue her rural culture, mocking her lack of an education, Luo saying "she's not civilised enough for me." However, the little Seamstress also demonstrates the importance of power and literature; at a time where ~~literature~~ literature was banned; a mass ~~incidence~~ <sup>homicide</sup> of all books burnt, save Mao's little red book. The ~~too~~ books transform the little Seamstress, and enable her to recognise her own self-worth, shown in the quote from Balzac at the end, where ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> says "a woman's beauty is a treasure".

beyond price." She further shows the effect of literature when she says "the books Luo read to me always made me want to die"; it is the books that are a catalyst for her leaving the mountain. The little seamstress is wild, and is described using bird imagery 'like a swallow', and could perhaps <sup>herself</sup> embody a phoenix; rising from the ashes of rural life into a new life of her own in the city. Her transformation from <sup>the</sup> books is emphasised by the cutting of her <sup>long</sup> hair into 'a short bob', perhaps reminiscent of her leaving her past behind and setting out for a new life. There are pre-montary echoes of her sudden departure; when Luo asks her if she can read, she replies, "I'm no fool", showing that she is well aware of her intelligence and capabilities. She further shows how Re-education was a bad idea; the absence of literature of knowledge, and the down to the country side movement; the sending of thousands of school children to work the land in the country side — as the effects of literature are so huge upon her; "she was transformed". The author Da Sijie, experienced re-education and the little seamstress' experiences appear to be a criticism of re-education; he further shows the power of literature by conveying this message in the structure of a book; ~~caught~~ cut into chapters, ending on cliff hangers.

Finally, the little seamstress drives the plot; she convinces Luo & Ma to steal the books; and their underestimation of her, and undervaluing of her rural culture have a huge effect on the narrator & Ma. The effect of her sorrow leaves the narrator, "aghast", he wants to marry her — "her disease was infectious"; and the narrator describes her "sensual beauty", and its effect upon him. She is the contrast ~~to~~ for of the uneducated against the educated; her transformation emphasises the importance of education & power of literature, in a time where the dictator Mao had banned it, and made people suspicious of one other; her eyes becomes the "cold master of the leather suitcase", rather than the friend he once was to the narrator and Luo.

**Examiner summary:** *The candidate shows perceptive understanding of the theme of racism in the novel; the valid points are supported by 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