

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations



OCR GCSE ENGLISH

(1900)

OCR GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

(1901)

TEACHER SUPPORT: COURSEWORK EXEMPLARS

Introduction

This resource pack has been produced in response to requests from centres preparing candidates for 1900 GCSE English and 1901 GCSE English Literature specifications not just for exemplar coursework folders but for exemplar essays, particularly at the upper end and lower end of the assessment Bands.

The essays included in this pack highlight the appropriateness of the task, and how marks have been awarded in relation to the assessment criteria. They have reproduced exactly as submitted, including all errors.

In addition, there are some general notes on the whole process of moderation and some helpful hints for centres when they are submitting the coursework of their candidates.

Exemplar essays titles have been collated from the folders of various centres and are based upon the most popular texts that are used for coursework. Centres are welcome to use them or adapt them if they think they are appropriate for their candidates.

The process of moderation

Many centres view the process of moderation with the same trepidation as an Ofsted inspection, and they often view the moderator with the same reservation as an Ofsted inspector.

Moderators are mostly practising teachers, and know exactly what pressure centres are under to get folders together and to complete the moderation process.

Our aim in this document is to deal with the process of moderation, and to give some examples of the standards that need to be applied when marking folders to the assessment criteria of 1900 GCSE English and 1901 GCSE English Literature.

The process in school

When your candidates have completed coursework it may be useful to keep some of the following points in mind.

- **Marking**

Folders are given a final mark, out of 40 for GCSE English and out of 45 for GCSE English Literature.

GCSE English

A total mark out of 20 is awarded for the response to reading, and is a combined mark for the Shakespeare and poetry pieces.

A mark out of 20 is awarded for the writing task; a mark out of 14 is awarded for AO3 (i) and (ii) – communication/organisation –, and a mark out of 6 is awarded for AO3 (iii) – sentence structure/spelling/punctuation. It would be helpful if centres indicated clearly the breakdown of the two marks for writing, e.g. 12 + 4 = 16.

Teachers **must** apply the assessment criteria for the specifications and use a ‘best-fit’ approach.

GCSE English Literature

A total mark out of 45 is awarded for the three pieces (Drama, Poetry, Prose/Literary non-fiction).

- **Incomplete coursework**

This is often a problem encountered by centres, and mistakes are often made in the mathematics of the final reduction.

GCSE English

If no writing piece has been submitted then **zero marks** must be awarded.

If one of the two reading pieces has not been submitted, mark the one response against the assessment criteria and then reduce that mark by **half** to take account of the missing piece.

GCSE English Literature

There are five minimum requirements:

- 1) Comparison of texts;
 - 2) Exploration of social/cultural/historical contexts;
- Three essays, each studying a different genre from a choice of four
- 3) Drama
 - 4) Poetry
 - 5) Prose
 - 6) Literary non-fiction.

Reduce the total mark awarded by 20 per cent for each of the requirements not met. For example, if a mark of 37 has been awarded but one of three required essays has not been submitted, reduce the total by 20 per cent: 37 less 20 per cent = 30.

It is helpful for the moderator if reductions from the total mark are clearly indicated on the coursework cover sheet so that it is clear how the final mark has been arrived at.

- **Annotation**

Each item of coursework must show evidence of the teacher's marking. Evidence may consist of comments at the end of the essay, or in the margin. At least some of the errors made should be indicated.

On the coursework cover sheet there is space for teachers to comment in more detail on the candidate's overall achievement. This should indicate how the assessment criteria have been applied to specific pieces of work, how the candidate has responded to the tasks set and the mark band which 'best fits' the final mark awarded. These comments are invaluable for the moderator for focusing in on specific pieces to establish how marks have been awarded.

- **Internal moderation/sampling**

It is essential that internal moderation has taken place in centres. Exemplar folders are available from OCR on request. These should act as a benchmark in the internal moderation process.

All teachers must be aware of the recognised standard of marking. Where some groups may have faced staffing disruption and a range of supply teachers, then one member of staff needs to be responsible for applying the standard to this group when the final coursework mark is awarded.

Centres need to be sure that they have a confident rank order, from highest to lowest mark, and that the marks of all teachers have been moderated to the consistent application of the assessment criteria.

Moderators will ask for the work of up to 20 candidates when selecting a sample of folders. These will include:

- The highest and lowest folder;
- As far as possible, folders across all teaching groups;
- Folders across a range of Band threshold marks.

Where mark distributions show 'bunching' of candidates in certain mark ranges, then more folders will also be requested from this area.

- **Submitting coursework**

Centres need only submit the **minimum** amount of coursework: for a GCSE English folder this is three pieces; for GCSE English Literature it is three pieces; a joint folder for GCSE English and GCSE English Literature comprises four pieces. Extra pieces of work are not helpful for the moderator, and do not influence the final mark.

Centres are asked to ensure that the moderator can see clearly what tasks have been set for each piece of work.

The moderator is only making judgements about the consistent application of standards across the sample of folders submitted. The moderator is not marking, or expected to make judgements on individual pieces of work.

Top Tips to help Moderators

- Place the completed coursework tasks neatly inside the A3-folded cover sheet. No further packaging is necessary. Individual plastic wallets should be avoided as the moderator has to take all of the work out to moderate it before then placing it back inside again; this considerably slows up the moderation process.
- Ensure that the mark that appears on the cover sheet is the same as that on the MS1 mark sheet.
- Ensure that deficient folders indicate clearly what piece is missing, and show the total mark before reductions and the final mark after penalties have been applied.
- Clear annotated comments on the back of the cover sheet should summarise the assessment criteria in relation to the final mark awarded.
- Ensure that the moderator can see clearly the task that has been set. 'Lady Macbeth's character' or '*Dulce et Decorum est*' is not helpful.
- All submitted pieces should show some evidence of marking, even if that is only in the form of a tick.
- Do not add extra pieces of work and then ask the moderator to "see what you think of it... we couldn't really make a decision".
- Make sure all cover sheets in the sample are signed.

Exemplar titles for GCSE English and GCSE English Literature coursework

Shakespeare

How relevant is the title of *Much Ado About Nothing* to the actions in the play?

Consider how much trickery and false words influence events in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Compare and contrast the ways in which Shakespeare presents the relationships between the two couples in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Which relationship do you think will be the most successful? You must support your answer with illustrations from the text. In your answer, you should consider the position of women in Shakespeare's day.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a play of dramatic tragedy. Which do you think are the most dramatic scenes in the play and how does Shakespeare achieve this?

Explore the different kinds of love in *Romeo and Juliet* and give examples of different characters' views on love.

How far do you think Friar Lawrence is to blame for the tragic events at the end of the play *Romeo and Juliet*?

How is love portrayed in *Romeo and Juliet*? Describe the different types of love and explain how they are crucial to the plot and outcome of the play.

How does Shakespeare use characters and personality to emphasise themes such as love, hate and fate in *Romeo and Juliet*?

What are the different elements of feeling in *Romeo and Juliet*? How does Shakespeare make these feelings effective?

Why is Act 5 Scene 3 the most dramatic scene in *Romeo and Juliet*? And how well is the emotion portrayed in the film?

(Note from Principal Moderator: this could perhaps be improved by comparing alongside another scene from the play to avoid too much weight being placed on the film version.)

Compare how Act 1 Scene 5 and Act 5 Scene 1 are made dramatically interesting and exciting in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Describe the different types of love in *Romeo and Juliet*. Describe the effects that the theme of love has on the play *Romeo and Juliet*.

Pre-1914 poetry comparisons

A comparison between *I Remember, I Remember* and *To the Virgins, to make much much of time*.

Several of the poems in this section explore the concept of change. Compare the ways two poems explore this concept. Think about the methods used by the poets as well as the ideas and language in the poems.

Compare the poems *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Which do you find the more effective war poem?

Compare and contrast *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Dulce et Decorum Est* with particular focus upon the language, structure and stylistic devices.

Compare and contrast how the poets create their image of war in *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *The Destruction of Sennacherib*.

Poe short stories

Consider the observation that *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart* are essentially the same story. How much do you agree with this?

How does Poe create suspense in *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*?

'Poe possessed an unrivalled capacity to create atmosphere and suspense, and to probe the dark depths of the human psyche. His stories push back the boundaries, making the improbable possible, the familiar terrifying and strange.'

Write about some of the stories you have read, bearing these comments in mind. In your essay, you may wish to relate aspects of the stories to elements of the gothic and horror genre.

How does Poe keep his audience in suspense?

How does Poe create an atmosphere full of suspense and Gothic horror in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Masque of the Red Death* and *The Pit and the Pendulum*?

In *The Pit and the Pendulum* the narrator almost succumbs to three different kinds of deaths. How is each kind characterised as both a psychological and physical form of torture?

Compare how the atmosphere of horror is built up with the reader in *The Judge's House* and *The Red Room*.

Exemplar essay 1

How is Juliet presented by Shakespeare in this extract (from Act 4 Scene 3) and to what extent does this reflect her character in the rest of the play?

Shakespeare begins the scene, Act Four, Scene Three, in Juliet's bedroom, where Juliet appears calm. She seems to talk to her nurse very easily but is more formal with her mother, when the latter arrives in her room to ask if she needs help with preparations for her wedding day.

Juliet manages to get rid of her mother by pretending that she is prepared and reassuring her mother that all is well and she just wants to be alone. Her mother realizes this and leaves with the nurse.

Then we start to see a very different Juliet. She has been through many different emotions since the start of the play and our first introduction to her as a young girl being prepared to follow in her mother's footsteps. However, once she meets Romeo, everything changes. We then witness a highly emotional girl and follow her through her first love and her dramatic decision to fight against her parents' beliefs. We see her in the next few scenes becoming more and more dramatic to the extent of finally being prepared to pretend to kill herself in order to avoid the arranged marriage to Paris and to be with her true love, Romeo.

This scene reflects her early character where we see Juliet being particularly imaginative. She seems to copy whatever Romeo does, and by the end nothing matters, not even her family, because of her love for him.

There is also a childish side to Juliet. She is very young and not ready to deal with such intense emotions as love, which will put her in conflict with her family. Because of her age she is too young to understand the feud between the Montagues and Capulets. In a time and of an age that would have required that she obey her parents, she is willing to throw away everything for Romeo, a man who she cannot have. We have also seen a selfish side to Juliet, where when her nurse does not feel well, it is less important to Juliet than finding out about Romeo.

In this scene, we see the childish Juliet, an imaginative Juliet, and also a scared Juliet who is alone and facing the real world. She is having to trust the friar with her life and she is making a life or death decision. She is aware of the consequences of taking the potion and the step she is about to make.

"I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life:
Nurse! – What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.
Come, vial."

By using a language here that shows the contrast of hot and cold, the effect of the word 'dismal' and the accentuation on punctuation, Shakespeare makes us more aware of Juliet and her immediate feelings and fears. We feel the effect of her talking to us more directly and intensely.

This scene shows the contrasts between the fear that what she is about to do could be fatal, to a child's need for her old nurse and her comfort, and finally, the fact that she is alone and must act alone if she is to take responsibility for the future of her relationship.

But the imaginative and anxious side of Juliet's personality breaks through again and she questions the friar's intentions this time, as she has questioned everything in her life since Romeo. She has many questions in her mind. And now she thinks of all those things that could go wrong with everything she is doing. She could really go mad or be buried alive. But her love for Romeo is such that it drives all other thoughts away, thus she quickly drinks from the vial and falls dramatically onto her bed to wait until she wakes up to see Romeo again.

In this scene we see all the different emotions that we are aware of throughout the play combined into one speech where she shows every part of her personality. Because she has acted behind her parents' backs she has to do it. We are made aware of this through her fights with her family.

In the following scenes we can see how Juliet's character changes.

We open with Act One, Scene Three, where Juliet is not looking to get married but open-minded. She knows what is expected of her. She is formal and polite to her mother. This is not a normal parent/child relationship as we know it today. It is time for marriage and her father and mother are arranging the perfect husband for her. Lady Capulet is asking her daughter to consider Paris and politely her daughter responds that she will like him as much as she is asked to. She is a well-behaved daughter and speaks only when asked to. This is a formal scene showing the times where marriage was arranged at a young age and children respected their parents' wishes without knowing any other way.

Following this, in Act One, Scene Five, there is the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet. In this scene, we see Juliet's flirtatious character but she is still proper. Romeo is more mature than he looks. He uses religious speech and Juliet picks up on it and imitates him. Juliet shows more maturity during their conversation and pretends to have more experience than she actually possesses.

She falls in love at first sight.

“My only love sprung from my only hate,
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.”

We wonder if this love is made stronger by the fact that he is a Montague, and she is a Capulet. The difficulty that they both come from fighting families affects them both but they are able to forget about it in their conversations.

In Act Two, Scene Two, the relationship is becoming very serious. Juliet believes he is the one for her and is saying already that she will marry him. However, she knows that if the Capulets see Romeo, he is dead. Juliet is very forward now and takes control over Romeo, which is very different from the girl at the start, obeying the wishes of her mother. She is very confident that she wants to marry Romeo now that she has met him but she is still very aware of the problems.

“O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name..”

Throughout this scene they try to find a way that the names Montague and Capulet do not have any meaning that relate to them. However, they are both very aware that this is a love that is not meant to happen, which may strengthen their love even more because it will never be accepted by their families. They know that Romeo will be killed if he is found with her.

“And but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.”

Act Two, Scene Five, is a scene between Juliet and her nurse. Her nurse has arrived, out of breath, but Juliet cannot wait. She is consumed by her love of Romeo and nothing else matters. She is impatient, wanting the news, and frustrated, because the nurse will not tell her. She knows the nurse is not well, but being selfish and with her own need, she tries to persuade her, begging her for news.

“I’faith I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me what says my love?”

In her desperate need to know about Romeo, Juliet begs her nurse to help them, and she gets the news she wants. Juliet just tries to make it to Friar Lawrence’s cell to get married.

Act Two, Scene Six, continues this theme as Romeo and Juliet meet with the Friar. No words can describe their love; it is so strong. They try to describe their love by comparing it to money.

“They are but beggars that can count their worth,
But my true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.”

In Act Three, Scene Two, Juliet has changed tremendously from the young girl at the beginning of the play. She is now both romantic and mature, waiting for her first night with Romeo. Juliet is now being very romantic whilst she waits for him.

“Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.”

However, just as their love appears to reach its highest point, she receives the worst news from the nurse. Romeo has killed Tybalt and he is gone. Only three hours after getting married he has killed her cousin, but despite her nurse’s concern, she cannot blame Romeo. Juliet is tormented by these events and feels that the news of his disappearance is worse than the deaths of all her family and everyone she loves.

Juliet’s distress becomes more obvious as her words become more exaggerated showing her strong feelings.

“O serpent heart, hid with a flow’ring face!
Did ever dragon keep sp fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical, dove-feathered raven,
wolfish revening lamb..”

These imaginative words are used to remind us of her distress. Shakespeare uses this powerful imagery in order to intensify the scene.

In Act Three, Scene Five, Juliet shows she does not want to leave Romeo. She is deeply in love and very upset.

Later in this scene we see a very different Juliet. Now she is rebellious and disobedient towards her parents. They would like her to marry their choice but she is rude, and her father finds it difficult to understand what his wife is telling him.

“Soft, take me with you, take me with you wife.
How will she none? Does she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blessed,

Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?"

Again, Shakespeare uses punctuation to intensify the effect of his speech. His use of the word 'soft' and then repeating his words to his wife make us feel how much he wants his wife to stop and explain to him exactly what she means about their daughter. Because he keeps asking questions we are made more aware of his need and what it is he wants. He feels he has done everything for her and does not begin to understand why she is so ungrateful. With the use of strong dialogue and shorter sentences Shakespeare creates more emphasis which gains our attention.

Juliet is distressed, begging her father to understand, but after this, he is very angry by her disobedience when he has tried so hard to understand her and now makes her a good offer in his view. As Juliet begs for a delay, now even her own mother is against her. And in despair Juliet feels that the friar cannot help her when she is upset, then she will find a subtle way to die.

Act Four, Scene One, shows Juliet is determined in her mission. She now appears to accept her parents' needs and her father is delighted to find her ready to be polite and please them.

In the final scene, Act Five, Scene Three, Juliet is devastated to find Romeo dead. She wants to kill herself, in fact, she longs for it. She wishes he had left her poison too so that she could kill herself.

"Poison I see hath been his timeless end.
Oh churl, drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips:
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them
To make me die with a restorative."

Juliet's need for drama is never more visible than in this final scene where she is looking for a drop of poison left on his lips and annoyed he did not leave any for her. This scene most reflects the scene we have been asked to study and compare, Act Four, Scene Three, because it illustrates Juliet as she really is, still a very imaginative child, unable to really cope with a sudden love against the background of a family feud.

Commentary on exemplar essay 1

Mark awarded:

17/20 – Grade A

Appropriateness of task:

How is Juliet presented by Shakespeare in this extract (from Act 4 Scene 3) and to what extent does this reflect her character in the rest of the play?

This is a good task. It asks for some detailed textual analysis but provides the candidate with the opportunity to show a broader knowledge of Juliet's character as well as sets the significance of the scene within the context of the whole play.

Application of assessment criteria:

- There is analysis and interpretative skill in demonstrating that the extract shows different sides of Juliet's character already seen earlier in the play, e.g. the obedient daughter (at least outwardly), the imaginative Juliet.
- Ideas are developed throughout the essay with a good awareness of Juliet's situation, her state of mind and her motivation.
- There is a little exploration of language (referring to hot and cold, punctuation, etc.).
- There is an awareness of the moral dilemma involved for Juliet – the feud, her love for Romeo, disobeying her parents.

To gain a higher mark:

- More language analysis of patterns, details of words and images, and of Shakespeare's exploitation of language for dramatic, poetic and figurative effect.
- Analysis of the nightmarish quality of the soliloquy.
- More detailed exploration of the theme of 'Who does Juliet trust?'.

Exemplar essay 2

Discuss Shakespeare's portrayal of two of Portia's suitors. How do they contrast?

There are many different characters and many different relationships in this play, for example one of the main relationships is between Antonio and Bassanio. Where the two friends have such a friendship, that they will risk their money and their life for the sake of the other. Also looking at another relationship between Antonio and Shylock, which is of hatred, there is a lot of conflict and at the beginning of the play is seen to be a comical one. There are a lot of racist jokes in this conflict, which is seen to be inappropriate at the time we live now, but when the play was written the jokes about the character Shylock would have been seen to be very funny. These days we tend to feel a bit sorry for Shylock for he is being continuously laughed at, but this continuous racism has been put into the play for it appeals to the audience that he was writing for. With the two characters The Prince of Aragon and The Prince of Morocco there is also a lot of racism aimed at them.

The Prince of Morocco is introduced into the play before he even makes himself present. This happens when a servant reports of his arrival and the first thing that Portia says about him is "If he have the condition of a saint, and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he shrive me than wive me." This is said for Portia is made out to be very discriminating towards the men who want to marry her. This discrimination seems to be a way to amuse herself, for in the first scene that she is in, she and Nerissa, her waiting women, have a conversation about all the suitors who tried to take Portia's hand in marriage and for each one Portia could find something discriminating to say about each of them. For example Nerissa mentions the Neapolitan prince and Portia goes and says "Ay that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse". Portia seems to make the point that no one is good enough for her apart from the perfect man.

Going back to Morocco the fact that he is black makes him seem to be a bad person. The remark that Portia makes where she compares his complexion to the devil is a very raised remark, but the audience would have laughed at this. This is because when the play was written people were very much with their own race and did not like anyone who was of a different race.

When Morocco first enters the play he seems to realize that he is being discriminated against, so the first words that he speaks are "Mislike me not for my Complexion." You can see from this that he realizes that his race is discriminated and finds it hard when he is not at home. By looking at all this you can see that he is not going to pick the right casket, for the audience do not want him to choose the right casket, so Shakespeare makes it appeal to the audience once again by having Morocco choose the wrong casket.

The Prince of Aragon is also deceived to be someone not fit to have Portia's hand in marriage. Even in the character's name you can see that there is going to be something wrong with him already. From the name you would think that he is arrogant and very up himself, the sort of person how people do not really like. As Aragon talks you do get the sense that he is an arrogant person and that he seems to think that it is very unlikely that he is going to choose the wrong casket. This is very different to how Morocco felt when he came to choose the casket. You see that Aragon is very confident that he is going to choose the right casket when he says

the following words “if I fail of the right casket, never in my life...” By this he seems to think that he has never made a wrong decision and in his life and that this was going to be no exception. Also Arragon makes clear that if he does “fail in fortune” then he will leave immediately for he will be greatly ashamed.

This character Arragon would have not been liked by the audience; just the same as Morocco was not liked therefore the audience would not have wanted Arragon to choose the right casket, so once again Shakespeare makes this so. This also makes it an embarrassing exit for Arragon and therefore puts a bit more amusement into the play.

Shakespeare has written the play very much so for the audience and uses correctors like Arragon and Morocco, who are seen as bad characters, to amuse and thrill the audience.

Commentary on exemplar essay 2

Mark awarded:

10/20 – Grade D

Appropriateness of task:

Discuss Shakespeare's portrayal of Portia's suitors. How do they contrast?

The title by itself might be limiting in terms of concentrating on fairly minor characters within the play (apart from Bassanio) and in not relating the particular scenes to the wider context of the play. However, the candidates' essay does indicate that the teacher has indeed suggested that they place the scenes in a wider context.

Application of assessment criteria:

- A personal response.
- An understanding of meaning.
- Some reference to language, e.g. picks up the similarity of the words Arragon and arrogant.
- An understanding of the theme of racism, its effect and the reaction of Shakespeare's audience.
- An understanding of stagecraft, particularly of the effect of talking about characters before they come on stage.
- An understanding of the two characters via other characters' reactions, e.g. Portia's comments.
- A brief comparison of the two characters.

To gain a higher mark:

- More detail needed overall.
- More analysis of what the characters say and Shakespeare's use of language.
- More comparison, as demanded in the task.

Exemplar essay 3

A modern audience would judge Romeo to be a typical teenage boy. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In this essay, I am going to discuss how Romeo's behaviour is like a typical teenage boy. I will write about how a teenage boy behaves in modern times, and refer to Romeo's behaviour throughout the play. I will also decide whether I agree or disagree that Romeo is like a typical teenage boy.

Romeo and Juliet was written by William Shakespeare in the 1590s. Shakespeare was born on April 23rd, 1564, in Stratford Upon Avon. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway. People liked to go to see Shakespeare's plays in local theatres and they liked to go see cock fighting.

The story of Romeo and Juliet is about two young lovers that meet at a party. Not known to them their two families, the Montagues and the Capulets, are enemies and have always hated each other. Soon Romeo and Juliet find out who each other are. They cannot stop loving each other so Romeo goes to Friar Lawrence and they get married soon. After the marriage, Juliet's cousin Tybalt found out they were married and Romeo had a fight and Tybalt was killed and Romeo was banished from Verona. Then Juliet found out that Romeo was banished then her mom and Dad arranged her marriage with someone else. She went to see Friar Lawrence and got a sleeping potion so she can act dead. When Romeo came back he thought she was dead and then he killed himself. Then she woke up and then saw Romeo dead and then she killed herself.

People would have to go and see Romeo and Juliet because it would appeal to teenagers and also they would understand it more than grownups would because it is based on real life situations. People in Shakespeare's times would like to go and see it because they loved Romeo and Juliet.

There are lots of examples of typical teenage behavior. Romeo is seen to behave like a typical teenager at some parts of the play. Some typical teenage behaviour includes fighting, getting into trouble with the police, getting involved with crime, and chatting up girls. Some teenage interests are sports, play station games, cars and drinking. Romeo shows some typical teenage behaviour in some scenes of the play.

In this paragraph I am going to explain how Romeo acts like a typical teenage boy. In act one, he is sad, is having mood swings and falls in love easily. At first he is in love with Rosaline.

'Ay me, sad hours seem long.'
(act one, scene one, line 157.)

Romeo is saying that without her the days seem long. Then he falls in love with Juliet:

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.
(act one, scene five, line 50.)

This tells you that he can't make his mind up on what he wants. He is acting like a typical teenage boy because he now loves Juliet not Rosaline. He thinks Juliet is an

angel. In act three Romeo acts like a typical teenage boy because he gets into a fight and loses his temper. This is like a typical teenager.

Benvolio says,

'And if we meet we shall not scape a brawl,
For now these hot days is the mad blood stirring.'

(act three, scene one, line 3.)

He is saying that if the two families should meet they will have a big fight. This is typical teenage behaviour.

in act five Romeo killed himself because when he saw Juliet he did not think straight and did not check Juliet was dead so she was not acting it.

an impulse. This is typical teenage behaviour because teenagers often do things without thinking.

'...go with me

To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.'

He is saying that he is going to be with Juliet again.

in this paragraph I will be talking about Romeo's actions which are not like a typical teenage boy. When Romeo married Juliet Straight away that was not typical teenage behaviour because modern teenagers would not marry some one they met straight away. Teenagers now like to go out with each other for longer. When Romeo killed himself when he thought Juliet was dead, that was not typical teenage behaviour because modern teenagers would not kill themselves if their girlfriend was dead. teenagers would not kill themselves if their girlfriend was dead. They would check first to see if she was dead and then they would phone the ambulance. When Romeo killed Tybalt that was not teenage behaviour because when some teenagers have fights they don't kill each other, but if they are really angry they don't know what they can do to each other.

In this paragraph I am going to talk about what Romeo does in the play that would attract the audience's attention in the theatre or in the cinema. I am going to talk about lighting, music and special effects and I am going to write about the parts that feature Romeo.

in Romeo and Juliet the main parts in the play that would attract the audience's attention are the fighting at the beginning when the Montague servants and the Capulets servants start a war. Also the fight with Tybalt and Romeo. if they did Romeo and Juliet in a theatre and they had the lights and sound effects the audience would remember that scene because they would have the lights moving around and flashing, and for the sound they would have intense music for when they are fighting.

In this paragraph I am going to disagree or agree that Romeo behaves like a typical teenage boy. I agree that Romeo behaves like a typical teenage boy because in all the scenes he behaves like a typical teenage boy, e.g he likes girls and goes to parties and has fights with his enemies.

Wrote this play I agree that he was trying to put across a point

The point might be that when you meet someone don't rush the relationship or if you do it could get you in to a lot of trouble like Romeo + Juliet.

Commentary on exemplar essay 3

Mark awarded:

5/20 – Grade F

Appropriateness of task:

A modern audience would judge Romeo to be a typical teenage boy. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In general this task might appear inappropriate. However, as it was given to a low ability group it was probably seen as a mechanism for helping candidates to engage with the text. Provided some guidance is given, e.g. 'Show understanding of the plot; pick out particular incidents from the play; use quotations' etc., this task can be appropriate.

Application of assessment criteria:

- There is evidence of personal response in arguing points for and against the essay title.
- There is some evidence of an understanding of character, e.g. Romeo's mood swings in relation to his love for Rosaline and in examples of impulsive behaviour.
- Quotations are used to support some of the points.
- There is a general awareness of significant features of character and plot.

To gain a higher mark:

- Less repetition.
- Better understanding of plot details (e.g. confusion about Tybalt finding out about Romeo's marriage).
- Better understanding of Shakespeare's language.

Exemplar essay 4

How does Shakespeare convey men and women's relationships and attitudes to love, sex and marriage in contemporary society in Act IV scene I of *Much Ado About Nothing*?

Contemporary society in Shakespeare's time treated marriages between the wealthy and privileged as largely business transactions. It was very much a patriarchal society; women were very weak and powerless. Fathers used their daughters as assets to bargain with as long as they were virgins. If daughters happened not to be virgins they were seen as worthless and insignificant. They would dishonour their family and disgrace themselves.

This was not just a question of abstract morality. Titles, wealth and therefore power were passed down through the pure bloodline. If the mother had not been a virgin on marriage then the identity of the father of the first child could be in doubt. Bastards could not inherit under the law and were not treated as equals. They were also seen as a threat to legitimate heirs. Shakespeare conveys this in his portrayal of Don John as scheming, jealous, cruel and cowardly. These attitudes however only applied to those of importance in society as we see from Shakespeare's portrayal of Margaret, Hero's servant. The fact that she was playing around and flirting with Borachio was behaviour that the audience of the time would have expected. She was never going to be the mother of an heir so her virginity was unimportant. In this society love was rarely a consideration in marriage; daughters were born possessions of their fathers and then passed on to be the possessions of their husbands.

Act 1V Scene 1 of 'Much Ado About Nothing' opens in church where Hero and Claudio are about to be wed. Everyone of any importance is there and it is a very public occasion. Claudio's and Don Pedro's public face and sense of honour mattered a lot to them. This is probably why Shakespeare chose this place for Claudio to denounce and humiliate Hero. A lot of the scene is written in blank verse which Shakespeare used for important characters or for speeches that were very significant to the play.

When Claudio accuses Hero of having been with another man Shakespeare uses references to disguise and to covering up the truth. He wants to give the impression through his use of language and imagery that although she appears to be one thing, that is, virtuous, she is in fact something else, not virtuous, 'She's but the *sign* and *semblance* of her honour: Behold how *like* a maid she blushes here!' He uses similes by harshly referring to Hero as 'this rotten orange' and 'an approved wanton'. Don Pedro, who actually helped to arrange the marriage with Leonato says, 'I stand dishonoured that I have gone about to link my friend to a common stale.' It is quite clear from this that contemporary society viewed women who had had sex before marriage as little more than prostitutes.

Shakespeare reinforces Claudio's dramatic accusation with his use of language techniques such as alliteration, 'Oh Hero! What a hero hadst thou been If half thy outward graces had been placed About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart?' Claudio's view on love is romantic and idealised. He hardly knows Hero yet agreed to marry her. Don Pedro courted her for him and he 'loved' her from afar. Shakespeare makes use of oxymorons to show how Claudio feels Hero has fallen 'But fare thee well, most foul, most fair'. Claudio thought he saw her as the most pure of women in

heart and mind but now having been with another man she is the most impure, 'Thou pure impiety, and impious purity'.

Throughout the whole of the wedding scene Claudio never seems to talk to Hero but accuses her without hearing what she has to say. This really shows how the men dominate this society. What Hero had to say was insignificant and Claudio thought himself to be better than any woman especially the one whom he was going to marry. Claudio's love wasn't deep enough to trust Hero to be true to him in the face of what he thought he had seen and the information he had been given by Don John. Claudio can only think of his own pain, he feels so sorry for himself and to him it doesn't matter how everyone else is feeling. Hero's life will serve no purpose anymore. She will be looked upon as nothing more than an outcast and someone who has disgraced her family and herself.

In the time of Shakespeare it was believed that it was Eve in the Garden of Eden who caused the fall from Grace by tempting Adam and therefore women were seen as lascivious and as temptresses. Therefore the word of a woman was less important than that of a man. In the light of this Hero had no way of defending herself or proving her innocence. Everyone presumed that she was guilty. From the first part of the scene Shakespeare is showing us that Claudio's relationship with Hero is not one of true deep love and that as her virginity is of paramount importance to him, because she has lost her virginity there is no question of him ever marrying her.

In the second part of the scene Shakespeare continues with this theme when we see how Leonato a man, and also Hero's father behaves towards his beloved daughter. Leonato chooses to believe the word of Claudio and Don Pedro over the protestations of his own daughter. He was very keen for Hero to marry Claudio. Claudio was a good catch – a brave soldier and the right-hand man of Don Pedro who was a prince and therefore higher ranking than Leonato himself. Leonato's loss of public face, the dishonour that Hero has brought upon him and the loss of the marriage itself are more important to him than his daughter's suffering. 'Why, doth not every earthly thing Cry shame upon her?' wails Leonato. He feels so sorry for himself that he admits that he would rather have no child than Hero as his daughter, 'Do not live Hero, Do not open thine eyes; For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die, Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames, Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches, Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?'

Although this does seem very harsh on Hero she does accept and firmly believes herself the male point of view about sex before marriage, for she says to her father, 'Prove you that any man with me convers'd At hours unmet, or that I yesternight Maintain'd the change of words with any creature, Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.'

However, once the 'important men' have gone Leonato softens up. He does truly love his daughter and is prepared to listen to the words of the Friar and Benedick and to go along with the Friar's plan which offers him some opportunity to save face and regain some honour. The attitude of the church was very important in Elizabethan society. The Friar's plan reflects contemporary society's views in that it acknowledges that if she had had sex before marriage, she had sinned. However, Hero could cleanse herself of her sin in the eyes of society and restore her reputation if she were thought to be dead. If the accusation against her could not be proved to be false then she could be hidden away in a nunnery, 'Out of all eyes, tongues, minds and injuries.' The characters remaining agree that this plan is sensible and fair. Although the Friar's plan is well-meaning the decision is really made over Hero's head which again reinforces the attitude that Hero as a woman is passive and vulnerable.

In the third part of this scene Shakespeare develops the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick. This relationship is completely different to the relationship between Hero and Claudio. They talk to each other with great passion and treat each other as equals. They use 'you and your' towards each other which in Shakespeare's time an audience would understand as conveying courtesy to a social equal. However, when they declare their love for each other they change to 'thee and thou' which again the audience would understand to convey closeness between equals. The language they use with each other is clever just as they are portrayed as being clever. There is a lot of play on words to do with swearing/protesting love and eating words/swords. For instance when Benedick swears by his sword that he loves her, Beatrice warns him 'Do not swear and eat it' by which she could either mean that he can never take back his love or that he must not eat his sword by getting himself hurt in combat.

Up until this time Shakespeare gives us the impression that neither of them have any interest in love and marriage. Beatrice's character is unusual in Elizabethan society. She is clever, strong and very talkative – the exact opposite of Hero. Hero wanted to follow the traditional way of life in this society and she is happy to have an arranged marriage and is happy to take second place to her husband. Beatrice has no father to arrange a marriage for her and wants to stand on her own two feet to prove that she doesn't need a man to make her acceptable in society. Shakespeare shows her as being very angry and feeling weak and powerless on Hero's behalf. 'Oh that I were a man!' Benedick is very impressed with her loyalty and love for her cousin. The depth of their true feelings for each other is shown when Beatrice asks Benedick to kill Claudio in order to avenge Hero. Beatrice uses his vulnerability by saying to him that he can only have her and her love if he kills Claudio. He is forced to make a really difficult decision. He either has to accept Beatrice's control over him or he has to give her up and go back to his male companions. By choosing Beatrice, Benedick shows real true love, not the romantic idealised love of Hero and Claudio.

Shakespeare conveys men's and women's relationships and attitudes to love, sex and marriage by using two contrasting relationships between two pairs of couples. The reality of a good honest love relationship is clearly the most desirable outcome. Courtly love conventions are mocked from the start, and Claudio seems destined to fail as a husband until he has become more honest and thoughtful as a serious lover. We know that both relationships will end in marriage but one relationship is idealised and romantic and will not succeed until Claudio has learnt his lesson and starts to be considerate and truthful. The other relationship is one of time, love and equality where much dialogue is involved and difficult choices have to be made. Shakespeare emphasizes the importance of virginity to marriage by showing us that Leonato's relationship with his daughter would come to an end because of the dishonour she would have brought upon him and that the alliance between Leonato and Don Pedro, two powerful men would also be terminated. Shakespeare shows us how important the church is in contemporary society by using Friar Francis to show a sensible, kind and forgiving solution to the problem and to bring about what he hopes is a happy ending, but he has no way of proving or concluding what he wants to achieve.

Commentary on exemplar essay 4

Mark awarded:

20/20 – Grade A*

Appropriateness of task:

How does Shakespeare convey men and women's relationships and attitudes to love, sex and marriage in contemporary society in Act IV scene I of *Much Ado About Nothing*?

The task would be appropriate for both the GCSE English and GCSE English Literature folders, inviting comment on the play's moral and social significance as well as Literature's social context. Provided that candidates are invited to look beyond the scene in the question, as the candidate in this exemplar has clearly been instructed to do, the task would encourage candidates to meet the criteria of the highest bands.

Application of assessment criteria:

This candidate demonstrates Band 1 criteria throughout the essay. Indeed it might be possible to find essays better than this, and if it were possible to award marks beyond 20 essays such as this might well fall into that category.

- An ability to deal with complex issues such as the relationship between morality and wealth.
- An ability to move from the general to the more specific.
- An excellent use of examples and quotations showing flair and precision.
- Evidence of a wider knowledge, e.g. the Elizabethan interpretation of the Adam and Eve story.
- Skilful comparison of characters.
- Skilfully weaves language analysis into the overall argument, e.g. shows how Shakespeare uses oxymorons to link with the main themes.
- Shows an awareness of audience.

To gain a higher mark:

Enough said!

Exemplar essay 5

An autobiography of Candidate X.

My memory is like a starry sky. Some stars are bright and immediately catch my attention, others are dim or distant and the more directly I look at them the more their details evade me. When writing an autobiography, it would seem sensible to write chronologically and to begin with my earliest memory. However, trying to discern with my naked eye which star is furthest from me is inconceivable.

As I gaze into the sky that is my memory, patterns emerge, and I begin to see a constellation of early memories that spell the word 'misunderstanding'. As I sift through my earliest memories, it strikes me that adults always overestimate or underestimate the knowledge and understanding of a child. Although I have several memories of patronising adults explaining with patience something that I had known for years, the memories in which I misinterpret what is presented to me are infinitely more amusing.

For example, I can distinctly remember lying on a cushion-covered sofa with my mother informing me that I had a 'bug in my tummy'. While she was taking my temperature, a vivid picture of a woodlouse crawling around inside me made me feel more ill than I actually was. Also, I can remember reading the title: 'Around the World on a Budget!' on the front of my father's 'Yachting Monthly' magazine. I must have been old enough to read, but I assumed that a budget was a type of bird similar to a budgie, and did not question the matter. I could continue to list a multitude of similar memories: the time when I applied eye shadow to the lower lids of my eyes; the time when I looked around wildly when my father told me that Christmas was coming; the time when I thought that God's first name was 'hallowed'... the list is endless!

However, the thing that frustrated me most as a child was when adults would laugh uproariously at me when I was being perfectly serious. I remember trying to answer a quiz that my father was reading. My question was: 'What was Ebenezer Scrooge?'. After having watched 'Mickey's Christmas Carol', I was confident that I knew the answer. I replied 'A duck' without hesitation. The answer ('a miser') confused me considerably, and nobody seemed able to stop laughing and give me an explanation.

Things that are left unexplained often grow inside me, consuming other thoughts, while my mind struggles to explain them. One such thing was a hole in the roof of the single story school building at my primary school. It looked as if someone had punched a hole through the tiles. It was about a foot square, and had rusted metal bars across it. I had always assumed that that was where the teachers lived. It had looked hostile enough!

I have many other memories of primary school. It is strange to see which star appears brightest at this distance. I first catch a glimpse of a classroom with decorated spiral snakes hanging from the ceiling, then a playground with a wooden boat on a tarmac sea; then I see myself trying to catch blossom as it falls from a huge tree, or making a nest of leaves for my wooden mouse to live in. I remember being inspired when our teacher had read us Roald Dahl's 'The Witches' and spending happy hours trying to turn boys into mice. Memories such as these flicker in my sky of stars, sometimes leaving me unsure as to whether I have really seen them. Others appear only as disconnected images that I cannot understand.

The only thing that I can remember of my first teacher was the skirt that she always wore. It was tarmac grey, pleated, and fell to her ankles. Now, (eleven years later) I doubt that I would be able to recognise her, but I am sure that I would remember the skirt. Similarly, all that I can remember of the Headmaster was his shoes (having studied them when he was pacing the hall in assemblies). I could probably draw them accurately even now. At this age, I evidently only observed the part of my teacher that was at my eye level. I also have vague memories of addressing my teacher's skirt when I talked to her.

One of my friends at primary school (whom I have not seen since) was a very superior girl called Y. I remember her in particular because she had been almost everywhere and seen almost everything, and if we had done something fascinating, she had done it twice. She had been to see the queen several times, and had been given more gifts and money from the tooth fairy than anyone else because her teeth were cleaner and altogether better than anybody else's. One particular morning, she was teaching us how to write a signature on the blackboards in the shelter. The shelter had been there as long as I could remember and was held up by three poles that always had children swinging round them. The blackboards, however, were only installed in my second year at the school and were even more popular than the poles. One day there would be whole boxes of chalk; the next day there would only be a few tiny pieces trodden into the ground, but chalk dust everywhere.

This was one of the days when chalk was plentiful. Y always knew what she was doing, (and what she was going to instruct us to do) and she took great pains trying to explain to us all what a signature was, delighting in our ignorance. A signature was, she explained, simply a squiggle. But you had to remember it and be able to repeat it lots of times and make it look the same. Y seemed to be good at it, giving exaggerated flourishes with each masterpiece. However, even when I did produce a satisfactory squiggle, it seemed impossible to replicate it! This star smiles at me as it catches my eye, and has remained many years whilst other stars have faded.

I cannot believe now that I used to admire Y and think of her as knowledgeable. It is similar to the way that I used to admire my older sister, Z. I used to be in awe of her when she 'read' books to me at play school. I was unaware of the fact that she was making up an inaccurate version of the story according to the pictures! She would dictate all of our early games: she was Jasmine while I was Aladdin, she was Beauty while I was the Beast ... Also, she delighted in telling me that her name meant 'princess' and that *my* name meant 'fair maiden', and that consequently I should be her maid in all of our games. She tried to console me with the information that I was a *fair* maid. (But not as fair as the princess, of course.)

I can remember in what high esteem I used to hold my older sister, but if I use a telescope, I can see still more clearly stars that are connected with this adoration. A simple photograph, or a video, can serve as a telescope into my past. These agents of memory can recall the dimmest of stars, and re-kindle their flame. However, the stars that these images represent have frequently retreated so far beyond the impregnable barrier of time, that it is impossible to recollect them, and they seem strange and unfamiliar. This was what I felt when I recently watched a video of Z and myself (at the age of three). She was 'reading' a book to her dolls on a huge armchair. I was struggling to climb up this mountain, but, simultaneously, she was pushing me back down; she was obviously content with her dolls as the sole audience. I did not recognise myself as the quiet toddler who followed Z like a shadow. Unfortunately for Z, I no longer obey her with such readiness!

It did not take me long to grow out of such admiration, and by the time we were five or six, everything had to be *exactly* fair in order for arguments to be avoided. I remember one occasion when Z and I were both convinced that we had the largest pile of vegetables. In the middle of our heated argument, our father swapped our plates around. That silenced us. When Z's plate was in front of me, it did indeed seem to be more abundant in peas than mine had been. Although too proud to voice my feelings, I was desperate to have my plate back; Z admitted later that she had felt the same.

Our longing to make everything 'fair' almost became an obsession. At one stage, all of our clothes had to be exactly the same in order for it to be 'fair'. However, we did also enjoy being mistaken for twins, and it simplified shopping for our parents! When my father presented to Z and myself two party dresses that a friend had grown out of, he asked us which one we would like to have. I was convinced that the velvet dress was more beautiful, and immediately pointed to it, saying, "That one!" and expecting an argument. To my surprise, Z had pointed to the opposite dress, and we had cried "That one!" simultaneously. I could hear my father breathing a sigh of relief behind us!

Never were our tempers tested more than when we were living in close proximity on 'The Boat', a yacht that we have sailed around England and France. However, having five people in a confined space for up to seven weeks led to relatively little conflict! It took me a little while to adjust to no computers, no television, a limited water supply, and no one but sisters for company; but after a lifetime of such holidays, the comforts of everyday life seem unnecessary. A person unused to being confined in a boat for weeks on end may become bored, but I rarely suffered from that affliction. Our primary occupation was reading. We kept the 'library' in the bow of the boat, and our father used to joke that the boat was bow-heavy! My record was reading forty books in four weeks. (Although I am ashamed to admit that I was nine at the time, and most of these were by Enid Blyton!) However, our reading was not uninterrupted. Once, our father threatened to ban reading if we did not start responding when he talked to us!

Reading was not our sole occupation on the boat. As wonderful as reading is, we had to relent after a few weeks, when it was beginning to get monotonous and the book supply was dwindling. Whilst going through the French canals, we cycled along the towpaths to prepare the next lock, and would cycle to find a boulangerie at each village we visited. However, sometimes even this, coupled with reading, did not occupy us all day. At such times, the only thing we had left to do was create. Personally, I believe that no child should have a life devoid of boredom; only boredom can inspire creativity.

We had reached the point when all of the colouring pencils had personalities and hobbies, and we had a stack of paper that had been drawn and written on, when beanie babies were invented. This came as a relief to such occupations, and from then on, our spare time was occupied with creating our beanie world. To begin with, the beanie babies were merely establishing their personalities and occupations, (as any other toy or item of stationary that entered the boat had done) but they soon became more demanding. We began to make intricate maps of 'Beanie Town'; to write newspapers and magazines (high brow and otherwise); to invent numerous (and comical) imaginary relations for some beanie babies; to write stories of their adventures (the most prominent in beanie literature being 'The Chronicles of the Huggly Duckling'); to invent currency; to educate young beanie babies in a strict schooling system; to write letters and postcards to the unfortunate beanie babies who

(as the population grew) were forced to remain behind... I will not bore you with more detail!

The boat was to me the embodiment of holidays, and when my sisters and I were young children, there was no place in the world that we loved more than Ryde. When I look up into my sky of memories, one particular star catches my eye. I remember awaking on a crisp morning and, gazing sleepily out of my porthole, seeing Ryde in all its splendour. I jumped out of my bedcovers in a frenzy of excitement, exclaiming as I did so that it was 'sweating cold'. The reason for the excitement that that particular town in the Isle of Wight inspired in us was simple: there was a funfair directly opposite the marina. We were also convinced that more crabs could be caught there than anywhere else, despite what our parents would tell us. Every day, all of the children in the marina would collect on the pontoons and begin to catch crabs. We would collect as many lines and nets as we possessed between us, before trying to persuade unwilling parents to part with some bacon. By the end of the day, we had caught what must have been every crab that Ryde possessed. The highlight of the day was upturning the buckets and watching hundreds of crabs scuttle across the pontoon and back to the sea. The memory of a group of teenagers with pink toenails panicking and trying to climb onto strangers' boats as the tidal wave of crabs approached them still amuses me!

We re-visited Ryde recently after many years of absence, and I confess that I was very disappointed with the town that I idolised. Stalls and shops selling flimsy buckets and jelly shoes lined the sea front, and now my 'roller coaster' was at shoulder height.

I gaze into my memory. The stars that were confusing or frustrating now wink in an amusing fashion. Some memories have changed along with my level of understanding and perception. Some memories that brought unhappiness upon recollection have become heart-breaking overnight. Perhaps they involved a certain place or person that, for whatever reason, I will never be able to see again. Or perhaps this place or person is now altered beyond recognition. Some stars, which used to be the most significant in my skies, are now trivial. The prospect of first year summer exams, for example, which had burned so dreadfully in my mind for a few weeks, has now diminished and seems unimportant alongside the ever-present threat of GCSEs.

The stars in my sky are constantly in motion: changing, dimming, or disappearing to make way for the stream of shining new memories. Most of these are fleeting, and unimportant. Sometimes, stars shoot obstinately away, and will refuse to inhabit my memory permanently. Unfortunately, these ephemeral stars are often lists of facts or figures. Some stars appear so dazzling, that I know they will remain in the sky forever: to haunt, amuse, or encourage me.

Commentary on exemplar essay 5

Mark awarded:

20/20 (14 + 6) – Grade A*

Appropriateness of task:

An autobiography of X.

Setting an autobiographical piece as the imaginative writing task is not always appropriate. With some lower ability candidates it can lead to a purely narrative response and limit language variation. An autobiography should be shaped within a creative context and to achieve a high grade it should involve a more complex structure rather than a linear approach.

Application of assessment criteria:

This candidate demonstrates Band 1 criteria throughout the essay and meets the highest level for a number of reasons.

- The use of twinkling stars as a metaphor for recalling memories is effective as a unifying device. It allows the writer to return to it at intervals as a way of moving the piece forward and keeps the writing cohesive.
- The choice of memories often follows a particular idea or theme, e.g. misunderstandings and idolising people or places.
- The use of genre is entirely convincing.
- There is a superb awareness of audience, knowing what is of interest and varying the pace and language.
- The mood is set very effectively and the writer returns to the starting point at the end, which draws the piece to a satisfying conclusion.
- Vocabulary is sophisticated, witty and precise.

To gain a higher mark:

Enough said!

Exemplar essay 6

In *Pride and Prejudice*, how do the characters reflect the times in which they were created and yet still appeal to the readers of the 21st Century?

Jane Austen set 'Pride and Prejudice' in around 1797, during the Regency era which saw important events such as the Napoleonic wars and the French Revolution. These events, however, do not seem to have hugely influenced her writing. 'Pride and Prejudices' main themes revolve around domestic life, the type of thing Austen would have observed closely to inspire the characters and ideas for her stories. Austen came from a reasonably well off family with good connections; the type of people she could base her characters on, with common attitudes of the time to highlight and bring into focus. She lived in a time in which women's views were seen as inferior, it was normal for women to be seen as the weaker sex, which created limitations for them. In 'Pride and Prejudice', there is never a point in which only men are present, there is always a woman either contributing to a conversation or present at the scene. This means that there is a woman's perspective documented all the way through the novel, which perhaps suggests Austen's views on whether women should have their say. Jane Austen would have believed that women should not be dismissed, and that they were extremely important, their views are just as valid as those of men. This is shown through the way the book revolves around the female character's interpretations of the main themes. After all, if Austen thought that only the views of men were important, like the majority of people at the time, the book would be completely different. It gives an insight into the opinions of the women of the time, and Austen's take on the social circle she was included in. She could be described as a neo-feminist (as feminism wasn't around at the time); she recognised and highlighted the unfair expectations of women at that time. Jane Austen wrote in a time when reading a novel was considered risqué and female novelists and actresses were frowned upon, so much so that it would have been seen as an occupation on the same level as prostitution. This can be seen in Austen's 'Mansfield Park' as the characters do not take kindly to the women putting on a play. Combined with those difficulties, Austen wrote in an unconventional manner, she had the perspective of someone who wouldn't normally have written at the time. She was upper middle class, and of course, at that time class was crucial. These aspects together resulted in novels which are still widely popular two hundred years later; stories which appeal to people despite the many differences in culture and society.

Many of the common attitudes of Austen's time were presented through the characters, for example with Mrs. Bennet. She has aspirations for her daughters, she wants them to marry well and gain a good reputation. This was not simply because she wanted her daughters to be happy; she didn't want them to marry into the wrong social circle. She wanted a good image, one which would reflect on her family, and, of course financial stability. At the time reputation really was everything. Another example of the way certain beliefs were portrayed was through characters such as Mr. Collins. Mr. Collins, the clergy man often makes long winded speeches and can be heard frequently praising his patroness, Lady Catherine de Burgh. His beliefs, which are aired freely throughout the novel, are reminiscent of articles such as the 'Fordyce Sermons'. These sermons basically dictated how women should behave, for example 'Certain books.....she who can bear to peruse them must in her soul be a prostitute'. Collins would have come out with similar speeches and at one point in the novel he criticises Lizzie for reading; he believes he knows what people *should* be reading. For example, 'I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of a serious stamp, though written solely for their benefit.'

As mentioned before, Austen only observed the world and society she was familiar with; she didn't seem to venture outside her own social circle a great deal. She did not write about the political system, for example, matters of law or foreign affairs. Instead, she concentrated on normal, home life. She deliberately did not include political topics in the novel, but still, she may have been affected by the difficulties of communication in that she may not have been properly informed of current affairs. Austen would have lived in a fairly isolated, enclosed world. Letters were the main form of communication which meant that information took a long time to be received. As Austen may not have been aware of the latest news, she didn't have much of a choice but to stick to observing attitudes within the social circle she was included in. So what is it about 'Pride and Prejudice' which makes it so appealing to the people of the 21st century?

Austen's favourite character, Elizabeth Bennet – the protagonist of the novel, seems to be a representation of Austen's own beliefs and attitudes. She is the second oldest in a group of five sisters, but unlike most other girls she is determined to marry for love, not for status or money. This does not fit in with her mother's plans; she does not seem to see Lizzie's intelligent and strong qualities as virtuous. She is, however, admired by her father who believes and praises that she is not 'silly' or shallow like her sisters. She has a sense of humour; she is witty, and on regular occasions makes her opinions clear. Some of her actions cause people such as Miss Bingley to look down on her, considering her to have 'pride and impertinence' after presenting herself with a mud stained dress. This would not have been ladylike behaviour at the time and would not have been the correct way to act in the situation. Despite the expectations of others, she does not seem to be ruled by the standards set by society, she wants more than status. Lizzie is not impressed by the marriage of Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins. 'Engaged to Mr. Collins! My dear Charlotte, impossible!' was Lizzie's response to their engagement. She would not settle for a marriage for money so she is surprised to find that it is exactly what her friend has done. Of course this was common at the time, women did not want to have to be dependant, and some would marry to escape their family along with the promise of financial security. She also finds it hard to believe that her friend would marry such a pompous snob. Lizzie, although being a sensible character tends to judge people by first impressions. She refuses to give Darcy a chance after she established him as a proud man; it is hard for her to see past her misconception until later on in the story. She also makes a mistake with Wickham, believing him to be a good character and being attracted to him; dressing for him on one occasion, 'She had dressed with more than usual care'. She is, however, corrected by Mr. Darcy when he informs her of Wickham's attempt to elope with Georgiana Darcy. Lizzie's strong, independent character is brought out after Darcy proposes for the first time. She did not know the whole story about Wickham at the time, and did not agree with her sister's treatment after Darcy discouraged Mr. Bingley to carry on the acquaintance with Jane. This ends in Lizzie accusing Darcy of being proud and un-gentlemanly, for example, 'Had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner,' and 'your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance...' She states, 'I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed to marry.' This quote shows how quick she was to form her opinion of Mr. Darcy, free to admit it believing that it was a justified comment. She goes back on her words entirely at the end, when the tension between the couple is resolved and their differences compliment each other, with Lizzie willing to teach Darcy to laugh at himself.

Despite Lizzies' usual liberal attitude towards what is expected of her socially, her family do force her to consider their appearance in society on certain occasions. For

example, at the Bingley ball when the behaviour of her family is embarrassing. At one point Mrs. Bennet is speaking about Mr. Darcy, 'I'm sure we owe him no such particular civility as to be obliged to say nothing he may not like to hear', whilst he is earshot and Lizzie has to try to persuade her mother to speak quietly. She is very aware and concerned about the consequences of Lydia's actions and how the family would appear socially from then on; 'the very great disadvantage to us all which must arise from the public notice of Lydia's unregarded and imprudent manner...' Her concern over the scandal of Lydia and Wickham may have increased by the thought of never seeing Darcy again due to the social disgrace.

I think that Austen created Lizzie almost in an image of herself – a woman very close to her sister (Jane Austen with Cassandra, Lizzie Bennet with Jane) who believed in love, with a sense of humour and a clever personality. I believe she wanted to make a character that would break away from the female stereotype – a strong character who knew what she wanted. One who brought equality into her marriage and listened and was interested in her husband. I think Lizzie is one of the main attractions of the book; she is an interesting character, one different to many of her time. She has her own faults but she brings wit and new ways of behaving into the story.

One of the most amusing characters in the book has to be Mr. Collins. He is Mrs. Bennet's cousin who is to inherit Longbourn after Mr. Bennet's death. In his first letter to the Bennet family he comes across as polite and enthusiastic, but perhaps a little too enthusiastic, especially when concerning his patron, Lady Catherine De Bourgh. Lizzie detects a certain trait of his almost straight away; 'There is something very pompous in his style'. This is a true conclusion, Mr. Collins is an incredibly long winded character, constantly praising his patroness and making snobbish speeches. He considers himself to be higher than others in his social status due to his associations and obviously talks how he does so people will think highly of him and his connections. His speeches often include his opinions on certain behaviour, the quote, 'I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of a serious stamp...' shows his objection to the girls reading novels, as it was implied that women who read them were immoral (as mentioned in the introduction.)

At the time, the church was considered a 'useful career' rather than a vocation as it promised a house, a salary and a good social position. The clergy was out of the class system – in a class of its own. Austen was well informed on that sort of lifestyle as her father and two brothers were all clergymen. Mr. Collins is resented, especially by Mrs. Bennet, because of the entailment. She calls him an 'odious man' but her opinion is changed when he announces that he is planning to marry one of her daughters. When he proposes to Lizzie, it comes as a great surprise to her. Mr. Collins is the exact opposite of the husband she is looking for. However, when she refuses, it takes a while to convince him, as he believes that 'it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept'. Eventually he gives up, after a rather long winded speech and, unaffected, moves on to Charlotte Lucas, much to Lizzie's surprise and Mrs. Bennet's disgust. It seems that he is more interested in the idea of marriage (as Lady Catherine had advised him to) rather than romance or his potential wife. At first he doesn't mind whether he marries Lizzie or Jane.

Mr. Collins is a caricature; he is an exaggerated generalization of the pompous, groveling attitudes present at the time. His character is comical; his actions are laughed at rather than respected. This perhaps shows Austen's opinion towards people of a similar character to Mr. Collins; that they were not to be taken seriously.

Mr. Darcy represents the 'pride' aspect of the novel. Where Lizzie is prejudiced, he is portrayed as proud. This part of his personality seems to become less apparent as the story continues, and the two forgive each other's differences. Unlike Lizzie, he is rich and well born, which has made him more aware of social status. He is different to characters such as Mr. Bingley and Mr. Wickham who come across as content and gentlemanly. It results in people forming misconceptions about him and his enigmatic personality. Opinions change, however, as he begins to reveal a more appealing side to his character; he rescues Lydia from disgrace despite his original dislike of the families connections. Lizzie also eventually inspires him to look past social class and to judge people by their character.

Darcy is a good man because he does not boast about how he helped Lydia. He does it for Lizzie and keeps the incident quiet. He also apologises for his actions towards Jane and tells Bingley how he has done wrong. He speaks honestly and intelligently, he always explains his actions. This is shown in his letter, 'I write without any intention of paining you, or humbling myself.' Darcy's first proposal clearly shows his views on Lizzie's social status and is very honest with her, but she is offended and accuses him of not acting like a gentleman. Later on, however, she shows that she is equal to him as her father is a gentleman, the same as Darcy; 'He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal'. He has high standards and states that he has met many 'accomplished' women. He is impressed by Lizzie and 'fine eyes', they make her face look intelligent. 'Uncommonly intelligent y the beautiful expression of her dark eyes.' Darcy is an interesting character because he is mysterious. He acts strangely at first, seeming unimpressed by anything, but later revealing a pleasant, clever character and the perfect match for Lizzie.

Mrs. Bennet comes across as an outspoken, poor parent. She had been married unhappily for twenty three years, which had perhaps influenced Lizzie's desire for romance. She and Mr. Bennet are an example of two people marrying for appearance. They are completely different people; she does not understand her husband. Her least favourite daughter is Lizzie. She is not pleased with Lizzie's refusal of Mr. Collins and gives her an ultimatum, 'Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mt Collins and I will never see you again if you do.' This quote highlights the differences in opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, they have completely different attitudes. Mrs. Bennet does not see that Mr. Collins is a ridiculous character, but instead is worried for her future, she wants to make sure that the entitlement wouldn't affect her. This shows her selfishness, she is not concerned about her daughters' well being, but is worried about her financial and social status. This aspect of her personality is reflected in the line, 'If I can see but one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield, and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for.' The emphasis is on her wish for them to marry well, not necessarily for them to find happiness.

She is very quick to form an opinion and then quite often goes back on it. She is resentful towards Charlotte marrying Mr. Collins; it means that lady Lucas had got one married daughter while she has none. She also is quick to judge Darcy, she shows her opinion of him freely and will air it to any one, yet after the proposal it is completely different. For example, 'Such a charming man! So handsome – so tall! O my dear Lizzy! Pray apologise for my having disliked him so much before.' This quote shows her delighted reaction to the news of Lizzie's engagement to Darcy, despite her previous and rather different views.

She makes mistakes with her daughters, not behaving in the correct manner when Lydia and Wickham elope. She believes that it wouldn't have happened if she had gone to Brighton with Lydia. She does not realise that she should have discouraged

her to go altogether. Mrs. Bennet is a good example of someone who lets their life be dictated by social expectations, doing things to try and make the family look good, although on most occasions, she ends up making a mockery of them and their poor social standing.

These four characters and the others combined, make the story an interesting group of diverse attitudes and opinions. It could almost be described as a microcosm of society of the time. Each character seems to represent a common attitude, some of which Austen approved of, others she made into jokes, not to be taken too seriously. This is one of the aspects which would appeal to the twenty-first century audience as a comedy is always popular. The humour works well as it may not be expected of an 'old fashioned' novel. I think the most appealing aspect of the novel is the romantic storyline. Romantic stories will always be popular, although cultural and social backgrounds change through time, emotions and feelings do not, so people are still able to empathise with them. It may also be refreshing to read about a romantic situation set in a different and perhaps more difficult time. People also enjoy costume/period dramas; stories of everyday life in a different era. The novel is written about normal people, about their problems, troubles and triumphs. It is not packed with confusing details of politics or war, just funny, normal people with normal feelings. The characters and storyline have appealed to the extent of modern stories being inspired by them. For example, it could be said that some characters in *Bridget Jones* have been loosely based on 'Pride and Prejudice' characters. Daniel Cleaver and Mark Darcy share the same kind of traits as Wickham and Darcy. There is same misconception on Bridget's part; thinking that Darcy is proud, and the same rivalry.

All in all, I think 'Pride and Prejudice' continues to appeal to a modern day audience due to the combination of timeless romance, tales of everyday life – including the struggle for equality for women, and the appeal of a period drama.

Commentary on exemplar essay 6

Mark awarded:

43/45 – Grade A*

Appropriateness of task:

In *Pride and Prejudice*, how do the characters reflect the times in which they were created and yet still appeal to the readers of the 21st Century?

A whole text task such as this is very well suited to more able candidates. There is a clear focus on the social, cultural and historical aspects which will encourage the candidate to research the context. Opportunity is given for personal engagement with the task and comparison between 19th century and 21st century values.

Application of assessment criteria:

The candidate demonstrates Band 1 criteria throughout the essay and meets the highest level for a number of reasons.

- There is evidence of understanding of the text in considerable detail, showing originality and confidence.
- There is evidence of a personal response to the whole text, and consideration of alternative endings.
- Imaginative use of quotations to justify analysis.
- Integrated knowledge of social, cultural and historical to deepen the response.
- Integrated knowledge and understanding of the significance of context and tradition.

To gain a higher mark:

Very little more to add, really.

Exemplar essay 7

Analysis of 'To his coy mistress'.

The poem is about a man and a woman the man wants to do stuff with her but she is acting shy because she does not want to do anything with him because she has not got any love for him she wants a man that she loves herself and that does not want to force her into doing anything that she doesn't want to do.

He has lust for the woman and he is in a hurry to get his pants down but at my back I always hear times winged chariot hurrying near (lines 21-22)

This makes me think of a woman sitting on a park bench the man is thinking in his head that he wants to have sex with her but she does not want to have sex with him because she is not ready for what he is he likes her body because he is always staring at her legs and her head but she's keeping her head down because she does not like a single thing on his body

The poem is written in old English it is also persuasive language trying to edge her into doing what he wants he also complements about her beauty like saying he likes how she is and how her legs look

An hundred years shall go to praise thine eyes, and on the forehead gaze two hundred to adore each Brest (line 13-14)

This poem is written in an aa.bb form"

.....time
.....crime
.....way
.....day (line 1-4)

The poet uses lots of describing words about time for example
'Had we but world enough and time (line 1)
Two hundred to adore each Brest (line 15)
Thus though we cannot make our sun stand still' (line 45-46)

I think the poet is telling us not to waste time when we are in love but at the same time I think that the poem is trying to say tell us that you don't need to rush with love in life when it comes it comes if you were to ask a woman something and she says no then it means no you don't have to keep on asking her for what you want to do with her because she said no.

I enjoyed the way that the poem rhymes in every line it is a bit boring when you first read it but when you get it in class the second time you get it and you know what it says some words which I did not know until I got what they meant.

Commentary on exemplar essay 7

Mark awarded:

4/20 – Grade F

Appropriateness of task:

Analysis of '*To his coy mistress*'.

The task is inadequate, especially at this level because there is no real focus. This is a candidate who is only entered for English and the study of one poem is sufficient, but a more precise task would have been more successful. The study of a modern poem may have been more appropriate at this level.

Application of assessment criteria:

- The candidate has made some response, albeit limited, to the poem as a whole.
- There is reference to content, character and situation.
- Quotations have been listed and there is evidence of response to specific words and phrases, as well as the main ideas.

To gain a higher mark:

- Choose a more appropriate poem, and a more specific task.
- Make some observations on use of language and choice of certain words.
- Clear awareness of the nature of the poem's meaning and ideas.